



Northern Corridor Transit and
Transport Coordination
Authority

THE NORTHERN CORRIDOR DIGEST

For an Efficient, Smart and Green Corridor

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NCTTCA Calls for Harmonised Regional Guidelines and Common response measures on Cross-border Transport and Health Services

The Executive Secretary of the Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Coordination Authority (NCTTCA) has urged the Northern Corridor Member States to adopt harmonised regional guidelines and common measures for testing Coronavirus across borders in an effort to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic while facilitating regional transit transport and trade.

Speaking to the media at the NCTTCA headquarters in Mombasa, Mr. Omae NYARANDI highlighted the challenges experienced by importers and truckers at the border points. These challenges have been identified during weekly stakeholders' meetings convened by NCTTCA in collaboration with transit transport and trade facilitation agencies some of them being delays at the border points, relay trucking and stigmatisation of truck drivers.

"We have identified different challenges experienced by importers and drivers, solved some and escalated others upward. ...with the testing measures introduced by member countries, there are delays at the border points. As of today, the queue at Malaba border is at 17 kilometres, and the situation may be worse tomorrow," the Executive Secretary said.

With the long queues at the border points, goods are delivered late to their destination. Cargo security and truckers' safety are not guaranteed as the drivers mingle with locals while waiting for clearance at the border points. Also, there are delays in the return of empty containers at the port of Mombasa, attracting retention charges by the shipping lines.

Although the East African Community Secretariat through a document dubbed 'EAC administrative guidelines to facilitate the movement of goods and services during the COVID-19 pandemic' directed the Partner States to use synchronised testing procedures, the region is yet to adopt harmonised testing protocols on COVID-19. Drivers' Coronavirus test results are taking long, and in some cases are rejected by member countries.

In a bid to reduce the delays at the border posts, the Executive Secretary called on the Northern Corridor Member States to harmonise Coronavirus testing processes and mutual recognition of the COVID-19 test certificate.

"We are requesting our Member States to have uniform testing and issuance of certificates such that a certificate issued in any member country is acceptable in the others," he said.

"We are requesting our Member States to have uniform certificates such that a certificate issued in any member country is acceptable in the others," he said.

Further, the Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) has relieved importers by extending free cargo storage period for transit import containers and transit export containers effective Monday 18th May 2020 and will run for three (3) months.

"We commend the KPA for extending the cargo free storage period at the port of Mombasa and ICD Nairobi," said the Executive Secretary.



Some Northern Corridor Member States are implementing relay trucking where goods are offloaded at the border and then loaded to a different truck with a different driver to transport from the entry point to the respective destinations or the exit point for handover. Relay trucking has precipitated the challenge of finding equally competent drivers, trained for heavy goods vehicles, and the safety of the goods during transshipment.

"Our Member State of Rwanda has set up warehouses at the border and brought customs and clearance officials. Cargo is offloaded at the border, and the importer has to organise for transport from the border to the respective destinations, which has proven to be expensive," the ES noted.

Transporters' Associations have also raised concerns that relay driving will create difficulties in handling insurance claims related to the cargo and the trucks in case of any eventuality, uncertainty on the safety of the load, the vehicles as well as fuel due to the involvement of multiple drivers.

As a result of fear of the pandemic and the fallacy that drivers are spreading COVID-19, driver and crew have faced rejection and stigmatisation, especially at the border points. In response, the NCTTCA will conduct sensitisation forums with truckers and border officials.

"Truck drivers face stigmatisation at the border points ... we will embark on sensitising the drivers to drive safely while observing COVID-19 safety measures put in place by our Member States as well as create awareness against stigmatisation of COVID-19 infected and affected people by the society," he said.

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"A campaign by all Northern Corridor Member States is needed to ensure that stigmatisation of drivers, who are an essential service, is reduced," he reiterated.

Furthermore, the government of Kenya has launched the evacuation of cargo by rail to ICD Naivasha to bring the containers closer to the hinterland, significantly reducing the transport distance by trucks.

"We welcome the transport of cargo freight to Naivasha ... this is a good step that will evacuate cargo and make it closer to the hinterland ... however, all responsible agencies need to ensure all facilities for the clearance of cargo are in place ... that the Naivasha-Mai Mahiu road is good enough to be used by transit cargo owners," he said.

Generally, the Northern Corridor Member States need to increase the capacity of testing, adopt a harmonised electronic relay of documents, and pass a standard Coronavirus test certificate acceptable to all member countries. A campaign directed to their Citizenry on reducing stigmatisation of drivers is also needed.

"All Northern Corridor Member States need to increase their capacity of testing, adopt a way to relay COVID-19 test results in a speedy timeline different from the 48 hours timeline currently in place," concluded the Executive Secretary.

Mombasa Port and Northern Corridor efficiency improves; Northern Corridor Transport Observatory

The efficiency of the Port of Mombasa and the Northern Corridor at large has significantly improved according to the 15th Issue of the Northern Corridor Transport Observatory (NCTO) report.

Mombasa port efficiency is measured through identified indicators, some of which are ship turnaround time, port dwell time and gross moves per hour. The indicators are informed by the Mombasa Port and Northern Corridor Community Charter (MPNCCC) that was reviewed in 2018 to realise increased efficiency in trade logistics. It was a culmination of extensive consultations with both private and public sector stakeholders on the upgrading and improved coordination of the monitoring and evaluation of the logistics services.



In the 2019, a total of 530 ships called in at the port of Mombasa.

In 2019, the port of Mombasa recorded an average turnaround time of 94 hours. In the same year, a total of 530 ships called in at the port of Mombasa. The median vessel waiting time decreased marginally from 13 hours in 2018 to 12 hours in 2019, which is within the Port Charter target of under a day (12 hours). Gross Moves Per hour has marginally improved from 30 moves in 2018 to about 32 moves in 2019. The improved productivity is attributed to improved investment and utilisation of shipyard equipment, including an increase in the number of Ships to Gantry cranes, Rubber Tyres Gantry (RTG) cranes, Terminal Tractors, among others.

The report reveals that performance in dwell time has been improving over the years with 2019 recording average dwell time of 87 hours against a baseline of 96 hours in 2018. The average dwell time for containers

at the ICD in Nairobi for the year 2019 improved favourably over the months from a high of 12 hours in January to 4 hours in December 2019, recording an annual average dwell time of 8 days.

Weighbridge crossing time improved as a result of the implementation of High-Speed Weigh in Motion (HSWIM). Transit time is greatly affected by stoppages along the corridor. Some of the main reasons for stoppage include; drivers' personal reasons, police checks, weighbridges, company checks, road conditions, custom checks, among other reasons.

Further, the report reveals that cargo throughput at the port of Mombasa has been increasing yearly with 2019 witnessing an annual increase of 11.2 per cent compared to the 2 per cent annual growth in 2018. The growth is attributable to a sustained

trend of growth in containerised cargo and liquid throughput. In 2019, containerised cargo accounted for 45 per cent, and liquid cargo accounted for 25 per cent of total throughput while 30 per cent was dry cargo, both bulk and general. The Mombasa Port and Northern Corridor Community Charter targets to attain port throughput of 35.90 million tons by December 2020.

Imports took the lion share- 80 per cent of total cargo throughput. The top import commodities through the port of Mombasa include petroleum oil & lubricants, clinker, wheat, iron & steel, palm/vegetable oil, fertilisers, coal, rice, plastic and sugar. Major import partners for the port of Mombasa include Asia and the European Union. The top export sectors included agricultural products, raw materials, ores and metals.

During the reporting period, slightly over 60 per cent of total port throughput was destined for Kenya. Uganda took the largest part of the transit traffic, accounting for approximately 80 per cent. Cargo handled at Nairobi Inland Container Depot (ICD) increased by 62 per cent from 257,972 TEUs in 2018 to 418,760 TEUs in 2019. The high performance is occasioned by the implementation and full use of the 485 km-long Standard Gauge Rail line from the port of Mombasa to Nairobi ICD in January 2018.

From the 2019 analysis, the percentage of quality paved and tarmacked roads in good condition have improved with about 88 per cent of roads in Kenya, 93 per cent for Rwanda, 41 per cent for Burundi and 42 per cent for DR Congo. Significant sections of the Corridor road in South Sudan, about 95% is in bad condition with about 5% in fair condition. The existing infrastructure along the Northern Corridor consists of physical transport infrastructure that is crucial for trade facilitation and providing logistics services that reduce the trade costs, as well as soft infrastructure that facilitates faster clearance and processing of goods.



The Mombasa Port and Northern Corridor Community Charter targets to attain port throughput of 35.90 million tons by December 2020.

The overall share of intra-Northern Corridor Member States trade has been increasing over the years. Burundi's overall trade grew by 4 per cent in 2019 compared to 2018 trading with Northern Corridor Member States. Total trade in Rwanda with other Northern Corridor Member States increased significantly by 26 per cent in 2019. DRC is the largest formal export partner for Rwanda, accounting for 66 per cent of all export trade. Total trade volume in Uganda with respect to Northern Corridor Member States was valued at approximately US\$ 1.96 Billion in 2019.

The NCTO report identifies key cost drivers on the Northern Corridor route including road condition, distance, levies and charges, safety and security, regional policy, political stability and Non-Tariff Barriers. Transport costs are a summation of various expenses incurred in moving a passenger or a unit of freight between a specific origin and destination, often passed on to consumers through the total cost of a good. Costs analysis often help to determine whether the corridor is efficient and attractive to stakeholders.

The report identifies intra-regional trade as one of the ways of achieving higher economic growth and regional integration. With most Northern Corridor Member States acceding to the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) with the economic objectives of reducing trade barriers and encouraging economic growth, intra-regional trade is expected to rise.

On average, trucks on the Northern Corridor do between 60,000 and 96,000 km/truck/year, which is far below the international standards. This contributes to the high cost of transport on the corridor. In the most efficient global trade corridors, the average km/truck/year is between 120,000 to 150,000. Improved transit time has a bearing on the reduction of transport costs which have been reducing substantively over the years.

The Northern Corridor transport network consists of modes of surface transport route linking the landlocked Countries to the maritime Port of Mombasa. These surface modes include road, rail, pipeline and inland waterways. Progress has been achieved in improving quality and capacity of transport infrastructure with the port of Mombasa increasing its handling capacity to 2.65 million TEUs; making it the busiest port in East & Central Africa with an annual growth cargo throughput of about 10 per cent.

Although there has been an improvement in most performance targets as evident by the report, several points of concern along the corridor logistics chain still hamper the overall performance of the corridor. Therefore, there is need for all stakeholders to implement various action plans and reforms proposed by the report; as well as to offer further improvements required for enhancing the performance of the corridor and boosting the monitoring mechanisms for better transport and logistics value chain.

“Great improvements in infrastructure around the Seaport and the corridor at large as well as the implementation of Standard Gauge Rail are bearing the desired outcomes,” says the report.

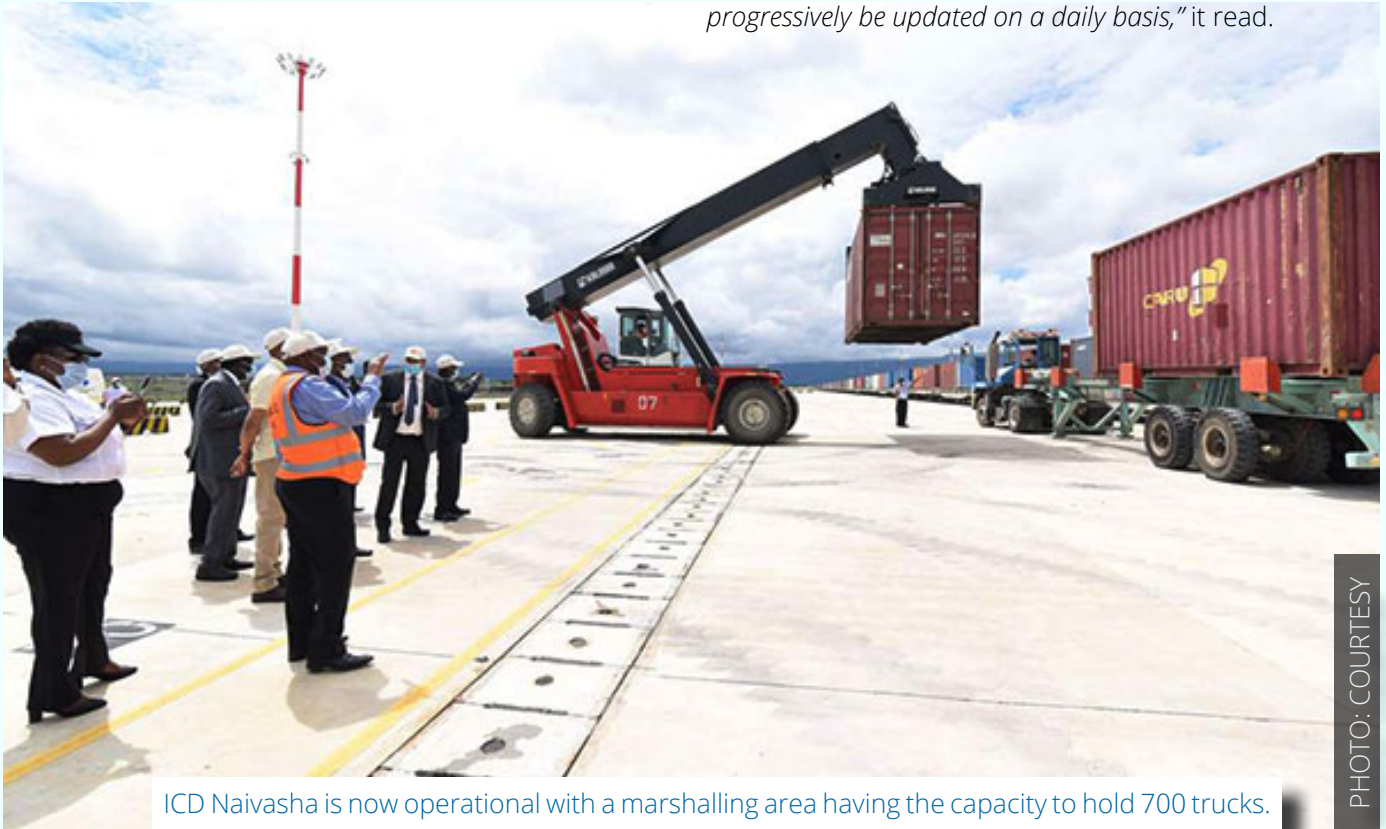
Naivasha ICD starts Clearing Transit Cargo in June

The Kenya Ports Authority (KPA) has put in place facilities to facilitate clearance of cargo at ICD Naivasha.

This is after the Northern Corridor Member State of Kenya directed clearance of transit cargo at ICD Naivasha in a bid to decongest the port of Mombasa and reduce interactions along the corridor thereby facilitating the containment of COVID-19.

For faster operations and reduced human contact, KRA also stated that all cargo hauled to the facility would be visible to importers and clearing agents through a list which will be updated progressively daily, on the KRA website.

"...owners of the affected cargo and their clearing agents will clear and pick their goods at the new facility. The list of cargo that has been moved from the Port of Mombasa to the Naivasha ICD can be accessed on KRA's website and will progressively be updated on a daily basis," it read.



ICD Naivasha is now operational with a marshalling area having the capacity to hold 700 trucks.

PHOTO: COURTESY

ICD Naivasha is a 45,000-square-meter facility linked by a 2.6-kilometre connection road to the Mai Mahiu-Narok road set to serve outbound transit cargo and exports in transit to Mombasa by SGR.

Cargo destined to Uganda, South Sudan, Northern Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo can now be handled at the facility which reduces the transit distance for the Member States by almost 650 Kms.

The facility will employ a One Stop Centre (OSC) model where all government agencies will clear cargo. The OSC at ICD Naivasha will house the regional Revenue Authorities including Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA), Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA), Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) and Burundi Revenue Authority, Office Burundais des Recettes (OBR).

In a press release by KRA, ICD Naivasha is now operational with a marshalling area having the capacity to hold 700 trucks.

"The KRA office at the Naivasha ICD is now operational with a marshalling area having the capacity to hold 700 trucks at any given time. The Customs offices have equally been deployed with relevant skilled staff," read the press release.

The facility is anticipated to boost storage of cargo mainly those destined for the East Africa Community Partner States: Uganda, South Sudan, Northern Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The government of Kenya while releasing the first 200 TEUs cargo that was on transit to Uganda, emphasised on its commitment to facilitating regional trade. In a statement by Cabinet Secretary (CS) for Transport Mr. James Macharia during the event, the completion of the station would help in containing the spread of COVID-19 as truck drivers will not have to go for the cargo in Nairobi or Mombasa.

However, transporters have had concerns, but Kenya has reassured on the safety of the cargo and the logistical efficiency that ICD Naivasha offers.

"KRA is well equipped to handle the huge capacity expected from Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi at the facility. The ICD will increase efficiency, as KRA is able to monitor cargo in Naivasha through the Joint Monitoring Centre," said the KRA Commissioner for Customs and Border Control in a press release.



PHOTO: KTA

Plea for Faster Evacuation of Cargo at the borders as KPA Extends Cargo Free Storage Period

Transit Transport industry players have called on the EAC Partner States to adopt a Journey Management System (JMS) to assist in tackling the Coronavirus spread at the borders as well as address delays experienced at the entry and exit points occasioned by different individual Northern Corridor Member States’ measures to tackle COVID-19 spread.

The testing of truck drivers and crew has been slow. Transit Transport industry players have asked the Northern Corridor Member States of Kenya and Uganda for a speedy COVID-19 clearance at the Malaba border, whose truck traffic extended up to 50 kilometres in May. These delays have cut short the flow of cargo as well as the supply of essential goods and services hurting the entire logistics industry. Long waiting time for COVID-19 clearance coupled with different Member States’ tests have made border clearance a lengthy process and expensive for importers.

Truck drivers, through their parent association, Kenya Transporters Association (KTA), have asked the governments of Kenya and Uganda to address their concerns on the presence of fuel tankers and dangerous cargo in the traffic jam, lack of food and water, poor sanitary conditions, and lack of social distancing.

“The current situation is unacceptable and is at a very dangerous health and safety risk level,” said the KTA CEO, Mr. Dennis Ombok.

With lack of social distancing and the ongoing interactions with the local community, truck drivers fear Coronavirus spreading at a much higher rate. The KTA expressed worries on the welfare of the drivers as well as stigmatisation of drivers while they deliver essential goods.

“The drivers are facing tough conditions and stigmatisation while they deliver essential goods and services,” added the KTA CEO.

KTA CEO: The current situation is unacceptable and is at a very dangerous health and safety risk level

The Federation of East African Freight Forwarders Associations (FEAFFA), a regional body of customs agents and freight forwarders reported that they are currently negotiating with the EAC governments to find a quick solution to the impasse at the border.

Further, the lockdowns imposed by Northern Corridor Member States have reduced working hours and efficiency of different Transit and Transport Agencies. Cessation of movement at night and checks and requirements to move from one point to another has led to increased transit times. These directives coupled with relay trucking of goods in some Northern Corridor Member States, importers say, have significantly led to an increase in transport costs.



Container free storage period extended for a period of 90 days

In response to the grievances by Transporters and Freight Forwarders, KPA has extended its free storage period package to its customers effective May 18 2020 for a period of 90 days due to the reduced efficiency created by the reduced workforce and the reduced working hours by Revenue Authorities, Port Authorities, Inland Container Depots and Container Freight Stations, Shipping lines, and Standards Bureaus amongst others to keep social distance or to retreat for mandatory quarantine, that has contributed to many delays.

In a notice issued to the public, KPA extended the storage period for Domestic Export Containers to 15 days from nine days previously granted.

"This is in line with our deliberate and continuous efforts of cushioning our customers of the Covid-19 which has affected the entire logistics chain," KPA acting Managing Director Rashid Salim announced in a public notice.

Transit Import Containers at the port and ICD Embakasi were granted 14 days from the previous nine days. Transit import containers at ICD Naivasha, whose free storage period was previously undetermined, was given 30 days. Transit export containers which enjoyed 15 days free storage will now be allowed 20 days free storage. However, the four days of free storage for domestic containers remained unchanged.

In general, transporters and freight forwarders have asked the Northern Corridor Member States' governments to move in and resolve their grievances to prevent a catastrophe for the region's economy.

"We are asking the authorities to move in urgently to resolve the issue to avert a possible catastrophe," KTA said.

EAC adopts Electronic Truck Drivers Surveillance System

EAC Partner States have adopted a regional COVID-19 surveillance system for trucks and their crew to be hosted at the EAC Headquarters in Arusha Tanzania, following EAC directive to its Partner States to finalise and adopt a digital surveillance and tracking system for drivers and crew on COVID-19 for immediate use.

The system piloting starts Monday, June 15, 2020 and its full implementation scheduled for the week of June 22, 2020. It will share truck driver's information leveraging on that which is managed and operated by Revenue Authorities in the region, and the existing health information systems in the Partner States.

"And now we are starting piloting this week since we have agreed with transporters. Also, we have finished purchasing equipment through the support of TradeMark East Africa that will be used for screening: these are tablets that will be having an application on," said Eng. Daniel Murenzi, the Principal Information Technology Officer at the EAC Headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania.

A Joint Consultative Meeting of the EAC Ministers/Cabinet Secretaries of Health, Transport and EAC Affairs held via Video Conferencing on May 29, 2020, agreed that the system would be supported by four (4) Command Operating Centres (COCs) located in four locations at

designated national Revenue authorities in Kenya, Uganda, DRC and Rwanda, with one additional COC set up at the Nimule border post for the Republic of South Sudan.

The report of the Joint Consultative Meeting chaired by Rwanda's Minister for Health, Hon. Dr Daniel Ngamije was signed by Partner States' Heads of Delegation/Health Ministers, namely: Hon. Dr Daniel Ngamije (Rwanda); Hon. Mutahi Kagwe (Kenya); Hon. Dr Jane Ruth Aceng (Uganda), and; Hon. Elizabeth Achuei (South Sudan).

The report reveals that, as a tracking tool, the system allows the users to share information across borders in a transparent manner, and the truck drivers will need to download a mobile phone application on their phones.

Continuous screening will be done at selected checkpoints along the transport corridors, which have already been designated, and information made available for all Partner States. Verification of documents will be done by customs,



PHOTO: EAC

Joint Consultative Meeting of the EAC Ministers/Cabinet Secretaries of Health, Transport and EAC Affairs held via Video Conferencing on May 29, 2020



PHOTO: COURTESY

EAC Digital Surveillance Tracker will allow the users to share information across borders in a transparent manner

immigration, law enforcement agencies/persons who will confirm if a particular traveller is fit to proceed on their journey.

The Digital surveillance tracker will interface and connect directly to designated laboratories in the Partner States to allow the Partner States, for purposes of Coronavirus laboratory results needed to generate the COVID-19 Test Certificates/attestation forms.

Among the directives issued by the Ministers/Cabinet Secretaries during the meeting were: Partner States to designate, provide, establish or ensure that the required critical enablers for the digital system to work are in place; the EAC Secretariat to fast track the implementation of the EAC Digital Surveillance Tracker; the EAC Secretariat to coordinate the rollout of the existing EAC Regional Electronic Cargo Tracking System to cover the Central Corridor, and the Secretariat in collaboration with the Partner States and National Transporters' Associations to sensitise key stakeholders on the EAC Digital COVID-19 Surveillance tracker.

EAC Secretariat also adopted an EAC COVID-19 Test Certificate for truck drivers and crew members. The digital surveillance system would facilitate a common approach to certifying results of those tested for COVID-19 by using the system to generate a COVID-19 test certificate for drivers and crew members.

Consequently, the generated COVID-19 certificate for drivers and crew members who have undergone tests would be shared with all respective stakeholders both at accredited designated laboratories and border crossing points in the region.

This certificate that will be recognised in the EAC is expected to be valid for 14 days and would allow the owner to travel in the region without being subjected to re-testing unless they are found to have signs and symptoms for COVID-19, on screening at checkpoints using the screening tool.

The Certificates will be issued only for those drivers and crew members that test negative for COVID-19. Those that test positive will be expected to follow existing national protocols to access care and other services.

The Ministers/Cabinet Secretaries were informed that the EAC Secretariat was planning to develop harmonised sensitisation material/content that is to be disseminated in the region and customised by individual Partner States. Further, the EAC Secretariat informed the meeting about resources mobilised for Risk and Community engagement to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the region. The framework will be implemented by the Partner States and partners, including the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC).

Taking note of the framework for the regional sensitisation and communication on COVID-19, the Ministers/Cabinet Secretaries directed the EAC Secretariat to mobilise more funds to support the implementation of regional sensitisation and communication initiatives for COVID-19.

Source: EAC Website

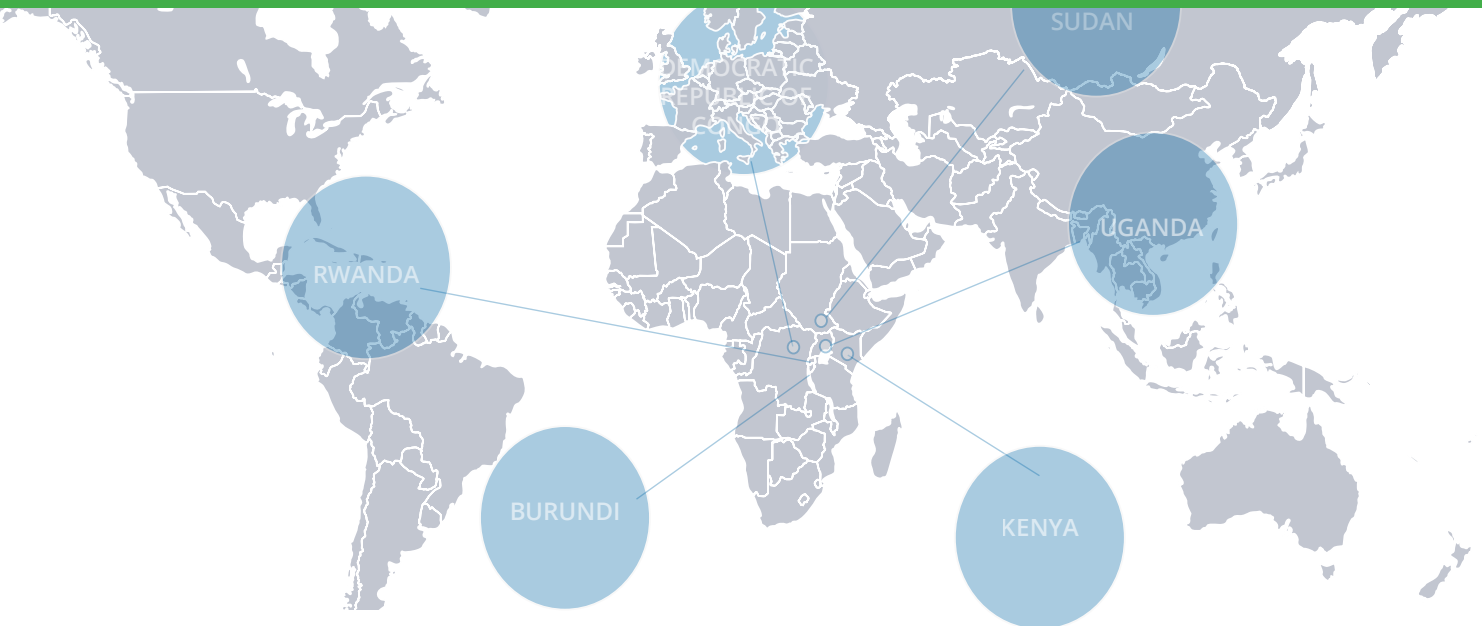


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