



EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

FIRST FORUM FOR THE MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

MINISTERS MEETING

**15TH – 19TH SEPTEMBER, 2008
KIGALI, RWANDA**

REPORT OF THE MEETING

(Ref: EAC/SDF/09/2008)

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REPORT OF MINISTERS MEETING

1.0 CONVENING OF THE MEETING

In April 2007, the 13th Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the Council of Ministers held in Arusha (**Report Ref: EAC/CME/13/2007, 16th to 18th April 2007**) approved the establishment of an EAC Forum for Ministers responsible for Social Development in order to **“provide a platform for East African Ministers of Social Development to share experience and to harmonize policies and approaches in management of cross-cutting social concerns, such as poverty eradication and overall management of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)”**.

During its 5th regular meeting which was held from 19th to 23rd May 2008 in Arusha, Tanzania, the EAC Sectoral Council on Education, Culture and Sports recalled that in its previous sessions, the Sectoral Council had directed the EAC Secretariat to convene and coordinate a meeting of Partner State Ministers responsible for Social Development.

Consequently, the first meeting of the Forum for EAC Ministers responsible for Social Development was held in Kigali, Rwanda from Monday, 15th to Friday 19th September 2008. The meeting was convened in accordance with the programmed EAC Calendar of Activities for the period July to December 2008.

1.1 Structure of the Forum

The Forum was conducted through a series of meetings starting with that of Technical Officers, 15th – 17th September, 2008, followed by that of Permanent Secretaries, on Thursday 18 September 2008, and the Ministerial Session on 19 September 2008.

1.2 Constitution of the Bureau

In accordance with the EAC Rules and Procedures, the meeting of Ministers was chaired by Hon. Christine Nyatanyi, Minister of State in-charge of Community and Social Development, Ministry of Local Government, Republic of Rwanda, while Hon. Gaudentia Kabaka, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, United Republic of Tanzania, was the Rapporteur.

1.3 Participation

The Meeting was attended by Ministers, Permanent Secretaries and Senior Officers from the EAC Partner State national ministries responsible for matters relating to social development. Also in attendance was Mr. John Nkinyangi, the representative from UNESCO Regional Office for Science and Technology in Africa, Nairobi, Kenya. The list of participants is attached hereto as **Annex I**.

1.4 Adoption of the Agenda

After discussions, the Agenda of the Meeting was adopted as presented by the EAC Secretariat. It is attached hereto as **Annex II**.

1.5 Commencement of the Meeting

After participants had introduced themselves, the Chairperson welcomed them to the meeting, and to the Republic of Rwanda, and wished them fruitful deliberations.

1.5.1 Remarks by UNESCO Representative

In his brief remarks, the representative of UNESCO, Mr. John Nkinyangi, Regional Adviser in Africa, Social and Human Sciences Sector, speaking on behalf of Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, called the First Meeting of the Forum of Ministers for social development timely. He expressed UNESCO's readiness to provide support within the framework of its intergovernmental programme on Management of Social Transformations (MOST).

Mr. Nkinyangi observed that one of the key objectives of the Forum - to promote the sharing of experiences on national and regional approaches to addressing identified common challenges for social development and to harmonize policies - was in tandem with the mandate of the UNESCO Social and Human Sciences Sector.

He noted further that the objective of the MOST programme, which is to encourage the transfer of relevant results from social science research to decision-makers and other stakeholders, was in line with the efforts of UNESCO and Member States to strengthen a culture of evidence-based policy-making in the field of social development at national, regional and international levels.

The representative of UNESCO outlined the history of the Regional Forums of Ministers of Social Development supported by UNESCO around the world, including the first network of Ministers in Latin America and the Caribbean which initiated activities in 2001, and the follow-up Forums of ECOWAS, SADC, the Arab States, South Asia and presently, EAC.

Mr. Nkinyangi highlighted the activities being supported by UNESCO in East and Southern Africa within the framework of promoting cooperation with the Ministers of social development and other stakeholders in the social sector under the aegis of the EAC and SADC in areas of interest to the Member States, including:

- poverty eradication;
- gender equality and development;
- combating HIV/AIDS;
- empowerment of socially-excluded individuals and groups, including youth; and
- free and open movement of peoples.

He concluded by promising to bring the recommendations of the Meeting of Ministers to the attention of his colleagues, especially the Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences.

Dr. Nkinyangi's presentation is attached hereto as **Annex III**.

1.5.2 Official Opening

The Meeting was officially opened by Amb. Julius Onen, Deputy Secretary General Projects and Programmes, at the EAC Secretariat.

Amb. Onen's opening speech is attached hereto as **Annex IV**.

2.0 CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARIES

The Ministers considered the Report of the Permanent Secretaries meeting, which highlighted detailed presentations that had been made. These are attached as Annexes V to XVII

3.0 SOCIAL SECTOR DEVELOPMENT CLUSTERS IDENTIFICATION OF PRIORITY AREAS OF REGIONAL COOPERATION

The meeting also reviewed the proposed priority areas of regional cooperation under the following major social sector development clusters:-

3.1 Health and Social Services

Issues related to traditional medicine; social mobilization of rural communities on public health and sanitation; training on public health and sanitation for both the rural and urban communities; adolescent and reproductive health; high maternal and infant mortality rates within the region; and the need for health insurance schemes. The meeting recommended collective efforts to be made by all Partner States to address problems related to pharmaceutical products and drug medicine.

The meeting proposed several strategies including strengthening advocacy, regulations and research with regard to traditional medicine; increasing and motivating the health community workers; and sharing best practices and experiences within the EAC on effective interventions in the areas of adolescent reproductive health and maternal mortality as well as the matter of health insurance.

- i. **The meeting recommends collective efforts to be made by Partner States to address issues such as communicable and animal diseases.**
- ii. **The meeting recommends that the Ministers responsible for Social Development take note of these issues and ensure their integration into existing relevant programmes of the EAC.**

3.2 Education, Science & Technology, Culture and Sports

The meeting considered the need to harmonise policies and strategies in the areas of Education, Culture and Sports and made particular reference to the varying progress made by each Partner State in meeting the MDGs on universal primary education. The meeting emphasised the need to hasten the process of harmonisation of the education curricula and the school calendar and to focus broadly on basic education rather than narrowly on UPE; girl-child education to be promoted; Lack of adequate teaching staff; expressed the need for Partner States to promote provision of quality education in the area of Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and special needs education among others, through staff capacity building and improvement of infrastructure.

Also, there is need for establishment of common infrastructure and coordinate existing common programmes such as sports academies etc.

The meeting noted further the lack of information among relevant stakeholders on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR); lack of common cultural infrastructure and of information on existing programmes; unharnessed potential of the value and/or benefits of cultural tourism; the slow process of ratification and implementation of international conventions on culture. The meeting also noted the need to teach Kiswahili in schools and adopt Kiswahili as official language of the EAC and use English as an official language. Also, promote French and other international languages to enhance opportunities for greater interaction among the peoples of the region.

The meeting identified several strategies to address these concerns including harmonisation of policies and programmes; gender mainstreaming; establishment of common sports infrastructure; promotion of investment in science and technology, ICT and research; increased use of the media in advocacy to promote stakeholder participation in basic education and UPE, as well as cultural and sports programmes; resource mobilization to support skills development, infrastructural development and capacity building.

The meeting recommended that the media could play a major role in education, culture and sports through advocacy information and social mobilisation of the sector programmes.

The meeting recommends that the Ministers responsible for Social Development:

- i. direct the EAC Secretariat to expedite the process of establishing relevant Commission, i.e. East African Culture and Sports Commission, East African Kiswahili Commission and the East African Science and Technology Commission;**
- ii. urge Partner States to establish and adequately fund national chapters/institution that support the relevant commissions;**
- iii. urge the Ministers responsible for education to expedite the implementation of Council Decisions on such matters like harmonization of education and accreditation systems as well as fees structures at University level;**
- iv. urge the Ministers responsible for education to ensure that education for the girl-child and other vulnerable groups is promoted and ensure gender mainstreaming and share best practices such as life skills interventions;**
- v. Urge the Ministers responsible for education to promote science, share research findings and encourage ICT usage;**
- vi. Urge the Ministers responsible for education to promote higher education by increasing transition rate to higher education and ensure quality; and**
- vii. Urge media houses in the region to exchange information.**

3.3 Gender, Children, Youth, Social Protection and Community Development

The meeting considered the need for regional strategies on challenges in the areas of Gender, Children, Youth, Social Protection and Community Development, including Gender Based Violence (GBV); the need to harmonize Gender, Youth and Children policies; women and youth empowerment through skills development and life skills programmes; and community empowerment, in general, to facilitate effective participation in social development programmes.

The meeting, accordingly, identified several strategies, including development of a regional comprehensive programme to address Sexual and Gender Based Violence; Monitoring and Evaluation frameworks; promotion of social protection interventions targeting the poor and vulnerable groups; development of appropriate structures, policies and laws to improve youth participation; increased opportunities for vocational education and training; establishment of vulnerability indices; and capacity building for communities.

On the issue of youth empowerment and participation in national development, the meeting underscored the need for clear national and regional strategies consistent with international commitments entered by individual Partner States in this regard.

The meeting recommends that the Ministers responsible for Social Development:

- i. recommend to Council, through the relevant Sectoral Council, to approve the establishment of a Sectoral Council on Gender, Youth, Children and Community Development, considering that under the existing arrangement these important areas are not individually being adequately addressed;**
- ii. recommend to Council through relevant Sectoral Council, to approve the creation of an East African Youth Council and Women Council;**
- iii. require that social protection be fully harmonised and mainstreamed in all social development programmes of the EAC and Partner States;**
- iv. require that social protection for the older persons and people with disabilities be included as part of the social development programmes of the EAC and Partner States; and**
- v. require that youth and gender equality issues be fully harmonised and mainstreamed in all development policies and programmes.**

3.4 Environment and Natural Resources

The meeting considered issues in the areas of environmental and natural resources governance, energy, water, climate change, waste management, pollution, encroachment on ecosystem and capacity building.

The meeting proposed strategies that include harmonization of policies and legislation relating to sustainable use of natural resources; development of common sensitization and public awareness programmes on issues related to use of environmental and natural resources; promotion and usage of appropriate technology, most especially use of energy efficient technologies and of alternative sources such as wind and solar energy; improvement of early warning systems; and capacity building to create requisite human resources and/or through strengthening implementing agencies with necessary tools and equipment.

The meeting recommends that the Ministers responsible for Social Development:

- i. take note of the environmental issues and ensure their integration into existing relevant programmes of the EAC;**
- ii. urge Ministers responsible for Water to ensure availability of safe and clean water especially in the rural areas;**

- iii. recommend to Council to establish an Environmental and Natural Resource Sectoral Council; and
- iv. urge for the expediting of the ratification of the Protocol on Environment and Natural Resources Management.

The respective Clusters Reports are attached hereto as **Annexes XVII-XX**.

4.0 WAY FORWARD FOR THE FORUM

With regard to integration of the activities of the Forum for Ministers responsible for Social Development into other programmes of the EAC, the Permanent Secretaries recommended further as follows:

The Ministers responsible for Social Development:-

- i. **Consider and take note of the social dimensions of Regional Integration in the context of overall third EAC Development Strategy (2006 – 2010) and the proposed EAC Common Market Protocol.**
- ii. **Consider and take note of the ongoing Social Development programmes, projects and existing policies in each of the EAC Partner States.**
- iii. **Urge the EAC Partner States to harmonize their national Social Development strategies, policies, projects and programmes.**
- iv. **Consider and take note of the progress made by each of the EAC Partner States towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Targets.**
- v. **Consider and agree that the meetings of the Forum for EAC Partner States Ministers responsible for Social Development be held annually on a rotational basis among the EAC Partner States.**
- vi. **Consider to recommend to the Council the establishment of a Multisectoral Working Group of Technical Officers which would identify, prioritize and address key cooperation matters of social dimension before presentation for consideration by the Forum of Ministers responsible for Social Development.**
- vii. **Consider and agree that the 2nd Meeting of the Forum for EAC Partner States Ministers responsible for Social Development be held from 1st to 4th September, 2009 in Bujumbura, Burundi.**

- viii. **Take note** of the forthcoming **EAC/COMESA/SADC Tripartite Summit** (Kampala, Uganda, 20 October 2008) and use it to inform the Heads of State and Government about the progress being made through the Forums of Ministers responsible for Social Development in both the EAC and SADC Partner States to address identified common challenges for social development and to harmonize the development of social policies.
- ix. **Direct** the EAC Secretariat to spearhead the process of identifying knowledge and policy gaps in relation to social development such as youth employment etc.
- x. **Urge** Partner States to provide adequate Social Development Workers to bolster implementation of social development programmes.
- xi. **Consider and recommend** to the EAC Council of Ministers to establish a Children and Youth position under existing EAC Administrative Structure within FY 2009/2010.

5.0 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There being no other business, the meeting was closed.

Signed on this 18th day of September 2008 by the respective Heads of EAC Partner States' National Delegations as indicated hereunder:-

----- Hon. Christine Nyatanyi, Minister of State in charge of Community Development & Social Affairs Ministry of Local Government	----- Hon. Capt. George H. Mkuchika, Minister, Ministry of Information, Culture & Sports	----- Hon. Atanas Manyala Keya, MP, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Gender, Children Affairs & Social Development	----- Hon. Nyenimigabo Jean Jacques, Minister, Ministry of Youth, Sports & Culture	----- Hon. Syda N. M. Bbumba, MP, Minister, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
Republic of RWANDA	The United Republic of TANZANIA	Republic of KENYA	Republic of BURUNDI	Republic of UGANDA