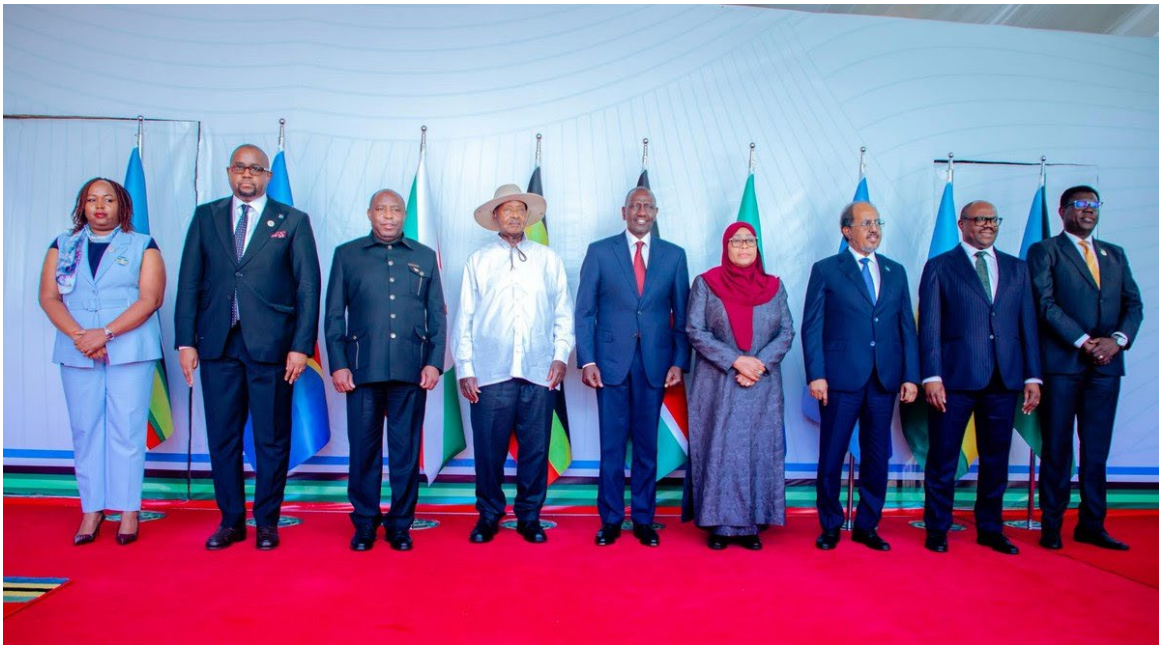




Introduction

The first quarter of 2026 focused on institutional stability and continued engagement in key East African Community processes. EACSOFF maintained its participation, strengthened internal coordination, and initiated efforts toward partnerships and resource mobilization. This edition highlights key engagements and priorities for the period.

Regional Engagements and Policy Influence



Participation in the EAC Heads of State Summit

The EAC Heads of State Summit serves as the highest decision-making organ of the East African Community, bringing together regional leaders to review progress and set the strategic direction of the integration agenda.

The 25th Ordinary Summit, held on 7th March 2026 in Arusha, was convened under the theme “Deepening Integration for Improved Livelihoods of EAC Citizens.” Discussions focused on accelerating regional integration, strengthening cooperation, and addressing emerging economic and governance priorities across Partner States.

A key outcome of the Summit was a leadership transition, with Ms. Veronica M. Nduva concluding her tenure as Secretary General of the East African Community, and **Ambassador Stephen Patrick Mbundi** sworn in to serve for the 2026–2031 term. Additionally, **H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda** assumed the role of Chairperson of the EAC Heads of State Summit, succeeding **H.E. President William Samoei Ruto of Kenya**.

Leaders also addressed financial sustainability challenges within the Community, agreeing to revise the contribution framework from a **65% equal and 35% GDP-based model to a 50:50 structure**. Partner States with outstanding arrears were granted a two-year period to settle their balances, alongside a partial waiver aimed at strengthening the operational capacity of EAC institutions.

EACSOF participated in the Summit, maintaining civil society presence and engagement within this high-level regional platform.



EACSOF Engages in EACJ Proceedings on Financial Compliance

The East African Civil Society Organisations’ Forum (EACSOF) has continued to participate in legal proceedings before the East African Court of Justice (EACJ) in **Reference No. 33 of 2020**, a case concerning the compliance of Partner States with their financial obligations to the East African Community (EAC).

The case filed by EACSOF addresses the obligation of Partner States to fulfill their financial commitments to the EAC, including the remittance of assessed contributions in accordance with the provisions of the EAC Treaty.

In line with the directives of the Court, the matter has now formally proceeded to the **mediation stage**, where the parties involved are expected to engage in discussions aimed at reaching an amicable resolution on the issues raised in the case.

This development comes alongside other recent regional engagements, including the **25th Ordinary Summit of the EAC Heads of State held on 7 March 2026 in Arusha**, where leaders also discussed the financial challenges facing the Community, partly resulting from delays by some Partner States in remitting their contributions. During the Summit, leaders agreed to review the contribution framework of Partner States to strengthen the financial sustainability of EAC institutions.

EACSO F will continue to engage in the court process in full compliance with the procedures and requirements of the Court, while reiterating the importance of accountability and the fulfillment of financial obligations by Partner States in accordance with the EAC Treaty.



EACSO F Participates in Policy Dialogue on Simplified Cross-Border Trade

A Policy Dialogue Forum bringing together stakeholders from COMESA, EAC, and SADC was held on **18-19 February 2026** in Nairobi, focusing on strengthening the implementation of the

Tripartite Simplified Trade Regime (TSTR) as a key driver of cross-border trade and regional integration.

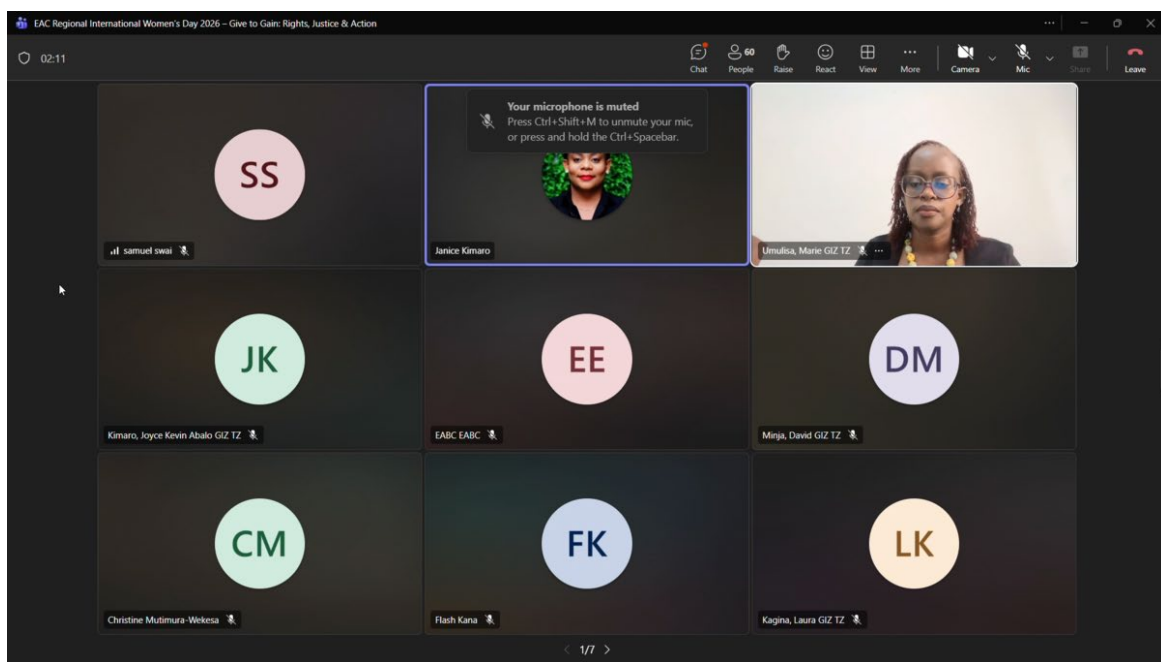
The meeting convened civil society, trade stakeholders, and regional institutions to explore how simplified trade frameworks (STRs) can be implemented more effectively, while emphasizing the importance of collaboration between Regional Economic Communities and non-state actors.

Participants highlighted that such collaboration is essential to ensure trade policies directly benefit small-scale cross-border traders, particularly women and youth, as well as the private sector across the COMESA-EAC-SADC region.

The discussions also provided a platform to examine the role of civil society in advancing inclusive trade policies and to identify strategies for increasing the participation of youth and women in cross-border trade.

EACSOE was part of the engagement, reinforcing its commitment to promoting inclusive and participatory trade policies across the region.

Programme Highlights & Civil Society Impact



Women Shaping East Africa's Digital Future

Through participation in a regional virtual forum, EACSOE highlighted the importance of addressing gender disparities in digital access and promoting inclusive digital ecosystems across the region.



World NGO Day

EACSOF joined the global community in commemorating World NGO Day, recognizing the critical role of civil society organizations in advancing democratic governance, accountability, and sustainable development.

The Forum reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening civic engagement and fostering partnerships that amplify the impact of civil society across East Africa. [Read More](#)



EACSOE Participates in LIFTED Project Engagement Meeting

EACSOE, as a beneficiary of the LIFTED Project, participated in a meeting to review progress, assess achievements, and plan 2026 operations and budgets.

The discussions examined emerging policy shifts and their implications for effective implementation across the region.

Looking Ahead: Key Preparations Underway



EACSOE, EALS and partners gear up for 2026 EAC Secretary-General Convening

EACSOE, in collaboration with the East Africa Law Society (EALS) and other apex bodies, is actively preparing for the 2026 EAC Secretary-General Convening. The forum will focus on the leadership transition at the EAC Secretariat, as Ambassador Veronica Nduva concludes her tenure and Ambassador Stephen Patrick Mbundi assumes office.

Preparations emphasize coordinated stakeholder engagement, translating Summit decisions into actionable outcomes, and promoting inclusive regional integration, ensuring that civil society and professional bodies play a central role in shaping EAC priorities.



**East African Civil Society
Organization' Forum**

*Strengthening Civil Society in
the Integration Process*

HAPPY
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