



**REPORT OF THE 28TH EACO REGULATORY ASSEMBLIES HELD
28TH JUNE, 2023, BUJUMBURA BURUNDI AT ROYAL PALACE HOTEL**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The 28th Assemblies of Regulators and the 25th Congress of the East African Communications Organization (EACO) took place on 26th to 30th 2023; under the theme **Enabling Connection of the Unconnected in the East African Region**. The event was hosted by ARCT, at Royal Palace Hotel, Bujumbura Burundi. The meeting was facilitated by the Republic of Burundi. The attendance lists attached herewith as **ANNEX I**.

The Regulatory Assembly considered reports from the Committees and the Working Groups namely:- Human resource committee (HRC), Legal & Constitutional Affairs Committee (LCAC) and the seven (7) Working Groups (WG1 – WG7).

The Assembly of Regulators noted implementation of Terms of reference (ToRs), challenges and recommendations presented by the Committees and Working Groups and adopted their recommendations as highlighted in this report.

2.0 OPENING OF THE MEETING

The meeting was officially opened by the Representative of the new Chairman of the Regulators Assembly Eng. Constaque Hakizimana, Director General of Burundi Regulatory Authority ARCT.

3.0 ELECTION OF THE BUREAU

The Bureau was formed as follows:

Chairman (Rep)	Eng. Constitute Hakizimana ((repre	ARCT
1 st Rapporteur	Mr. Emmanuel Misago	ARCT
2 nd Rapporteur	Mr. Mayor Moses	NCA
Secretariat	Ms. Norah Sitati	EACO Secretariat

4.0 ADOPTION OF AGENDA

The Agenda for the 28th Assembly of Regulators was adopted and is attached as **ANNEX I**

5.0 REMARKS OF THE OUT-GOING CHAIRMAN

The outgoing Chairman, Eng. Patrick Baganizi presented to the assembly the report of activities. He thanked the BURUNDI Regulatory Authority (ARCT) for hosting the meeting, the EACO Secretariat and all EACO Working Groups & Committees, which through their joint effort and commitment tried to achieve their tasks. The Chairman's remarks are attached as **ANNEX II**.

6.0 REMARKS OF THE IN-COMING CHAIRMAN.

The Representative of Chairperson, Eng. Hakizimana Constaque thanked the outgoing Chair, in particular for the impressive work done during his tenure and in the general the commitment of the Republic of Rwanda for the achievement. After he took the role of chairing the meeting. The in-coming Chairman's remarks are attached as **ANNEX III**.

7.0 CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS BY COMMITTEES AND THE WORKING GROUPS

7.1. REPORT OF HR COMMITTEE

Noted 1:

7.1.1 The following were noted from the presentation made by Chair of the Human resource committee Mr. Erasmo A. MBILINYI:

- (i) Implementation of the Education Policy
- (ii) Recruitment of the Liaison Manager/ICT
- (iii) Subsistence allowances rates and transport
- (iv) HRC participated in elaborating the Review of the current strategic plan 2023-2028
- (v) Comprehensive review of the Human Resources Manual
- (vi) Review of EACO organization structure for alignment to the Strategic Plan
- (vii) Capacity Building Program. HR coordinated the spider capacity building program for ICT regulators

(viii) Recruitment of Senior Officer, ICT.

7.1.2 Challenges

1. Low uptake of EACO training program
2. insufficient staff budget to run the Secretariat
3. Understaffing in the secretariat
4. Slow pace of joining the EAC
5. Inconsistence participation for some members

7.1.3. Recommendations:

1. EACO members to continue encouraging their staff to participate in EACO activities especially in trainings, workshops and meetings
2. The Regulatory Assembly is invited to note, consider and adopt the HRC Report of July 2021 to June 2023

The report was adopted by the Assembly and is attached here with as **ANNEX IV**

7.2 REPORT OF LEGAL & CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

7.2.1. Noted 2:

The following were noted from the presentation made by Mr. Timothee Rudaseswa, the Chair of LCAC:

- (i) Consideration of the issue of signing of the constitution by members;
- (ii) Consideration of category of members who had signed the EACO Constitution, paid membership fees but were not active in EACO activities;
- (iii) Category of members who have not signed the EACO constitution, not paid membership fees and are not active in EACO activities
- (iv) A proposal be made to Congress to amend the Constitution of EACO Constitution to provide for the following
- (v) Proposals for changes in the Constitution would cover amongst other issues the following: *The Function of the Assemblies, The Function of Congress, EXCOM, membership and Constitutional Sign-off*

7.2.2 Recommendations:

Secretariat should:

- a) Prepare a communique to Members with an explanation/rationale for the proposed amendments, asking for comments.

- b) Convene a Meeting of the LCAC to deliberate on and consider comments from EACO Members.
- c) LCAC to prepare the Draft Constitution for consideration by the EXCOM.
- d) LCAC to prepare the Draft Constitution for adoption by Congress.

Agreed 2:

The Assembly recommends:

- (i) Regulators should put more efforts in assisting member States to sign the EACO reviewed constitution.

The report was adopted by the Regulatory Assembly and is attached here with as **ANNEX V**

7.3 WG1: EACO COMMUNICATION SECTOR INDICATORS HARMONIZATION

Noted 3:

The report of WG1 presented by Ms. Juliette Nirera, Chair of WG1, which included;

7.3.1 The achievements

- I. Data Collection has been done for the FY 2022/2023, and Q1 for FY 2022/2023 and the respective reports prepared;
- II. Detailed report for Telecom indicators for Q1 was developed and presented to EXCOM ;
- III. The group developed harmonized postal and broadcasting indicators. Their integration to the database management system shall be done in the next financial year of 2023/2024 ;
- IV. A concept note was also developed to convert the project into a Working group and this was approved by EXCOM and the regional statistics shall be launched in this congress.

7.3.2. Recommendations:

- (i) Ensure regular participation in all meetings ;
- (ii) Cooperation with experienced bodies in Communication Data Analysis such as ITU, GSMA;
- (iii) Advanced Capacity Building for the Databank Working Group Members in state of the art Data science.

- (iv) Member countries to dedicate and facilitate its officers to the Working Groups for consistency and continuity.

Agreed 3.

The report of WG1 on was adopted by the Regulatory Assembly and is attached here with as **ANNEX VI**

7.4 WG2: ICT INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, CONNECTIVITY SHARING AND DIGITAL INCLUSION

Noted 4. The following was noted from the presentation by Paul Kiage, who represented the Chair of WG2.

- (i) The ToRs for the working group for the cycle 2021-2023;
- (ii) The meetings held during this cycle
- (iii) The implementation status of these ToRs
- (iv) Summary of completed work during the cycle
- (v) Planned activities under the new strategic plan 2023-2025

7.4.1 The challenges and proposals

1. Inconsistencies in attendance by members/ low attendance;
Proposal: Member States are requested to retain nominees to EACO Working Groups.
2. Lack of experts on specific subject areas being handed in the working groups;
Proposal: Member States should nominate experienced personnel as well as encourage Telecom Operators and Industry to attend these meetings and Working Groups since they are the subject experts. There is also need for Capacity Building on specific subject matters.
3. Delay in delivering Draft documents.

Proposal: Working Group Members are requested to devote adequate time to the working group's activities / deliverables

7.4.2 Recommendations:

WG2 requested the Assembly to NOTE and ADOPT the following completed documents.

- i) Guidelines for management of Critical Infrastructure in the Region
- ii) Best Practices for System/Network Management issues within the Region

Agreed 4.

The report of WG2 was adopted by the Regulatory Assembly and is attached here with as **ANNEX VII**

7.5 WG3: ICT APPLICATION, CONSUMER PROTECTION ISSUES AND CYBERSECURITY

Noted 5:

The following were noted from the presentation by Mr. Denis Loyatum, Chair of WG3:-

- (i) The ToRs for the working group for the cycle 2021-2023;
- (ii) The meetings held during this cycle
- (iii) The implementation status of these ToRs
- (iv) Summary of completed work during the cycle
- (v) Planned activities under the new strategic plan 2023-2025
- (vi) That the working group had completed three documents and were ready for adoption

7.5.1 Challenges faced by the WG3

- (i) Unavailability of Subject Matter Experts for both physical and online meetings ;
- (ii) Irregularity in participation: some members do not attend WG3 meetings regularly and this affects the assigned tasks ;
- (iii) Physical meetings may have been affected by budgetary constraints. ;

7.5.2 Recommendations

- (i) Member countries to adopt the strategy/policy documents and recommendations from the working group;
- (ii) Member countries to dedicate and facilitate its officers to specific Working Groups for consistency and continuity;
- (iii) Member countries to consult adequately before the working group meeting and collect inputs to the documents in elaboration;
- (iv) Each country/NRA to encourage operators to attend working groups meetings.

Agreed 5.

The report of WG3 was adopted by the Regulatory Assembly and is attached here with as **ANNEX VIII**

7.6 WG4: POSTAL & COURIER SERVICES DEVELOPMENT AND REGULATIONS

Noted 6:

The following were noted from the presentation made by Mr Daraus Muhwezi Jim, Chairperson of Working Group 4:

- (i) Universal service obligations: work on progress, developing the needs and data collection still on-going;
- (ii) Attended Workshop organized by PAPU;
- (iii) Development of a strategy on modernization and transformation of the postal sector initiated;
- (iv) Mobilizing funds for National Post code project in EAC members States;
- (v) Process started for hiring a consultant for the services of development of a framework for cross border mail transportation system;
- (vi) Coordination of automated quality performance test.

7.6.1 Challenges

- (i) Restrictions due to COVID19 pandemic;
- (ii) Inconsistency of participants in Working Group;
- (iii) Delay in providing data;
- (iv) Budget constraints;
- (v) Issues of internet connectivity during online meetings.

7.6.2 Recommendations

- (i) Needs to measure QoS based on outcomes of customer surveys;
- (ii) Implementation of National addressing;
- (iii) Designate permanent members in working groups to ensure continuity

Agreed 6:

The report of WG4 was adopted by the Regulatory Assembly and is attached here with as **ANNEX IX**

7.7 WG5 BROADCASTING DEVELOPMENT, SPECTRUM MANAGEMENT AND MEDIA SERVICES REGULATIONS.

Noted 7:

The following were noted in the presentation by Eng. Andrew Kisaka, Chair of WG5:

- (i) Four meetings (two virtual and two physical) were held;
- (ii) That Working Group 5 also handles EACO's regional preparations for ITU World Radiocommunication Conference and follows the study cycle towards developing harmonized regional positions for the conferences;
- (iii) WG5 held nine (9) preparatory meetings (both Physical and online) for WRC-23 preparations aimed at harmonizing EACO position on the 26 Agenda Items, and 15 Topics, managed to harmonise its position with a success rate of up to 97% ;
- (iv) WG5 meetings serve as a basis to develop EACO harmonised positions on all agenda items towards submission to the Africa Preparatory meetings (APMs) ;
- (v) WG5 also undertook studies to ensure regional needs are taken into account on WRC-23 agenda items ;
- (vi) WG5 completed six (6) documents and were ready for adoption

7.7.1. Recommendations

- I. For these EACO administrations to consider reviewing their current regulatory standing considering the benefits of similar regulatory framework and structures that would make harmonization of regulations and strategies much easier for the region ;
- II. 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 ;
- III. 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)
- IV. 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.

Agreed 7.

The report of WG5 was adopted by the Regulatory Assembly and is attached here with as **ANNEX X**

7.8 WG6: COMMUNICATIONS NUMBERING PLANS, IP ADDRESSING, SERVICES PRICING & INDUSTRY ANALYSIS

Noted 8.

The following were noted in the presentation by Mr. Lukas Musembi, Chair of WG6 according to ToRs of WG6:-

- (i) 6 meetings were held ;
- (ii) Elaboration of TORs and achievements;
- (iii) Elaboration of its activities in the new strategic plan (2023-2028);
- (iv) Developed a guideline for Competition assessments in the communication sector ;
- (v) Developed the Frequency Spectrum Pricing Guidelines ;
- (vi) Guidelines for metering and billing for voice and data services were developed ;
- (vii) Developed costing methodologies for regulated basic postal services;

7.8.1 Recommendations

- (i) Approve the four (4) completed output documents ;
- (ii) Urge member state to send relevant experts to participate in future work of the group (the group requires participation of two categories of specialist engineers and economists)

Agreed 8.

The report of WG6 was adopted by the Regulatory Assembly and is attached here with as **ANNEX XI**

7.9 WG7: E-WASTE MANAGEMENT & GREEN ICTs

Noted 9.

The following were noted from the presentation made by Mr. Juma Ooro, Chair of WG7:

- (i) The working group conducts its business through: physical meetings, online meetings, training, workshops
- (ii) WG 07 held three (3) physical meetings, nine (9) online meetings, four (4) physical workshops and three (3) webinars
- (iii) All EACO member countries were represented in the said meetings, workshops and activities. Consistency was maintained;
- (iv) WG 07 reviewed and revised its Work Plan. It was noted that 40 out of 49 deliverables were achieved

- (v) The current status of its implementation of the Work Plan is appended in the detailed report
- (vi) Model Framework on E-waste Management for the Region is in place
- (vii) The framework gave guidelines to countries regarding formulation of E-waste Management in the region
- (viii) Updates from National Steering Committees; The RSC held two (1) physical meeting on 15th February 2022 in Nairobi, Kenya; one physical meeting in Bujumbura, Burundi and five (5) online meetings to formulate EACO's 2nd Regional Strategy on E-waste management for the year 2022 – 2027.

7.9.1. Challenges

- I. Countries are at different levels on e-waste management;
- II. Low awareness levels on matters of e-waste;
- III. Constrained financial resources in implementing infrastructure for e-waste management;
- IV. Slow pace in reviewing the existing e-waste laws; policies, regulation and guidelines to reflect the current environment and formulation of new ones;
- V. Inadequate representation of service providers/operators (broadcasters) in wg07 meetings;
- VI. E- waste surveys not fully carried out
- VII. Counterfeit Gadgets Management is still a challenge

7.9.2. Recommendations:

- I. Countries to enact various laws, policies, regulations, guidelines and standards on e-waste management ;
- II. Member States to consider allocating a budget for e-waste management in order to conduct more awareness and fund e-waste management projects
- III. Member states to continue with the implementation of the 2nd Regional E-waste Management Strategy (2022– 2027) while sharing experiences and success stories.
- IV. Member states to device mechanisms for getting e-Waste from the Government and its institutions for proper disposal
- V. There is need to have more experts on Green ICTs and Counterfeit Gadgets management in WG 07
- VI. EACO member organizations should continue supporting the participation of their staff in ITU-T and ITU-D study groups related to E-waste.

Agreed 9.

The Assembly adopted the WG7 Report and is attached here with as **ANNEX XII**

8.0 Completed Documents Adopted by the Assemblies are as follows:

- I. Guidelines for management of Critical Infrastructure in the Region
- II. Best Practices for System/Network Management issues within the Region
- III. EACO Guidelines for Quality of Service for Mobile Voice Services
- IV. Manual on Harmonized Strategy to address risks in Digital Financial Services (DFS)
- V. Regional strategy for establishing and operationalization of Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs)
- VI. EACO Harmonized framework for Satellite Licensing
- VII. EACO radio frequency spectrum policy guidelines
- VIII. EACO Satellite filing and Coordination guidelines
- IX. Harmonized spectrum management strategy and roadmap for future spectrum release
- X. EACO Radio Frequency Spectrum Allocation Plan.
- XI. Guidelines for content sharing, digital rights management and digital content management
- XII. Guideline for Competition assessments in the communication sector
- XIII. EACO Frequency Spectrum Pricing Guidelines
- XIV. Guidelines for Metering and Billing for Voice and Data Services
- XV. Costing Methodologies for regulated basic Postal Services
- XVI. EACO Guidelines for Universal Postal Service and Access

9.0 SUBMISSION OF REGULATORY ASSEMBLY REPORT

This report is hereby submitted to the Congress for consideration and approval.

Dr. Samuel MUHIZI
CHAIRMAN, 28th EACO Regulators Assembly

Mr. Emmanuel MISAGO
First Rapporteur

Mr. Mayor MOSES

Second Rapporteur

Ms. Norah SITATI

Liaison Manager, HRA