

**ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY HON. EZEKIEL MAIGE (MP),
DEPUTY MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL
RESOURCES AND TOURISM OF THE UNITED REPUBLIC OF
TANZANIA AND REPRESENTATIVE OF THE INCOMING
PRESIDENT OF THE 9TH GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE
LUSAKA AGREEMENT, IMPERIAL HOTEL, KAMPALA,
UGANDA, 3RD OCTOBER 2008.**

Honourable Ministers,
The Director of the Lusaka Agreement Task Force,
Representative of the Executive Director of UNEP,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Technical Experts
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank my colleagues for according me great honour to serve as President of the 9th Governing Council of the Lusaka Agreement.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the newly elected Bureau Officers: Hon. Henri Djombo (MP), Minister for Forest Economy of the Republic of Congo as Vice President and Hon. Serapio Rukundo (MP), Minister of State for Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities of the Republic of Uganda as Rapporteur.

May I also take this opportunity to acknowledge the impressive performance of our predecessors under the able leadership of Honourable Dr. Noah Wekesa (MP), Minister for Forestry and Wildlife of the Republic of Kenya. The significant achievements made include the positive progress in the implementation of the Task Force Strategic Plan and strengthening the capacities of other institutions established under the Agreement to effectively implement its objectives.

The Bureau of the 9th Governing Council is being elected to office at a time when most African countries are facing a myriad of challenges in fighting wildlife crime. I am glad to note that the Task Force and the National Bureaus have tirelessly stepped up their efforts to address this problem.

LATF/LAGC.9/3.7

However, the biggest challenge will continue to be mobilization of resources required to undertake law enforcement activities.

For the Task Force, I understand that financial resources needed to implement its strategic plan are a very big challenge. As the Bureau is encouraging the Task Force to continue its effort of mobilizing resources, may I take this opportunity to urge Parties to continue complying with their financial obligations and support the Task Force to enable it operate proficiently.

I am informed that the Financial Strategy to sustain the operations of the Task Force was developed and approved by the last Bureau. I wish to inform you that the current Bureau will spearhead all efforts which will ensure the positive progress of achieving these strategies and in so doing ensure financial sustainability of the Task Force.

I also wish to thank the cooperating partners for their continued support. Indeed, on behalf of the Bureau I wish to recognize the tremendous support accorded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in the implementation of the Agreement.

I wish to reassure you all that the Bureau Officers will always guide and attend to the Secretariat on the affairs of the Agreement from time to time.

During the tenure of the 9th Governing Council, we will ensure that we continue building on the already laid foundation while soliciting and anticipating the necessary support from all the member states to ensure that the objectives of the Agreement are attained.

Honorable Ministers,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are aware of the seriousness of cross border wildlife crime in our region and the fact that this crime cannot be fought in isolation need not be overemphasized as the threats are obvious to all of us. This therefore requires closer law enforcement cooperation between states and relevant agencies. In this regard, may I call upon Non-Party States to accede to the Agreement to enable us collectively achieve our goal of curtailing wildlife crime in the region.

LATF/LAGC.9/3.7

It is my hope that we as Governors will take lead in promoting the Agreement by making use of regional and sub-regional fora such as at SADC, EAC and COMIFAC to advance the Lusaka Agreement.

I encourage our cooperating partners to continue supporting the Agreement and in particular the work of the Task Force in implementation of its programmes.

Finally, I look forward to fruitful deliberations at this Governing Council Meeting and it is my hope that it will come up with resolutions that will propel the Lusaka Agreement to greater heights.

Thank you.

Hon. Ezekiel Maige (MP)
Representative of the President, 9th Governing Council