



## **EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY**

### **STATEMENT BY AMB. DR. RICHARD SEZIBERA, THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE (COP21/CMP11) - 8<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2015, PARIS, FRANCE**

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#### **Your Excellencies; President of COP21/CMP11; All Protocols Observed**

It gives me great pleasure to address you during this historic occasion of COP21/CMP11 on behalf of the East African Community (EAC). From the very onset, let me convey our profound sympathy to the President and the people of France for the pain and sorrow as a result of the recent barbaric terrorist attack on innocent people.. The EAC stands in solidarity with the people of France and the global community to combat and defeat terrorism and all related acts. I wish to congratulate the French Government for the excellent organization of the conference and wish them success as COP21/CMP11 Presidency. I also commend the remarkable progress recorded by the international community on environmental multilateralism since 1992 when the Climate Change Convention was agreed upon and implementation enhanced through the Kyoto Protocol of 1997.

#### **Your Excellencies,**

The EAC is a regional intergovernmental organization of the Republics of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. EAC strives to improve the quality of life of its citizens through increased trade and productivity, harmonization of policies, programmes, standards and legal instruments and most importantly safeguarding the region's rich and diverse environment and natural resources whose management is adversely affected by the changing climate.

Our region's heavy dependence on the natural capital predisposes key sectors of the economy such as agriculture, which is mainly rain-fed, to impacts of climate change. Agriculture accounts for an average of 40% of the region's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and provides livelihood and substantive income to more than 80% of our citizens. Consequently, anything that hits negatively this sector directly hinders the region's efforts to attain socio-economic development and transition from Least Developed Countries (LDCs) to middle income economies. To EAC therefore, a good deal from the COP21, will be the one which:

- ✓ Ensures Parity between mitigation and adaptation recognizing the increased burden for adaptation in developing countries due to inadequate aggregate mitigation efforts and also fully recognises and consolidates the adaptation efforts made by those countries in the

context of National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs);

- ✓ Enhances the full operationalization of the Warsaw International Mechanism for “Loss and Damage” and enables African countries to deal with loss and damages associated with climate change impacts and minimizes their negative socio-economic consequences; and
- ✓ Enhances country ownership of programmes and projects with respect to both adaptation and mitigation and ensures transparency in the provisions of financial, technology transfer and other forms of support including capacity building which should be customized to specific needs of beneficiary countries;

### **Your Excellencies,**

EAC stands ready to partner with the international community in ensuring the full implementation of the Paris Agreement and more specifically support her Partner States through the process of ratification of the Paris Agreement to pave way for its entry into force in 2020 and thereafter its implementation. Specifically, EAC is committed to:

- ✓ Aligning its existing Regional Climate Change Policy (2011), Climate Change Strategy (2011/12-2015/16) and Climate Change Master Plan (2033) to the Paris Agreement and fast track the process for legislating on climate change that is currently underway at the EALA;
- ✓ Supporting the capitalization of the EAC Climate Change Fund established in 2010 through pioneering the accreditation of EAC under the Adaptation Fund (AF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) as the 1<sup>st</sup> Regional Implementing Entities (RIE) in East Africa;
- ✓ Promoting the continental climate resilient and low carbon development initiatives and programmes such as the Africa Climate Smart Agriculture Alliance (ACSA); the African Adaptation and Loss and Damage Initiative, and the just launched Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI). The newly established EAC Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (EACREEE) will facilitate the latter in the context of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs).

In conclusion, EAC wishes the COP21/CMP11 fruitful proceedings and deliberations and looks forward to implementation of the Paris outcome with a view to enhancing climate change adaptation and mitigation concrete actions for the benefit of the people, ecosystems and economies of East Africa and humanity at large.

**I thank you all for your kind attention.**