

East African Community (EAC)

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East African Community Headquarters

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Chairperson: Uhuru Kenyatta, Kenya (elected on rotation in November 2013 for a one-year term) Secretary-General: Richard Sezibera, Rwanda (appointed on 19 April 2011 for a five-year term)

Purpose

The East African Community (EAC) was initiated in 1999 as the regional inter-governmental organization of the five East African countries. Article 5 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community states that the objectives of the community shall be "to develop policies and programmes aimed at widening and deepening co-operation among the Partner States in political, economic, social and cultural fields, research and technology, defense, security and legal and judicial affairs, for their mutual benefit". The EAC countries established a Customs Union in 2005 and a Common Market in 2010. EAC aims to create a monetary union as the next step in integration and ultimately become a political federation of East African states.

Evolution

The EAC was first formed in 1967 but collapsed in 1977 because of political differences. In 1993, the Agreement for the Establishment of the Permanent Tripartite Commission (PTC) for East African Co-operation was established, and, in 1996, the Commission's Secretariat was launched. In 1997, leaders directed the PTC to upgrade the Agreement establishing the Commission into a treaty. This Treaty entered into force on 7 July 2000 following its ratification by the original three partner states - Kenya, Uganda and UR of Tanzania. Rwanda and Burundi acceded to the EAC Treaty on 18 June 2007 and became full members of the community from 1 July 2007.

Structure

The EAC is overseen by the Summit of Heads of State and Government, which gives general direction on the Community's goals and objectives. Its structure also includes the Council of Ministers, which is the main decision-making institution; 14 ministerial-level sectoral councils; East Africa Legislative Assembly; East African Court of Justice; and Coordination Committee. The Coordination Committee is responsible for regional cooperation and coordinates the activities of the sectoral councils. The Secretariat, which is the EAC executive organ, ensures that regulations and directives adopted by the Council are properly implemented.

Meetings

The Summit meets at least once a year and may hold extraordinary meetings at the request of any of its members. Summit decisions are reached by consensus. The office of Chairperson is held for one year in rotation among the partner states. The Summit discusses business submitted to it by the Council (which meets twice a year) and any other matter that may have a bearing on the EAC.

Members (5)

Burundi Kenya Rwanda Uganda UR of Tanzania

South Sudan was granted observer status in November 2012, pending consideration of its application for full admission.