



## **Report of EATUC/EAEO Meeting with EAC Secretary General on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2015, EAC Headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania**

### **Introduction**

On 18th May 2015 the EATUC/EAEO delegates met the EAC Secretary General Hon. Amb. Dr Richard Sezibera at the EAC Headquarters in Arusha Tanzania. The EATUC/EAEO delegates composed of EATUC Chairman Bro. Francis Atwoli, EAEO Chairperson, Madam Rosemary Ssenabulya, Dr. Aggrey Mlimuka the Executive Director of Association of Tanzania Employers, Sis. Caroline Khamati Mugala Executive Secretary of EATUC and two technical persons from EATUC and EAEO (Bro. Opio Douglas - EAEO and Bro. Stephano Mwaiko - EATUC). The Secretary General was accompanied by Ms. Mary Makoffu the EAC Director of Social Sectors. The meeting kicked-off by self-introduction from EATUC/EAEO delegates followed by the opening remarks from EAEO Chairperson Madam Rosemary Ssenabulya and EATUC Chairman brother Francis Atwoli.

### **Remarks by EAEO**

On behalf of the EAEO, the Chairperson Madam Rosemary Ssenabulya appreciated the commendable work done by the EAC Secretary General, she said EAEO is a unique body within the region and is working together with EATUC to strengthen issue of labour and employment within the region. Chairperson provided an overview of EAEO, and its activities.

She pointed out that EAEO would like to work closely with EAC in order to ensure that the commitments set out in the common market protocol are met. He mentioned that EAEO and EATUC have jointly developed a position paper on the issue of free movement of workers focusing specifically on work permits. She added that EAEO and EATUC shall be engaging EAC on more issues over the coming days and years. She then presented EAEO request for observer status which is intended foster the spirit of tripartitism enshrined the ILO Tripartite Consultation Convention. She concluded her remarks by stating that EAEO will engage EAC on a number of lobbying and advocacy priorities.

### **Remarks by EATUC**

On behalf of EATUC, the Chairman Bro. Francis Atwoli congratulated the EAC Secretary General for his visible job he has done within the region and the support EATUC received from the EAC under his leadership. He said EAC has made progress in terms of regional integration although there are still issues which are supposed to be implemented and are very crucial for employers and workers within the region for instance the meetings for ministers of labour and employment which were not conducted for more than five years, Chairman appealing to the EAC Secretary General to revive the meetings for the ministers of Labour and Employment which can be in tripartite form to meet and discussing issues of employers and workers of EAC before the meeting of International Labour Conference which commences every June in Geneva Switzerland.

Concerning the EAEO observer status to EAC, Chairman appealed to the Secretary General to consider the request of EAEO, he said an observer status will promote tripartism in EAC affairs. About the Post 2015 agenda, Chairman said the workers are advocating for all the seventeen goals to remain as part and parcel of the post 2015 agenda, and he urged EAC to support this effort. Last but not least, Chairman invited the Secretary General to attend the upcoming PanAf Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2015 in Kigali Rwanda.

### **Remarks by the EAC Secretary General**

During his remark the Secretary General congratulated the EATUC/EAEO for their efforts and very unique collaboration between Employers and Workers in the EAC. He said the EAC is making very good progress in regional integration in terms of free movement of goods, services, capital and on infrastructure development but progress has been slow in the area of free movement of labour within the EAC. He added that even in countries such as Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda where free movement of labour is open, they still put some restrictions in one way or another. Concerning the work permits the Secretary General said some pressure is coming from workers within the region who don't support the free movement of workers in order to protect their jobs. The Secretary General suggested harmonization of the work permits to zero cost and simplifying the procedures and call for support from EATUC and EAEO in pushing this agenda.

He noted that the issue of EAEO observer status is an executive matter and will be handled expeditiously. Concerning the portability of the Social Security, Secretary General said the process is complicated due to the difference in Social Security schemes; and currency volatility within the region so its implementation will take time.

### **Way forward and Conclusion**

The Secretary General committed himself to renew the Memorandum of between EAC and ILO as well as revive the meetings for the ministers of the EAC. The EAC Director of Social Sectors to identify specific resources to be allocated towards calling a meeting of the ministers of labour as soon as possible and a meeting to discuss the issue of work permits in particular.

In addition, the Secretary General pointed out that a score card will be developed to help in tracking progress on the free movement of labour within EAC. He also promised to consider attending upcoming PanAf Meeting in Kigali Rwanda on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2015 but this will depend on his availability.

EAE0 and EATUC thanked EAC for the opportunity to have the meeting and the good working relationship EAC and social partners.