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Tanzania Daily News (Dar es Salaam)

East Africa: EAC Integration Way to Go, Says Expert

BY MARK MUGISHA, 26 JUNE 2012

DEEPENED regional integration is the only way to go if East African Community (EAC) partner states are to get rid of colonial boundary dilemmas, a Ugandan based peace and security expert has said.

Dr Arthur Bainomugisha, a Makerere University Don and a Director at the Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE), said the current border disputes in the region arise because the EAC has not achieved the desired integration.

Bainomugisha made the remarks during a public dialogue in Kampala over the weekend organized by the Uganda Action Network on Small Arms (UANSA).

The event also marked the end of the Global Week of Action against Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) which was organised by the EAC Secretariat in collaboration with the Eastern Africa Action Network on Small Arms (EAANSA) and the German International Development Agency (GIZ).

"Regional integration will address all these conflicts because time will come when border demarcations are meaningless," Dr Bainomugisha said, citing to a border dispute between Uganda and Kenya that almost took the two neighbours to war over the tiny Miging Island.

The University Don called for deeper democratic governance, saying that this puts in place constitutions that stipulate peaceful transfer of power which in turn circumvents situations of military coups and bloodletting conflicts.

"There should also be improved promotion of civil military relations in Africa," he told the Independent East African News Agency (EANA) on the sidelines of the workshop.

Dr Bainomugisha called for an end to illegal arms, saying that perpetrators of the crimes always walk unharmed and instead leave up to ninety per cent of war victims to being children and women.

A senior Uganda Army Officer Lt. Col. Gordon Busingye attributed the proliferation of fire arms to the moral degeneration in many societies in the region. He presented a paper titled: "Government Action on Armed Violence."

"Some parents and people don't cooperate in providing information about illegal arms to security personnel in their neighborhoods. This has led to increased gun violence," Busingye told participants who included legislators, members of the civil society organizations and the sections of the media.

Milton Muwuma, a Uganda Member of Parliament said that drug abuse has been cited as one of the main causes of misuse of fire arms and called on governments to control the vice.

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