The New East African Community comprising of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania (and probably Rwanda) has embarked on a serious and completely new Cooperation Treaty that is different from the defunct EAC which was disbanded in 1977. In the new set up priority is given to ensuring that the new community learns from history and does not repeat the mistakes of the defunct Community. Similarly, the new cooperation has facilitated the formation of the East African Business Council (EABC), comprising apex bodies of private sector organizations in the three member states. Similarly, the East African Trade Union Council (EATUC) has been granted Observer status in the deliberative and policy making organs of the Cooperation. Likewise similar initiatives have been taken (or are underway) in other sectors e.g sports, tertiary education etc. However given the past history, social, cultural and economic diversity and indeed the impact of inevitable globalization process, there are definitely opportunities to be exploited and monumental challenges to be faced in order to move the Cooperation to a stage that no single leader or even three/four of them could reverse the Cooperation and its gains. The paper discusses the role of the Non-State Actors (NSAs) and how they can be harnessed to promote the Cooperation
and indeed the desired goal of achieving democratization, improved service
delivery, economic growth and poverty reduction, all of which are key and
strategic ingredients for sustainable development. In developing the paper, an
attempt has been made to situate NSAs in a proper context, and also conceptual
issues regarding NSAs in the context of EAC were discussed. The remaining part
of the paper concentrated on the major challenges ahead and the Way Forward
as NSAs and EAC focus on building mutual trust and collaborative partnership
for more solid, productive and sustainable integration in East Africa and beyond.

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The Context

The purpose of an East African Federation is best described by the following
quotations:
“The balkanization of Africa into 53, mostly sub-optimal states, has meant that Africa cannot have a large internal market under one Political Authority; have no power to negotiate with the rest of the world..... This balkanization must ... wound up”

H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni
President, Republic of Uganda

“We have everything to gain in East African Federation in terms of political stability, greater feeling in safety in numbers and as an economic entity better able to fight poverty”

H.E. Benjamin Mkapa
President, United Republic of Tanzania

“I firmly believe that regional integration is not a choice but a necessary strategy for sustainable development... On a cultural level, regional integration solidifies the unity of communities with personal ties and common history, language and culture”.

H.E. Mwai Kibaki
President, Republic of Kenya

The East African countries have a fairly long history of integration since colonial times. The post independence initiatives had a historical context and urgency for integration are relevant in understanding the context of the current efforts towards closer integration. At the same time the recent embrace of regionalization is a political and economic response to globalization as states try to control at a regional level what they may have failed to manage at a national level [Rugumamu 2005:68]. Regionalism refers also to a process of policy coordination, harmonization and adjustment designed to facilitate closer economic and political interdependence, and to manage the externalities that
arise from it [Haggard, 1995] In fact, the past two decades have witnessed a resurgence, revitalization or expansion of regional economic cooperation and integration groupings at the global level. Regionalism is also seen as a force that helps channel the resources of economies and people into activities where they are likely to excel. It is indeed a force that softens the effects of globalization by pooling state policies and resources in order to compensate for the loss of national policy and sovereignty. Ideally, regional economic integration represents an extension in international economic relations, driven by economic mechanisms, but frequently with political objectives as the key, strategic and underlying force.

However it needs to be emphasized upfront that it is the political process with unflinching political commitment at all levels that is the engine of integration. Inherent in all this is also the commitment to broad popular participation and inclusion of all segments of the people in the East African partner countries. Broadly speaking, this refers to the role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) or invariably, called Non-State Actors (NSAs). An attempt will be made in this paper to discuss the role of NSAs in the new East African Cooperation. The main focus of the paper will be on the opportunities, provided by the inclusion of NSAs, the challenges governments in East Africa and NSAs themselves have to overcome and the way Forward towards closer, more effective and productive East African Cooperation (EAC). The main underlying thesis is that the goals and objectives of the new EAC can hardly be realized and sustained by the efforts of Governments alone. History still haunts this region for our failure to demand greater space and voice in the former East African Community in which the three
leaders had almost an absolute monopoly on its fate. The more the many and
diverse groups of people take an active role in the new set up, the more it is
“socialized” among the East African people, the less monopoly the leaders will
have on it and the better for all stakeholders.

Immediately following this introduction, an attempt will be made to
contextualize NSAs followed by a broad conceptual framework regarding
NSAs. Following this will be an analysis of challenges which have to be
overcome in order to build and sustain an effective NSAs – EAC relationship and
collaborative partnership and mutual respect, confidence and trust. Following
this part will be a discussion on the Way Forward and the last part will be a
concluding summary of the paper.

**NSAs Contextualized**

In our view the role of NSAs is as important as it was during Africa’s anti-
colonial struggles in which the self activity of ordinary people, organized in their
communities, labour, youth, disabled and women’s groups played a strategic and
pivotal role in supporting the political parties during the fight for political
independence [Bond, 2005:1]. Unlike the former East African Community, the
new EAC bold initiative is unique, in that it is an East African drive, largely East African owned and East African led renewal and development programme. However one needs to take note of the lack of effective measures for NSAs sustained active involvement, participation and inclusion and indeed “staying engaged” in various EAC issues is still wanting. It is also important to recognize that it is a common flaw that objectives of EAC are politically correct and even responding to practical needs, but even so way beyond the response capacity. It should also be appreciated that experiences with NSA participation in advocacy, policy and dialogue processes are relatively recent in EAC partner states. As it will be argued later in this paper, more needs to be done to make NSAs weigh more on advocacy, policy and dialogue at EAC level. It is worth appreciating that Chapter 25 of the EAC Treaty recognizes the lead role of the Private Sector and Civil Society in the development process. In particular Article 129 only acknowledges the symbiotic partnership between the public and private sector during policy formulation, programme prioritization and implementation. Towards this end, and without any direction from the Secretariat, a number of professional and Civil Societies [Appendix X] have formed East African bodies which could now be effectively harnessed during both the Customs Union and Common Market stages to form a solid foundation for the Political Federation.

Indeed a number of Professional Associations, Civil Society Organizations, Local Government Associations, Youth and Women organizations have formed alliances across East African borders and some of them meet regularly. These associations are expected to play critical roles in civic (not political) education on the need for Federation in specific target groups [The
Committee on Fast Tracking East African Federation, 2005:58]. The Civil Society and Professional Associations expect to play robust roles in the following areas: First, advocacy and sensitization of the citizenship towards EAC goals and objectives, including the Political Federation. Second, ensure entrenchment of Good Governance, Human Rights, Environmental Conservation and setting up of conflict resolution mechanisms. In our view the above reflects a sustained trend since the late 1980s of donor agencies and religious organizations channeling more and more funds through NSAs as a means to promote democratic governance. The basic assumption is that NSAs and good governance are mutually reinforcing. On the other hand, the enforcement of good governance opens up new spaces and voices for active citizen participation, since freedom of association, expression, information and inclusiveness are strategically crucial to the emergence of vibrant NSAs and the acceptance of pluralism and diversity. These, in our view, are the cornerstones of “taking the EAC to the people” (who are sovereign) where EAC actually is not only anchored but it belongs to the ordinary people. On the other hand, an enabling environment is key to allow NSAs to become change agents that influence public policy in favour of democracy, popular empowerment and public – sector accountability. NSAs are thus expected to fulfill several (non-exclusive) roles: as welfare service providers, as advocates, as watchdogs and as development partners. The following Figure provides a clearer picture of these roles.

**Figure I: Roles of Civil Society Organizations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Welfare Service Delivery</th>
<th>Advocacy</th>
<th>Watchdog Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil society organizations</td>
<td>Civil society</td>
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can provide the necessary institutional basis for service delivery when questions of effectiveness and responsiveness of the state arise.

At the local level, grassroots organizations can promote collective action to improve access to basic services (e.g., health and education).

| Organizations can play a role in political life by reiterating the legitimate right of citizens to make demands upon the state. Civic education programmes can help mobilize people and encourage previously marginalized groups to enter the political arena. Civil society organizations are effective vehicles for representing and negotiating citizens' interests vis-à-vis the state. | Organizations can promote good governance and social equity by monitoring both state and market performance. Non-state organizations increasingly use the dissemination of information – on current legislations, public expenditure, policy implementation, achievements and drawbacks in promotion of the rule of law, good governance, and respect of human rights-as a tool to keep an eye on state performance. |

In our view as NSAs become more active, visible and powerful in the public sphere at EAC level, they raise their credibility and legitimacy and can no longer be taken for granted. Indeed NSA actors and players need to endorse the good governance agenda in EAC if they are to earn and deserve public trust nationally and at EAC level. Given what has been said above, it is evident that processes of political and economic liberalization nationally, regionally and globally have altered the role of state and created inevitably greater space and voice for a diversity of stakeholders, actors and players other than the central
state to participate more actively in EAC development processes. The next part will provide a conceptual understanding of NSAs, invariably also known as CSOs.

**Grappling with conceptual issues**

It is worth appreciating that NSAs is not only a nebulous concept. In practice, it represents a hugely complex, diverse and dynamic arena of actors and players. [Cangas, 2004: 3-5] There is no shortage of conflict within NSAs, including stiff competition for prominence, credibility, legitimacy and resources. At the same time lines between NSAs and the state (and EAC) are often blurred as well. Indeed, it is not always easy to understand “who’s who” in NSA and to identify organizations and institutions that have the potential, mindset and commitment to be effective change agents in collaborative partnerships with state and also at EAC level. It is thus emphasized that the support to and ownership of EAC by all and diverse groups of stakeholders is key and strategic to the prosperity and sustainability of EAC. With this in mind, the wide-ranging participation of all segments of society should not only be encouraged but must constantly remain a permanent feature of its policy and operations. [ECDPM/GOT, 2005: 9-10]. This is in order to create enabling and favourable conditions for greater voice, equity and for effective participation and inclusion of the poorest in the fruits of economic growth and for the strengthening of the democratic governance in and within EAC. Nevertheless it will be hard for NSAs to participate at EAC level if they remain fragile, undemocratic and un-pro-active at local/community and national level (ibid). It is also important to recognize that
the purpose of extending partnership to NSAs in the policy formulation and implementation of EAC is, among others, to achieve the following:

First, to contribute to the consolidation of a stable and democratic environment within EAC. Second, to increase ownership of the sustainable development process within EAC. Third, to ensure greater sustainability of mutual cooperation programmes within EAC. Fourth, to make decisions on priority areas for capacity building support to non-state actors. Fifth, to provide a framework for promotion of “Societal dialogues” between (and among) NSAs, Governments and EAC’s negotiation, consultation and/or simply exchange of ideas and information. Sixth, to facilitate access to funding from various internal, external, private and multilateral organizations. Last, but not least, to create conditions that will help NSAs to organize consultations in a way that makes it possible to start up and facilitate a continuous process of dialogue in the most flexible and adaptable way in and within EAC.

It is in this sense that NSAs themselves are expected to operate in a democratic, transparent and accountable manner, share the key development objectives and have the capacity to present their views and proposals of their members. Likewise, NSAs should also have the capacity to report back to their members or constituencies and to other stakeholders not present in the consultations as well as to disseminate information to a broader range of organs, including grassroots. But for NSAs, to do so effectively, they need development of skills in lobbying, advocacy and negotiation techniques, participating in legislative work, analysis and presentation, and establishment of networks and/or organized activities.
Thus capacity building is essential to enable NSAs to play a constructive and more pro-active role in the EAC development process. However it should not be seen as a final objective, but as a means of attaining EAC development goals. In broad terms, capacity building should support NSAs to achieve the following:

First, to improve internal structure and organization, constituency building (e.g. broadening networks), the development of leadership qualities, the development of analytical and advocacy skills, sustainable fund raising mechanisms, etc.

Second, to perform an advocacy role vis-à-vis Government at local, national and regional level, ensuring that the needs of the grassroots are represented at all levels. Related to this is continuously increasing the capacity of actors for policy analysis and dialogue.

Third, to perform a monitoring role vis-à-vis the State and EAC institutions or vis-à-vis a particular issue of general interest nationally and/or at regional level.

Fourth, to improve the research capacities of NSAs, in order to focus interventions on pro-poor development policies to articulate poor communities’ concerns, Governments’ and Donors’ agendas and to identify “best practices” to be replicated and adapted to other contexts facing similar development challenges in and within EACs.

It should also be noted that the initial enthusiasm towards NSAs could also be receding: not all organizations of society are as civil as they appear and not all “NGOs” are as non-governmental as they claim. Their representativity, accountability and sustainability are often weak and in many instances some NGOs are highly politicized. In some parts of Africa, for instance, NSAs have tended to replace opposition parties as channels of dissent and discontent. Indeed, for a variety of reasons, it is often easier, safe and more profitable to do
politics from an NSA angle than within a political party. These circumventing strategies are in many ways understandable given the political climate dominating many democratizing countries, characterized by systematic distrust, subtle repression and continuous harassment. But they undermine the very foundations of a genuine democratic polity and the principle according to which NSAs should be apolitical. Thus while we should encourage and celebrate the participation of NSAs in promoting and sustaining EAC, we should be always alert on such negative tendencies, which, if not checked, could be detrimental to the very foundation that created them. Only NSAs that address the needs of their members, have specific issues for dialogue and are managed democratically with transparency will be considered legitimate partners in the new EAC.

The art of strengthening “NSAs” encompasses: legitimacy, accountability, transparency, credibility and representation as major cross cutting themes. In recognition of the growing prominence of NSAs on the world stage, EAC partner states should explore new participative and accountable models for promoting individual and collective governance within NSAs and the EAC. In other words there must be “good governance” agenda for CS within the national and EAC context in terms of being accountable to themselves, nationally and at EAC level. The following figure summarizes structured accountability mechanisms:

**Figure 2: Accountability canvas of Non-State Actors**

![Accountability canvas of Non-State Actors](image)
One of the most important factors determining the legitimacy of a NSA organization is its degree of embeddedness in society. Associations that have a clear mandate, agenda and the capacity to advance the interests of their members have the greatest chance of becoming key political players and actors. At the same time, ability to enter the policy making terrain and landscape depends on organizations’ capacity to make use of well-funded research in advocacy campaigns, to develop skills of persuasion and to access spaces, such as EAC, where policy is formulated. In these ways organizations e.g. professional associations, cooperative and trade unions etc. are able to reproduce their constituencies both at national and EAC level. NSAs are becoming aware of the need to set up a clear governance agenda that effectively deals with issues of representation, both within the NSAs themselves and across the EAC. Indeed setting up and furthering this agenda will increase the ability of NSAs to satisfy their constituencies’ demands and ensure they are credible, active, legitimate and accountable at all levels of EAC.
Gradually as NSAs are being recognized as formal partners in EAC development, more attention is being paid to their internal governance and internal structures. The expectant is that NSAs promoting democratic governance should practice what they preach, if they are able and remain credible. However, the right of NSAs to influence public policy making without being an elected body is often called into question as few NSAs derive their only legitimacy from democratic election processes.

It is emphasized that accountability entails concrete mechanisms to hold an organization responsible for its actions, through either rewards or sanctions. In general terms, accountability requires that EAC be fully committed to deliberately creating greater space for NSAs in order to provide itself with checks and balances, in addition to treating NSA as key and strategic partners. Also, people or institutions affected by the EAC’s actions should have means to legitimately report concerns, complaints and abuses, and get redress if needed. NSAs must also respond to claims raised by a wider range of actors and players upwards to their trustees, government and resource providers and individuals downwards to their partners, networks of peer organizations, local communities’ staff and supporters.

It should also be emphasized that the role and agenda of NSAs are indeed broad and diverse. To date, debate has revolved around issues of trust, legitimacy, autonomy, proved performance, and voice, internal democracy and strengthened accountability and transparency. In our view only when NSAs address seriously these issues will they qualify as legitimate and responsive partners in EAC development. Needless to say there is a long way to go till this
goal is fully realized and recognized. Most analyses of NSAs consider four organizational levels: The first, and broader level is composed of the Grassroots Organizations. These are generally informal groupings that provide coping strategies to address an immediate constituency issue. The second level is that of formal and structured association opening at local, national, and regional level, such as NGOs and are geared by social responsibility and demands. The third level is made up of umbrella organization and thematic network, such as national association, federation and thematic groups that champion common interests, share information, set up strategic partnerships and secure funding. Finally, the fourth level is constituted by platforms, which are a dialogue for the umbrella organs and networks. Claiming legitimacy only on the basis of legality can be problematic in countries where freedom of expression and association are not clearly protected by law or where there is mutual suspicion between Government and NSAs. The next part focuses on the main challenges that NSAs face and have to overcome in order to enable them become more active and pro-active development partners in and within EAC.

**NSAs and EAC: Challenges Ahead**

That NSAs have an important role to play in enhancing and sustaining EAC should not raise any controversy. However it is emphasized that the implication of non-state actors is not limited to mere participation in the implementation of projects and programs of EAC at local level. In our view non state actors are to, first be informed, demand to be influenced and involved in dialogue on all EAC policies, strategies and priorities. Second, they should
demand to be involved in the implementation of EAC projects and programmes. Third, NSAs must demand to be provided with resources to support EAC local development processes. Fourth, they should demand to be provided with building support in critical areas in order to reinforce their capabilities, particularly as regards organizational matters and representation, and the establishment of consultancy mechanisms including channels of two-way informal and formal communication and dialogue, and to promote strategic alliances inside and outside EAC. It is also emphasized that non state actors in EAC can play roles as both service providers and advocacy agents. Non-state actors may play either or both of these roles. As service providers, they may be involved in the implementation of EAC projects/programmes. As partners in dialogue, they shall voice views of the groups they represent and consult with decision makers within the Government and the EAC in the strategic and programmatic orientation of the cooperation with the EAC. Both roles also involve their participation in the monitoring and evaluation of the performance of EAC. This means that they should take an active part in the review of the impact and efficiency of the EAC and policies/programmes affecting them. The purpose of extending partnership to non-state actors in the implementation of the cooperation process is to achieve the following:

First, contribute to the consolidation of a stable and democratic environment within EAC. Second, increase ownership of the development process with EAC. Third, ensure greater sustainability of cooperation programmes within EAC. Fourth, make decisions on priority to capacity building support to non-state
actors. Finally, provide a framework for promotion of “social dialogue” between NSAs, Government and EAC negotiation machinery.

The challenges confronting EAC development are many, complex and varied. However they come from two inter-related sources: First, constraints imposed by hostile international economic and political dis-order within which their economies operate and second, domestic weaknesses deriving from social, economic and political structures and the notorious neo-liberal structural adjustments policies and programs. Given the fact the global non-actors are normally allies of the poor, it is incumbent upon non-state actors in the EAC region to rally with their global counterparts for not only moral but material, political and technical support so that non-actors in the region could acquire greater voice and space that would enable them play a more pivotal and strategic role in enhancing EAC. This would include first and foremost EAC is controlled, managed, owned and benefits EAC people and not an exclusive market for international trade, their corporate conglomerates and/or individual or groups of EAC leaders.

The non state actors must be enabled to have the necessary mind set, skills and capacities to promote a renewed EAC wide engagement on its own development goals and initiates. Indeed non-state actors need to get training, advocacy skills and capacity to contribute to and engage in dissemination of knowledge of the issues at stake; engage with and participate in the mobilization of social groups around their interests and appropriate strategies of EAC development; and engage with governments and policy institutions at local,
national, regional and continental level and expand collaboration with their colleagues at the global level.

Above all partner states in the EAC must take measures that will require the re-constitution of the developmental state: a state for which social equity, inclusion, national unity and respect for human rights form the basis of political and economic polities; a state which actively promotes, and nurtures the productive sectors of the economy; actively engages appropriately in the equitable and balanced allocation and distribution of resources among sectors and people; and most importantly and which integrates people’s control over decision-making at all levels in the right, equitable use and distribution of social resources. A common challenge is the weak internal organization e.g. decision-making processes that are not always clear, archives and files that are not well organized, no communication system that makes information flow through an organization difficult and unreliable and structure and systems that are inadequate, etc. There are regular complaints about “briefcase NGOs” in East Africa that are focused on mobilizing donor funds but end up using these scarce resources for personal gains. In other cases organizations are highly personality-driven and focused on a leader rather than development concerns or institutional structure. Some challenges are common. NSAs have a particular challenge in terms of donor dependency. As a matter of fact very few have a strategy that envisages sustaining themselves beyond ad-hoc project financing. This problem is compounded for organizations that have been successful and are under tremendous pressure to grow at an “unnatural” pace. A major challenge specific to pure development organs is to bring their objectives in tune with the available
resources within their local priorities and capacity. Other related challenges include the following: First, policy dialogue on EAC proves most successful when it is participatory and civic organs collaborate effectively. Second, there is hardly any publicly known policy agenda that is known in advance or which NSAs have provided an input. Usually NSAs come in when “the food is ready”. Third, there are no terms of engagement that bind EAC and non-state actors in dialogue to respect a certain procedure or framework. Fourth, channels to organizational dialogue are not always clear. Fifth, policy dialogue at EAC level is currently developed at macro level, than at sector and grassroots level and of particular significance are voluntary organizations in which women and youths who hardly participate. Undoubtedly, they represent a key social force for EAC at the grassroots level, for they are able to find easily a common language across borders and a united by the similarity of their experiences, concerns and roles in society. However a number of operational challenges arise in the process: NSAs diversity can hamper efforts to define a common agenda for EAC as a whole, the right of governments to oversee NSAs operations can be hard to reconcile with the right of NSAs to participate in the political EAC landscape and terrain. Third, assessing in-house democracy requires complex institutional analysis, fourth, upward and downward accountability demands are sometimes antagonistic and difficult to reconcile and finally, adopting a mult-factor approach to EAC governance regimes that roles be re-defined and power relations reconsidered.

At the same time the diversity that exists across NSAs is an obstacle to defining a universal good governance framework that is applicable throughout EAC, particularly as regards the criteria for accountability, transparency and
internal democracy. For instance, certain standards of practice may be beyond the reach of small NSAs e.g. few grassroots organizations are able to afford annual auditing by independent professional companies. In this framework, it would be wise to allow some versatility in the choice of tools and check list that organs can use to comply with minimum standards.

**EAC and NSAs: Way Forward**

The resolve of the people and Governments of East Africa towards political and economic integration now seems irreversible. Unlike in the past, the new initiative is not only a bold one, but is based on broad participation and inclusion of various segments of people whose stake in it is as important and valid as that of its leaders at both national and EAC level. The need and importance of NSAs playing a pivotal and strategic role in EAC is not only recognized but also encouraged. However the envisaged collaborative partnership between EAC and NSAs is still fragile and uncoordinated both at national and EAC level. In our view, the national Governments, EAC and NSAs have to do more individually and collectively to enhance the partnership, collaboration and all round inclusiveness. Goodwill alone and mere rhetoric will not be sufficient. Concrete actions in terms of policies, regulatory framework and implementation of the same will make a huge positive difference on all stakeholders.

NSAs will need to improve their knowledge base and technical capacity to make meaningful contribution to the cause and ideals of EAC. But often they focus very one-sidedly on knowledge and analysis not enough on the equally
important other aspects e.g. negotiation, advocacy, lobbying, dissemination etc. Many NSAs are convinced that their suggestions and/or demands are urgent and legitimate, but few have recognize that “how” is as important as the “what” to conclude successful negotiations both at national and EAC level. It is emphasized that meaningful dialogue between NSAs and EAC will not only depend on decisions by NSAs, but also by Governments and EAC that communicate their agenda timely, invite organizations with enough lead time to give them a chance to prepare contributions and consult with each other, and provide the necessary information in a consistent, effective and transparent way. There is a clear need to further structure and institutionalize participation, inclusiveness, accountability and transparency in the way EAC and NSAs interact and collaborate on all important issues related to integration. Indeed some NSAs may be happy that they are more regularly consulted by Governments and EAC, but get frustrated by the apparent lack of serious involvement and participation in the key decision-making process after the consultations. This leaves a perception that participation is not based on a genuine partnership.

In addition intense civic education will need to be carried out in each partner state and at EAC level to promote awareness of the idea of EAC and to prepare the general public not only to recognize its legal and political existence, but equally important, the public must continue to demand the ownership of EAC. There are already a number of formal and informal integration processes among the professional bodies and Civil Society Organizations whose involvement is important for reducing any socio-economic and cultural gaps among the citizens
of East Africa. This process also helps in building mutual confidence for cooperation and further integration. The East African Business Council, representing the private sector and the East African Law Society are among these civic associations. In this context, great importance attaches to the promotion of cultural exchanges, sports events and other social contacts at the level of ordinary people to people relations. Indeed this type of integration and cooperation would build solidarity and bridges between (and among) peoples of partner states and would indeed contribute to mobilizing public opinion in support of EAC. Likewise, special attention should be given to establishing cooperation among organizations and institutions representing the self-employed, neighbourhoods groups, and NGOs, and voluntary organizations that continue to spring up throughout Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

Concluding Summary

The New East African Cooperation has embarked on a serious and completely new Cooperation Treaty that is different from the defunct East African Community which was disbanded in 1977. In the new EAC priority is given to making sure that the new integration learns from history and never repeat the
same mistakes again. The exclusion of civil society and the private sector from participation in the cooperation and integration processes and activities was a glaring blunder in the disbanded East African Community. The main thesis of the paper was that the pivotal and strategic role of NSAs is inevitably crucial for not only “socializing” EAC within public sphere, but equally important, to make the various segments of the population in East Africa demand a stake, voices, participation and all round inclusion in all matters related to EAC. In this way, integration has a greater and more robust chance of not only mere survival but will be easier to maintain and sustain since not a single leader or group of leaders will have an exclusive monopoly to abolish the new EAC. It is worth summing up this paper by these words:

“The primary bond that links the countries and peoples of the South is their desire to escape from poverty and underdevelopment and secure a better life for their citizens”

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