
REPORT ON THE EAST AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY SUMMIT 2023

Introductory remarks from the CEO

Dear partners and friends, EACSOF wishes to express our gratitude to our sponsors, partners and the organising committee for the success of the first-ever East African CSO summit which was timely and very well received. We encourage civil society actors, development partners and EAC member states to take up and implement the recommendations from this Summit to enhance citizens' interests and ensure the success of regional integration initiatives. Let us share the opportunities to expand our network and continue collaboration as we strive to address the challenges and opportunities emerging from global development. Our gratitude goes to the very able facilitators of this Summit Mr. John Ulanga, Adv. Harold Sungusia and all of the session moderators who supported lively enaement on the various topics under discussion.



About EACSOF

The East African Civil Society Organisations Forum (EACSOF) is among the most diverse and active regional CSO platforms on the African Continent. EACSOF membership convenes all Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), civil society organisations, and Community Based Organisations in East African Community. It enables CSO to work together to amplify East African citizens' collective power to contribute fully to policy formulation/ review for increased socio-economic growth in the EAC integration process.

EACSOF's strong networks and convening power brings together the leading actors in civil society in East Africa to amplify citizens' voices and concerns above important matters in order to complement Governments' initiatives and hasten socio-development in the EAC. Since its founding in 2007, EACSOF has been central in strengthening institutionalisation structures and the relationship between CSOs and the East African Community Secretariat, organs and institutions. EACSOF is mandated as the Voice of civil society in the EAC integration process as outlined in the EAC Consultative Dialogue Framework (CDF).

About the Summit

The first annual East African CSO Summit was held in Arusha, Tanzania from the 3rd to 5th May 2023 under the theme “Harnessing citizens’ prosperity in EAC and AfCFTA integration processes.” The main objective of this Summit was to renew the social contract between the EAC and the Citizens in the East Africa region through Civil Society. In addition, the Summit provided a space for CSOs working on different thematic areas, including Health, Governance and Democracy, Trade and Investment, Peace and Security, Agriculture Development, Climate Change, gender and Youth engagement, to connect and collaborate and to showcase achievements and impactful programs in the Region.



Objectives of the Summit

1. To renew social contact between EAC Citizens and the East African Community and re-establish civil society as a partner in regional economic development in East Africa.
2. To capacitate the CSOs on emerging health, governance, climate change, gender and youth, AfCFTA issues.
3. Strengthen EACSOFF focal country chapters linking them to the National Ministries of EAC for recognition.
4. To launch EACSOFFs new Strategic Plan (2023-2027) and garner support for its implementation.
5. To develop a roadmap for implementing the new EASOF strategic plan for the next five (5) years.

Profile of conference participants and speakers



The East African Civil Societies Summit brought together over 300 representatives from Civil society, the EAC institutions and organs, the EAC Partner States, Academia and development partners from the Region and beyond. Speakers at the Summit brought a wealth of knowledge and experience

Summit sponsors

We are grateful to our sponsors of this Summit, Oxfam International for their continuing financial and technical support to the East African Civil Society Organizations Forum. We also had great support from EACSOFF members who sponsored panels and participants to attend. Additionally, we appreciate the efforts and guidance provided by the Summit planning committee consisting of members of the EACSOFF Governing Council and EACSOFF national chapters.



Highlights of discussions at the Summit

The Summit facilitated thematic discussions between CSOS and Government Officials from EAC secretariat, Parliamentarians, and Ministries to deliberate and share insights. The insights from these specialised thematic discussions will propose an implementation road-map to guide how relevant actors should address the current regional, continental and global issues.



Official Opening Ceremony

The East Africa Civil Society Summit was officially opened with a recitation of the Tanzanian and the East African Community anthems. The guest of honor at this auspicious occasion was the Honorable Dorothy Gwajima, Minister for Community Development, Gender, Women, and Special Groups who attended the Summit as a representative of H. E the President of Tanzania Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan. The opening ceremony attended by over 300 representatives from civil society, academia media and development partners was graced by many dignitaries including the honorable Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women, and Special Groups, Dr. John Jingu; the representative of Oxfam International Mr. Bill Marwa; the honorable Ambassador to the E.U, Amb. Manfredo Fanti; Principal Officer at the EAC Political Affairs Department Mr. David Onen; AU- ECOSOC Representative Mr. Daniel Lema and the president of the EACSOF Governing Council.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Daniel Lema, president of the EACSOF Governing Council welcomed distinguished guests and delegates from the Region, noting with regret that despite the best efforts, representatives from DRC were not present at the Summit. He went on to share about who the EACSOF is and their role in advocacy in regional integration as well as a brief on the CSO summit and its aims.



He thanked development partners, specifically Oxfam International who have supported the process of developing the new EACSOE strategic plan and this Summit.

Over the course of the opening ceremony, the various speakers thanked the government and the people of Tanzania for their hospitality to the delegations from other EAC Member States and encouraged participants to engage deeply in the discussions over the next two days. The representatives from development partners assured participants that they were dedicated to collaborating with civil society to ensure citizens were benefiting from the integration process. They called for enhanced engagement between civil society and government in development processes through open and accountable processes to strengthen public participation in regional integration.

In her keynote address, Honorable Gwajima welcomed all participants and hailed the Summit as an important platform that would support CSOs to implement their projects and bring in citizens voices to the topics under discussion noted that without the cooperation of CSOs development processes would be slower as they have a further reach than even governments.



Resolutions and recommendations

1. A call to enhance the appreciation of traditional music by initiating an annual award ceremony to recognise cultural and traditional forms of art



2. Requests for land to establish a permanent presence in Arusha will be forwarded to the President for her action
3. Request for observer status will be acted upon when the due process is followed.

Governance, Democracy, Peace and Security: Reflecting on avenues for citizen engagement on matters of regional integration in East Africa

Speakers on this panel

Hon. Kennedy Ayason Mukulia - EALA General Purpose Committee Representative from ECOSOC

Amb. Manfredo Fanti - EU- Tanzania

Mr David Onen - EALA Representative from African Union Economic, Social, and Cultural Council

Mr Bright Sefa - Representative from the Regional Dialogue Committee

Mr. Edmond Yakan - EACSOF CG

The discussions on this panel considered the available avenues for engagement in regional integration processes and were followed by in-depth group discussions on matters arising. The EAC Treaty provides for participation, collaboration and cooperation of all stakeholders in the integration process known as the Consultative Dialogue Framework, which provides for structured dialogue and multistakeholder partnership to widen and deepen cooperation in various sectors work towards providing an enabling environment, establishing clear and effective communication and feedback, harmonisation of positions, and strengthen the capacity of CSOs. The dialogue process takes a thematic engagement format annually with specific themes determined for policy engagement.

There have been 72 recommendations, 22 of which were fully implemented and 36 are still being implemented, while 14 have not yet been implemented. This dialogue framework led to the development of the EAC youth forum, the 2012 policy on PWD, the establishment of the women's fund and other initiatives. Bills of the East African Legislative Assembly are presented by the Council but there is provision for private members Bills. However, council business takes precedence over private members' Bills.



Participants recommended that the community needs to be able to fund themselves through fundraising from partner states rather than fundraising from development partners and called on CSOs to advocate for the pending private member's Bills.

Resolutions and recommendations

How can CSOs be more involved in the decision-making processes related to the integration of the EAC?

1. There is a need for increased understanding of the EAC organs and institutions and their role
2. Strengthen the National Dialogue Committees as they are an important avenue for citizen engagement

How do the EAC governments ensure that the integration process is transparent and accountable to citizens? What should be done to ensure that CSOs and Governments work together?

1. The nominations process to EALA is not representative as it is done through national governments. As such CSOs call for the review article 50 so citizens elect their EALA representatives
2. Enhance budget and resource tracking

What should CSOs do to practically and more effectively promote economic integration in the EAC region?


1. There are low levels of knowledge on taxation regimes as such, CSOs should raise awareness around the common market protocols
2. Advocate for streamlined tariffs, harmonise legal structures, policies, and common standards, eg in value chains and ensure laws and policies are implemented and adhered to
3. Foster collaborations between government and private section
4. Champion the consumption of East African Products and services

What are the governments expectations from CSOs and what are the CSOs expectations from Governments to promote social integration in the EAC region?

1. The government expects CSOs to complement their efforts, engage marginalised groups, promote Swahili as a common language, monitor and feedback on the status of integration, regional policies and laws, and promote a sense of ownership and pride in our identity as East Africans.
2. CSOs expect governments to create an enabling environment for CSO, to be part of the integration process as partners, enhance free movement of people across the Region, promote common education system or curricula, and promote positive cultures through establishing East African cultural awards to promote local culture.



What should the governments and CSOs do to enhance engagement with the EAC organs for the realisation of EAC objectives?

1. Enhance the principles under Article 7 on citizen centered development by strengthening the Consultative Dialogue Framework (CDF)
 2. CSOs encouraged to build coalitions and partnerships with media, academia and private sector
 3. If we want strategies to work we must involve citizens through working with communities at the local level
 4. Undertake capacity building to sensitise citizenry on the avenues for engagement
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Governance, Democracy, Peace and Security: Reflecting on the Realities of civic space in the Region

Speakers on this panel

Mr. David Onen - Principal Officer at the EAC Political Affairs Department

David Sigano - CEO East African Law Society (EALS)

Dr. Sarah Bireete – Center for Constitutional Governance (CCG)

Lorna Merekaje- South Sudan Democratic Engagement Monitoring and Observation Programme (SSUDEMPO)

The discussions in this panel centred around the state of democracy and civic engagement in the Region. Most member states in the EAC region suffer from one ailment or another, including good governance challenges, constitutional change of government, armed conflicts threatening the peace, or displacement of citizens. Additionally, the different regional level formations on the continent EGAD, EAC, Great Lakes Region, are affected by in-country health. Although there is a seemingly slow response to issues identified through the early warning system, participants were informed that many interventions occur in the background to prevent and de-escalate possible conflict in the Region.

Additionally, Speakers agreed that there is a growing trend of greater restrictions across the Region, it is not a passing cloud and needs to be checked. Strategies for pushing back on the shrinking legal space include strategic interest litigation, building coalitions at various levels, and advocacy for legal and policy reforms.

At the regional level, the EACJ and other institutions provide avenues for independent, impartial adjudication and resolution of issues, engagement and de-escalation of conflicts, it is a platform for engaging in advocacy and enforcing regional policies. There is growing confidence that the regional court is impartial and they will access justice. The EACJ has had a good implementation of decision over 50%– those that have not been implemented it is due to the nature of the orders.

Resolutions and recommendations

1. CSOs should engage with the thematic aspects of regional integration aspects through EACSOFF
2. CSOs should lobby for space to engage and contribute to the decision-making bodies of the EAC

Embracing Civic Technology to Amplify African Voices

Speakers on this panel

Andrew Songa - Civil Society Secretariat Coordinator, the Charter Project Africa

Bill Marwa - Digital Rights Advisor, Oxfam in Africa

Sylvia Katua - Program Officer for Mzalendo Trust, Kenya;

Yusuf, Tanzania Youth Vision

Bright Sefa - Policy Officer with the African Union Economic Social and Cultural Council

The main focus of the Charter Project Africa is to boost citizen engagement through Civic technology in the implementation of key African Union document of governance i.e. the African Charter on Democracy, Elections, and Governance (ACDEG). The ACDEG is one of the shared values of the African Union that enshrines democracy, elections and good governance as key African Union Values; at least in theory all the member states in Africa have committed to saying the way we want to govern our countries is on the basis of regular, free, and credible elections, the upholding of the rule of law, the respect of fundamental human rights and freedoms, and also independent state institutions.



Mzalendo Trust monitors the parliament through the use of civic tools and new media to facilitate public engagement on legislative processes, including Dokeza and Bongo na Mzalendo; Knowledge generation and management, including flagship scorecards and shujaa reports; Advocacy on matters of public interest; Engagement with parliamentary caucuses and civil society organisation; Technology & Innovation, and Participation in OGP and SDG's partnership. Dokeza is a Bill annotation platform that is an innovative tool that has the capacity to radically enhance public participation in the law-making process. The Promise Tracker on the other hand is an accountability civic tech tool that will monitor the implementation of party manifesto promises by both the ruling party and opposition. Other Mzalendo Tracking Tools include; Live analysis of parliamentary proceedings and business; Hansard feature on Mzalendo Website; Legislative analysis & policy review, and Conducting evidence-based research e.g. Legislative compendium & implementation.

There is a need for young people to be fully aware of what is contained in the Charter so they can demand and engage to ensure that the country is increasing the commitment to sign and ratify the Charter. Through the Charter Africa Project, Tanzania Youth Vision Association has worked with Young Parliamentarian Caucus since 2016. The Caucus presents youthful thoughts and demands such as what the young people want to see the government do to increase their commitments to the signing and ratification of the Charter.

Back when it was the OAU, its primary focus was the decolonisation of Africa, but with the AU, the main focus is how to put the citizens at the center of the AU developmental Agenda so that citizens can be part and parcel of what AU is doing. This is the main reason why ECOSOCC was created, solely for CSOs, with no government interference. At the AU ECOSOCC Level, “the harmonised AU Wide Accreditation Network” is developed, which aims to collapse every accreditation in any other AU bodies and has one door entry that is through ECOSOCC for CSOs and once you get through that door you can have the chance to engage with any other AU body.



Resolutions and recommendations

1. Civic Tech Tools should be more accessible and easy to utilise with basic internet.
2. There is a need to connect the Civic Tech Initiatives with the traditional advocacy approaches.
3. To work with the parliament to not only adopt these Civic Tech Tools but also take up the Civic Tools and make sure that people use them.
4. To connect the AU organs with Civil Society Digital Activists who are pursuing aspects of democratic governance by engaging in formal spaces that the AU already has.

Civic Space in Tanzania over the Past Decade

Speakers on this panel

Mr. Andrew Karamagi, MSTCDC;



The findings of a research paper by the MSTCDC on access to information and freedom of expression in the civic space in Tanzania reveal that the laws like the cyber crimes Act of 2015 and the NGO Act limit access to information and freedom of expression. It portrays the existence of rule by law instead of rule of law, which requires the laws to be clear, specific, enacted publicly, follow equality etc. Laws enacted impose denial or subversion of due process of rights i.e presumption of innocence, where a penalty is imposed before the determination of the case, or where the law does not provide room for appeal. Many of the laws from 2011 to 2021 were enacted to restrict basic freedoms under a certificate of urgency, which prevents citizens from participating in the process.

Resolutions and recommendations

1. CSOs are to propose for amendments in these suppressive laws that restrict their work
2. CSOs and the citizens need to be organised and principled in order to reclaim our power and mandate
3. Conduct studies to understand the challenges in Zanzibar and address

Trade and Investment in the EAC Region

Speakers on this panel

Mr. John Bosco Kalisa CEO EABC.

Ms. Angelique Umulisa - Representative from East Africa Business Council.

Lamech Wesonga - GIZ; Representative from EAC Trade Directorate.

Jane Nalunga - Representative from SEATINI Uganda.

Lina Asiimwe - EASSI Uganda.

The integration agenda has three components: it must be people-centred, and enhance prosperity and stability in the Region. The AfCFTA is a game changer with a good deal to the Africa Continent given the opportunities of it. AfCFTA has stepped up to ensure full inclusion of women and youth who are the key component of SMEs. Small businesses dominate the Private Sector in the Region and further, majority of these small businesses are women and youth owned. This group needs to be targeted the most in terms of accessing the opportunities in the AfCFTA. The AfCFTA has a lot of potential such as to increase intra-Africa trade, jobs, and production, and like any other trade arrangement, the AfCFTA is a game changer because it provides a larger market catchment when it comes to markets for the products.

The high cost of internet access in terms of costs of data as well as the high taxes associated with the mobile money transactions limit access to digital opportunities for women and youth. Most small-scale businesses are informal due to the high business costs, including registration, taxes, and electricity. There are also low levels of financial literacy, especially among women in business.

EAC has submitted provisional schedules on current concessions for category A products which the EAC will liberalise over 10 years' time. The negotiations must also ensure they the strategic key industries the Region needs to promote through exports, and those industries that the Region needs to protect. The speakers were confident that the gains that have been accumulated in the EAC in the implementation of its regional programs will facilitate the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement.

The EAC has also submitted a consolidated service for the AfCFTA comprising specific commitments by the Partner on five priority services sectors which include communication, financial, tourism, transport, and business. Further, in order to access economic development dividends in the AfCFTA, it is important that the EAC really implements the AfCFTA Agreement and indeed all the members who are party to the agreement. EAC has prioritised implementation of the AfCFTA through developing and implementing awareness and capacity-building programs including preparation of training manuals and publication of the AfCFTA instruments.

EAC Partner States have developed national AfCFTA strategies and plans to support other countries to start trading under AfCFTA preferences. There is adequate legal and regulatory institutional and human resource capacity within the majority of the Partner States and at the regional level to implement commitments, particularly on provisions relating to rules of origin, customs to operation, and trade facilitation.

Resolutions and recommendations

1. There is a need to build our capacity to understand the complex issues and processes such as protocols
2. Civil Societies need to be very proactive in terms of engaging and claiming our space in the integration agenda to ensure the people's interests and aspirations are reflected in these processes
3. There is a need to develop policies on digital penetration, remove VAT imposed on internet usage and infrastructure and reduce the costs of acquiring equipment that are relevant to ICT
4. Small or new businesses should be offered tax support, tax reduction, and tax incentives so that they can register and formalise because when they are not formal they cannot access all the opportunities provided by the government.
5. Women and youth entrepreneurs should be encouraged to utilise the digital tools available to take part in regional and continental trade.



Agriculture and Climate Change

Speakers on this panel

Mr. Joe Mzinga - ESAFF

Mr. Hakin Balirane - ESSAF

Ms. Marygoreth Mkenda - EALA

Mr. Fahari Marwa - EAC

Speakers and participants in this session agreed that climate change is a real challenge but can also be a lost opportunity. The opportunity presented by more countries joining the EAC can be a positive move towards achieving food security. The 2016 EAC agriculture summit of called for the EAC and EALA put in place regional legally binding instruments to ensure realisation of the Malabo goals. Speakers further recommended that tech irrigation should be used to benefit women, youth, and the public. The discussion highlighted that only 30% of the land designated for agriculture is used in Tanzania, whereas 70% is not used for food production. There was also a call to integrate indigenous knowledge with the new agriculture technology, which will be more sustainable since most farmers are small scale farmers.



Resolutions and recommendations

1. Member states should spend at least 10% of their national budget on agriculture. The allocation of the funds should go to the intended projects with transparency and accountability to alleviate the challenges farmers and citizens face.
2. Integrate indigenous knowledge with the new agricultural technology and address disaster management to enhance food security.
3. Advocate for land ownership by women and youth since they are the largest working class and yet have limited land ownership.

Vaccine Manufacturing in East Africa/Africa: What it Takes and Why

Speakers on this panel

Prof. Kilian Songwe - Principal Consultant, A Global Quality Consultants (AGQC) and A Global Healthcare Public Foundation (AGHPF) Regional Director, Africa

Baguma Christopher - Director of Programs

Blair Micheal Mutambi - Afya na Haki

Jane S. Nalunga - Executive Director, Southern and Eastern Africa Trade Information and Negotiations Institute (SEATINI) Uganda

Discussions in this panel centered around the state of vaccine manufacturing in the Region, and identifying the opportunities to unlock the potential for advancing local capacities. Africa's population is rising and contributes 25% of global diseases yet we import 99% of vaccines. Lessons learnt during the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic when we got very few doses of the available vaccines worldwide and they were delayed lead us to advocate for sustainable vaccine production that would see at least 60% manufactured within the African Continent. Tanzania is one of the countries that has met WHO ML3 capacity since 2018, indicating they have the capacity, skills and knowledge for vaccine manufacture. At the regional level, we have policies dealing with pharmaceuticals, including a regional pharmaceutical plan with important pillars we can rely on to improve local production.

Resolutions and recommendations

1. When negotiating trade agreements we need to be clear that they will help us to have the capacity to manufacture our own vaccines
2. There is a need to review public health Acts which are likely outdated and advocate for harmonisation of laws and policies that can advance vaccine production



Gender inclusion and participation in the current global Economic Arena

Speakers on this panel

Diana Mwanzia - Collaborative Centre for Gender Development

Angelique Umulisa - Representative from EAC Trade Directorate

Lulu Ngw'anakilala - Legal Services Facilities

Rose Rhono, GIZ

Bina Maseno - Badili Africa



This panel started with a presentation of findings of a study on a comparative analysis of the legal framework governing sexual violence across East Africa conducted by CCGD. The speaker highlighted sextortion as one of the most pervasive forms of VAC for which there is minimal data as it is often not reported. Some of the policy interventions that should be enacted to encourage increased participation of women in

cross-border trade, investment and decision-making include removal of trade barriers, providing support for value addition, initiating quality development programs and showcasing EAC products and market opportunities through MSME fairs regionally. Gender inequities, poverty and structural barriers often shape power and decision-making patterns on how resources are used and benefits distributed across the Region.

One speaker highlighted that It would take close to 136 years to close the global gender gap. In regards to women in leadership, well-designed and implemented quotas as well as other measures such as awareness raising, help to reduce under-representation and promotes gender equity and women's rights.

Resolutions and recommendations

1. Provide equal opportunities to men and women to close gender gap
2. Undertake gender mainstreaming at the national and regional policy level

Youth inclusion and participation

Speakers on this panel

Andrew Karamagi - MS-TCDC

Stephen Martin Etoru - Technical Advisor, You Lead

Purity Jebor - Youth Coordinator, Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development

Moses Kanyesije - Economist

Bina Maseno - Badili Africa

Governments have a lot of pressure to deliver, and whenever they get income it comes from taxation and revenues they collect. There is also growing pressure from the international community through cutting aid. Every year our finance ministers read budgets and announce impressive growth figures for our economy, yet young people and the general population continue to complain about unemployment, lack of opportunities, and other socio-economic challenges they face. Speakers noted that growth might be happening but jobs do not match with the growth because of the population. Additionally, our governments and CSOs lack statistics; hence we tend to believe in statistics from world bank, IMF and other international organisations.

The education system does not change as the labour market changes. There is a gap in the education system as the training does not shift to create people who can take up employment as the employment market changes. However, on the positive side, when young people don't feel the impact of education, they have the capacity to shift. In July 2011, the East Africa Projection was estimated at 135.4 million middle class people compared to an estimated 133.1 million people in June 2010. Speakers urged that if there were affordable health facilities, affordable quality education, and affordable standards of living, there would be no black tax.

Resolutions and recommendations

1. EAC should interrogate the priorities of our Region and prioritise areas where young people can benefit
2. Youth need to be encouraged to embrace data, take position in leadership and be involved to understand the policy processes
3. Develop regional policies on Sexual Reproductive Health Bill and the East African Community Youth Policy

Conclusion

The first ever East African Civil Societies Forum was well received by Government, CSOs, as well as Implementation and Development Partners. The summit has been a resounding success, bringing together a diverse group of experts and professionals from various fields to exchange knowledge, insights, and experiences. We explored a wide range of topics, delving deep into the latest research and advancements in various domains. It stoked the interest of all participants in not only the regional integration agenda, but also the working of the East African Civil Society Organizations Forum.

Throughout the sessions, attendees actively engaged in stimulating discussions, fostering an atmosphere of collaboration and innovation. The presentations delivered by esteemed speakers were thought-provoking, shedding light on cutting-edge developments and emerging trends. The conference provided a platform for participants to share their ideas, challenges, and successes, encouraging fruitful interactions and networking opportunities.

The CSO Summit not only expanded our knowledge and understanding but also served as a catalyst for future collaborations and initiatives. The connections made during the event will undoubtedly lead to fruitful collaborations, research projects, and professional relationships that will continue to shape our respective fields. Since the completion of the Summit we have had renewed engagement on the key topics as well as renewed inquiries on partnership and membership to EACSOE.

We leave with a renewed sense of inspiration, motivation, and commitment to advancing knowledge and creating a positive impact in our fields. We look forward to the future opportunities that will arise from the connections and insights gained during this conference, and we anticipate the continued growth and progress in our respective disciplines. We depart with new perspectives, lasting connections, and a shared vision for a better future. Until we meet again, let us continue to explore, learn, and push the boundaries of knowledge, united in our pursuit of excellence.



EAST AFRICAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS' FORUM

Strengthening Civil Society in the Integration Processes

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