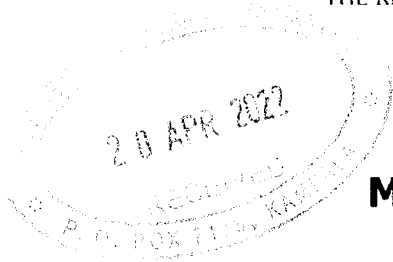




THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT TO PARLIAMENT

ON

**THE ADMISSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF
CONGO (DRC) INTO THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY
(EAC)**

BY

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Rt. Hon, Speaker and Hon, Members,

As you are aware, The East African Community (EAC), a regional intergovernmental organization comprises of the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Rwanda, Republic of South Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania, and the Republic of Uganda with its Headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania.

The mission of the EAC, is to **widen and deepen** economic, political, social and cultural integration to improve the quality of life of the people of East Africa through increased competitiveness, value added production, trade and investments.

In line with the above mission, the EAC has been processing the application of DRC to become a member of the EAC.

Article 3 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the EAC provides the matters to be taken into account when considering the application by a foreign country to become a member of the Community. These are:

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- a) Acceptance of the Community as set out in the Treaty;
 - b) Adherence to universally acceptable principles of good governance, democracy, the rule of law, observance of human rights and social justice;
 - c) Potential contribution to the strengthening of integration within the East African region;

- d) Geographical proximity to and the interdependence between it and the Partner States;
- e) Establishment and maintenance of a market driven economy; and
- f) Social and economic policies being compatible with those of the Community.

APPLICATION OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO TO JOIN THE EAC

Rt. Hon, Speaker and Hon, Members,

The Democratic Republic of Congo, applied to join the EAC and the above criteria had to be complied with before admission. The following steps and actions were taken in the application, verification, negotiation and admission of DRC into the EAC:

- a) The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) through a note verbale dated 4th June, 2019 submitted an application to join the East African Community.
- b) The 21st Ordinary Summit of EAC Heads of State held on 27th February, 2021 considered the application and directed the EAC Council of Ministers to expeditiously undertake a Verification Mission.
- c) The 31st Meeting of the EAC Sectoral Council of Ministers responsible for EAC Affairs and Planning held on 11th June, 2021 appointed the verification team comprising of officials from EAC Partner States and supported by a team from the EAC Secretariat.

- d) The Verification Mission to the DRC was conducted both in Goma and Kinshasa from 26th June to 4th July, 2021. The verification team comprehensively interacted with the various Ministries, Departments and Agencies in DRC with a view of fully appreciating the structural and institutional setup as well as their policies and procedures visa viz the EAC policy and legal framework. In their report, the team established that DRC is considerably conforming to the EAC statutory requirements for admission of foreign countries as new members.
- e) The 45th Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the Council of Ministers, held on 20th December, 2021, received, considered and forwarded to the Summit of EAC Heads of State the report of the Verification Team.
- f) The 18th Extra-Ordinary Summit of the East African Community Heads of State Virtually on 22nd December, 2021 received and considered the Report of the Council on The Verification Mission on the Admission of the DRC to join the East African Community and Directed the Council to expeditiously commence and conclude Negotiations with the DRC for admission to the East African Community and report to the next Summit.
- g) The negotiations between the EAC and DRC were held between 15th – 24th January and the DRC accepted to be bound by the current legal framework of the EAC.
- h) The 46th Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the Council held virtually on 8th February 2022, considered the report of the negotiation for the

admission of DRC into the EAC and recommended to the Summit to consider admitting the Democratic Republic of Congo into the Community in accordance with Article 3 (3) of the Treaty.

- i) The 19th Extra-Ordinary Summit of the East African Community Heads of State held via video Conference on 29th march, 2022, admitted the Democratic Republic of Congo as a full member of the East African Community, and also directed the Council of Ministers to develop a road map of integrating DRC into the Community.

Therefore in light of all the above and the final admission of the DRC into the EAC by the Summit, indicates that DRC was able to satisfy the admission criteria as set out in Article 3 (3) of the Treaty for the establishment of the East African Community on the admission of a foreign Country into the Community.



PROCEDURES AHEAD TO COMPLETE THE ADMISSION PROCESS

Rt. Hon, Speaker and Hon, Members,

As a matter of admission procedure, the 19th Extra-Ordinary Summit designated H.E President Uhuru Kenyatta, the Chairperson of the Summit to Sign the Treaty of Accession between the EAC and the Democratic Republic of Congo into the East African Community by 14th April 2022.

I am, glad, to inform you that this process was concluded by the signing of the Treaty of Accession of the Democratic Republic of Congo into the East

African Community on 8th April, 2022 by H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, Chair of the Summit and H.E. Félix Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, President of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Treaty of Accession commits the Democratic Republic of Congo to the EAC Treaty and Protocols, the Tripartite agreement between the EAC-COMESA-SADC, and various Memoranda of Cooperation.

The Treaty of Accession highlights the following key areas, among others:

- a) Cooperation in Legal and Political Matters.
- b) Cooperation in Trade, Finance, Investment, Monetary and Fiscal Matters.
- c) Cooperation in Infrastructure Matters.
- d) Cooperation in Productive Sectors.
- e) Cooperation in Social Sectors.
- f) Participation in EAC Institutions, Projects and Programmes.
- g) Financial Obligations.
- h) Registration of the Treaty with the African Union, the United Nations and any other Organizations as the Council of Ministers shall determine.

Now that the Treaty of Accession has been signed, DRC will commence internal processes beginning with domestication of the EAC Treaty and Ratification of the various protocols, and thereafter, will deposit with the EAC Secretary General the Instruments of Ratification before 29th September 2022.

The key Pillars which will be the subject of discussion are;

- a) The Customs Union;
- b) The Common Market;
- c) The Monetary Union; and later
- d) The Confederation as a transitional model to Political Federation

The Democratic Republic of Congo will commence full participation in EAC Meetings, Projects and Programmes with effect from 1st October, 2022 if all the above prescribed steps are complied with and in the set timelines.

BENEFITS AND IMPLICATIONS TO THE COMMUNITY ON ADMISSION OF DRC

Rt. Hon, Speaker and Hon, Members'

The admission of DRC into the EAC has a range of benefits and implications, however, let me highlight a few;

1. Benefits

- a) The EAC will have a combined population of over 300 million people that provides an expanded market with opportunities to produce and sell goods and services hence, enhancing the prosperity of our people.
- b) The EAC will have a global connectivity from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic Ocean. This will support the existing trade corridors in the movement of goods and people into the hinterland of the

Community. There is need for quick and targeted investment in roads and related infrastructure to tap into this opportunity.

2. Implications

- a) The admission of DRC, a dominantly French speaking Country, will require the use of French in the Community. This resonates with the earlier decision of the 21st Summit of EAC Heads of State held on 27th February, 2022 that adopted English, French and Kiswahili as Official Languages of the Community. The non-French speaking EAC Partner States, must now put in place modalities of learning and using French as well as Kiswahili as these are now the center stage of the official operations of the Community. I will be tabling a Cabinet Memorandum on how Uganda will implement this Summit Directive.
- b) There will be need of more financial resources to enable the Ministry of East African Community Affairs effectively participate in all activities related to the Integration of DRC into the Community and more particularly bi-lateral engagements that will enable Uganda to leverage and competitively tap into the DRC Market. I will be presenting a Cabinet Memorandum to Cabinet on Uganda's Strategy on competitively tapping into the DRC Market.



Rebecca Alitwala Kadaga

1ST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER/

MINISTER OF EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS