



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT, DURING THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF DEFENCE AND SECURITY OF EASTERN AFRICA REGION, HELD ON 15TH FEBRUARY, 2014

GUEST OF HONOUR, H. E. HONOURABLE WILLIAM RUTO, DEPUTY PRESIDENT, OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA

CHAIRPERSON OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF DEFENCE AND CABINET SECRETARY FOR DEFENCE AMB RAYCHELLE OMAMO,

HONOURABLE MINISTERS OF DEFENCE AND SECURITY OF EASTERN AFRICA REGION,

DISTINGUISHED CHIEFS OF DEFENCE AND SECURITY

MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS

DISTINGUISHED EXPERTS

COLLEAGUES, HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS, HEADS OF STRUCTURES AND COMPONENTS,

EASF STAFF,

MEMBERS OF PRESS,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO WELCOME ALL OF YOU TO THE 16TH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF DEFENCE AND

SECURITY OF EASTERN AFRICA REGION AND APPRECIATES THE KIND GESTURE SHOWN BY HONOURING OUR INVITATION TO THIS MEETING.

LET ME TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO RENEW OUR APPRECIATION TO THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA FOR HOSTING THIS ORDINARY SESSION, AND THE WARM HOSPITALITY OF THE PEOPLE OF KENYA.

I SINCERELY THANK OUR ESTEEMED GUEST OF HONOUR H. E. HONOURABLE WILLIAM RUTO, THE DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA, FOR HONOURING OUR ORGANIZATION BY HIS PRESENCE, DESPITE HIS ENORMOUS SCHEDULE AND GRACING THIS EASTERN AFRICA COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OPENING CEREMONY.

I ALSO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO WISH ALL OF YOU DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR 2014, AS THIS IS THE FIRST TIME WE MEET SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW YEAR.

HONOURABLE MINISTERS, THIS IS THE FIRST EASF POLICY ORGANS MEETING SINCE THE PASSING ON OF THE FORMER PRESIDENT OF SOUTH AFRICA, H. E. NELSON MANDELA, I HUMBLY REQUEST EACH ONE OF US TO TAKE A MINUTE OF SILENCE, AS A SYMBOL OF OUR HEARTFELT

COMPASSION, FOR THE CONTINENT AS WELL AS THE WORLD, HAS LOST A GREAT ICON.

GUEST OF HONOUR, DISTINGUISHED MINISTERS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

ITS BEEN FIVE DAYS SINCE THIS ORDINARY SESSION BEGAN. OUR EXPERTS DEDICATED THEIR EFFORT AND PREPARED A REPORT THAT WAS PRESENTED TO OUR CHIEFS OF DEFENCE, WHO HAVE PUT SEVERAL HOURS TO ENSURE THAT ADEQUATE PREPARATIONS FOR THIS MEETING HAVE BEEN PUT IN PLACE.

DISCUSSIONS HAVE BEEN FRUITFUL AND FOCUS HAS MOSTLY BEEN ON ACTIVITIES THAT WILL ADEQUATELY PREPARE EASF FOR FULL OPERATIONAL CAPABILITY (FOC), WHICH IS NOW LESS THAN TWO YEARS AWAY. AS EASF MOVES FORWARD TOWARDS THIS GOAL AND CONSIDERING THAT THE CONTINENT HAS REACHED A CONSENSUS TO OPERATIONALIZE THE RECS/RMS STANDBY FORCES, IT IS OUR EXPECTATION THAT EASF WILL BE AT PAR WITH OTHER STANDBY FORCES AND TRUST THAT OUR DECISION MAKERS WHO HAVE INVESTED SO MUCH IN THE ORGANIZATION, WILL MAKE IT A REALITY. I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS OUR SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS TO THE PRESIDENT AND THE GOVERNMENT OF KENYA FOR THE KIND GESTURE IN SUPPORT OF THE EASF COUNTRIES BY GIVING 1 MILLION USD TOWARDS THE EXERCISE AMANI II.

INDEED, THE EASTERN AFRICA REGION COUNTRIES INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY DEMONSTRATED THEIR POTENTIAL TO DEAL WITH THREATS AND CONFLICTS IN THE REGION. EASF MEMBER STATES EXPERIENCES AND CAPACITIES ARE IMMENSE AND CAN SUCCESSFULLY FACE ALL KIND OF THREATS AND CONFLICTS WITHIN THE REGION AND ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA WHEN CALLED UPON.

THIS IS AN ASSURANCE THAT THE PERSPECTIVE OF EASF AS A STANDBY FORCE IS ONE AND STRONG. ALTHOUGH THE TIME TO DEAL WITH ALL PENDING CHALLENGES TOWARDS ACHIEVING THE FOC IS LIMITED, I AM HAPPY THAT THE EACDS HAVE CORRECTLY IDENTIFIED THAT TARGET AND PROPOSED THE WAY FORWARD TO MAKE EASF OPERATIONAL BEFORE 2015.

GUEST OF HONOUR, HONOURABLE MINISTERS, INVITED GUESTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

AS I CONCLUDE MY TOUR OF DUTY IN MARCH 2014 AND SINCE THIS IS THE LAST POLICY MEETING THAT WILL BE CONDUCTED WHILE I AM STILL SERVING, PLEASE ALLOW ME TO REGISTER MY APPRECIATION FOR THE SUPPORT THAT I HAVE RECEIVED FROM EACH ONE OF YOU. IT HAS BEEN A GREAT HONOUR TO SERVE THIS REGION AND I THANK YOU FOR THE

PRIVELEDGE GIVEN. I KNOW IT MAY NOT HAVE BEEN ALL SMOOTH, BUT I REQUEST THAT THOSE THAT I MAY HAVE AGGRIEVED IN THE COURSE OF MY TENURE TO SINCERELY FORGIVE. I ALSO WISH TO ASSURE YOU THAT, I WILL ALWAYS BE READY TO GIVE MY CONTRIBUTION OR SUPPORT WHEN CALLED UPON.

PLEASE ALLOW ME ONCE AGAIN TO APPRECIATE THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF DEFENCE, AS STATE REPRESENTATIVES, AND THE CONTRIBUTION THEY MAKE TOWARDS BRINGING PEACE AND SECURITY TO OUR REGION AND TO THE AFRICAN CONTINENT.

THE JOURNEY TOWARDS ACHIEVING FOC IS LONG AND REQUIRE A LOT OF RESOURCES. OUR FRIENDS WHO HAVE WALKED WITH THIS HAVE SUPPORTED US BY PROVIDING NOT JUST FINANCIAL RESOURCES, BUT ALS TECHNICAL EXPERTISE. I THEREFORE REGISTER MY APPRECIATION FOR THE ENORMOUS SUPPORT THEY HAVE GIVEN US.

I WISH TO EXPRESS ON BEHALF OF EASFCOM, OUR SINCERE GRATITUDE FOR THE SUPPORT RENDERED TO THE ORGANIZATION.

I NOW KINDLY INVITE THE CHAIR OF THE FRIENDS TO GIVE HIS STATEMENT.

THANK YOU