

Monthly Updates April 2026

Citizen Empowerment | Policy engagement | Institutional Development



East African Civil Society
Organizations Forum

Dear Esteemed Members and Partners,

The East African Civil Society Organisations' Forum (EACSOFF) is pleased to share its Monthly Update for **April 2026**, highlighting key regional engagements, policy developments, and opportunities for collaboration across the East African Community.

We invite you to remain engaged with EACSOFF's work and to partner with us in strengthening inclusive dialogue, accountability, and citizen participation across the region.



Regional Stakeholders Advance Citizen-Centered Integration at the EAC Secretary General Convening 2026

The inaugural East African Community Secretary General Convening 2026 brought together regional institutions, dialogue parties, policymakers, civil society, and private sector actors in Arusha, Tanzania, to reflect on the future of regional integration and strengthen collaboration within the East African Community. Organized under the Regional Dialogue Committee (RDC) and chaired by the East Africa Law Society, the Convening provided a high-level platform to assess progress, address implementation challenges, and reinforce accountability in advancing the regional agenda.

As a member of the RDC and former Chair of the platform, the East African Civil Society Organisations Forum participated in discussions focused on strengthening inclusive governance and citizen engagement within the integration process. During the session titled “What Keeps the Regional Dialogue Committee Awake: Reflections from Dialogue Parties and MEACAs,” EACSO Chief Executive Officer, Ms Lilian Alex, highlighted the importance of the Consultative Dialogue Framework in ensuring that citizens’ voices inform regional decision-making.



She noted that the RDC has strengthened engagement between civil society, regional institutions, and partner states through structured dialogue and nationally coordinated consultations. At the same time, she emphasized the need for stronger institutional support, improved coordination, and sustained investment to ensure dialogue outcomes translate into practical action and policy implementation.

The Convening concluded with the adoption of a Communique outlining recommendations aimed at strengthening institutional accountability, enhancing stakeholder participation, addressing trade and governance challenges, and reinforcing citizen-centered integration. For EACSO, participation in the Convening reaffirmed its commitment to advancing inclusive regional dialogue and ensuring civil society remains an active partner in shaping the future of East African integration.



EACSOE Witnesses Leadership Transition at the EAC Secretariat

During the 2026 East African Community Secretary General Convening, stakeholders witnessed the official leadership transition at the Secretariat, a significant moment in the Community's institutional journey. The occasion formally recognized the service of outgoing Secretary General Veronica M. Nduva, who was honored with a token of appreciation for her distinguished leadership and contributions to advancing regional integration.

Special recognition was given to her role in reviving and hosting the **Secretary General's Forum after a six-year hiatus**, an achievement viewed as instrumental in restoring structured dialogue between regional institutions, stakeholders, and citizens. The recognition underscored the importance of strengthening participatory platforms that promote accountability and inclusive engagement within the integration process.



As one of the stakeholders present, East African Civil Society Organizations Forum joined regional partners in witnessing the official handover of leadership within the East African Community Secretariat and acknowledging the contribution of outgoing Secretary General Veronica M. Nduva.

Through this moment of transition, EACSOF formally **welcomes incoming Secretary General Stephen Patrick Mbundi** to office and expresses confidence in his leadership at a critical stage of the regional integration agenda. **EACSOF looks forward to strengthened institutional coordination, enhanced engagement with civil society**, and renewed commitment to a citizen-centered integration process that delivers tangible impact across Partner States.

The Forum also underscores the importance of sustaining structured dialogue mechanisms, particularly the Secretary General's Forum, as an essential platform for inclusive policy engagement, accountability, and collaboration between EAC institutions and East African citizens.



Strengthening Agroecological Trade and Market Access in East Africa

EACSOF participated in the EAC Capacity Building Meeting on Identification, Certification & Trade of Agroecological Products held in Arusha, organized by SEATINI Uganda in collaboration with TABIO, representatives from the Government of Tanzania, and other agricultural stakeholders.



The meeting convened regional actors to examine opportunities and persistent challenges related to agroecological product certification, cross-border trade facilitation, and increased awareness of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Discussions focused on strengthening market access for agricultural producers, improving certification mechanisms, and addressing barriers that continue to limit participation of small-scale traders within regional trade systems.

Representing EACSO, CEO Ms. Lilian Alex contributed to the dialogue by emphasizing the need for stronger grassroots awareness, enhanced political commitment, and simplified certification procedures. She further highlighted the importance of expanding digital trade systems that can reduce bureaucratic barriers and enable farmers and small-scale traders to access regional markets more efficiently.

The engagement reinforced the importance of inclusive trade frameworks that support local producers, promote sustainable agricultural practices, and strengthen regional integration through accessible and equitable market opportunities across East Africa.

EACSOF Reaffirms Commitment to Inclusive and People-Centered Regional Integration

East African Civil Society Organisations Forum remains firmly committed to advancing a more inclusive, transparent, and people-centered regional integration agenda. Through continued engagement with regional institutions, Partner States, and development actors, EACSOF will sustain its efforts to ensure that policies and trade frameworks translate into meaningful opportunities for citizens, particularly small-scale producers and traders. The Forum reaffirms its readiness to support collaborative initiatives that strengthen agroecological trade systems, improve market access, and promote sustainable development across the East African Community.



EACSOF joins workers and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) across East Africa in commemorating Labour Day, recognizing their vital contribution to strengthening communities, advancing rights, and promoting regional integration.