

## **Toward the Harmonization of Legal Education and Training Curricula in east Africa Regional Integration**

Fidèle Masengo<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kigali Bar Association

masengof@yahoo.fr

The East African Community (EAC) is the regional intergovernmental organisation of the Republics of Kenya, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Republic of Rwanda and Republic of Burundi with its headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania. The Treaty establishing the East African Community was signed on 30 November 1999 and entered into force on 7 July 2000 following its ratification by the original three Partner States – Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The Republic of Rwanda and the Republic of Burundi acceded to the EAC Treaty on 18 June 2007 and became full Members of the Community with effect from 1st July 2007. The Vision of EAC is a prosperous, competitive, secure, stable and politically united East Africa; and the Mission is to widen and deepen Economic, Political, Social and Culture integration in order to improve the quality of life of the people of East Africa through increased competitiveness, value added production, trade and investments. In order to promote the attainment of the objectives of the Community, Partner States agree to undertake concerted measures to foster cooperation in Education and Training within the Community. Among those measures are notably the coordination of their human resources development policies and programs and also to harmonize curricula, examination, certification and accreditation of education and training institutions in the Partner States through the joint action of their relevant national bodies charged with the preparation of such curricula.

In the same line, they also agreed to exchange information and experience on issues common to the educational systems of the Partner States from which they would collaborate in putting in place education and training programs. According to the treaty, the free movement of goods, persons and services is provided. Under the EAC common market protocol, there's an agreement related to the liberalization of legal services and free movement of lawyers. This is a very interesting field of research for the young regional integration like EAC with many differences in educational background. As it is known, the three original Member States (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania), are all former British colonies. As a consequence, their legal system is grounded on common law tradition. Contrarily, Rwanda and Burundi were colonized by Belgium and adopted consequently the civil law legal system which is used for more than a century. In these two legal systems, Member States lawyers have a different traditional legal practice and rules of professional conduct. Furthermore, the EAC has The East African Court of Justice (the Court), which is one of the organs established under Article 9 of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community. The Court's major responsibility is to ensure the adherence to law in the interpretation and application of and compliance with the Treaty. This can be only easy when all judges and lawyers have real convergence in their legal system. The liberalization of legal services and free movement of lawyers calls for the harmonization of legal education and training curricula which seems to be the only condition of free movement of legal services. This paper will try to give an overall framework of the

entire system in terms of the free movement of lawyers. It addresses some issues related to that harmonization by responding to some of questions such as: What are the current developments in legal education and training in EAC Member states? What are the challenges and threats for the process of harmonization of legal education and training? How will the EAC Member States ensure the convergence of learning outcomes for law degrees in EAC? What is expected from pre-professional education? How to cope with non nationally trained applicants? What is the future of the East Africa legal education and training?