



...Stakeholders excited at move

East African Legislative Assembly: January 28, 2015: The EALA has late this afternoon enacted the EAC Cooperative Societies Bill 2014 giving the cooperative fraternity and stakeholders, something to smile about.

The Bill sailed through the third reading after Members debated and made amendments to a number of clauses to reflect relevancy and consistency.

The object of the EAC Cooperative Societies Bill, 2014 is to provide a legal framework for Co-operative Societies in line with Article 128 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the EAC strengthening the role of private sector as an effective force for developing economies.

The Bill is divided into ten parts. Clause 3 of the Bill lays down objectives of Cooperative Societies which include: solving problems collectively, co-ordinating knowledge and skills and promoting self-reliance amongst Members. The rest of the areas contained in the Bill deal with the formation, rights and duties of members and privileges. Other areas include the assets and liabilities, settlement of disputes and winding up/dissolution of Societies.

The Bill is based on the understanding that each Partner State shall undertake to encourage the efficient use of resources and to promote the development of private sector organisations which are engaged in all types of economic activities, such as the chambers of commerce and industry, confederations and associations of industry, agriculture among others. At national

level, co-operators bear the primary responsibility to develop themselves but it is worth mentioning that regional and international support and cooperation may be needed to supplement domestic efforts.

The Bill moved by Hon Mike Kennedy Sebalu received overwhelming support on the floor of the House last week when the report of the public hearings held in the Partner States was approved.. Various stakeholders including the East African Farmers Federation have come out in support of the crucial Bill.

The President of the Eastern Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF), Mr. Phillip Kiriro, expressed his excitement at the passing of the crucial Bill. “Today, is definitely a good day for the cooperative movement and this is very exciting news. I laud the legislators for enacting the key Bill”, he said on phone from Kenya’s capital, Nairobi.

The Federation’s Executive Director, Steve Muchiri termed the passage of the Bill as historic. “I have just returned from a stakeholders meeting in Addis Ababa and everybody there had expressed optimism”, he said. “The long wait has finally paid off”, he added.

The Bill shall now move to the next stage – which is that of assent by the EAC Heads of State in line with Article 63 of the EAC Treaty.

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