



## ANNUAL NEWSLETTER



### **A Message from the Chairperson of EACSOF**



**Mr. Edmund Yakan  
Chairperson EACSOF**

**To all EACSOF members and the wider civil society organizations in the EAC region.**

As we reflect on 2024, I am filled with gratitude for the collective strides we have made in advancing the role of civil society within the East African Community (EAC). This year has demonstrated the power of collaboration and resilience in addressing the challenges faced by our region.

From empowering local communities to championing human rights and sustainable development, our efforts have shown that when we come together, we can achieve remarkable outcomes. I deeply appreciate your unwavering commitment and dedication to our shared vision.

As we look ahead to 2025, I invite all Civil Society Organizations across the EAC region to join EACSOF's efforts in reactivating, re-strategizing, and strengthening the voice of civil society in East Africa. Together, let us work towards building an integrated regional community where citizens fully participate in all processes that impact their lives.

## Our Esteemed Partners and Stakeholders

The year 2024 has been nothing short of transformative for EACSOF. It has been a privilege to lead this organization through a year of impactful initiatives, meaningful consultations, and strengthened partnerships across the EAC region.

Together, we have laid a strong foundation for deeper collaboration and greater influence in policy-making processes. Your support has been instrumental in achieving milestones such as enhancing CSO participation, addressing pressing regional challenges, and advocating for inclusivity at all levels.

As we gear up for 2025, I urge us all to build on this momentum and embrace the opportunities that lie ahead. With your continued engagement and passion, I am confident we will achieve an even greater impact in the coming year.

I am also delighted to announce that EACSOF will be hosting the CSO Summit 2025, and we warmly welcome you to join us for this significant event.

Thank you for your dedication and commitment. May this holiday season bring you peace, joy, and renewed energy for the year ahead.



**Ms. Lilian Alex**  
Chief Executive Officer, EACSOF

## Year in Review !

As we reflect on the journey of 2024, it's clear that this year has been one of significant progress, collaboration, and impactful change for EACSOF. From hosting groundbreaking events to forging stronger partnerships across the East African Community, we have worked tirelessly to advance the role of civil society in regional integration. This section highlights the key achievements, challenges, and moments that defined our year, underscoring our continued commitment to building a more inclusive, sustainable, and integrated East Africa. Let's look back on the milestones we've accomplished together!

## Regional Engagements



### East African Civil Society Organizations (CSO) Summit 2024.

EACSOF successfully hosted the East African Civil Society Organizations (CSO) Summit, an event that brought together over 300 representatives from civil society, EAC institutions, partner states, academia, and development partners.

Under the theme "**Harnessing Citizens' Potential in Regional Integration Processes: Utilizing Technological Advancements to Resolve Climate Change Challenges and Ensure Food Security in the Region,**" the summit facilitated engaging discussions and collaborative efforts towards addressing the region's critical development issues.

The summit was an important milestone in strengthening the role of civil society in regional integration and fostering multi-stakeholder dialogues on climate change and food security, two of the most pressing challenges faced by the region.

[Read More:](#)



## Participation in EAC Women's Intergenerational Dialogue

EACSOF played an active role in the East African Community (EAC) Women's Intergenerational Dialogue. This significant event aimed to bridge the generational gap among women leaders, facilitating the exchange of experiences and strategic discussions on enhancing women's roles in regional development.

The Dialogue was attended by Members of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), including the Speaker of the Parliament, and was graced by the Guest of Honor, H.E. Veronica M. Nduva, Secretary General of the East African Community (EAC).

EACSOF's participation underscores our dedication to advancing gender equality and empowering women throughout East Africa. During the event, Ms. Lilian Alex CEO of EACSOF emphasized the crucial roles of education, financial empowerment, supportive policies, and networking in fostering women's leadership. She also highlighted the need for improved health services and a peaceful environment to enable women to thrive.



### The 7th Annual EAC Secretary General's Forum

The 7th Annual EAC Secretary General's Forum, held after six years, served as a key platform to address regional challenges and explore opportunities for integration. Under the theme “Towards a Resilient and Fully Integrated East Africa: Harnessing Opportunities in the Borderless Community,” the forum focused on critical discussions across five subthemes, aiming to build a stronger, more united region.

EACSOFF played a vital role in reviving the forum by collaborating with civil society, the private sector, and EAC institutions to ensure inclusive dialogue. The event provided an invaluable opportunity for stakeholders to share experiences, exchange best practices, and explore innovative solutions to enhance the integration process.

The Secretary General's Forum emphasized a collaborative approach to realizing a politically unified and economically borderless East African Community, driving progress toward a resilient and fully integrated region.

## EACSOF National Country Consultations



In collaboration with GIZ, EACSOF successfully conducted national chapter consultations across the eight partner states of the East African Community (EAC). These consultations aimed to assess the status of CSO engagement with the EAC, prepare for the EAC Secretary General's forum, strengthen national chapters, recruit new members, form thematic clusters, and establish new chapters in emerging EAC member states. The consultations also served to enhance the active engagement of CSOs and stakeholders within the region, ensuring stronger focal points for advocacy and collaboration.

For detailed insights and the strategic recommendations made during these consultations,

[Click here to read the full Report & Recommendations.](#)





### **EACSOF at the 2024 Heads of State Summit and 25th Anniversary Celebrations of the East African Community (EAC)**

EACSOF was represented by its Board Member and Tanzania Chapter Coordinator Mr. Daniel Lema at a side event during the 25th Anniversary celebrations of the East African Community (EAC). The event focused on initiatives like the Single Customs Territory (SCT), One Stop Border Posts, system interconnectivity, and the simplification of procedures that have significantly improved trade efficiency and minimized customs clearance delays.



### **SEATINI and EACSOF Collaboration**

EACSOF proudly participated in the Joint EAC & SADC Civil Society Organizations (CSO) Forum on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), organized by SEATINI Uganda. The forum convened diverse stakeholders to explore the critical intersections of trade policy, human rights, climate change, gender, and debt, emphasizing their role in shaping Africa's trade future.



EACSOF actively participated in a three-day regional dialogue hosted by SEATINI-Uganda from December 10th to 12th, supported by Diakonia Africa.

The event focused on addressing the impact of illicit financial Flows (IFFs) on Domestic Resource Mobilization (DRM) within the East African Community (EAC). EACSOF contributed to discussions on enhancing transparency, accountability, and regional cooperation while building consensus among Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to reduce IFFs and strengthen DRM practices.

**SEATINI Uganda Special Edition Newsletter May - August 2024**



### **EACSOF at ILO CAPSA Project Closeout Conference**

EACSOF participated in the ILO CAPSA Project Regional Knowledge Sharing and Closeout Conference from November 12 to 14, 2024, in Naivasha. The event reviewed achievements, shared best practices, and addressed sustainability as the project concludes in December 2024.



The CAPSA project, active since 2020, focuses on combating child labour, forced labour, trafficking in persons, and violations of acceptable work conditions in Kenya, Uganda, and the EAC region. EACSOF's involvement highlights its commitment to advancing human rights and fair labour practices.



## Other National Engagements in the Year 2024



**CSO Validation Meeting on Resilience**

EACSOF, in collaboration with the Uganda National Non-Governmental Organizations Forum (UNNGOF), hosted the CSO Validation Meeting on Resilience, a crucial discussion focused on validating findings from a comprehensive study on civil society Organizations' (CSOs) resilience strategies in response to the increasing challenge of shrinking civic space in East Africa.

The meeting convened key stakeholders, including CSO leaders, regional actors, and experts, to evaluate and refine the resilience strategies CSOs are employing to navigate the growing restrictions on civil society activities and freedoms in the region.

### Key Discussions:

- **Shrinking Civic Space:**

The meeting addressed the pressing issues faced by CSOs, such as restrictive laws, government surveillance, and limitations on freedom of association and expression, all of which hinder the free operation of CSOs and their ability to advocate for social change.

- **Resilience Strategies:**

Various resilience strategies were discussed, including adaptive programming, building strong coalitions, utilizing digital tools for advocacy, and regional collaborations. These approaches are designed to help CSOs maintain their work in the face of growing political and regulatory challenges.

- **Cross-Border Collaboration:**

Regional cooperation among CSOs was emphasized as a critical tool in sharing experiences and strategies to overcome barriers. The importance of supporting each other in maintaining operations and advocating for a more enabling environment for civil society was central to the conversation.



### Tanzanian CSO Engagement in EAC Integration 2024

CSO Week 2024 featured a pivotal session dedicated to exploring the role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Tanzania's integration into the East African Community (EAC). The session aimed to foster dialogue on the challenges and opportunities faced by Tanzanian CSOs in participating actively in EAC processes, identifying key areas where their involvement could be enhanced for improved integration outcomes.

During the session, Ms. Lilian Alex, CEO of EACSO, emphasized the pressing challenges confronting CSOs, including reduced engagement at national and regional levels. She called for renewed efforts to strengthen civil society's role by fostering new partnerships and encouraging collective action within the EAC framework.

Adding a broader perspective, Karina Dzialowska, Head of Economics and Governance at the EU Delegation to Tanzania, highlighted opportunities for greater inclusivity in the integration process. She underscored the importance of mentorship and capacity-building initiatives, particularly for underrepresented groups like youth, and encouraged CSOs to integrate young people into decision-making structures to enhance representation and inclusivity.

The session concluded with strategic recommendations, urging CSOs to play a proactive role in shaping policies, building partnerships, and ensuring that the EAC integration process is equitable and inclusive, benefiting all communities, especially those that have been historically marginalized.



EACSOF participated in the International Women's Day Conference held at the East African Community (EAC) headquarters. The conference focused on the pivotal roles of women and youth in regional development. Key discussions highlighted women's leadership in driving economic growth, peacebuilding, and political engagement, while also emphasizing the critical importance of youth empowerment in shaping the future of East Africa.



EACSOF joined other CSOs in the region in Nairobi, Kenya, for deliberations hosted by the Pan African Parliament to seek their views and input on a model law on gender equality.



EACSOF participated in a key convening on "Enhancing Human Rights in Africa," hosted by the Data for Governance Alliance. Ms. Lilian highlighted the opportunities for CSO engagement in the EAC and urged unity in advocacy efforts across the continent.



EACSOFF, as a member of the Tanzania Trade and Investment Coalition (TATIC), participated in a meeting held on October 16th, 2024. The gathering focused on discussing the latest updates in trade and investment, identifying emerging challenges and opportunities, and fostering networking among the invited civil society organizations.



EACSOFF joined CSOs in Dodoma to validate the Toolkit for Legal & Reporting Requirements—a significant milestone for NGOs navigating legal frameworks!

This toolkit tackles critical areas such as registration, permits, report writing, funding access requirements, and financial incentives. Its primary goal is to help NGOs operate legally, promote transparency, and meet their reporting obligations.

# PARTNESHIP



## EACSOF and GIZ Sign MoU to Strengthen Civil Society Engagement in Regional Cooperation and Sustainable Development

On August 1, 2024, EACSOF and GIZ signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance the participation of civil society organizations in regional cooperation and sustainable development efforts across East Africa. This partnership aims to empower communities and drive positive change, fostering a stronger, more collaborative approach to addressing the region's development challenges.

# UPCOMING EVENT

## The East African Civil Society Summit 2025

THEME:  
**"Harnessing EAC Citizens' Potential and Participation in Regional Integration Processes."**

Sub-Theme:  
**"Innovating for Regional Integration: Advancing Governance, Economic Growth, and Social Inclusion in the Digital Age"**

Date: May 2025 | Nairobi, Kenya | www.eacsof.net

## OUR PARTNERS



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