Communications for all in East Africa

REPORT OF THE 28TH EACO ASSEMBLY OF BROADCASTING OPERATORS HELD ON 28TH JUNE 2023, IN BUJUMBURA-BURUNDI

1.0.   OPENING OF THE MEETING

The 28th Assembly of Broadcasting Operators of EACO was held on 28th June 2023.

Mr. Arthur ASIIMWE, the Chairperson of Broadcasting Assembly and Director General of Rwanda Broadcasting Agency (RBA) welcomed the participants present to the 28th Assembly of Broadcasters of EACO, and thanked the members of WG5 for their endeavours to achieve the ToRs that were the assignment to this Working Group during the past two years.

The meeting was attended by 14 members who included Broadcasting Operators and National Regulatory bodies of the EACO members, namely Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, and coordinated by the EACO Secretariat

2.0.   ELECTION OF THE BUREAU

In accordance with the Rules and Procedures of the EACO, the Assembly of Broadcasting Operators elected the Rapporteurs of the bureau as follows:

a) Mr. John MUNKONDYA   *1st Rapporteur-Tanzania*
b) Mr. Mathias NDAYIRAGIJE   *2nd Rapporteur- Burundi*

3.0.   ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was adopted without amendments. The agenda is contained in *Annex 1.*

4.0.   REPORT OF OUTGOING CHAIRPERSON OF THE BROADCAST ASSEMBLY

Mr. Arthur ASIIMWE, the outgoing chairperson presented his report on the work that he has been done during his tenure to the Broadcast Assembly.

The following were highlighted from the report of the outgoing chairperson:
   i.   Development of the new EACO strategic (2023-2028). This contains priorities for broadcasting sector under EACO Working Group 5.

ii.   WRC-23 preparatory Workshops:

One of the EACO activities for this year is to coordinate the harmonization of the EACO positions for the World Radio-communication Conference 2023. This mandate was given to EACO WG5 on Broadcasting Development, Spectrum Management & Media Services Regulations.

It was reported that, EACO has organized and held seven (9) preparatory meetings (both Physical and online) for WRC-23 during this cycle aimed at harmonizing EACO position on different Agenda Items.

Further reported that, a final online meeting was held on 22nd June 2023 to obtain a harmonised position on different agenda items including Agenda item 1.5 which touches the future of broadcasting.

iii.   Policy Harmonisation at the EACO Working Groups especially WG5 which look at Broadcasting issues. These include:

a. Carried out a study on Sustainability of Free To Air Television; and
b. Carried out both Mobile and FM broadcasting Cross-border coordination in the region.

iv.   Challenges in the sector which include:

a. Sustainability of Free-To-Air Television;
b. COVID 19: This has greatly affected a number of business, with limitation to movement of persons. This has affected access to ICT services;
c. The broadcastings sector content developers are affected by Copyrights infringement and piracy challenges;
d. Local content development and regulation; and
e. Changes in the way traditional way broadcasting is delivered especially through the use of the internet.

v.   Recommendations:

a. Broadcast Operators are encouraged to actively participate in the work of EACO under WG5 so that core issues in the area of broadcasting are discussed and prioritised; and
b. Ensure to identify and address topical issues affecting the ICT industry on broadcasting in East African Region.

The details of the report are provided in *Annex 2*.

5.0.   HANDOVER OF THE CHAIRPERSON

The outgoing chairperson of the Broadcasting Assembly Mr. Arthur ASIIMWE from Rwanda Broadcasting Agency (RBA) has handed over the chairmanship to Mr. Jonas NDIKUMUREMYI, the Director General of National Radio of Burundi.

Mr. Jonas NDIKUMUREMYI thanked the outgoing for the great chairmanship as well as the WG5 for the achievements made and committed to continue the good work that was realised for the past two years.

6.0.   PRESENTATION OF THE REPORTS OF THE WG5

Mr Andrew Kisaka, the chairperson of WG05 on Broadcasting Development, Spectrum Management & Media Services Regulations gave a presentation on the works of WG5.

The details of this WG05 report are available in the *Annex 3.*

The following documents in the broadcasting sector are ready for adoption and approval by the Congress:

1. EACO Harmonized framework for Satellite Licensing;
2. EACO radio frequency spectrum policy guidelines;
3. EACO Satellite filing and Coordination guidelines;
4. Harmonized spectrum management strategy and roadmap for future spectrum release;
5. EACO Radio Frequency Spectrum Allocation Plan; and
6. Guidelines for content sharing, digital rights management and digital content management.

7.0.   IDENTIFY CROSS CUTTING ISSUES TO BE SHARED IN THE JOINT WORKING COMMITTEE

The Broadcast Assembly meeting identified the following cross cutting issues:

1) Cross border Frequency coordination requires participation of both broadcasting and mobile operators;
2) Participation in the work of WRC-23; and
3) Agenda item 1.5 for WRC-23.

8.0.   WAY FORWARD FOR THE TORS IN REGARD TO BROADCASTING AND PLAN FOR THE BROADCASTING ASSEMBLY FOR THE NEXT CYCLE

The following were identified as way forward for the Broadcasting Assembly for the next cycle, 2023/2024 & 2024/2025:

1. Develop a Harmonized Model Digital Broadcasting Policy and Regulatory Framework (Adopted from abolished WG1);
2. Development of harmonized framework on the Authorization and Use of Maritime Frequencies, Maritime Mobile Service Identities (MMSI) and call signs within the region;
3. Development of harmonised guidelines for Broadcasting content;
4. Development of guidelines on the Authorisation and use of Amateur radio frequencies in the region;
5. Development of guidelines on the authorisation and use of Meteorological frequencies in the region;
6. Development of guideline on the authorisation and use of Aeronautical frequencies in the region;
7. Review existing EACO cross-border frequency coordination framework;
8. Development of a regulatory framework for Local Content Development and Management;
9. Conduct studies on the impact of emerging technologies on regulation (including spectrum management and broadcasting);
10. Coordinate the implementation of mobile cross-border frequency framework;
11. Coordinate the implementation of FM Radio cross-border Framework.
12. Continue with the studies on the sustainability of FTA television broadcasting services.

9.0 Recommendations from the Broadcasting Assembly:

1. Follow, understand and build capacity in the latest Broadcasting technologies
2. Continue the work on Sustainability of FTA and come up with harmonised approach to sustain the FTA television broadcasting services
3. Encourage attendance of broadcasters in the work of EACO
4. Promote Digital Sound Broadcasting (DSB) development and determine the right standards and licensing approach
5. Follow and actively participate in WRC-23 agenda items related to broadcasting services especially spectrum in the UHF band of 470-694 MHz
6. Broadcasting Satellite project for East Africa should be spearheaded to ensure that the objectives are realised.
7. EACO Member states should follow through and work together to ensure that submissions made under resolution 559 (WRC-19) are completed in time for WRC-23 consideration and approval.
8. Develop capacity on space technology

9.1 On technical Studies towards WRC agenda items and others:

It was observed that progress of initiated studies within EACO were severely hampered by time and technical resource limitations. Due to these limitations, it was not possible to conclude some of those studies in time or at all. **The following is recommended to remedy these challenges**;

1. Identify WRC agenda items of interest for undertaking studies by EACO early enough and quantify the required resources to undertake such studies.
2. Establish clear engagement terms of reference with partner organizations with whom EACO can collaborate to undertake the identified studies.
3. Ensure the results of these studies form input contributions from EACO to ITU Study Groups and Working Parties to ensure EACO administrations have an effective participation and strong voice that will help to promote their interests at the ITU.
4. Consider conducting trainings within EACO on affordable simulation software like SIMCAT to build the capacities of local experts in undertaking certain studies.

9.2 Radio-Communication Assembly

The meeting was reminded about the forthcoming ITU Radio-communication Assembly (RA-23) and the required preparatory process. Members are urged to take the RA-23 preparations into consideration as they prepare for WRC-23.

Recommended: for EACO Administrations to identify areas of interest in terms of responsibilities such as chairs and vice chairs at the various ITU-R study groups and express interest in a timely manner.

9.3 Cross- border Frequency Coordination

The importance of cross border frequency coordination was underscored and the need for reviewing the existing framework was also emphasized.

Recommended: to review the existing mobile cross border frequency coordination mechanism in the next cycle taking into account the newly established continental agreement on the same (Harmonized Calculation Methods For Africa – HCM4A)

9.4 Space applications

The working group noted the ongoing global space race and recalled that EACO had previously developed a concept note on CubeSats with relevant recommendations which could however not proceed far under the current setting of EACO.

Recommended: that EACO establishes a Working Group on Space Issues based on the proposed concept note and continue to encourage the different administrations to establish national space agencies while developing strategies for the ultimate establishment of a regional space agency.

10.0   CLOSING OF THE BROADCASTING ASSEMBLY

In the closing remarks, the Chairperson thanked the members and other participants for their participation in the Assembly meeting and were encouraged to actively participate in the future work of the Broadcasting Assembly.

The Chairperson therefore declared the meeting closed at 13:10 hrs CAT

11.0   CONCLUSIONS AND WAY FORWARD:

The Congress is hereby invited to:
> ➢ Note and adopt the report of the Broadcasting Assembly; and
> ➢ Provide any further guidance the Congress may deem necessary towards the effective and efficient performance of Working Group 5.

SUBMITTED

Jonas Ndikumuremyi

Chairperson

ANNEXES:

ANNEX 1: AGENDA FOR THE 28TH BROADCASTING ASSEMBLY

Agenda for
Broadcast Assembly

ANNEX 2: REPORT OF THE OUTGOING CHAIRPERSON OF THE BROADCAST ASSEMBLY

Report of
Outgoing Broadcast

ANNEX 3:   REPORTS OF THE WG05

Working Group 5
Presentation.pptx

ANNEX 4:   LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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