

National Parliamentary Legislative Activities and The Promotion of East African Community Regional Integrationa Case of Parliament of Rwanda

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Abstract: African countries have taken several measures to promote regional integration, a major part of which is intra-regional trade African Union (2017). The general objective of this study was to analyse the contribution of Rwanda Parliament on the promotion of East African Community regional integration. The specific objectives were to analyse the impact of Rwanda Parliament Legislative activities on promotion of East African Community regional integration; to examine the relationship between Rwanda Parliament and East African Community regional integration; and to assess the role played by Rwandan Parliament in the promotion of East African Community regional integration. The findings of this study have both educational and diplomatic implications. The study used descriptive survey design. The population targeted in the Parliament of Rwanda was 80 people. Only 60 were available by the time of data collection. Census approach was used to select all elements to participate in the study. Questionnaires, and documents analysis schedule were used to collect the data. Instruments were self-administered and employed descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, percentages), Karl Pearson correlation, content analysis were used to analyse the data. Figures, Tables and textual models were used to present the findings and all ethical issues were adhered to. Throughout the findings it was revealed that on the first objective 50 percent agreed that parliaments' members create legal environment, 60 percent agreed that parliament's members formulated laws which protect Rwanda and Rwandese in the deals of regional integration and 90 percent agreed that members of parliament of Rwanda have oversight responsibilities to promote regional integration. To the same extent, it was also revealed that parliamentary legislative activities of Rwanda Parliament has great impact on regional integration at 63.4 percent. Concerning the second objective, it was revealed that there is a significant low positive degree of relationship between legislative activities of Rwandan parliament and East African community regional integration [$r= 0.257$ p (002)]. On the third objective, it was concluded that 60 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that there is a room for collaboration between Rwanda parliament and EALA to challenge topics on a table. About percent 90 indicated that parliamentary correspondences from EALA including Bills get debated at Parliamentary level in the EAC partner states. About 51 percent indicated that EAC National parliaments often debate and oversee the process of regional integration. It was concluded that legislative activities of Rwanda Parliament have significant impact on the promotion of East Africa Community regional integration. The members of parliament are encouraged to formulate laws which stimulate region and international collaboration between Rwanda and others nations. The government of Rwanda is encouraged to work collaboratively with the national parliament to scrutinize all possible ways to increase Rwandese interest in East African Community.

Key Terms: *National Parliamentary Legislative Activities; The Promotion of East African Community; Regional Integration*

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I. INTRODUCTION

African nations have tried a number of measures to encourage regional integration, with intra-regional trade playing a significant role. The creation of the African Union and the rise of various Regional Economic Communities (RECs), which seek to accomplish integration through free trade while simultaneously establishing customs unions and a shared market, are examples of this.

The Treaty establishing the East African Community (EAC), which was intended to be a significant step in this direction, was signed in 1967 and created the East African Community (EAC), one of Africa's regional trading blocs. Ten years later, the Community Treaty was legally ended in 1977 as a result of the irreconcilable political friction between Tanzania and Tanzania and the ideological conflict between Tanzania and Kenya, which led to an untenable scenario Mugabo (2014). Following the approval of the EAC treaty that

member nations of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania had earlier signed in 1999, the East African Community (EAC) was once again established in 2000. South Sudan joined the union in April 2016, while Rwanda and Burundi joined in 2007.

The treaty states that the EAC goals are to create policies and initiatives that will enable the partner states to cooperate more closely in the political, social, cultural, and economic spheres for their mutual benefit. The political component of regional integration on the continent has received considerable attention since the late 1990s.

The establishment of various types of regional parliamentary assemblies (RAs) was pushed for as part of what is now known as the "third phase of regional integration" in response to a strong call for good governance, accountability, and transparency. Similar to national legislative assemblies, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) is the East African Community's legislative body. According to Article 49 (1) of the EAC Treaty, the EALA, which is the Community's legislative body and, like most legislatures, has legislative, oversight, and representation as its primary duties, shall communicate with the National Assemblies of Partner States on matters pertaining to the Community. It is from the provisions of the EAC treaty that National Assemblies of Partner States including the Parliament of Rwanda given room to play their role in EAC regional integration. The Pan-African Parliament (PAP), the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), and the Africa-Caribbean and Pacific European Union (ACP-EU) are international and transnational parliamentary organisations in which the Rwandan Parliament has participated (2010).

This participation has not only offered Parliament of Rwanda with opportunities for participation and contribution to international issues exposure but also registered lot of interest towards support of the national and regional gains. Hence to such efforts put on EAC regional integration, it has been faced various challenges that need to be resolved even by now. Mathieson (2016) highlighted that overlapping membership issues of parliamentary bodies of EAC State members is among the major challenges. The issue of membership overlap divides a country's focus and collaboration, which has a negative impact on regional integration. Mathieson (2016). But, despite those challenges that are occurring sometimes, Rwandan Parliament sees EAC regional integration as socio-political as well as economic grounded by a shared vision to maintain prosperous, competitiveness as well as securing an East Africa political united country. With this context in mind, this research project will examine the role that national parliaments have played in expanding EAC regional integration by using the example of the Rwandan parliament.

II. Problem Statement

EALA is required to communicate with the national assembly of the partner states on matters relevant to the community in accordance with Article 49 (1) of the EAC Treaty (2006). Since each partner state's national assembly is required by Article 50(1) of the Treaty to elect nine assembly members who will represent as much as is practical, the national parliaments are essential to the survival of EALA. Mechanisms were put in place to create room for interaction between EALA and the national parliaments for the purposes of promoting, coordination and increasing sensitization among the citizens in the partner states.

Such mechanisms include the annual Nanyuki Series which brings together parliamentarians from the partner states to deliberate over issues and share experiences. To strengthen its relationship with national parliaments, EALA also established the Inter-Parliamentary Forum on Population, Health and Development (IPFPHD), the Inter-Parliamentary Liaison Committee on Natural Resources/Extractive Industries (IPLC-NR/EI), the Inter-Parliamentary Liaison Committee on Budget (IPRLC-B), and the Inter-Parliamentary Liaison Committee on Trade (EAPLC) (2014).

Additionally, the relationship between the regional Assembly and the National Assemblies of the Partner States is outlined in article 65 of the Treaty. There is cooperation between the clerks of the two assemblies, which mainly consists of reciprocally transmitting parliamentary copies of records of all relevant debates of the meetings of the Assembly and Bills introduced into the Assembly not forgetting the Acts of the Community. The same relationship and cooperation are provided for in article 202 and 190 of rule of procedures for the Senate of Rwanda and Chamber of Deputies respectively. Senate rule of procedures (2018), Chamber of Deputies rule of procedures (2018). Although there is exchange of information between the regional and national parliaments, reports submitted by EALA to the national assemblies are rarely debated on by the members of the national assemblies. According to Kibua and Tostensen (2005), this is because their mandate which is mainly on creation of domestic legislation, forces them to focus on domestic issues. Despite the fact that parliaments of EAC member states seems to be involved in different treaties and cooperation, there was a concern about the role of their legislative activities in promoting regional integration.

Existing literature about the subject showed that Parliament of Rwanda meets for topic related to EAC only for elections of Members representing Rwanda to EALA. For all parliamentary correspondences including Bills introduced are rarely debated at Parliamentary level. This seems to be a challenge since article 49 (1) and 65 of EAC Treaty did not bind EALA to interact with National Assemblies with Partner States for nothing.

Ultimately, though studies have been done on role of regional parliaments as regards to regional integration, none has carried out research on the possible potential contribution of National Parliaments in the promotion of East Africa regional integration process. It is from this background that this study analysed the contribution of National Parliaments on the promotion of East Africa Community regional integration, taking the case of Parliament of Rwanda.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: This study used descriptive survey study to answer all research questions. A systematic analysis on how the independent variable affects the dependent variables throughout the responses from respondents was used by the qualitative data collected by the use of questionnaires. Based on data collected, were also make an assessment of views and expectations of respondents regards to the role of Rwanda Parliament in promoting regional integration in the East Africa.

The targeted population for this study was 80 people from the Parliament of Rwanda. However, only 60 respondents were available during the time of data collection. The study decided to use a questionnaire for 60 (sixty) respondents. The survey study opted to capture all the responses. It was imperative to use the survey study to articulate all necessary information for the study. This study used two types of research instruments which are questionnaire and documents analysis schedules. Questionnaire was the primary instrument that was employed in this study. It was administrated to the respondents of parliament of Rwanda. Document analysis schedules was also used to collect supporting information to what that would have been collected from questionnaires, more specially document analysis schedule provided secondary data whereas, questionnaires provided primary data. The data was analyzed by using SPSS 24th Version.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

General and Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Demographic characteristics of the participants was considered to be important in this study. To this, effects gender, age, and education level.

Table 4. 1: Gender of the Participants

Gender	Frequency	Percentages
Male	24	40
Female	36	60
Total	60	100

Source: Primary data (2021)

Table 4.1 Shows that majority of respondents were female. This was indicated by 60 percent of female against 40 percent who were male. These findings were in line with the findings presented by NIST in the recent health and demographic survey DHS (2020) it was revealed that majority of Rwandese were female. This was indicated by 52 percent female against 48% of men. There was also a need to establish age distribution of the respondents. To achieve this data was collected and presented in the Table 4.2.

Table 4. 2: Age Group of the Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percent
35 yrs and less	18	30
35-40 years	24	40
40 - 45yrs	16	20
45 years above	6	10
Total	60	100

Source: Primary Data (2021)

Table 4.2 shows that majority of respondents were adult and mature persons. This was indicated by 40 percent of the respondents whose ages were between 34-40 years of age. In this track, educational levels of the respondents was also of great consideration as related data presented in the Table 4.3. Educational experience of

the respondent is one of the most important and influential factors to consider when in demographic characteristics of the respondents. It is in this concerns that educational level of the respondents in this study was considered, the relevant data are presented in the table 4.3.

Table 4. 3: Distribution of the Respondents by Education Level

Level	Frequency	Percent
Bachelors’ degree	18	30
Master’s degree	36	60
PhD	6	10
Total	60	100

Source: Primary Data (2021)

Table 4.3 shows that majority of respondents have master’s degree in education. This was indicated by 60 percent of the respondents.

Impact of Rwandan Parliamentary Legislative activities on promotion of East African Community regional integration

There was a need to analyse the impact of Rwandan Parliamentary Legislative activities on the promotion of East African Community regional integration. To achieve this data, the relevant questionnaire was administered to 60 respondents in Parliament of Rwanda. The respondents show the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statement mentioned in the questionnaire. Lastly, after-data analysis, the collected data were summarized in the table 4.4.

Table 4. 4: Impact of Rwandan Parliamentary Legislative activities on promotion of East African Community regional integration

STATEMENTS	SDA		D		N		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Parliaments’ members create legal environment which facilitate EAC integration.	6	10	12	20	0	00	12	20	30	50
The representation of Rwandan MPs to EALA contributed on EAC integration.	6	10	42	70	0	00	12	20	0	00
Parliament’s members of Rwanda formulated laws which guide Rwanda and analyze legal aspects of regional integration.	0	00	6	10	12	20	6	10	36	60
Parliament’s members formulated laws which protect Rwanda and Rwandese in the deals of regional integration.	0	00	6	10	0	00	6	10	48	80
Members of parliament have oversight responsibilities to promote regional integration.	0	00	6	10	0	00	0	00	54	90

Source: Primary data (2021)

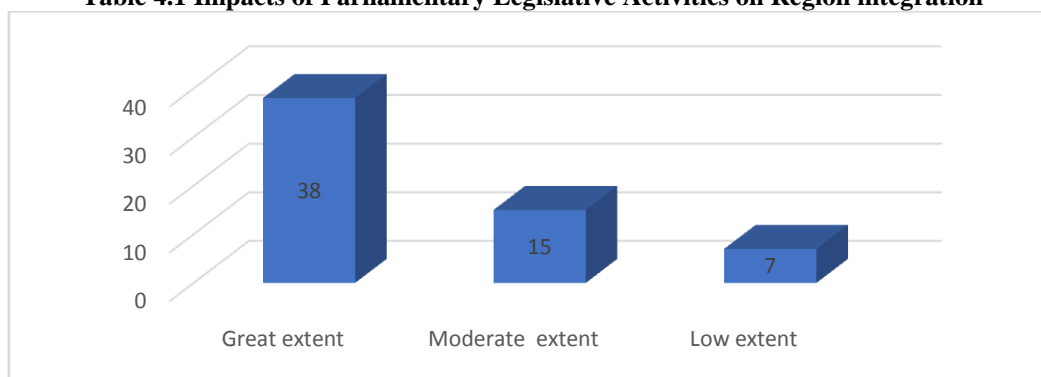
Table 4.5 show responses given by the respondents showing the impacts of Rwanda parliament legislative activities on the promotion of EAC. Questionnaires were organized in Likert scale format and respondents were asked to show the extent to which they agree or disagree with the provided statement. Analysis and presentation were also based on the provided statements. On the first statement 50 percent strongly agreed that Parliamentarians create legal environment which facilitate EAC integration. On the second statement, 60 percent were neutral about the fact that representation of Rwandan MPs to EALA contributed on EAC integration. On the third statement, 70 percent strongly agreed that the representation of Rwandan MPs to EALA contributed on EAC integration.

On the fourth statement, 60 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that parliament’s members formulated laws, which protect Rwanda and Rwandese in the deals of regional integration. Last but not the least 90 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that Parliamentarians have oversight responsibilities to promote regional integration.

These results are consistent with McCarthy's 1995 findings, which indicated that regional integration in Africa differs from that in other developing countries regions due to Pan- Africanism of continental identity and consistency. The move towards regional integration in Africa stems from the slavery and colonial experiences of Africans both within and in the diaspora when they were dominated over by the West. In addition, Dubois were not comfortable with maintaining this status quo hence mobilized others to fight against racist domination that subjected Africa to overreliance on the West for primary export commodity driving the pan Africanist agenda

Matera (2005). There was also a need to determine the extent to which parliamentary Legislative activities impacts the promotion of East African Community regional integration to this end relevant data was collected, after analysis there was presented in the figure 4.1.

Table 4.1 Impacts of Parliamentary Legislative Activities on Region integration



Source: Primary data (2022)

Figure 4.1 shows that majority of the respondents in this study noted that parliamentary legislative activities has great impact on region integration as indicated by 38 out of 60 respondents of this study. These findings were in line with the findings presented by Dirar’s (2014) who argued that the founding fathers of African regional integration had differing ways on approaching integration although they were all in agreement that Africa needed to integrate, his conclusion is based on the remarks by the three presidents. These findings were transformation of the OAU to AU in the millennium through the Abuja Treaty brought with it an increased emphasis on RECs which were considered building blocks towards the full realisation of the African Economic Community (AEC) Bensah (2011) The delivery of services within these RECs differs from one REC to another.

4.2.2 Relationship between Legislative activities of National Parliaments and East African Community regional integration

There was a need to establish the relationship between Legislative activities of National Parliament and East African Community regional integration. The relevant data was collected. After data analysis, the collected data was presented in the Table 4.5.

Table 4. 5: Relationship between Legislative activities of National Parliament and East African Community regional integration

STATEMENTS	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Legislative activities of Rwandan parliament contribute to the promotion of EAC integration.	6	10	0	00	6	10	12	20	36	60
The legislation activities of Parliament of Rwanda correlated with EAC regional integration by providing legal environments.	0	00	0	00	12	20	6	10	42	70
Parliament of Rwanda formulate laws and regulations which correlated with EAC Regional integration	0	00	0	00	6	10	0	00	54	90
Parliament’s members formulated laws which protect Rwanda and Rwandese in the deals of regional integration.	12	20	0	00	0	00	18	30	30	50
Members of parliament have oversight responsibilities to promote regional integration.	0	00	0	00	18	30	30	50	12	20

Source: Primary Data (2022)

Table 4.6 show summarized responses given by the respondents aimed at establishing relationship between legislative activities of national parliament and the promotion of East African Community regional integration. In the findings, the majority at 60 percent indicated that the Legislative activities of Rwandan parliament contribute to the promotion of EAC integration. On the second statement, 70 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that legislation activities of parliament of Rwanda correlated with EAC regional integration by providing legal environments.

As long as third statement get considered it was revealed that 90 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that parliament’s members of Rwanda correlated with EAC Regional integration through formulation of laws and regulations., the fourth statement the findings indicated that 50 percent strongly agreed that parliament’s members formulated laws which protect Rwanda and Rwandese in the deals of regional integration. While on the fifth statement, at least 50 percent of the respondent strongly agreed that Members of parliament have oversight responsibilities to promote regional integration.

The AU has put up structures to facilitate involvement of African citizens in its affairs. The Pan-African Parliament (PAP) was created with the express purpose of providing African peoples and their grassroots groups a platform to participate more actively in conversations and decisions affecting the continent Walraven (2004). PAP’s performance has been limited by its status as a consultative body and not a full legislative body. This, according to Aggad is due to absence of political will among the leaders to empower the parliament.

Furthermore, Sore (2010) argues that PAP reviews are so dependent on signatory nations will that they put the parliament at risk of being placed on indefinite probation even if they provide clearly beneficial outcomes. Other legislative bodies have equally experienced similar predicament as PAP’s. SADC ‘s PF for instance, is equally a consultative body with minimal legislative, oversight and budget powers. This, according to Musavengana¹⁹ is due to SADC governments being averse towards being held accountable by parliaments and ordinary citizens. In addition to this, Karl Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to determine the extent to which legislative activities of National parliament correlated with East African Community regional integration, computed data were presented in the table 4.6.

Table 4. 5: Relationship between Parliamentary Legislative activities of Rwanda Parliament and East African Community regional integration

Correlations			
n ^o	Independent Variables	Statistical test	East African Community regional integration
1	Legislative activities	Pearson Correlation Sig.(2-tailed)	.257 .002

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

Listwise N=60

Computation was based on the confidence level of 95 percent.

Source: Primary Data (2022).

Table 4.7 shows that there is a low positive degree of relationship between legislative activities of Rwandan parliament and East African community regional integration. This was indicated by $r= 0.257$ $p(002)$. This tells us that increase in parliamentary legislative activities will led to the improvement of East African Community integration and development.

These findings were in line with those of Hasse (2013), who discovered that both soft and hard infrastructure constraints—such as insufficient or nonexistent road and rail networks, a lack of productive capacity, the proliferation of non-tariff barriers like rules of origin and regulatory policies, provided by a combination customs clearance line at border posts, the slow implementation of regional trade agreements, and the prevalence of overlap—have significantly slowed progress.

4.2.3 Role played by Rwandan Parliament in the promotion of East African Community regional integration

There was also a need to assess. To this end relevant data was collected, after data analysis, the collected data was presented in the Table 4.8. The third objective that this study was aimed to achieve was to analyse the role played by Rwandan Parliament in the promotion of East African Community regional integration. To achieve this objective relevant questionnaire were administrated to 60 respondents’ who were the members of the parliaments. The posed questions were informing of statement; the respondents show the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the provided statement. The after-data analysis, the collected data were summarized in the table 4.8.

Table 4. 6: Role played by Rwandan Parliament in the promotion of East African Community regional integration

STATEMENTS	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
There is a room for collaboration between Rwanda Parliament and EALA to challenge topics on a table.	6	10	0	00	6	10	12	20	36	60

The representation mandate of Rwanda MPs seemed to be limited to national boundaries.	0	00	0	00	12	20	6	10	42	70
Parliamentary correspondences from EALA including Bills get debated at Parliamentary level in the EAC Partner States.	0	00	0	00	2	10	0	00		90
EAC National Parliaments of Partner States sometimes influence regional integration	12	20	0	00	0	00	18	30	30	50
EAC National Parliaments contribute in speeding up the commitments and projects meant for regional integration implementation calendar.	0	00	0	00	18	30	30	50	12	20
EAC National Parliaments often debate and oversee the process of regional integration.	0	00	16	27	13	22	31	51	0	00

Source: Primary Data (2021)

Table 4.8 presented responses given by participants showing the contribution of national parliament in the promotion of EAC. Making the point a case on the first statement about 60% of the respondents strongly agreed that there is a room for collaboration between Rwanda parliament and EALA to challenge topics on a table. On the second statement about 70% strongly agreed that the representation mandate of Rwanda MPs seemed to be limited to national boundaries.

On the third statement about 90 percent indicated that parliamentary correspondences from EALA including Bills get debated at Parliamentary level in the EAC Partner States. On the fourth statement, 50 percent indicated that parliamentary correspondences from EALA including bills get debated at parliamentary level in the EAC partner states. On the fifth statement about 50 percent agreed that EAC National Parliaments contribute in speeding up the commitments and projects meant for regional integration implementation calendar, whereas on the sixth statement, about 51 percent indicated that EAC National parliaments often debate and oversee the process of regional integration.

These results agree with those made public by UNDP (2011), which found that quasi-monopolistic trucking industries that are protected by regulations have a role in the high cost of transportation in many African nations. No number of better roads or more efficient border crossing procedures will be able to solve this issue because it falls under the jurisdiction of regulatory reform and competition policies.

4.3.4 EAC Regional integration and related Challenges

There was a need to establish the challenges that EAC regional integration is faced. In this concerns different challenged have been discussed but the main ones were presented in the Table 4.9.

Table 4. 7: EAC Regional Integration and Related Challenges

STATEMENTS	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
State Self-Interest seems to be barrier to EAC regional integration.	6	10	0	00	6	10	12	20	36	60
Political will can be a challenge to the promotion of EAC regional integration.	0	00	0	00	4	20	2	10	48	70
Lower involvement of civil society seems to be a limitation in promoting EAC regional integration.	0	00	0	00	6	10	0	00	54	90
Citizens' participation in regional integration is a cause which affect the promotion of EAC regional integration.	4	20	0	00	0	00	6	30	30	50
External impact and negotiating power affect negatively EAC regional integration.	0	00	0	00	18	30	30	50	12	20

Source: Primary data, (2022)

Table 4.9 shows the challenges that are affecting East African community integration. In these particular concerns, about 60 percent indicated that state Self-Interest seems to be barrier to EAC regional integration. About 70 percent of the respondent indicated that political will among members states is still a challenge to the promotion of EAC regional integration. About 90 percent indicated that Lower involvement of civil society seems to be a limitation in promoting EAC regional integration. About 50 percent of the respondents indicated that Citizens' participation in regional integration is a cause, which affect the promotion

of EAC regional integration, last but not the least about 50 percent of the respondents agreed that External impact and negotiating power affect negatively EAC regional integration.

These results were not dissimilar from those reported by Buigut (2011), who found that geographic conditions also impede the exchange of products, particularly when lengthy distances and geographic obstacles are coupled with inadequate infrastructure. Non-tariff barriers still exist, which must be added to these challenges. However, it must be believed that illegal or legal informal trading continues on a wide scale and is not captured in the data. Poor coordination of economic policy, along with insufficient levels of interstate trade, is a major barrier to successful regional integration. The political objectives of the member states exhibit some significant differences, according to a recent study by the University of Dubai.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMANDATION

Based on the findings presented in this study, it was concluded that legislative activities of parliamentary members have a significant role impact on the promotion of EAC integration. It was also concluded that there is a low positive degree of relationship between legislative activities of Rwandan parliament and East African community regional integration as indicated by $r= 0.257$ p (002). Last but not the least, majority of the participants agreed that Rwandan parliament played a significant role in the promotion of East African Community.

Recommendations:

In relation to the conclusion of this study, the researcher gives the following recommendations: The members of parliament of Rwanda are encouraged to formulate laws which stimulate region and international collaboration between Rwanda and world nations. The government of Rwanda is encouraged to work collaboratively with the national parliament to scrutinize all possible ways to increase Rwandese interest in East African Community.

In collaboration with other member nations, the Rwandan Parliament should work to end resource-wasting membership in regional blocs that overlap. Based on the state's strategic or economic interests, there should be a clear advantage for a member state to join any regional bloc. It is essential to obtain member nations of the EAC ongoing commitment to the swift adoption and implementation of laws passed by the EALA. The Rwandan Parliament, like the other EALA members, must work to keep faith in the ability of the EALA to pass legislation that benefit the entire region and do not harm any particular section of it.

On the direction and authority of each Parliament and the society as a whole, proper public engagement should always be performed among all stakeholders and citizens of each member state. Before joining any regional block, this needs to be done, and ongoing civic education should be maintained at regular intervals. The Rwandan Parliament shall create a comprehensive program in collaboration with other member states to guarantee that the assembly's operations and/or the community's overall well-being are not hindered by a lack of resources, whether it be financial, human capability, or institutional strengthening.

Additionally, EALA departments and the community at large should make wise use of the few public resources that have been given to them. The Rwandan Parliament should establish mechanisms for the capacity building of policy formulators at the national level in order to ensure coordinated policy formulation at each state level that does not conflict with one another, which then enables easy coordination at the regional level and makes its implementation even at state level to be uncomplicated. This process includes planning, public policy analysis and or formulation, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, all of which call for adequately bolstering institutional and human resource competence. The Rwandan Parliament should make sure that appropriate diplomatic consultations always come before the passage of any legislation in order to ensure commitment and consensus. This will make it possible for the laws to be implemented easily after they are passed in each Member stake in the block.

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