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The **EAC** Passport



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Editorial



Dear reader,

The reality of African integration is upon us as regional integration is at the top of the agenda for each African government. The benefits are significant: seamless trade in goods and services; a stronger bargaining position in international trade negotiations; a larger market of more than one billion people for local traders to tap into and that is more attractive to foreign investors than the segregated markets of individual States; simplification of business transactions via regional single currencies; guaranteed political stability through regional peace mechanisms; strategic security; and, above all, economic prosperity.

Central to the African integration process is free movement – not only of goods, but also services, capital, workers, establishments, self-employed persons and non-economic travellers including tourists, students and patients (commonly known as free movement of people). This Digital Symposium focuses on the latter, particularly from the perspective of the East African Community (EAC).

The EAC Passport – an internationally recognised travel document to ease free movement of people across the EAC and elevate the status of applicants for foreign travel – has been adopted by the EAC Partner States. All applicants for new or renewed passports in Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi are now receiving the EAC Passport. South Sudan is set to follow course. For a number of people, this development is unique and exceptional but many have not fully understood its history, rationale and implications.

This Digital Symposium sets out to demystify the EAC Passport. First, an interview with Chris Magoba reveals the history and legal foundation of the EAC Passport. Second, an interview with Florence Nakazi explains the rationale for the EAC Passport and its implications for East African integration. Third, Edgar Rwemigabo undertakes a synopsis of regional passports with a view to illustrating that the EAC Passport is in good company with similar passports from other Regional Economic Communities in West Africa and Europe. Fourth, Pooja Karia explores the notion of ‘East African citizenship’ vis-à-vis the EAC Passport. Fifth, Louis Gitinywa demonstrates the commercial advantages of a common passport, particularly from a tourism point of view. And finally, Kennedy Chege elaborates, through personal experience, the practical hardships of adopting a common passport especially in regard to citizens living abroad.

All in all, this inaugural edition of our monthly Digital Symposiums collects brief expert opinions not only from across the board – including government technocrats, policy analysts, academics and legal practitioners – but also from across the region – particularly Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Kenya.

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FIVE KEY QUESTIONS,

WITH CHRIS MAGOBA

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Mr. Chris Magoba is the Principal Public Relations Officer at Uganda's Ministry of East African Community Affairs (MEACA). He answered five key questions about the EAC Passport.

1. *What is the history of the EAC Passport?*

A regional passport is not a new development in the EAC. In fact, the East African passport predates the current EAC. While the EAC was revived in 1999 upon the signing of the Treaty, the first EAC passport was launched in November 1998. This was by the Permanent Tripartite Commission for East African cooperation – a precursor to the current EAC. Thus, since 1998, citizens from the EAC countries have been able to access a special travel document which allows them to travel with ease within the regional bloc. Its use was however limited because it was not recognized internationally, meaning that it was not accepted as a travel document beyond East Africa.

Currently (2019), Ugandans can hold both the Ugandan and the old East African Passport. The old East African passport is used for travel only in the East African region. However, the new EAC e-passport is internationally recognised and it replaces the old East African passport as well as our national passports. In other words, all the EAC partner states shall use one passport – the new generation EAC e-passport.

2. *What is the legal framework of the EAC Passport both at the domestic and Community level?*

The EAC e-passport is being issued in line with the existing Ugandan legal framework. According to the Passports Act 1982, the Minister responsible for internal affairs is mandated to appoint a senior immigration officer to be a passports control officer. Under the same law, the administration, control and supervision of all matters relating to passports and any other travel documents shall be vested in the passports control officer, subject to the directions of the Minister. Regarding the type of passport, the same law provides that “There shall be such types and categories of passports and other travel documents as the Minister may, from time to time, by statutory instrument prescribe”.

Further still, and for purposes of uniformity, the Treaty establishing the EAC in Article 104 provides that, “The Partner States shall, as may be determined by the Council ease border crossing by citizens of the Partner States and maintain common standard travel documents for their citizens. Additionally, according to Article 9 of the EAC Common Market Protocol, a citizen of a Partner State who wishes to travel to another Partner State shall use a valid common standard travel document. It is thus in this context that: (a) the Partner States came up with and agreed to the use of the East African Passport for travel within the EAC since 1998; (b) the Northern Corridor Partner States agreed to use the national ID as an authen-

tic travel document for their nationals since 2014; and (c) the EAC Heads of State launched the new generation EAC e-passport in 2016.

Thus, the process of the issuance of the EAC e-passport is anchored on both Ugandan laws and the Treaty establishing the EAC plus other protocols and legal instruments agreed thereunder from time to time.

3. *For regional and international travel, how do national ID's and the EAC Passport interface?*

Each of those documents serves a different purpose. The new generation EAC Passport will take you anywhere in the world. The national ID cannot take you outside East Africa. The national ID is mainly for you to be identified and to access services (like scholarships, jobs, health care, participating in elections as a voter or candidate, etc) within Uganda. It is however also used to travel within the EAC even if you don't have a passport as indicated below.

Among the Northern Corridor Partner States of Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda you can use your national ID to travel. With regard to the other EAC Partner States, you can use a Temporary Travel Permit/Pass issued by the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control.

Please note the difference between an interstate pass and a temporary travel permit/pass. The interstate pass is issued to a traveller (at no cost) who is travelling among the Northern Corridor Partner States (Uganda, Kenya and Rwanda) using the national ID. The temporary travel permit/pass on the other hand is issued (at a cost of Ug/Sh10,000/=) to a traveller who has neither the national ID nor a passport but has other forms of identification like an employee ID, student ID or driving permit. Both documents will facilitate your travel within the EAC.

4. *Can a holder of the EAC Passport on an international trip seek consular services from an Embassy of any of the EAC Partner States?*

For now, it is not applicable. In the long run it will be possible especially considering that we are now working

on an EAC confederation constitution and ultimately political federation.

5. *Is MEACA involved in the issuance of the EAC Passport?*

MEACA is not directly involved. In fact, ordinarily MEACA is not responsible for issuance of travel documents. However, this being a new initiative championed partly because of East African integration, MEACA was involved from the outset when matters of intra EAC travel were being initiated. Right now, we are involved in information dissemination.

FIVE KEY QUESTIONS,

WITH FLORENCE NAKAZI

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Ms. Florence Nakazi is a Research Analyst at the Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC). She answered five key questions about the EAC Passport.

1. The EAC Passport has been touted as an ‘e-passport’. What does this mean?

Contrary to the ordinary passports, the e-passport is an electronic passport with enhanced security features, including an electronic chip which stores the bio-data of the holder. With the e-passports, the automated passport reader at the check-in counters connects to various databases including data on passenger National ID to assess the authenticity of the passport holder.

2. What advantages accrue from an e-passport compared to an ordinary passport?

The EAC Treaty commits Partner States to adopt measures to achieve free movement of persons, labour and services within the community. The transition to e-passport is one the various ways to achieve the stated goals. By the fact that the world over, countries are being more digitalized, transitioning from an ordinary passport to an e-passport is associated with a number of advantages. These include:

a. The e-passport is a widely recognized document due to its capacity to provide a secure identification of the passport holder. This harmonized system of movement will limit chances of forgery of bio-

metric information stored in the passport by fraudsters. It has enhanced privacy features for the holders, which combats identity fraud and strengthens national and international confidence in travel documents;

b. The e-passport combines visual and electronic security features designed to be secure and difficult to duplicate when compared to the existing passports. This is likely to enhance security for travelers, the airline as well as immigration and border security agencies. This makes it extremely difficult to change data, which is held on the e-passport, and therefore almost impossible for forgery to take place;

c. Electronic passports have benefits of automated border clearance or “e-gates” and automated issuance of boarding passes for travelers. This fastens travel arrangements with all airlines where e-passport reader equipment is in use. This means citizens leaving or entering the EAC countries will freely do so without necessarily interacting with immigration officers using e-gates. This will boost free movement of people across the region.

d. The e-passport will tremendously enhance the integrity of the Partner States’ passports worldwide, across embassies and airlines. Airline check-in as well as immigration border/airport controls will be less intensive. It is expected that e-gates will be installed in the main entry points to the Partner States, making it easy for East Africans to exit and

enter the country with much ease. This will facilitate movement of people which ultimately promotes development.

e. The e-passport application process is likely to be a bit easier than before. In the current system, persons have to bring their passport sized photographs, which they get from a local photo studio along with the other required documentation. But with the new system, persons will be able to walk into the Immigration and Passport Department and get pictures taken there at no additional cost.

3. As an economic and policy analyst, do you consider the EAC Passport to be a step in the right direction for East African economic integration?

As earlier mentioned, the guidelines for the implementation of the East African Common market Protocol require free movement of people in the East African Partner States (Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, and Southern Sudan) to easily transact. I believe that with the EAC passport, movement of people will be eased across the stated Partner States which is likely to benefit all of them. However, this will only be feasible if all Partner States agree to implement these guidelines. We recently witnessed the closure of the Rwandan border, which highly affected cross border movements and trade between Uganda and Rwanda.

4. What challenges, if any, could the EAC Passport cause for economic integration and how should they be resolved?

One of the key challenges is the varying costs of acquiring the EAC passport in the different countries. Compared to the rest of EAC countries, it is too costly for Ugandans to acquire e-passports. It costs UGshs 250,000 (USD 67) for an ordinary EAC e-passport. This makes it one of the most expensive in the region compared to Kenya and Tanzania who are charging for the same at Kshs 4,550 (USD 43) and Tshs 50,000 (USD 22) respectively. This is likely to undermine the right of movement of Ugandans which is a constitutional right, yet passports

are meant to facilitate easy movement of citizens across the region. This should be solved by fixing the acquisition cost at a foreign currency (US dollar) for which countries should follow to issue the passports.

In addition, EAC passports are mainly targeted for airports within the EAC region without due consideration of other border posts. This means the other cross border posts will be neglected. Partner States will have to incur additional investments (like new reader stations for fingerprint reading) at their border posts to install e-gates and yet for a long time, governments (such as the Ugandan government) have relied on donors to rehabilitate them. This means that the whole scheme required for e-passports must be extended to the inspection system on borders, to be able to propagate, verify, and revoke numerous certificates.

Furthermore, other EAC countries (Burundi and South Sudan) are politically unstable. This is likely to delay implementation of the decision to roll out EAC passports in the region and therefore compromise economic integration. Countries will have to devise additional internal measures to allow free movement and integration.

5. The EAC Passport does not currently confer 'East African citizenship'. Citizenship is still a matter for the individual Partner States. Would you advise the EAC to add more value to the EAC Passport by legislating for East African citizenship? Is this something we should look forward to in the near future?

Under the nationality laws of EAC countries, each citizen has a right to nationality based on the set criterion. In my opinion, I think the EAC passport framework should not legislate for East African citizenship because this will deprive Partner States' citizens of their national identity. By the mere fact that on the EAC passport, it is well labelled the Republic of Uganda, Kenya etc, this signals the nationality of the concerned citizens, which could be lost in due course as we try to advocate for EAC citizenship using EAC passports.

Understanding Regional Passports



Edgar Rwemigabo

The EAC e-passport has been rolled out throughout the region for a period of two years now, with Kenya being the first Partner State to issue them and the others following suit. This however is not the only regional passport that promotes visa-less movement of people regionally. The European Union (EU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are examples of other regional blocs that have regional passports of a similar nature. This article will discuss, in a comparative manner, the nature of the different regional passports in an effort to il-

lustrate why the EAC has made a move towards this style of passport.

The EU Passport is a travel and identity document held by citizens of the 28 Member States of the EU. The passport came into existence as a follow up to the Maastricht Treaty of 1994 that emphasized free movement of people across the Union. The document therefore guarantees free movement of people within the EU and the European Economic Area – which consists of the 28 Member States of the EU, together with Switzerland and Norway (which are not EU Member States).

The EU passport possesses features that are identical across the board, for example, all the passports are burgundy in colour, save for Croatia, whose passport is still blue. In addition, all the passports have the title “European Union” engraved on the cover of the passport in the respective national language of each Member State. The passport has a biometric chip that is designed to international standards and can be used at different immigration gates throughout the world. This ensures efficiency throughout the region as the holders of these passports do not need to go through the manual immigration process but can scan their passports at automated immigration gates and immediately gain entry. Accordingly, the EU passport ensures its holders enjoy their Treaty right to free movement within the EU and EEA and its uniform features encourage security and efficiency of movement of people.

In 2000, the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the ECOWAS met in Abuja and adopted the ECOWAS passport which was modelled on the EU passport, with the ECOWAS emblem on the front cover. A five-year transitional period ensued as national passports were used in conjunction with ECOWAS passports while ECOWAS passports were phased in and became more widely available. They are currently being issued 100% and have out phased the old national passports.

The ECOWAS itself does not issue passports, but the passports are issued by the governments of its 15 Member States and have some similarities in design. These include the green coloured cover for ordinary passports, blue coloured cover for service passports, and burgundy coloured cover for diplomatic passports. Additionally, they share common security features and have biometric information and an e-chip to enable use through automated immigration gates and to adhere to the international standard of e-passports. The ECOWAS passport therefore shares numerous similarities to the EU passport and the main difference comes in the implementation of the policy and agreements by the authorities of the respective regional blocs. They both share the same goal which is to promote free movement of people in the region which is one of the major aspects of Regional Economic Integration.

Consequently, just like those in Europe and West Africa, a regional passport – the EAC Passport – is being issued to the citizens of the Partner States of the EAC, particularly Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi. The majority of the characteristics are similar among the Partner States, include common colours across the various categories (blue for ordinary citizens, green for State officials and red for diplomats). The EAC e-passport has an electronic chip holding the same information as the old model passport, alongside a biometric identifier, digital photograph of the holder and security features to prevent unauthorized use and forgery.

The e-passport features will facilitate faster clearance of citizens at immigration check points and provide an enhanced database with an automated fingerprint verification system that guards against certain fraudulent acts like multiple passport issuances to the same person, thus improving imposter detection. The EAC e-Passport is equally designed to international standards and has numerous advantages including: enabling use of e-gates for self-clearance, automated issuance of boarding passes and quick passenger processing worldwide – all following international security standards.

All in all, despite the fact that as a region the EAC might be late to the party, the EAC e-passport has arrived and will guarantee free movement of people in the region and numerous opportunities in tourism as well as private business. There are a number of similarities the EAC passport shares with its counterparts in Europe and West Africa and based on their relative success in aiding the free movement of people in their respective regions, the future of the EAC passport in promoting this and the integration agenda all together seems bright.

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The East African e-Passport does not Entail East African Citizenship



Pooja Mahendra Karia

The Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community provides for the establishment of a common market of the East African Community (EAC), and there is a Protocol for its establishment – the EAC Common Market Protocol.

The common market here means an integrated single market of the Partner States in which there is free movement of goods, services, persons, workers and capital. Under the Protocol, the Partner States have agreed to guarantee free movement of persons who are citizens of other Partner States of the EAC in their territories. This goes with ensuring non-discrimination by implementing entry without visa, free movement, stay in the territory and exit without restrictions. To these rights however, there are limitations that can be imposed by the host state on grounds of public policy, public security and public health.

To have uniformity on the implementation of the free movement of persons by the Partner States, there are regulations that have been enacted namely EAC Common Market (Free Movement of Persons) Regulations. These provide for a need to have the standard identification system common amongst all Partner States to form a basis for identifying the citizens of the Partner States. The Regulations also provide that a citizen who wants to travel to another Partner State should use a valid common standard travel document while on the other hand it allows the Partner States to use machine readable and electronic national ID cards as travel documents if they wish to do so.

It is upon the foregoing background that the EAC Heads of States decided on issuance of the EAC e-passports that are made in line with the set guidelines of the International Civil Aviation Organization for it to be globally acceptable. It has an electronic chip holding information as to the names, date of birth and place of birth together with a biometric identifier digital photograph of the holder and security features to avoid authorized and fraudulent use. They are of diplomatic, service and ordinary categories, which come in red, green and sky-blue colours respectively showcasing the EAC flag. The outer front cover has the words 'East African Community' in gold on top and the name of the issuing Partner State pasted below.

At this juncture, it is vital to note that free movement is only accorded to the following persons from the Partner States: visitors, those travelling for medical treatment, students, persons in transit, or persons travelling for other lawful purpose other than a worker or a self-employed person. Such persons are supposed to present a valid standard document or national ID and declare all necessary information. They are given a pass valid for up to 6 months that could be renewed at the immigration office of a Partner State without a fee. Such persons are not allowed to take up employment except where the person is on internship or industrial training.

Thus, the EAC e-passport is a standard tool issued by each EAC partner state to achieve the free movement of persons under the EAC Common Market Protocol; it is not in any way an indication of EAC citizenship as is the case with the European Union's (EU) 'Union Citizenship' elaborated below:

In the set-up of the EU, every person holding the nationality of a Member State is a citizen of the Union. It is complementary to the national citizenship and does not replace it. From this status then arise a number of rights and duties since it is a relationship between each citizen and the EU including political participation. These rights and duties are based on Union law and they cannot be limited unjustifiably by the Member States.

Union citizenship implies the right to move and reside in the territories of the Member States, the right to vote and stand as a candidate in the elections to the European Parliament and the municipal elections in their respective Member States, the right to diplomatic protection by any Member State in the territories of third countries (that is, non-EU States) where their home Member State does not have consular or diplomatic representation, and the right to petition the European Parliament. Surprisingly, with the exception of the electoral rights, the EU citizenship is a systemization of the already existing rights since there is neither guarantee of fundamental rights to the citizens nor provision of duties.

Therefore, it is the freedom of movement of persons that is the corner stone of Union citizenship together with other movement rights. It is way different from the situation in the EAC because the EU expressly establishes the Union citizenship.

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Reaching the Regional Full Tourism Potential? A Perspective Analysis of the East African Community Common Passport in Accelerating Tourism Growth



Louis Gitinywa

According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), direct travel and tourism employment in Africa rose to 9.3 million USD which constitutes 6.8 million jobs in sub Saharan Africa. The East African region remains one of the fastest growing regions in the continent and at the global level, interestingly, the WTTC ranks two East African heavyweights Kenya and Tanzania among the top ten African countries which benefit from direct employment in the tourism industry. The tourism industry in East Africa has over the years registered a strong performance. This was evidenced when the World Economic Forum: Travel and Tour-

ism Competitiveness Report stated that the sector has contributed to the regional GDP with growth rate estimates around 4.5% per year since 2007.

Therefore, it is pertinent to enhance the free movement of persons in the region, especially in the context of the EAC where foreign tour operators have complained of cumbersome immigration procedures at border entry points for those who wish to cover various circuits in the region to explore its rich range of cross-border sceneries made by the unique fauna and flora, including the variety and vibrancy of cultural heritage across the region. Here the pertinent question that needs to be asked is, how can the Tourism Industry in the East African Region reach its full potential?

One obstacle to this would be the ability of East African citizens and residents to move within the region freely, either for leisure or for business and it is this obstacle that the East African Passport is created to address. The launch of the East Africa Passport is a historic and vital milestone to the region's effort to fully implement the common market which will further spur more opportunities to promote intra-regional trade and cross border investments in different areas, such as the tourism industry resulting in the creation of additional jobs.

Furthermore, the East African Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions (MICE) industry is emerging as one of the fastest growing tourism categories in the region. As such, we are seeing how East African Partner States are positioning themselves into this area and looking to develop it further, with state of art conference-facilities being built across the region, including the Kigali Convention Centre and the Kenyatta International Conference Centre in Nairobi.

Therefore, there is a need for a conducive environment that will facilitate free movement of persons and push for Regional Integration which will in turn improve the business climate for tourism and encourage investment in infrastructure.

The East African common passport presents a huge opportunity for the East African Partner States through free movement of persons and goods within the region which will boost our economies, facilitate transfer of skills, knowledge, technology, best practices and drive up the economic growth. However, the benefits of the East African common passport will only be realized through its effective implementation by the EAC Partner States that have

committed themselves to it.

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The Plight of Kenyan Nationals in the Diaspora in Light of the Directive to Acquire the New EAC e-Passports



Kennedy Macharia Chege

Following the 17th Ordinary Summit of the East African Community (EAC) Heads of State that was held in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) on the 8th of September 2016, the new international East African e-passport was launched. The rationale for this development is inter alia to synchronize passports in East Africa to boost the free movement of people across the region (Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, South Sudan, Burundi and Rwanda). This is an effort to promote regional integration, which has increasingly become a major theme across Africa, culminating in the recent African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) that has the effect of creating a common African market. It is expected to become the largest free trade area in the world once implemented.

It was agreed that the process of issuing these passports would commence from the 1st of January 2017. Kenya, for example, began issuing the e-passports towards the end of 2017 and set the deadline for the 31st of August 2019. After this deadline, the old passports will no longer be considered valid travel documents. The Kenyan government, through the Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Security, Dr. Fred Matiang'i, has insisted numerous times that the deadline will not be extended beyond this date.

Critics of the move to issue new passports have argued that in Kenya, less than 10% of the population possess passports and it is reasonable to infer that the millions living in poverty will most likely never leave the boundaries of Kenya. Therefore, it is alleged that the government has misplaced its priorities. Instead of spending the much-needed resources by issuing the new passports, it is asserted that what these people need includes: good governance, employment, clean water, affordable housing, good roads and transport systems, markets for their goods and services, universal healthcare and quality education.

With such directives for citizens to acquire the e-passports within strict peremptory deadlines, it is concerning that the government appears to disregard the interests of its nationals living in other countries. This is because there are hardly any mechanisms in place to ensure that its nationals are enabled to register and obtain the e-passports. For example, Kenyans living in South Africa have expressed displeasure with the efforts by the government to facilitate the process of acquiring the new passports. It is however noted that the President, Hon. Uhuru Kenya, instructed relevant government agencies to come up with strategies to ensure that Kenyans in the diaspora are issued with the new generation passports in the countries of their residence. These agencies are yet to heed to the President's call.

In Cape Town for example, many Kenyans have been left frustrated as they have been forced to travel back to Kenya for the purpose of registering for the e-passports, to beat the government-imposed deadline. Although the Kenyan High Commission offices are based in Pretoria, it has not begun processing passports despite the imminent deadline. This creates inconvenience and disruption with people's daily lives. A flight from South Africa to Kenya is expensive and many of these people may be unable to raise the requisite funds. This is considering that majority of the Kenyans in South Africa left Kenya to seek greener pastures and to look for opportunities to make ends meet.

With slightly over 2 months left to the deadline, it is unclear whether the Kenya High Commission in Pretoria will start

to process the passports. It was only recently that it decided to send some of its officials to Cape Town, to ease the burden on Kenyans having to travel either to Pretoria or to Kenya, to register for the what the government termed the “Huduma Number.” The “Huduma Number” refers to a database of citizen’s data, for ease of access to information whenever the government offers services. A card, akin to an Identity (ID) Card is issued to those that have applied for the number, containing all their data. It is expected to ease the burden of carrying bulky documents to prove one’s identity.

Although no plans have been made to send officials to Cape Town for the passport registration process, the experience of Kenyans in Cape Town in their attempts to obtain the “Huduma Number” shows that measures must be put in place from the outset to ensure the efficiency of the process. The “Huduma Number” registration ordeal explains what could go wrong with poor planning by the government, as will be described below.

The “Huduma Number” has long been highly contentious and was subject to court proceedings, where it had been alleged that the government was forcing Kenyans to acquire the number, which was deemed an invasion of privacy. This is because it appears to give out too much of citizens’ data to the government yet the government has in the past failed to protect their data. Though the courts ruled that acquiring the “Huduma Number” was optional, it became clear that not having this number would prejudice citizens, especially when it comes to seeking government services. The government needed to sensitize the populace about what the “Huduma Number” entails, as majority of Kenyans do not understand why they are obligated to receive it.

Sending officials to Cape Town was seemingly a considerate move on the part of the government. However, this portrayal of urgency literally at the very last minute, depicts poor planning. This initiative could have been initiated since 2017 when the process for issuing e-passports began. Even in Kenya, it was only in the last few weeks that the government permitted Kenyans to register for e-passports in areas other than the cities of Nairobi, Kisumu and Mombasa.

Information circulated on social media and other platforms that there would be a registration drive initiated by the Kenya High Commission in Cape Town from Friday 31st May to Sunday 2nd June 2019. The endeavour to send officials to Cape Town to register Kenyan nationals was marred with a myriad inefficiencies and inconveniences.

One of the consulate officials set up base in one of the most populous University of Cape Town (UCT) residences in Observatory (Cape Town). The news of the official’s presence was circulated quickly to Kenyan UCT students and others that reside around that area in the preceding days. On the Friday, hundreds of Kenyans arrived with their old passports and identification documents as requested. The process took excessively long to conclude, and some waited in queues for more than 5 hours. Also, the registration machines were faulty and had to be rebooted severally. I was among the people that arrived first to the venue and I could vividly hear chatter and complaints lamenting the fact that only one official had been brought in to register the multitudes of people. It became apparent that there was a problem of insufficient resources (personnel). As a result, despite being relatively close to the front of the queue, I waited in line from about 4:30 PM and was only registered a few minutes before 10:00 PM. The situation was worse over the next two days (Saturday and Sunday), as hundreds of Kenyans hoping to register for “Huduma Number” were turned back and instructed to return the following day because the registration machines were dysfunctional. The above shows that sending officials to other locations, without proper planning is futile. It would instead be prudent for the government to establish another Kenyan embassy in Cape Town, which has a significant Kenyan population. This is one of the ways that the Kenyan government could tackle the problem of registering Kenyans in the diaspora for projects such as the rollout of the e-passports and the “Huduma Number.”

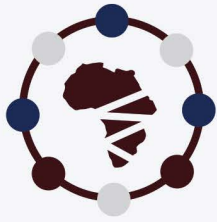
Failure to acquire e-passports by the set deadline will not only prejudice people in terms of having to travel to Kenya but is bound to have very severe consequences for business activity. As has been expressed above, the old passports will be rendered invalid, meaning that they cannot be used as travel documents. This means that commercial activities will adversely be affected, as it is expected that there will be many that will not have applied for the passports by the deadline.

Another problem that has been raised relates to the requirements for registering for the passports. Applicants must submit copies of their parents' identification documents. Such a requirement poses a challenge for Kenyans in the diaspora as it would mean travelling back to Kenya, thus incurring huge financial costs. Also, for many, their parents may be deceased and, consequently, it is unclear how they would be expected to get copies of their identification documents.

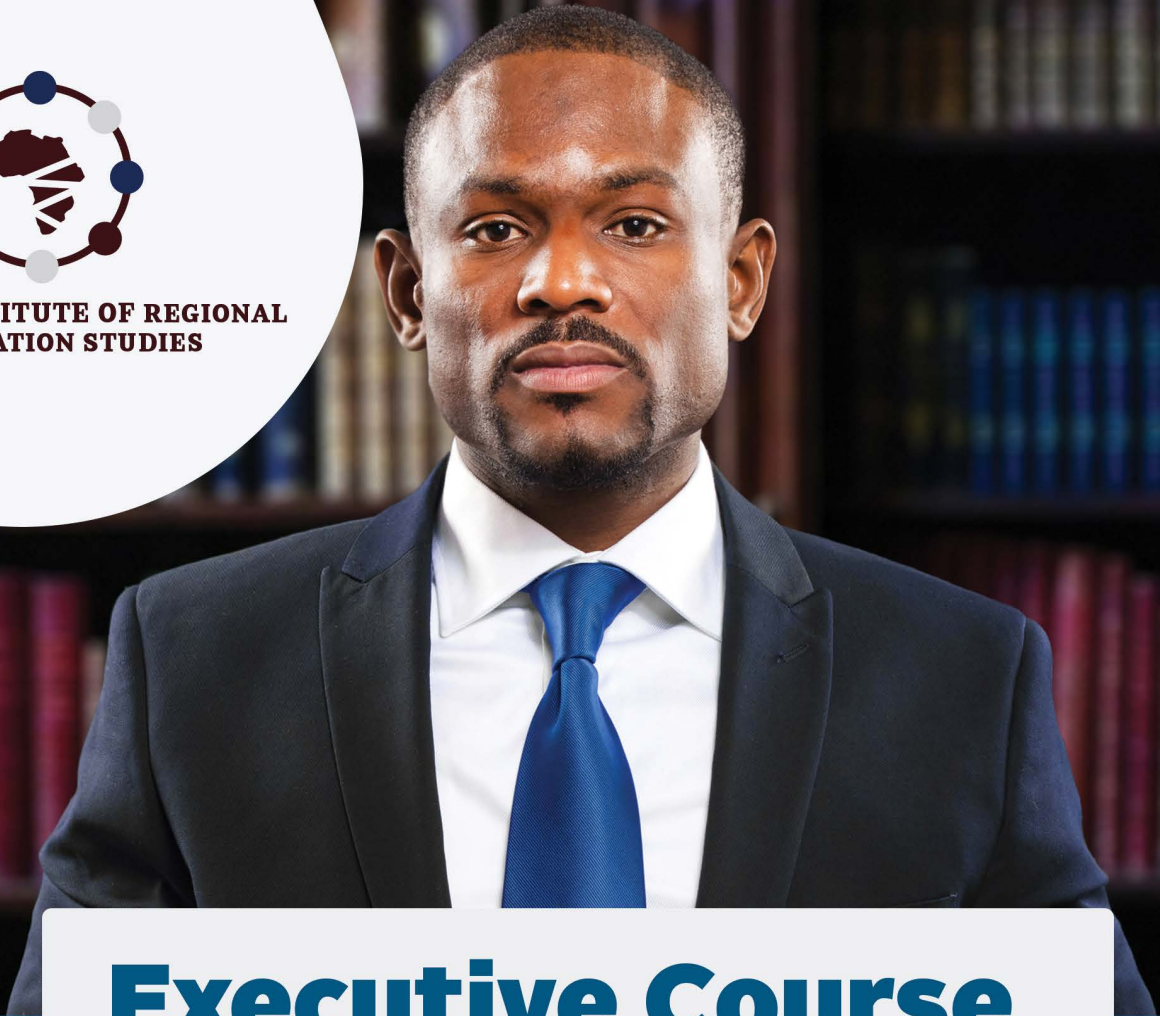
The government must also strive to determine the number of Kenyans in other countries, for proper planning. For example, the exact number of Kenyans in Cape Town and in South Africa generally remains unclear. This makes it difficult for the government to initiate projects such as the ones above. It needs to provide incentives or ways to encourage Kenyans around the world to register with their respective embassies wherever they are.

Kenyans in the diaspora deserve to be treated with dignity and the same importance as is accorded to nationals in Kenya. The Central Bank of Kenya (CBK), which conducts monthly surveys acknowledges that Kenyans in other countries remit billions of shillings every month. Remittances are now being recognized as an important contributor to the country's growth and development. According to the National Treasury's official records, Kenyans working abroad sent home Ksh 11 Billion in March 2019, an amount which can make a huge impact in the economy. This accounts for only the recorded remittances through formal channels such as commercial banks and other authorized international remittances service providers. It is estimated that the total annual remittances were actually \$2 billion, with \$1.2 billion having been through unofficial channels. This emphasizes the point that Kenyans living outside Kenya must be taken seriously when it comes to government initiatives and service provision projects.

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