Press Release

5th March 2013

TANGO Establishes an Online Forum on East African Integration agenda

Tanzanian CSOs have stepped-up engagement in the East Africa Community (EAC) Integration Process. This comes in a wake of the launching by the Tanzania Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (TANGO) of citizens' online discussion forum on EAC regional integration issues.

The launch takes place today (5th March 2013) at the Serena Hotel and will be officiated by Hon. Samuel Sitta the Tanzania Minister for East African Cooperation.

Termed the "CSO Portal on EAC integration" the portal seeks to provide ordinary citizens of the EAC a voice on the trends and wont of the regional integration process. The portal whose address is (www.tangoforum.or.tz) will cover issues related to Trade, Governance and Accountability, Common Market, Customs and the Involvement of Marginalized Groups among others.

The portal has been constructed in a bid to actualize articles 127, 128 and 129 of the East African Community Treaty that provides for the participation of Private Sector and Civil Society Organizations.

Despite the platform being hosted by a civil society organization (TANGO) essentially the portal is an EAC citizens dialogue platform which welcomes views from the ordinary citizens, small-scale farmers and traders, private sector and the public sector actors.

The by-product of the discussions from the portal will be synthesized into brief papers and action alert notes that will be disseminated to government, EAC organs, civil society, private sector and other relevant stakeholders.

TradeMark East Africa Tanzania, the financiers of the portal project, say that they are supporting the TANGO project due to their belief that civil society, reaches citizens of East Africa in a unique way, and therefore the need to support such efforts as the TANGO portal which educate and inform EAC citizens more about regional integration agenda.

Notes to Editors

* The TANGO EAC Forum has been established for Civil Society Organizations, the Private Sector, the Public Sector, and other relevant stakeholders to discuss EAC regional integration issues and processes. The portal has relevant documents on EAC integration, and allows members to upload and download best practices in form of attachments of text, audio, and/or video. Discussions open for a specified period, and after closure, synthesized into a Policy Brief, and Action Alert Note, to be submitted to relevant actors including the Government and relevant organs at the EAC Secretariat.

* The Tanzania Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (TANGO) is an apex institution for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the country. TANGO's mission is to empower its members and other CSOs to effectively engage and influence policies through capacity development, information sharing and coordination.

* TradeMark East Africa (TMEA) is a not-for-profit organization that supports the EAC Secretariat, national governments, private sector and civil society so they can enhance trade and markets in the region for the benefit of all East Africans. TradeMark East Africa supports the CSOs through grants, generation of evidence-based information, capacity building, and establishment of regional dialogue platforms on key issues affecting trade, equitable participation and economic growth.

* The EAC integration processes include a Customs Union, Common Market, Monetary Union and Political Federation in order of establishment. The region is now at the stage of implementing a Common Market.

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