



EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

EAST AFRICAN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION OF THE ASSEMBLY URGING THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND PARTNER STATES TO ENHANCE THE EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN, YOUTH AND *PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES* IN BUSINESS AND TO EQUIP THEM TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITIES UNDER THE AFCFTA

(Moved under Articles 49(2)(d), 59(1), 120, 121(a)(c) &(e) and 122 of the Treaty and Rule 26 of the Rules of Procedure of the Assembly)

WHEREAS the Community recognises the importance of women as a vital economic link between agriculture, industry and trade and committed in Article 122 of the Treaty to increase the participation of women in business and to promote special programmes for women in small, medium and largescale enterprises;

AND WHEREAS under Article 120 of the Treaty, Partner States undertook to cooperate in the development and implementation of a common approach towards the youth, *persons with disabilities* and other disadvantaged and marginalised groups in the Community;

NOTING that one of the primary objectives of the Agreement for the Establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is inclusive socio-economic development, with opportunities for women and youth and the importance of gender equality;

FURTHER NOTING that Article 27 (2) (d) of the African Union Protocol on Trade in Services, also enshrines the commitment of Member States to improve the export capacity of both formal and informal service suppliers, with particular attention to micro, small and medium size; women and youth service suppliers;

RECOGNISING that women in Africa are predominantly engaged in subsistence agriculture and make up a large part of the agricultural labour force and produce much of Africa's food with over a majority of cross-border traders, especially those engaged in informal trade, being women;

CONCERNED that for decades, women, youth and *persons with disabilities* in the EAC region have been trapped in poverty cycles due to several underlying factors including

unequal access to education, factors of production, and trade facilities; inequitable labor-saving technologies; underpaid or unpaid labour; harmful cultural practices; and limited legal protection from gender inequality practices entrenched in society;

FURTHER CONCERNED that due to the lower literacy levels, women are more likely to face difficulties in complying with border management procedures given the paperwork requirements, such as sanitary and phytosanitary certificates, certificates of origin, trade permits and export certificates which limit and affect their access and participation in trade and development activities;

GRATEFUL to the Council of Ministers and our Partner States for their collective efforts in promoting the movement of goods and services across borders under the Common Market generally and enhancing the participation of women in business in particular, through the adoption and implementation of the EAC Strategy for Promoting Women in Business and Women's Socio-Economic Empowerment, the removal of several tariff and non-tariff trade barriers, the implementation of the EAC Single Customs Territory and the application of the revised EAC Rules of Origin which have eased doing business in the region.

GRATEFUL to the East African Women in Business Platform which in collaboration with the East African Business Council and with support of TradeMark East Africa are currently implementing the Greater Inclusion of Women in Trade Project under which the Community aims to increase the value of trade done by women owned businesses in the EAC regional trade;

CONVINCED that pursuant to their commitment under Article 122(e) of the Treaty, the Council of Ministers and the Partner States need to enhance their support for women entrepreneurs and producers and the national and regional associations of women, Youth and *persons with disabilities* in business in order to promote *their* effective participation in trade and development and to equip *them* to take full advantage of the potential and the opportunities available to them through the AfCFTA.

AWARE that under Article 49(2)(d) of the Treaty, the Assembly may discuss any matter pertaining to the Community and make recommendations to the Council;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ASSEMBLY AS FOLLOWS: -

THAT in accordance with Article 49(2) (d) of the Treaty, the Assembly urges the Council of Ministers and the Partner States to:

- (a) develop and implement programs and activities specifically targeting women, youth and persons with disabilities aimed at enhancing their start-ups capacity or entrepreneurs and producers in the Community in order to increase the effective participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities in business;
- (b) Direct the Secretary General to explore and enhance engagement with the private sector, the business community, and Development Partners to increase and support programs that boost the capacity of women, youth and persons with disabilities start-ups or entrepreneurs and producers to participate in cross-border trade and the AfCFTA;

(c) Direct the Secretary-General to mobilise funds from development partners, private sector and Partner States to support women, youth and persons with disabilities business led platforms and collaborate with the East African Business Council (EABC) in implementing programmes and activities to support women, youth and persons with disabilities businesses.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Francoise UWUMUKIZA", is written over a blue horizontal line.

Moved by:

HON. FRANCOISE UWUMUKIZA

Seconded by: HON. GAI DENG