AGENDA 100%



Get In Touch

KAMPALA , UGANDA

P : +256 751 041 397

E : ngobiamb@gmail.com

w : www.ngobiambrose.com

AGENDA 100%



CAMPAIGN MANIFESTO

FOREWORD

Way back when I attempted to run for Guild President at Makerere University, seven words mentioned by my opponent then; “Pan Africanists offer nothing except wearing traditional clothes,” still manage to get me today in a corner to think.

The movement of Pan Africanism has subsided and lost purpose. Away from the conventional aspirations of freeing the race from all the indignities of subjugation, segregation, ignorance and poverty, the remaining spirit of Pan Africanism finds its frail life with elite communiqués at certain summits in Arusha or Addis Ababa; and in the gorgeous dresses of the honorable Professor Patrick Loch Otieno Lumumba.

While the everyday limitations of a Pan Africanist might shape the nature of their discussion and their behavior, we fall off as a people committed to strengthening the African race if we make rhetoric and catch cold. This is why I am convinced that the strategy we should follow is this: THE AGENDA 100%.



The Agenda 100% however, is not an abstract motto meant to be scattered and lost in the numerous debates that young and old Pan Africanist engage in across the continent. It narrows the muzzle onto the tangibly attainable aspiration of federating the East African region, as an anchor step towards African renaissance.

Well, I am lucky that I was born East African, a region whose federated future was first imagined 130 years ago in 1896 when British officials proposed to join Kenya and Uganda into a common administration. Today, eight countries in the region have happily or unhappily ratified the treaty for the East African Community whose future goal is a political federation. That future is now, and I am happy to comment about the rising spirit of change amongst my generation; the East African Generation Z (Gen Z.) whose decisive power has been demonstrated in the last three years. In 2024 alone, we showed the corrupt Kenyan regime what is possible in our times when there is a solid union of purpose and mobilization.

The young Tanzanians equally stood up against a callous regime in 2025, shaping discourse in the region. We have continued to show that this is a unique time to be young. Nowhere in African history have we had teenagers searching, and perhaps designing, portals of access so they are part of conversations on how the continent governs itself.





When we started East Africa Must Unite (EAMU) in 2023, we were convinced about the incompetency within our individual states and the weaknesses of the East African Community. Nope! We shall not overcome unemployment and poverty in Uganda through the corrupted efforts of that tiny state unless we redefine and implement the core expectations of our citizenship. We shall not overcome corruption and tribalism in Kenya unless we structurally rule out the ease of getting away with fraud and de-incentivize being tribally correct.

Tanzania, DRC, Somalia, and South Sudan shall not be free from the excessive use of power and incompetency until there is a supervisory institution to which the states presiding over our people in these countries must account.

The states in our region must therefore give way to individual expression on how the future of the East African Community shall be decided. That is singularly the number one aim of the Agenda 100%: demanding that full effort takes shape in our integration agenda. In the following policy narration, we recommend structural changes within the East African Community and redefine the role each stakeholder should play going forward.

Fellow East Africans; let us take a bet just once another generation.
WE SHALL WIN.

Hon. Ambrose Ngobi.
Member of Parliament, East African Legislative Assembly, Uganda (2027-2032).

Our Candidate

Hon. Ambrose Ngobi.
Member of Parliament,

East African Legislative Assembly, Uganda (2027-2032).



1. FUNDING THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY.

On March 7, 2026, the Heads of State Summit of the East African Community adopted a financing formula for the community of 50% (equal Partner State contribution) and 50% (assessed contribution) effective from July 2026.

This was a response to the financial constraints that the community continues to experience as a result of defaults by Partner States from their annual contribution obligations.

The same summit also decided to waive off the arrears due to the defaulting Partner states by 50% instructing that the other remaining half of the debts be paid in two years.

This means that South Sudan will only pay a half of the 27.7million USD it owes to the community, Burundi a half of the 22.7 million USD, South Sudan half of the 21.8 million USD, Somalia half of the 10.5 million USD, and Tanzania half of the 9 million USD.

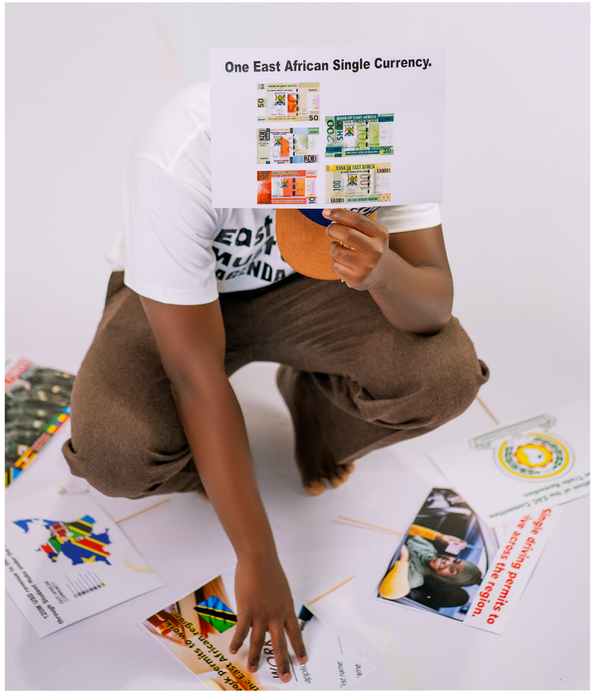
The budget of the community for the financial year 2025/2026 is 109.3 million USD and the community is willing to lose half of the 89.3 million USD owed to it in debt. This is clearly bad mathematics. But even so, the new financing model is erroneously anchored on the belief that defaulting Partner States do not have as enough cash to contribute to the East African Community while at the same time run effective development agendas in their individual countries.

That is why, the formula increases the percentage of Partner State contribution based on the size of the economy by 50%, whereas the issue is simply that of political will. Partner States will find money to fund corruption within their borders before they will remit their annual obligations to the community.

From the above therefore, we recommend a new financing formula (the EA CITIZEN PAY); set on a citizenship paid franchise scheme by a quarterly individual subscription fee of 2 dollars amounting to 8 dollars paid annually by every citizen who is to decide the socioeconomic destiny of the community.



Donor funding for the EAC's administrative and operational budget consistently made up around 40-65% between 2013-2022 raising questions of the dangers associated with this level of external financial support. Some have argued that neocolonialism is alive with a big stake in the future outcomes of the East African integration agenda. In 2021, the community adopted financing reform to have partner states increase their contributions to 65% to reduce donor dependency and improve sustainability. Despite those earlier efforts, actual remittances by some Partner States have been inconsistent causing budget shortfalls and operational delays.



Narrow regimes within Partner States have found motives to be slow in financing the East African Community and it's not feasible to continue placing the fortune of 331 million people at the mercy of individuals with clearly different priorities and motivations. So the problem with our funding model is that on the one hand there is a looming threat of dominance by external entities in how the community prioritizes and governs itself, while on the other hand there is an elite capture of the integration agenda. The first problem is fortunately avoidable, while the second one is unforgivable.

The question of who should bear the funding burden of the East African Community is central to the legitimacy of the community's aspirations, sustainability, and independence. We cannot dream of a future federation when the chief funder of the enterprise is Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni.

A 2 dollar fee payable every 3 months is not only a civic contribution, small enough to be universally payable but significant enough to create ownership of the integration agenda by link funding to voting rights (at least for the start); but it shall also change the social contract of the integration agenda by grounding it roots in the East African citizenship

To appreciate how best this proposal is, perhaps it is better to have a general agreement that funding formulas that require remittances by Partner States often fall short of the expectation because they rely on the goodwill of a given regime in the Partner State. Some of these regimes are really unworthy the bother.

The ECOWAS funding model for example, is primarily based on a CommunityLevy of a 0.5% tax imposed on goods imported from non-ECOWAS membercountries. This levy accounts for approximately 70-90% of the ECOWAS budget, making it the main source of revenue. Development Partners such as The African Development Bank and The European Union contribute slightly to the ECOWAS budget through providing grants and project financing. This contribution is typically less than 1%.

The primary reliance on the import levy means ECOWAS's financial health is closely tied to trade volumes and customs collections across member states. Member states are responsible for collecting and remitting these funds directly to ECOWAS accounts in their central banks. However, challenges such as non-compliance by some member states and low recovery rates have singlehandedly impacted the organization's ability to implement its programs.

In March 2021 for example, the ECOWAS Parliament held a seminar in Freetown, where it was revealed that only about 30% of the expected levy funds were being collected over the preceding three years, drastically affecting ECOWAS's program visibility and integration pace.

The Parliament called for stricter measures to remittances, including direct central bank payments, to improve compliance and ensure timely recovery of the funds. In November 2022, ECOWAS Parliamentarians in Abuja expressed concern that some countries had made no payments since early 2022, while others were up-todate despite economic crises.

They warned that those in compliance could not "continue to pay for others". s.

By September 2024, recorded as "the worst year in recent history," the Finance Directorof ECOWAS Parliament confirmed severe declines in levy remittances from member states, warning of serious operational implications.



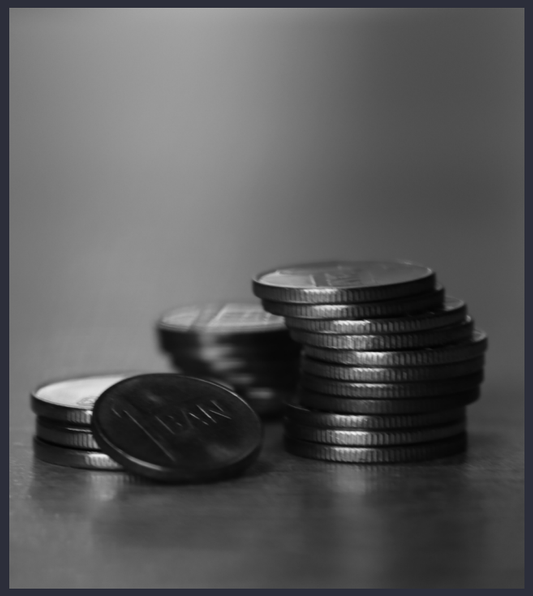
The sustainability of this model is threatened by poor compliance from the member states. In fact, Nigeria only fulfilled 100 percent of its financial obligations to the community, making a full payment of its levy for the first time in nearly two decades on December 13, 2024. This is so despite the size of Nigeria's economy.
The tendency of African countries to prioritize national fiscal expansion even at the expense of national commerce; which can be crowded out as interest rates rise and business stagnates as taxes cripple capital expenditures and hiring at the margin, should serve as a reminder that failure to meet budget commitments to supranational organizations is an inherent part of narrow regime and nationalistic interests characteristic of most of the African states.

ECOWAS' policy of import levy just as the East African Community's Partner State direct contribution policy, strikes right at the heart the core operational principle of the community:
The market-driven approach to economic integration.

If the administrative and operational expenditure of the community rises way beyond its current budget, it would require oftentimes an increase in individual state appreciation of the need to prioritize funding the community.
As for ECOWAS, this would mean increased import tax which might discourage some products from being imported altogether. For those that would still be imported, there could be price hikes in the market having a deteriorating effect on consumer surplus in the region.
Perhaps more fundamentally at this stage, it must be noted that real wages across Africa broadly and East Africa specifically have not risen over the past decade as inflation has reigned supreme. While economic growth has averaged well over 5.8% overtime in recent years throughout the region, real wages have lagged indicating an overall lower standard of living over the time period.
According to Willis Towers Watson's 2024 Salary Budget Planning Report for Africa, organizations in East Africa raised salary budgets by an average of 6.9 percent in 2024, yet regional inflation ran at about 10.1 percent—implying a roughly 3.2 percent real wage contraction on average.

Beyond revenue challenges from depending on the import levy to fund administrative and operational capacity, the ECOWAS funding model has failed to holistically unite citizen participation and ownership with the operational and representative nature of regional politics, something to the best of our knowledge is only answered if citizens individually contribute to the structure of government finances and the long term priorities that follow.
This explains the skepticism displayed by some political commentators in discussing the future of ECOWAS with many believing the foundations of the economic bloc are not strong enough to keep the members together. They have argued that it is an association of states rather than a union of citizens, which is not any different to the East African Community.

The 2 dollar quarterly funding mechanism can serve as a vote of approval for the viability of the integration agenda on an individual basis. It is a preparation and reflection of the willingness of the citizens of East Africa to evolve beyond their narrow national borders.



If effected, the quarterly contribution to the funding needs of the community will overshadow nationalistic concerns in countries like Tanzania where the leadership and certain nationalistic interests argue that "the EAC Empire is after their land," for it will show that even Tanzanian citizens would love to share the land of Rwandans and Kenyans. A citizen-funded integration project will aid us overcome most petty policies by national governments to undermine the integration agenda.

This mechanism however might not be easy to implement in one go but must be approached on a piecemeal basis to identify people most likely to benefit from regional integration on a short to medium term basis and incorporating them into the new electoral structure by presenting them with the benefit of voting for their representatives in the East African Legislative Assembly.

According to the official approval on July 10, 2025, the budget for the East African Community (EAC) for the financial year 2025/2026, amounts to approximately USD 109 million. To match this figure, only a minimum of 14 million EAC citizens would need to have made payments over a one year period prior to the year of official date of commencing this funding formula. With full invigoration, over 160 million East Africans will be able to contribute to the East African Community which would in turn create 1.28Billion USD revenue.
Student hubs and the broader educated working population are a good target to reach initially but if this model catches on, even local peasant populations will appreciate the degree of the incentives attached to the people-centered funding approach to the community. In this regard, Blockchain technology would be adopted to promote transparency in fund gathering and spending would greatly encourage the adoption of this model.



For the start however, funds can be collected via mobile money through deductions amounting to 0.0222 on every transaction performed by a subscribed citizen (This is only 77.7 UGX).
However, debit cards too should be encouraged) and salary deductions made of 0.6667 dollars every month. It can be that affordable to meet the criteria of voters' willingness to pay while limiting elite capture and infantile approaches to the politics of the East African Community

2. BUSINESS AND LIFE IN THE REGION; NON TARIFF BARRIERS EXTERMINATED.

The East African Community has integrated past the Customs Union up to the level of a Common Market. However, there exist constraints to the full operationalization of the Customs Union Protocol which arise primarily as a result of the tendency of Partner States to allow a number of Non-Tarrif Barriers such as the issuance of stay applications and duty remissions for particular imports exclusively on nationalistic grounds.

Stay Applications allow Partner States to disregard the set Common External Tariff (CET) and apply different tariff rates for specified imports. Duty Remission allow companies in Partner States to pay lower import duties or be exempted from paying duties altogether.

The absence of uniformity in the CET has led to trade tensions in the region as some Partner States insist on placing full duty fees on products from other Partner States that were produced by imported raw materials on tariff reprieve measures.

To Contextualize this, it is important to understand that Article 25 of the East African Customs Union protocol states that:

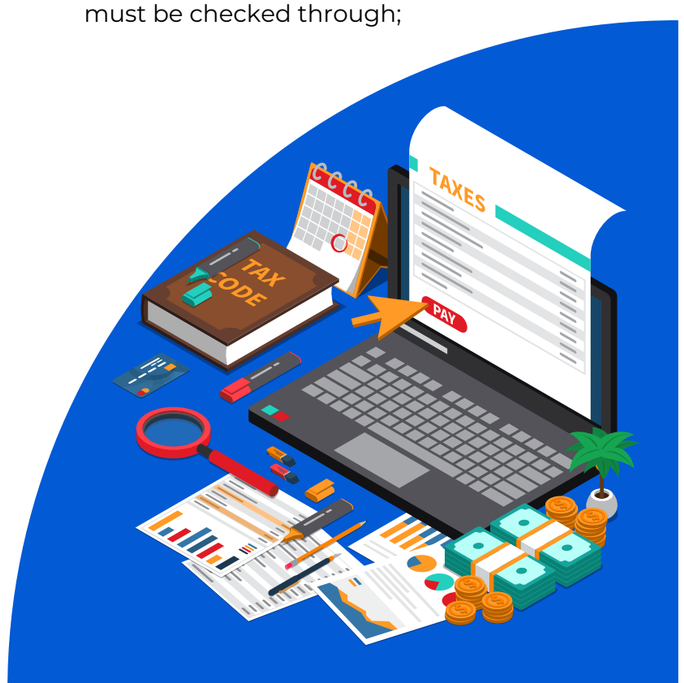
The Partner States agree that goods benefiting from export promotion schemes shall primarily be for export. In the event that such goods are sold in the Customs territory, such goods shall attract full duties, levies and other charges provided in the Common External Tariff. The sale of goods in the Customs territory shall be subject to authorization by a competent authority and such sale shall be limited to 20 per centum of the annual production of a company. (East African Community, 2004b, Article 25)

Article 25 in light of the Duty Remissions and Stay Applications program provides an avenue for the institution of certain non-tariff barriers by Partner States against each other with potential ripple effects of non-tariff barrier reciprocity.

For an example of a non-tariff barrier instituted by one Partner State against another, consider the example provided by Christabel Ligami in The East African newspaper of 3rd August 2013 where it was reported that British American Tobacco Kenya Ltd. manufactured goods for the EAC market using local inputs whilst importing some inputs for the same products under the duty remission scheme. The specific inputs were however reportedly used only for the production of cigarettes and other tobacco products exported outside of the EAC.

Tanzania rejected this, saying that it could not verify which cigarettes were produced using imported inputs and which ones were produced using local inputs. Tanzania applied a full duty on products produced by British American Tobacco Kenya Ltd., irrespective of the source of inputs.

These non-tariff barriers emanating from the failure of the community to fully operationalize the Customs Union Protocol must be checked through;



1. Eradicating duty remissions and stay applications altogether after restructuring realistic tariff rates for all taxable imports to void the relevance of these exemptions. Realistic tariff rates are needed as for instance, Kenya a major consumer and importer of rice would suffer if the Common External Tariff of 75% on rice lobbied for by Ugandan rice traders seeking higher prices for their rice output forced the entire community to go along with that specific tax with no remission respite. Hence, rates should be realistic if they are to be maintained. Perhaps political economists across the region will argue in favor of simply creating uniformity in granting duty remissions and we retain them. Even if this was to be a plausible argument, it would be more beneficial and appropriate to have input from the Community as a single bloc rather than relying solely on national Duty Remission Committees which operate on nationalistic grounds to promote narrow regime interests over regional long term goals. Either of the above would accelerate trade based on transparency and common goodwill, but the first proposal aligns well with creating a full commitment to our integration agenda.

2. If companies use local and imported imports for the same products sold within the region and abroad, there should exist a mechanism to verify the distinctive nature of products produced using local inputs from products produced using imported inputs. This however is difficult and entails a tendency towards the bureaucratization of trade and has potential for regulatory capture by businesses seeking political favors. This is part of the reason for why it was suggested that we must deal away with stay applications and duty remissions even if that is politically unpopular.

Let it be noted that the fully operationalization of the East African Customs Union would enable the East African community to negotiate in the WTO as a regional bloc rather than single countries. This should provide more leverage for the region in obtaining better trade deals with other countriesand regions in an age of heightened protectionism. Together as a bloc, the East African Community has the potential to create a large consumer base and wider regional labor market, all prerequisites for long run development, due to demographic factors that point to a high-growth environment, especially if the right cultural and institutional environment is in place.

On the other hand, the free movement of labor and capital across the region has been met with unjustifiable resistance among regimes of everyday politics without considering the common goals we share as a region.

The second stage of our integration, the establishment of a common market is supposed to embody not only the elements of Free Trade Area such as the free movement of goods, but also elements of the Customs Union such as a Common Tariff Regime; and definitely the free movement of labor and capital across the region.

Special attention will be given to labor mobility difficulties across the region. These pertain to obtaining of work permits, residency difficulties and security threats associated with free movement of people across borders.

- **Difficulty of Obtaining work and residency permits.**

In 2012, Kenya prohibited the issuance of work and residence permits to foreign workers who were not at least 36 years old and whose guaranteed gross monthly salary was not at least $2,000. Apparently, the Kenyatta regime did this to combat the youth unemployment problem which would threaten regime stability.

This however discriminated against other Partner State citizens and violated the Common Market protocol. It is a recurring theme that whenever regional interests collide with regime interests, African strongmen choose selfpreservation over deeper integration interests.

The integration process needs to be shielded from the political whims of Heads of State and the short-term regime concerns in particular Partner States. It is these Heads of State usually seeking national popularity and approval ratings that place a 'fork in the road' to deeper integration by restricting the flow of goods and people and money across and into the region. This, needless to say, attracts endless retributive escalation jeopardizing an agenda meant to serve long run interests of the broader citizenry and not short term priorities.

Below, our policy recommendations on overcoming labor market bottlenecks toward the effective implementation of the EAC common market are discussed.

1. The policy marking organs of the community should strive to align regional law and Partner State law to smoothen the integration process through ensuring community law subordinates national laws to ease implementation of labor mobility agendas inherent in the common market protocol. This should make work permits and residency status easier to obtain due to a common thread in both sets of laws that is, regional and state law.



2. Partner States with work permit charges should be encouraged to drop them with accompanying feasibility studies on other ways to raise lost revenue from previously charging for work permit granting. This would ensure all Partner States are complying with the Common Market Protocol.

3. Digitizing work permit applications and their acquisition through a mobile Application. In 2023, the EAC launched the Non Tariff Barriers App to allow traders report and help eliminate trade barriers. There can be a harmonization process in the application of work permits through the different national organs responsible so we create a regional organ responsible for assessing and granting work permits. The application for them would be strictly online on the Non Tariff Barriers App.

4. Partner States in the EAC should be discouraged from belonging to more than one economic bloc as this hinders true commitment to deeper integration. Taking Burundi for instance, it chose to maintain its work permit fees for EAC members because it wanted to give preferential treatment to Rwanda and DRC with which it belongs in The Economic Community of Great Lakes Countries. Tanzania too maintains work permit fees for other Partner States' citizens and it is as well a member of The Southern Africa Development Community.

5. Operationalization of the EAC Committee on Trade Remedies.
Established under Article 24 of the Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Customs Union, the EAC Committee on Trade Remedies is the fourth stage in the dispute settlement procedure designed to challenge non-tariff barriers. The EAC Committee on Trade Remedies is supposed to be the most important stage in the dispute settlement procedure and its decision is supposed to be final (East African Community, 2004b, 30). It's inoperability as of 2026 since its inception in 2004 has been blamed on the lack of ratification on the part of Partner States, absence of member recommendations to

the committee and institutional readiness on the part of the committee to commence operations. The inability of the community to operationalize the committee however raises questions about the commitment of Heads of State to meaningful integration in the region. As highlighted earlier, non- tariff barriers are a subtle form of political capital that contributes to regime popularity and subsequently stability.

However, politicians understand that industry and labor arepolitical capital and garnering their support leads them to mislead the broader public on the need for interventionism and the disrespect to human choice through disregarding markets. This is a sensitive issue that cannot be addressed easily across in an increasingly protectionist world, but if East African integration is to make any sense, there should be a denationalization of its intraregional exchange. How is the region supposed to claim to be a community if certain corners of the community limit the produce of other corners and even deport members of other parts of the community under the allegation that they are 'illegal immigrants'? The East African Court of Justice needs to hold Partner States who violate the integration protocol accountable before the courts of law and cause consequences to those Partners that would exhibit short sighted behavior and anticonsumer sentiment in the community.

6. Denationalization of intra-regional trade. The tendency to give a national character to markets hurts the trend for free exchange which is a driver for increased production in any given economy.
Commerce is such that comparative advantages in the production of particular commodities allocate industries unevenly across the world and this causes political alarm in certain political circles. But this is an erroneous understanding of economic activity to begin with. All exchange is between individuals with regard to their consumption considerations. Consumer satisfaction is the end goal of all production and it means that industry and labor only exist to serve the primary role of value creation and distribution across the globe.

7. De-bureaucratization of trade through simplified trade dispute resolution mechanisms. Trade dispute resolutions should be simplified to ease the resolution process of Partner States against each other over unfair practices. The Current EAC Dispute Mechanism has 7 stages for trade dispute mediation and resolving a particular case can take up to a year to find a solution to. These stages are Consultations (up to 2 months), Good offices, conciliation, and mediation (up to 2 months), Panel (up to 4 months), EAC \Committee on Trade Remedies (up to 2 months), East African Court of Justice (no length of time specified), Compensation and suspension of concessions (temporary) and Compliance in that respective order. This highly bureaucratized process does not help the welfare of those whose livelihoods depend on intraregional trade and its smooth flow. It cannot be emphasized, regional trade needs to be depoliticized and denationalized.
De- bureaucratization would entail reducing the number of those stages to about 3 that is, the Consultation Stage, the EAC committee on Trade Remedies and the East African Court of Justice. Some of the other stages unnecessarily delay dispute resolution and can be done away with and their functions rolled into each other to ensure a simpler approach to non- tariff barriers as this would serve to gradually phase them out as a political tool.

8. Escalation of non-tariff barriers needs to be nipped in the bud by fining countries that resort to unilateral retribution rather than seeking mediation through official. The country that first imposes the non-tariff barrier should pay a specified fine to the country affected and then special assessments of the potential harm to trade should attract more fines to compensate the affected country.

But again, if the affected country takes into its own hands to impose its own barriers, the EAC Committee on Trade Remedies should impose a fine on it too as a way of discouraging senseless retaliation that undermines the citizens while politicians strive to flex economic muscle. Intraregional trade is not a Partner State but EAC citizen affair and this should guide the approach to regional inter-territory openness to exchange and mutual cooperation.

9. Harmonization of goods standards to build an East African standard scheme. In May of 2011, Kenya imposed a ban on flowers from Tanzania that passed through Nairobi (Kenya) to Europe and other markets. Kenya claimed that Tanzanian cut flowers did not meet the standards necessary to assure that Kenyan cut flowers were protected from the risks of pests and diseases (Mshomba 2017). Uganda also rejected Tanzania's mosquito nets and Kenya's beef and beef products claiming that these did not meet the standard of product quality in Uganda.

10. Joint East Africa Community Peace and Security operations. Partner States from time to time close their borders with each other citing security concerns, but then again, this hurts livelihoods in the community. The Partner States should intensify regional collaboration on security issues by forming a permanent collective army that can help with enforcing peace and good governance at borders and within Partner States to remove the justification of border closures. Furthermore, this permanent joint task force can serve to maintain a general atmosphere of peace and political stability across the region limiting the need for interference in the internal affairs of the region by development partners seeking deals strictly with a few members rather than having to negotiate with the bloc as a whole. A case in point is the recent deal between the DRC and Rwanda mediated by the USA which comes with mineral concessions. If the East African Community was able to have its affairs in order by itself, there would be no need for such outcomes. Peace is always good, but it can be an internal rather than external process for purposes of integrity of sovereignty.

Kenya rejected Uganda's milk products under the allegation that these goods did not meet product quality and safety standards in the country. These issues have already been raised and various solutions recommend, however, it is important to note that the East African Community could benefit from encouraging producers in the community to adhere to international standards and enforce them so that the products are neutral in all Partner States removing the 'poor standards' excuse to limit other community nations' products. Better, an East African Standard Board stationed at the Secretariat would help ensure a smooth adherence to the standard expectations within the region.



Political Will, Reforms in How We Integrate

An inquiry into political will on the part of East African Heads of State toward deeper integration reveals a picture of mixed feelings toward the aspirations of the East African Community. "Land is out of the EAC 'empire," Samwel Sitta, Tanzania's Minister for East African Cooperation, told the newly elected Tanzanian members of the East African Legislative Assembly in 2012. Tanzania is both a member of Southern Africa Development Community as well as the East African Community begging the question of the nature of its approach to the East African Customs Union if SADC ever evolves beyond a Free Trade Area to establish a Customs Union because a single country cannot belong to more than one Customs Union unless both Customs Unions have the same Common External Regime. Still, Tanzania deported almost 7000 illegal immigrants from Rwanda most of them teachers in retaliation for being left out of "the coalition of the willing."

Rwanda closed its border with Uganda in early 2019 breaching Article 104 of the EAC Treaty which provides for free movement of persons, labor, services, right of establishment, and residence. To add to this list are the numerous and ever increasing non-tariff barriers arising from dictates by Heads of State, the failure if not outright refusal to operationalize the EAC Committee on Trade Remedies which would be a positive step in the denationalization of intraregional trade and other blatant violations of the Treaty for which there are no clearly stipulated repercussions. Further, an inquiry into the power of the East African Legislative Assembly leaves much to be desired.

In elementary republican theory; but also especially because Partner States signed a treaty that was clear aimed for a Political Federation, power is shared among the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary with each having "equal" powers. This is intended to prevent tyranny that might arisefrom the absence of checks and balances to the jurisdiction of any one government branch.



However, at the regional level, the Summit as the Executive organ dominates the Legislature both explicitly and implicitly to the detriment of proper administration and accountability in the political process. Explicitly, the Summit has several mandates including powers to give general directions on how the community should be run in attaining its objectives, powers to review the state of peace, security, and good governance within the community, admission of a new member to the community, assent to acts of the community and powers to appoint judges of the East African Court of Justice (EACJ). This means that the members of EALA have little scope to direct the affairs of the integration agenda even if they were people- elected rather than appointed. The greatest powers are vested in the Summit which it should be noted, works strictly with consensus. Then there exists the Council of Ministers higher in hierarchy than EALA, mandated with policymaking. The Council initiates Bills to the East African Legislative Assembly. This translates to the fact that the Bills debated by the representatives are not products of their imagination. The minister responsible for EAC in the Council and the Attorney General from each Partner State are all appointees of the Heads of State accountable only to narrow regime interests.

It does not help that EAC Treaty Amendments require the unanimous agreement of all Heads of State at the Summit. Neither does it help that the members of the East African Legislative Assembly are appointed by political parties; usually Heads of State dominated, and vetted in National Assemblies with no input from the general population whatsoever.

This process as it exists is a remnant of “the African Old Guard” from early postcolonial Africa. The shadow of strongman politics and its eldest offspring neo-patrimonialism dominate the African political landscape to the detriment of the continent’s social evolution and economic development.

For context, neopatrimonialism refers to a situation in political administration wherein existing formal state institutions like the constitution are defiled by informal, personalistic networks of power based patron-client relationships. These relationships are a rendition of African chieftaincy in the modern era of democracy and rule of law.



In this circumstance, the ruler operates as a patron rather than an impersonal administrator of the state employing public resources for personal gain and distributing favors in exchange for loyalty. In the book ‘The State of Africa’, Martin Meredith describes how the initial African statesmen moved to personify power and organize cult-like followings to ensure regime stability while rhetorically marrying this to national advancement.

This past of failed statesmanship still haunts Africa today, where the role of Politics is greatly exaggerated by nationalist leaders, the media and general public leaving little to no room for personal responsibility, voluntary cooperation, good faith dealings and contractual obligations honorable before independent courts. The political sphere in Africa is such that paternalistic power operates to the detriment of individual action and personal commitments. Just to be clear, bureaucrats cannot create prosperity. This is purely a product of individual interactions typically epitomized by market exchanges and dialogical experiences in which peace and civilization are born. It is not an overstatement to argue that Africa and East Africa particularly needs more markets, less government intervention, less strongman politics and more rule of law. Government intervention has unforeseen consequences such that simply allowing the state to oversee a wholly private endeavor like vanilla production as it happens in Uganda can go a long way in pushing the Ugandan government to even block vanilla imports from Kenya or Tanzania claiming to protect local farmers thereby undermining the integration agenda at the margin. In that sense, a regulation that seemingly had little to do with intraregional trade in the first place paves the way for the enactment of a previously unforeseen barrier to community advancement.

African political parties both ruling and opposing have limited political essence, that is, a sustained sense of political ideology that drives long term planning. Take for instance the Democrats in the USA being for greater government intervention, more regulation, and women’s reproductive rights; while the Republicans on the other hand are for Big Business interests, more military spending, less regulation and so on.

In this context, East African political parties are more uniform in their approach to governance which inspires no civic commitment on the part of the broader citizenry. Their only concern is replacing each other in power with no clear national visions on how to engage the population to find more fulfillments in their existence through meaningful responsibility, participation and voluntary engagement with other members of the society.

To solve the problem of limited political will towards deeper integration in Africa, one might argue that there needs to be a general re-imagination of political philosophy, state culture and nation building on the continent broadly and in the East African region particularly. Leaders must understand that the state serves a limited role in society and its domain is distinct from that of the free interaction of individuals who seek their own betterment through exchange and peaceful cooperation. This makes one realize that even the endless wars and coups on the continent are a failure of African Culture to fundamentally respect the sanctity of the individual.

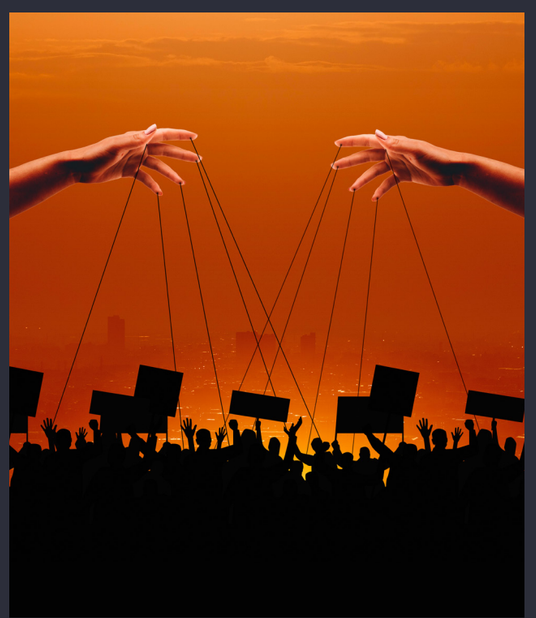
These wars are after all fought by rival factions seeking political office and not civilians looking to better their lives. What is needed on the continent is not more authoritarian leadership, not more democracy, but firm rule of law centered on respecting the boundaries of the individual and the fact that people’s lives mean more than free vaccinations, free universal primary education, and free security against threats from enemies of the ruling politicians. People’s lives are a sum of their experiences and this cannot be so without a great degree of freedom to pursue independent choices, something the African Culture of socialism has continually sidelined.

The proposal on reimagining political philosophy, state culture and nation building however would take a long time to materialize even when it must be said, is the best and perhaps only long term solution to the failed governance and absence of people- centered approaches to administration.

Given the structural nature of the problem identified here and the nearimpracticality of this initial solution, simpler and marginally helpful solutions can be extended.
In what follows, we will attempt to give form and meaning to these suggested solutions.

1. The integration process should be divorced from the political whims of East African leaders both administratively and financially. The EAC agenda should be funded by the East African Citizenship as earlier proposed. Detaching the funding mechanism from the Heads of State would be a step in the right direction as the integration process would cease to depend on their wishes and threats but considerations of the EAC citizenry's wellbeing.

2. Election of the EALA members should be done by the broader citizenry although for the start throug a paid franchise as a way of making it possible to mobilize funds for the community. The current structure of electing representatives to the regional assembly is based on patronclient systems thereby reinforcing the anti-people approach to regional integration witnessed thus far. Members elected to the regional parliament are merely appointed by political parties represented in the National Assemblies who then are vetted in those representative National Assemblies. A point to note in this case is that the regional assembly is charged with the roles of oversight, representation and legislation. Thinking about this reveals the contradiction in a state-led over people-centered integration agenda. How exactly are the laws meant to guide the evolution of the integration process supposed to be impartial if the legislators owe their existence in large part to their Heads of State who in most cases have a firm grip over the domestic National Assemblies and the prevailing discourse therein? How exactly is there supposed to be oversight even in the event of blatant violations of the Treaty on the part of the Partner States if the representatives have a



fundamentally and structurally weak mandate to deliver for the people they represent with respect to the Protocols for greater community cooperation? How is representation of the people supposed to be effective if these politicians are not chosen by and have no medium for communication with the people? If their mandate was earned on the basis of viable policy proposals rather than patronage, it would be a different discussion altogether. This is why it is further suggested that only leaders capable of demonstrating an in depth understanding of the intricacies of the EAC should have the opportunity to sir in the regional Assembly. The paid franchise can make sure this is so.

3. The Council of Ministers should be stripped off the policymaking mandate of the community, and that mandate should be allotted to EALA. The Summit has the ability to delegate some of its powers to the Council of Ministers such as the admission of a new member, appointment of judges of EACJ, assent to the Acts of the Community, and power to give general directions and impetus to the community. The policymaking body and the Summit can't have a patron-client relationship. Inquiries on particular policy paths can be made with the Council but to say it must originate policy over a larger body of representatives betrays the essence of non-tyrannical government.

4. Operationalization of the East African Community Development Fund and giving it the mandate to purchase up to a certain amount of Partner State debt would go a long way in increasing access to funding for Heads of State which would serve as a bargaining chip to reach a compromise on more openness to deeper integration.



5. In general terms however, we need a cultural revolution in favor of free market capitalism over state dominance and socialism in East Africa. This would discredit the overstated importance of African governments, easing regulatory and tax burdens and promoting personal freedoms and responsibility. African political culture has had an impact on social and economic evolution. The social rot we witness today across the continent has its roots in the state-worship culture we embody as a people. The economic stagnation has its roots in socialist policies that presuppose a paternalistic and violent approach rather than dialogue and mutual respect among individuals. Even the lack of military discipline on the continent can always be traced back to socialistic backdrop that characterizes African Culture. From Tanzanian Presidents owning land on behalf of the people(like the people are children with no understanding of the value of land), to the Uganda government setting official vanilla harvest dates and strictly prohibiting harvesting or possession of beans before these dates, with agricultural police and local government staff tasked to monitor and enforce these rules, to the Mali government seizing over $131 million worth of gold from Barrick Gold claiming it was for the good of the people, African governments simply disrespect their people's sovereignty, demand absolute power and establish personal cult structures among other illiberal measures that hinder the rise of a true liberty and civilization on the continent. A change in the attitudes of the people to social, political and economic organization is itself necessary to ensure political will is aligned with broader people interests other than regime interests.
This would require deeper education on cultural nuances. Paid franchise to the extent it forces a bare minimum commitment to political realities might help.









Summary.

In a nutshell, this manifesto has attempted to address the question of full commitment towards the integration agenda of the region. On the issue of funding the EAC, paid franchise is suggested to ensure that the trap of populism does not hinder robust policy development in furthering integration. Furthermore, the operationalization of the East African Community Development Fund to generate extra revenue and make investments to improve community wellbeing has been suggested. This would also accelerate the adoption of a single currency in the region. On the issue of bottlenecks to intraregional trade that have manifested chiefly as non- tariff barriers hindering the mobility goods, services, labor and capital, operationalization of the EAC committee for Trade Remedies has been recommended as the core solution along with the denationalization of intraregional trade and deregulation of commerce to encourage the growth of the formal sector in the region which can also greatly benefit state revenues. To address the absence of political will to deeper integration, a balance of power within the EAC has been suggested.