

The East African Legislative Assembly

What is it?

EALA) is a sub-organ of the larger East African Community, being the legislative arm of the Community. It **seats** 62 members from EAC community.it was established under Article 9 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community.

Brief history

- EALA was established by article 9 Treaty of the EAC treaty was signed on 30th November 1999 and entered into force on 7th July 2000 by the Partner States of The Republic of Uganda, The Republic of Kenya; and the United Republic of Tanzania. The Republic of Burundi and the Republic of Rwanda acceded to the Treaty on 18th June 2007 and became full members on 1st July 2007 while Republic of South Sudan joined on 16th April 2016 and became a full member on the 5th September 2016 thus expanding the number of the Community Partner States to six.
- Under the Treaty, the Assembly has a Membership comprising nine members elected by each Partner State; ex-officio members consisting of the Minister or Assistant Minister responsible for the East African Community Affairs from each Partner State; the Secretary General and the Counsel to the Community. Currently, the Assembly has 54 elected Members; and 8 ex-officio Members totaling to a Membership of 62.
- Formal economic and social integration in the East African region started with, among other things, the construction of the Kenya Uganda Railway 1897 – 1901, the establishment of the Customs Collection Centre 1900, the East African Currency Board 1905, the Postal union 1905, the Court of Appeal for Eastern Africa 1909, the Customs Union 1919, the East African Governors Conference 1926, the East African Income Tax Board 1940 and the Joint Economic Council 1940;
- Provision was made by the East Africa (High Commission) Orders in Council 1947 – 1961, the East African Common Services Organisation Agreements 1961 – 1966, and the Treaty for East African Co-operation 1967 for the establishment respectively; of the East Africa High Commission, the East African Common Services Organisation and the East African Community as successive joint organizations of the said Countries to control and administer certain matters of common interest and to regulate the commercial and industrial relations and transactions between the said countries and by means of a central legislature to enact on behalf of the said countries laws relevant to the purposes of the said joint organizations;
- In 1977 the Treaty for East African Co-operation establishing the East African Community was officially dissolved, the main reasons contributing to the collapse of the East African Community being lack of strong political will, lack of strong participation of the private sector and civil society in the co-operation activities, the continued disproportionate sharing of benefits of the community among the Partner States due to their differences in their levels of development and lack of adequate policies to address this situation;
- Upon the dissolution of the East African Community the said countries signed on the 14th day of May, 1984, at Arusha, in Tanzania the East African Community Mediation Agreement 1984, hereinafter referred to as “the Mediation Agreement” for the division of the assets and liabilities of the former East African Community;
- Pursuant to article 14.02 of the Mediation Agreement the countries agreed to explore and identify areas for future co-operation and to make arrangements for such co-operation;
- On the 30th day of November, 1993, provision was made by the Agreement for the Establishment of a Permanent Tripartite Commission for Co-operation between the Republic of Uganda, the Republic of Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania for the

establishment of the Permanent Tripartite Commission for Co-operation hereinafter referred to as “the Tripartite Commission” to be responsible for the co-ordination of economic, social, cultural, security and political issues among the said countries and a Declaration was also made by the Heads of State of the said countries for closer East African co-operation;

- On the 26th day of November, 1994, provision was made by the Protocol on the establishment of a Secretariat of the Permanent Tripartite Commission for Co-operation between the Republic of Uganda, the Republic of Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania, for the establishment of the Secretariat of the Tripartite Commission for Co-operation between the Republic of Uganda, the Republic of Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania to act as Secretariat of the Tripartite Commission, hereinafter referred to as “the Secretariat of the Tripartite Commission”
- On the 29th day of April 1997 at Arusha in Tanzania, the Heads of State of the said countries after reviewing the progress made by the Tripartite commission, in the development of closer co-operation between the said countries in the fiscal, monetary, immigration, infrastructure and service fields and after approving the East African Co-operation Development Strategy for the period 1997 – 2000, directed the Tripartite Commission to embark on negotiations for the upgrading of the Agreement establishing the Tripartite Commission into a Treaty;
- The Founding Nations, the Republic of Uganda, the Republic of Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania were subsequently joined on the 1st day of July 2007 by the Republic of Burundi and the Republic of Rwanda as members of the East African Community while Republic of South Sudan joined on 16th April 2016 and became a full member on the 5th September 2016 thus expanding the number of the Community Partner States to six.
- The said countries, with a view to strengthening their co-operation are resolved to adhere themselves to the fundamental and operational principles that shall govern the achievement of the objectives set out in the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community and the principles of international law governing relationships between sovereign states;
- Furthermore, the said countries, with a view to realising a fast and balanced regional development are resolved to creating an enabling environment in all the Partner States in order to attract investments and allow the private sector and civil society to play a leading role in the socio-economic development activities through the development of sound macro-economic and Sectoral policies and their efficient management while taking cognizance of the developments in the world economy as contained in the Marrakesh Agreement establishing the World Trade Organisation, 1995 referred to as “the WTO Agreement” and as may be decided by Partner States, the development of technological capacity for improved productivity;
- The East African Legislative assembly (EALA), which is the independent, legislative arm of the Community, was formally inaugurated by the Heads of State of the original three EAC Partner States at its first sitting in Arusha, Tanzania on the 30th day of November 2001. Hon. Abdulrahman O. Kinana, an Elected Member from Tanzania, was unanimously elected as the Speaker of the First Assembly.

Functions of EALA

- Their function include, legislative, representative and oversight mandate. This mandate is through Article 49 of the Treaty detailing that the Assembly shall be the legislative organ of the Community; liaise with the National Assemblies of the Partner States on matters relating to the Community; debate and approve the budget of the Community, consider annual reports on the activities of the Community, annual audit reports of the Audit

Commission and any other reports referred to it by the Council; Discuss all matters pertaining to the Community and make recommendations to the Council as it may deem necessary for the implementation of the Treaty;

- The Assembly may also perform any other functions as are conferred upon it.

How does it work?

Currently the Assembly has established the following Committees, the Commission; the Accounts Committee; the Committee on Legal, Rules, and Privileges; the Committee on Agriculture, Tourism and Natural Resources; the Committee on Regional Affairs and Conflict Resolution; the Committee on Communication, Trade and Investment and the Committee on General Purpose.

These Committees are charged with the responsibility of overseeing implementation of the provisions of the Treaty and the EAC Development Strategy in the special areas of cooperation that fall under their respective ambit. It is through these Committees that the bulk of the Assembly's work is executed. In essence, they are the technical arm of the Assembly and as such play a significant role in the final decisions taken by the Assembly

Did you know: The current speaker of EALA is Hon Ngoga Martin from Rwanda Constituency

Fun facts:

The Treaty establishing the East African Community was signed on 30th November 1999 and entered into force on 7th July 2000 by the Partner States of The Republic of Uganda, The Republic of Kenya, and the United Republic of Tanzania. The Republic of Burundi and the Republic of Rwanda acceded to the Treaty on 18th June 2007 and became full members on 1st July 2007 while Republic of South Sudan joined on 16th April 2016 and became a full member on the 5th of September 2016 thus expanding the number of the Community Partner States to six.

References

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