The Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC) hosted its 12th Annual General Meeting on 18th April 2018 at the Serena Hotel in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania. The meeting was attended by members from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Malawi, Zambia, DRC and Burundi. The AGM is the Apex Governance body of EAGC, where the Board of Directors who are representatives of the members, elected to represent them in the Board report back to the members.

During this meeting, EAGC performance for the previous year and the audited financial accounts were presented to members, as well as plans for 2018.

The members' AGM was followed by the Annual Members' and Stakeholders' Luncheon which was sponsored by the Commercial Bank of Africa Group, a member of EAGC. The Chief Guest for the Luncheon was Hon. Charles Mwijage, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment of the United Republic of Tanzania.
Other prominent dignitaries who graced the Luncheon were the High Commissioner of Malawi in Tanzania, H.E. Ms. Hawa O. Ndilowe and the Minister Councillor of the Embassy of the Democratic Republic of Congo Mr. G.K Yamba.

The day was crowned by an EAGC Regional Grain Trade Facilitation Forum held at the same venue after the members and stakeholders luncheon.

**PREAMBLE**

The Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC) is a Regional membership-based organization representing the grain sector in Eastern and Southern Africa. The Council exists to facilitate efficient, structured, profitable and inclusive grain trade in its mandate countries in the Eastern Africa region, namely Kenya (Regional Headquarters), Uganda, Tanzania, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Burundi, Rwanda, Zambia, Malawi and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

EAGC draws its membership from the grain sector value chain actors in its member states, which include farmers, traders and processors. Support service providers and complimentary sectors such as agro-input suppliers, financial services and animal feed manufacturers also form part of the membership.

![A cross section of EAGC Members at the AGM](image)

As a membership-driven organisation, the Annual General Meeting of EAGC members forms the supreme decision-making organ of the Council.
The AGM is convened as per the provision of the EAGC Memorandum and Articles of Association and By-Laws, so as to receive the annual report and to make decisions on EAGC’s strategic direction. Every two years, the AGM also hosts election of EAGC’s Board of Directors whereby members vote for their representatives on the EAGC Board.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LUNCHEON AND REMARKS FROM KEY DIGMITARIES

1. LAUNCH OF EAGC’S 3RD STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2022

At the 2018 Annual Members luncheon, EAGC unveiled its 3rd Strategic Plan for implementation in the next 5 years (2018-2022). The Strategic plan was launched by Hon Charles Mwijage, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Investments in Tanzania.

The minister also gave a key note speech on “the role of regional agricultural commodity trade in the development of agro industries in Eastern Africa”.

3. Keynote Address by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Investments in the United Republic of Tanzania
In his address to the members at the Luncheon, the Hon. Charles Mwijage; **APPRICIATED** EAGC for being a regional body with the capacity to bring together grain stakeholders from 10 different countries in one setting and expressed his pleasure to have been accorded the honour to address such a diverse and committed team of grain sector stakeholders from the entire region.

**STATED** that the cereal sector in the Eastern Africa region has grown by over 50% and this is despite the various challenges that it is facing. He further expressed his pride in the Republic of Tanzania for its above average cereal production of cereals in the region.

**HIGHLIGHTED** that the Eastern Africa has three of the fastest growing economies, these being: Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania and indicated that with this economic development, a high level of industrialization would be achieved and that the agricultural sector has to be factored in this drive.

**EMPHASIZED** that the fact that industrialization, particularly agro processing which is a means of poverty alleviation and economic empowerment and **CALLED OUT** to the private sector players to increase the trade within the region as presently only 10% of commodities was traded within the region.

**NOTED** that increasing regional grain trade would address food security issues and enable stakeholders in the sector to tap into regional grain markets and **ASSURED**
the stakeholders that, Tanzania recognizes the importance and remains supportive of regional integration.

FURTHER HIGHLIGHTED that East Africa countries need to explore win-win situations when trading among themselves and STATED that agro-processing features greatly in Tanzania’s various development plans and in support of this, the Government of Tanzania has planned to establish over 100 medium income enterprises to fast track the industrialization agenda.

ADMITTED that there is no perfect market and that among the challenges faced in Tanzania, has been the lack of adequate storage facilities and ANNOUNCED that the Government of Tanzania had set aside 65M euros to establish such units across the country and informed that this new project would be launched at the end of April 2018.

Remarks by the Chairman of the EAGC Board of directors, Mr Eugene Rwibasira

In his speech Mr Eugene Rwibasira;
APPRECIATED the support of the EAGC members, the members of the Board of Directors, development partners, Eastern Africa States’ Ministries and EAGC secretariat, emphasizing that EAGC had risen to greater heights as a result of their efforts over the years.
ACKNOWLEDGED all the partners who continued to provide EAGC institutional core support in 2017 and from the very beginning when EAGC was formed. These included key partners starting with the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), who have supported EAGC with core institutional support for close to 10 years now. Others partners include USAID, AGRA, DFID, CTA, GIZ, USDA, UN FAO, ELAN RDC among others.

STATED that EAGC was keen to continue working together to ensure all dimensions of food security in grain availability, affordability, acceptability, and accessibility – are achieved for a prosperous and food secure Eastern Africa Region, Africa and the world at large.

Remarks by the Executive Director of EAGC, Mr Gerald Masila

Mr Gerald Makau Masila, the Executive Director of EAGC discussed in detail the core focus of the 3rd EAGC Strategic Plan as well as the progress and achievements that were realized during the implementation of the past two strategic plans over the last decade.
In his address Mr Masila;

**HIGHLIGHTED** that the strongest indicator of the organization’s growth in the past ten years has been the increase in membership, which stood at 340 members by close of 2017 since 2006.

**DEMONSTRATED** how EAGC has been able to address challenges faced by the grain sector such as the four As of food security: Availability, Affordability, Acceptability and Accessibility.

**STATED** that as the organization moves forward towards achieving its mandate, EAGC will capitalize on the resources that it already has. These include: GSoko online trading platform that brings together buyers and sellers of grain in the region for more efficient and profitable trade; RATIN platform which disseminates market information collected from key selected markets and borders in the region; EAGI: the capacity building wing of EAGC that focuses on capacity building of grain producers, processors, traders and service providers in the value chain; ATPAFESA which has been dedicated to policy advocacy and ensuring a favourable trading environment throughout the region.

**FURTHER NOTED** that the EAGC would be introducing the Trade Facilitation Fund that would be highly instrumental in enabling members to carry out trade transactions through the EAGC GSoko online grain trading system. provision of trade finance support services.

**EMPHASIZED** that EAGC would mainly focus on promoting “MORE TRADE AND BETTER TRADE” and expounded that more trade meant more volumes, more trade flows and more production and **EXPLAINED** that better trade meant better in terms of efficiency, quality and competitiveness.

**HIGHLIGHTED** that EAGC focus on more trade would be mainly to address the grain quantity challenges of volumes, value and grain varieties for markets and clients at National, Regional and International level.

**POINTED OUT** that for EAGC to realise better grain trade on behalf of its members, the main focus would be on promoting grain quality and reducing transaction costs.

**FURTHER ADDED** that EAGC would achieve **better grain quality** for trade through promoting Post Harvest Management, provision of lab services, analysis and quality assurance warehousing and storage.

To reduce the transaction costs, he **STATED** that EAGC would provide market information on the logistics of moving grain from source to destination, cost of finance as well as regulatory and legal compliance including permits and licences.
EAGC in partnership with ELAN-RDC launched their first project that will kick off in the Eastern and Southern parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo from May 2018. The programme would be centred on market development in DRC and paving a way for regional integration in terms of trade and business, which would, translates to "Momentum for DRC." Through this project EAGC and ELAN RDC, aimed to work with smallholders farmers and small enterprises working in the grain value chain in increasing their income and ultimately their standards of living.

Remarks by the Senior Agricultural Advisor at the ÉLAN RDC, Mr. Ngama Munduku

In his remarks Mr. Ngama Munduku, the Senior Agricultural Advisor at the ÉLAN RDC;

MENTIONED that the programme’s key objective would be to increase cross border grain trade from DRC by 25% and NOTED that ELAN RDC collaborated with EAGC because of the various successful initiatives and milestones that the Council has been able to achieve over the past 10 years.
**HIGHLIGHTED** that EAGC had invested immensely in capacity building for the grain value chain actors, provision of grain market information, trade facilitation as well as policy, research and advocacy, these being the prime areas that the project would focus on.

**FURTHER ADDED** that farmers and other grain stakeholders in DRC were in dire need of such services and therefore, EAGC will play a vital role in ensuring that these stakeholders are exposed to best practices in structured trading systems.

**POINTED OUT** that the partnership would enable DRC stakeholders to address food security as well as realise profitable grain trade.

**STATED** that there was a high level of development in infrastructure and urbanization and overall economic development in DRC and hence invited potential investors and traders to explore opportunities in their country.

### 3. REGIONAL GRAIN TRADE FACILITATION FORUM

EAGC in partnership with Global Communities hosted a **Regional Grain trade facilitation forum** –B2B. The forum brought together over 50 sellers and buyers of maize, beans, soybeans, rice, groundnuts and other grain commodities from the Eastern and Southern Africa nations where 43 contracts amounting to 94,931 MT and valued at USD 43,030,438 were signed for trade.

Agricultural input suppliers also signed contracts for the sale of machinery for seed and grain processing as well as silos for storage valued at USD 7.5 M bringing the total value of trade transactions to USD 50,530,438. Logistics and financial institutions such as the Commercial Bank of Africa also participated in the forum to provide grain trade finance services to the buyers and sellers.
The Council urged the buyers and sellers to standardize the quality of their grain in order to address the needs of the regional consumers seeking for healthy and safe grain for consumption.

**4. 12TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

In his statement marking the opening of the Annual General Meeting, the Chairman of EAGC, Mr Eugene Rwibasira, highlighted the strides EAGC made over the past 12 months in its pursuit towards an efficient, organised grain industry in Eastern and Southern Africa. In his address, Mr Rwibasira:

- **HIGHLIGHTED** EAGC’s success in creating business opportunities for its members whilst simultaneously promoting grain trade and food security. This was most recently exemplified by the Trade Mission to Uganda which yielded trade opportunities worth over US$ 55 million for EAGC members in Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania.

- **POINTED OUT** EAGC’s role in delivering value and benefits to members who include grain farmers/Producers (Small, Medium and Large), grain Traders, grain processors as core/active members and other associated members such as financial institutions, logistics and service providers among others.

- **FURTHER HIGHLIGHTED** the Scope of EAGC which remains to be a REGIONAL organization covering countries in the Eastern Africa region.

- **EMPHASIZED** that EAGC had so far established presence with offices and appropriate registration in eight countries – Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan, Malawi and Zambia.

- **ANNOUNCED** that this year 2018, EAGC would be establishing presence and registration in the DR Congo and Ethiopia.

- **NOTED** that EAGC’s G-SOKO service had been fully functional with online trading taking place on a weekly basis for the past year. He **ADDED** that the GSOKO online platform would continue to provide an opportunity for banks and financial institution to provide trade finance service to EAGC members through a fully secured and collateralized credit to buy grains through G-SOKO.

- **REITERATED** the growth and success of EAGC’s core services in provision of market information through EAGC RATIN, capacity building and tailor-made training for the grain industry through EAGI and influential policy advocacy through the ATPAF-ESA platform which successfully delivered the revised harmonized East African standards for staple foods.

- **INFORMED** that EAGC would be embarking on the implementation process of the new strategic business plan EAGC SBP III (2018-2022) which will seek to reposition EAGC from the nascent stages to a mid-level to mature status focusing purely on service delivery with sources of revenue being fees for service and trade promotion being at the core of the service.
RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAY FORWARD

The Annual Members and Stakeholders Luncheon recommended the following:

Tanzania’s Ministry of trade & investments will collaborate with the Eastern Africa Grain Council **TO FAST TRACK NECESSARY CERTIFICATIONS AND PERMITS** needed to promote **CROSS BORDER GRAIN TRADE**.

There is need to **STRENGTHEN TRADE INSTITUTIONS** the EAC, COMESA and SADC Region so at to promote Regional Grain Trade for much greater achievements in this area.

EAGC members and stakeholders from both **PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTOR TO CONTINUE COLLABORATING WITH THE COUNCIL** following the shift of the institution’s focus towards institutional strengthening for the future survival and sustainability of the Council.

**EVIDENCE GATHERING, EXPERIENCE SHARING, IDEAS AND LEADERSHIP** of EAGC members and stakeholders will be key in driving the grain policy agenda and positioning EAGC as “**the Leading Voice of the Grain Industry in Africa**.”

There is need to continue to **ASSURE THE GOVERNMENTS** in the region, where EAGC member businesses in the grain sector are established and operated of **EAGC’S COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP**. This will be to urge for a **CONTINUED DIALOGUE** and **CONSULTATIONS ON POLICY ISSUES**, so that together the parties can find solutions to the problems ailing the grain sector.

For more information, please feel free to contact the EAGC Secretariat through the addresses below:

Email: grains@eagc.org Web: www.eagc.org/www.ratin.net
Regional Grain Trade facilitation forum held on 18th April 2018, Photo Gallery

Event partners/Sponsors

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