



# A TWO WHEEL JOURNEY TO THE EAC INTEGRATION



## GACS REPORT

# Letter to the East African Heads of States



**Your Excellences,**

The Great Africa Cycling Safari (GACS) appreciates your efforts to create a strong, prosperous region.

By riding our bicycles throughout the region, we are fighting alongside you in four crucial areas:

- 1. Advancing the objectives of the East African Community,**
- 2. Raising awareness of the problems related to food security, and the consequences of environmental problems and climate change on the community.**
- 3. Encourage bicycle tourism throughout the East African Community, with special focus on non-traditional tourist destinations.**
- 4. Promotion of peace and security in the EAC region.**



In this book, you will see the work we do with the little resources we have at our disposal. We are pleased to notify you that, as a result of our grassroots efforts, the East Africa community's vision is becoming more vibrant. We have managed to make a significant impact on the lives of many individuals. Through our dedication and determination, we have witnessed the transformation of the East African community into a thriving and dynamic environment. Your Excellences, we firmly believe in the power of unity and collaboration, and our actions speak louder than words.



Through our collective efforts and unwavering commitment, we are actively implementing initiatives that address the diverse needs and aspirations of every individual within this community. Our job is to carry out the goals and objectives of the community.

***GACS welcomes you, your Excellences.***



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*This report provides feedback on the developments and activities that have taken place during the seven years of GACS' existence. It also includes recommendations from the public intended for EAC Partner States' policymakers to consider and act upon.*

# Acknowledgement

The Great Africa Cycling Safari would not have been possible without the assistance and commitment of the EAC Partner States, a million-tree international organization, EAC security agencies, cycling groups and associations, the Pan Africa Movement, the Pan Africa Federalist Movement, and dedicated volunteers.

Our heartfelt thanks go to our coordinators, Faith Munga, Mobutu Machaba, Kimuli Rogers, and Semujju John Baptist. We also extend our sincere appreciation to Honorable Hajjat Sarah Kanyike, Mbowa Aron Vincent, Baluku Ronald Busimba, Abdul Wahabu Nyanzi, Joyce Kevin Abalo, and Faith Achieng Munga for their exceptional dedication and commitment to making a positive impact.

We sincerely appreciate the involvement and support of the EAC Secretariat, EAC Partner States. Our gratitude extends to the Ministries of East African Affairs, customs and Immigration departments of the different partner states, EAC-GIZ Program, and to the police and Military forces of the EAC states.

We earnestly thank Coastal High School in Tanga, and Gairo Secondary School, Pedal TZ and Twende Butyama in Tanzania, Journey House in Bugesera Rwanda, the Burundi Scouts Association, Kagira Skills Ibanda, Ibanda Community Organization Network, Million Tree International, M-vin motel Kampala,, Fun Cycling Uganda, in Uganda, Critical Mass Kenya and Goma cycling club in DRC for giving their time and provision to the team as they cycle around.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to cyclists who have participated in the GACS events since its inauguration in 2016 to date.

# Forward



Each year, in August, GACS get bigger and better, growing in both scale and impact. East Africa witnesses our modest contribution, which has evolved into one of the most significant and visible initiatives supporting the strengthening of the East African Community integration process. Notably, standing as the longest endurance bicycle tour in the region, covering 6000km in 55 days, drawing participants from across East Africa. GACS brings together cycling enthusiasts and professionals to embark on a challenging journey, showcasing the stunning landscapes of East Africa.

***“Through various channels, the global community is closely monitoring and following our progress.”***

We rely on our determination and spirit to ride our bicycles across East Africa. Along the route, we showcase the progress of regional integration at various accessible locations, highlighting the unity and cooperation within the region.”.

Not only that, we raise awareness of regional integration among the citizens of East African Community member states, fostering a deeper understanding of the benefits and opportunities that integration offers.

Not only that, we aim to tackle climate change and raise awareness about food security, contributing to the sustainable development of the community and ensuring a better future for its citizens.”.

Not only that, we actively promote peace and security within our region, fostering stability and cooperation among East African Community member states.”

Not only that, we are committed to promoting bicycle tourism within the East African Community, with the goal of making the EAC the world’s no.1 bicycle tourism destination.

***Finally, we want to ride as much or as little, as long or as short as we feel. For its cause, however, we ride and finish the course.***

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Bosco Balongo', written over a white background.

JohnBosco Balongo  
**Founding Director**  
**GACS Cycling Africa**

# EAC Secretary General

It is with great pleasure and immense pride that I extend my heart-felt appreciation to all those cyclists who participated in the Great African Cycling Safari (GACS) events. This exceptional event has not only captured the spirit of adventure but also the essence of integration within the East African Community (EAC).

GACS has come a long way since its modest beginnings in 2016 and I am delighted to have witnessed its growth into the most successful bicycle tour of the region.

The dedication and enthusiasm of the Gallant Cyclists and countless others who contributed to this remarkable journey are truly commendable.

The cyclists exemplified the spirit of solidarity and collaboration that characterizes our community as they raised the EAC flag and the flags of the seven (7) EAC Partner States during their epic 6,000-kilometer journey across six of the eight EAC partner states: Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I am informed that more than 1,000 cyclists joined the team during various legs of the tour, while many others came out to cheer and celebrate their remarkable achievements. We hope that this tour will soon extend its reach to Somalia and South Sudan, further strengthening the bonds of cooperation in the region.

The GACS serves as a testament to the power of small decisions and choices, just as our EAC integration has evolved from cooperation between three countries to encompass seven (7) Partner States and still counting. We view this cycling adventure as a unique opportunity to market the EAC integration to its true owners, the ordinary people of East Africa.

The purpose of this cycling safari is not only to create awareness about the integration but also to sensitize the communities along the tour's itinerary. In this endeavor, the cyclists are aligning with the vision of the EAC Heads of State, who are committed to taking the integration to the grassroots level.

I am pleased to acknowledge the cyclists' dedication to mitigating the effects of climate change through their Community forest initiative in the region and their dialogue with students and residents on enhancing food security and climate resilience. I appeal to the private sector in East Africa to provide corporate sponsorship for the tour and thereby enhance its reach to more EAC Citizens.



Hon. (Dr.) Peter Mutuku Mathuki  
**Secretary General**  
**East African Community**

# GACS Directors' Message



Baluku Ronald  
Director GACS CYCLING AFRICA

The GACS aims to educate and empower communities on measures that ultimately lead to the EAC integration by engaging in conversations and sharing knowledge, inspire individuals to take action towards ensuring a secure and sustainable future. Further more, the GACS aims at create awareness about food security and climate change by sensitizing communities along the cycling route.

I am happy that we are moving in the right direction and for what we have been able to achieve as GACS since we started in 2016. Our efforts have not only raised awareness about integration but also engaged in sustainable discussions with the communities along the tour route.

These discussions have led to the implementation of local and regional initiatives and projects aimed at mitigating the impact of climate change. Additionally, the cyclists have been able to gather valuable insights and feedback from community members, which will inform future advocacy efforts and policy recommendations. As we continue to pedal forward, we are confident that our collective actions will contribute towards a greener and more resilient future for all.

Abdul Wahabu Nyanzi  
Director GACS CYCLING AFRICA



The GACS is the only venture in the region that brings life to the EAC integration freedoms. The fact that people can move by bicycle across borders is confirmation that the region is peaceful for trade and tourism. It should be noted that growth of this regional block depends a lot on its internal markets making movement of people and goods a critical freedom.

Food security is one area that all East Africans need to direct energies if the region is to remain competitive and attractive in the future. Food is going to be the weapon of mass destruction of the future and therefore our region must be positioned to become resilient. The GACS spends 55 days on the trail, talking food security matters with school children, the crop that is going to be in charge of the region tomorrow. They are the ones that are going to be here when our grandchildren need good quality food. Responding to the food security call by planting fruit trees in common areas is a double pronged approach that also addresses issues of climate change.

# THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY!?!?

To effectively engage with the East African Community, a thorough understanding of its structure and dynamics is essential. Without this knowledge, establishing connections with member states and navigating the complexities of initiating and implementing projects or interventions become a significant challenge.

Therefore, it is our responsibility to educate citizens and provide access to information that will enhance their understanding of the East African Community concept, culture, partner states, governance frameworks, policies, and underlying assumptions.

Although we often perceive the East African Community primarily as a political forum where leaders from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Somalia, Tanzania, and Uganda convene to discuss how to rule us, it's important to remember that the term 'community' broadly refers to any group of people united by a common interest or characteristic. This can apply not only to large political entities but also to smaller, localized communities such as neighborhoods, rural areas, or specific development zones within a larger, geographically defined regions. "



*GACS Team At the Ministry of Foreign affairs and International relations in Kigali, Rwanda*

## How can the East African Community be described?

During our past events, we met a Hungarian cyclist along the way who boldly argued that the East African Community is just a desire/concept held by a group of countries in the region. He believed that the East African Community lacked a strong sense of unity and cooperation among its member states. According to him, the organization failed to effectively address regional issues and promote economic integration, making it merely a symbolic entity rather than a functional one.

It was described by some people we met along the route as a political organization for some African nations. "An EAC meeting is where the presidents of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, and Rwanda get together over a cup of tea and strategize on how to rule us", according to a woman we met in Kazuramimba, Tanzania. It's just a geographical name on the map.

They do not see the East African Community as something beyond politics. It is therefore the same question we are trying to find answers to.

During the Youth African Connect held in Kigali 2017, one of the big personalities in the Music industry (Akon) called upon all stakeholders in African and the sub regions to re-brand Africa. We would also like to add to his voice and invite every East African to join in the call to rebrand and rewrite our own history.

Yes, our stories have always been written by other people, and so we are portrayed as incapable, untrustworthy, and so on. We know the truth and can use initiatives like GACS to write our own history, and promote our own values as East Africans.

We are aware of the truth and recognize the opportunity initiatives like this present to shape our own narrative. We urge leaders at all levels to support efforts focused on rebranding the East African Community, rewriting our collective history, and championing the values that define us as East Africans. **HELP REDESCRIBE THE EAST**

## AFRICAN COMMUNITY

### The role of EAC armed forces in the East African integration by the UPDF Political Commissar, Major Gen Henry Masiko.

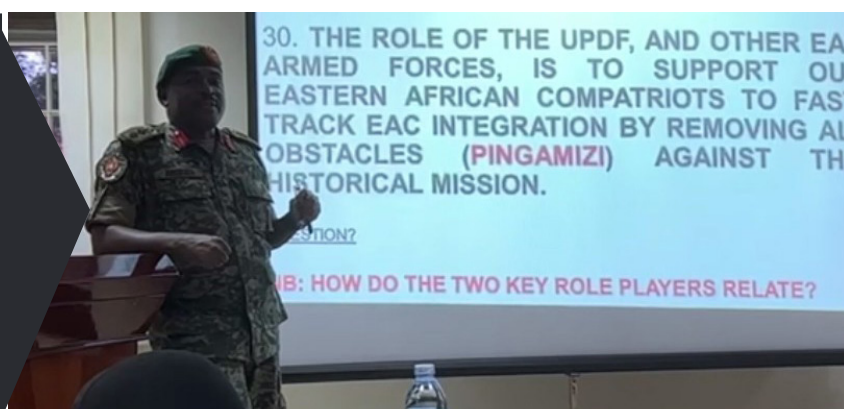
When you have a **VISION**, its execution will require writing down a **MISSION** statement supported by **MISSION OBJECTIVES** which are stated in a **SMART** manner on who is to do what.

Therefore, it is important to discuss the role of the UPDF and other EAC armed forces in EAC integration. From the perspective of the 20/80 principle, everyone needs to know who is to take on which leading role, even though the implementer and stakeholders may be many. EAC`s participation in the process of Africa`s integration is a matter of historical necessity.

All do their bit to make it happen fast. And as for the UPDF, the integration of Africa is not a mere agenda of the day but a matter of principle that is grounded both in our ideology and doctrine. That is also a matter of obedience to the provisions of our national constitution. So, when the UPDF is doing a pan-Africa role, whatever the odds and sacrifices entailed, they are in their perfect flow, for it is a calling.

As such, **GACS and her participants are considered fellow integrationists by the UPDF.** You are our fellow fighters in this war. You are the EAC Agenda's strategic reserve force.

*Chief Political Commissar to GACS2023 during a Lecture at URDCC Gadafl Barracks Jinja, Uganda.*



# About

## GACS Cycling Africa

Over the past seven years, we have successfully organized and staged the event regionally known as the East Africa Bicycle Tour, marketed as Tour d'EAC. In 2022, we re-branded to GACS Cycling Africa, which represents the Great Africa Cycling Safari (GACS), a registered entity in Uganda. GACS is the world's longest endurance bicycle safari, dedicated to promoting people-centered integration by fast tracking the EAC integration process and raising awareness of various social and environmental issues affecting communities across the region.

The event is a 55-day, 6,000 km cycling expedition that highlights the rich diversity of life across East Africa, while fostering unity and adventure among participants. As one of the key initiatives for regional integration, GACS draws cyclists from all EAC partner states and passes through six of the seven member countries. This unique platform has become a powerful catalyst for regional integration, translating the EAC's goals and policies into tangible actions at the grassroots level, while strengthening cross-border collaboration and understanding.

### Vision

*To be recognized globally as a leading cycling event in East Africa that brings together cycling enthusiasts to promote cycling, EAC tourism and to highlight opportunities, issues and challenges faced by EAC residents.*

### GACS Thematic Pillars

#### 1 GACS as a Promoter of EAC Integration.

By cycling through multiple East African Community (EAC) partner states, GACS actively promotes the EAC integration agenda. The event brings together participants from all EAC member states, creating a unique opportunity to demonstrate the benefits of regional cooperation and unity. As participants traverse borders, they experience firsthand the shared cultural, economic, and social ties that bind the region, helping to strengthen the spirit of integration at both grassroots and policy levels.

#### 2 Promotion of peace and security in the EAC region.

Through community engagement and dialogue, GACS connects with people in both remote and urban areas. The route is designed to highlight the region as safe and peaceful for tourism and business. Cyclists are drawn from different EAC member states with diverse cultures and therefore having these people speaking one common language for the distance and number of days exhibits our resolve for a stable region.

#### 3 Trade, Investment, and Tourism.

GACS highlights the vast potential for trade, investment, and tourism within East Africa, with a particular focus on bicycle tourism. As participants travel through diverse landscapes, they engage with local communities, showcasing the region's tourism potential while promoting sustainable travel. By drawing attention to the economic opportunities created by tourism, GACS helps foster local economic growth and enhances the visibility of East Africa as a key destination for investment and development.

#### 4 Food Security, Climate Change Awareness, and Ecological Restoration

Through its route across East Africa, GACS raises awareness of critical regional challenges such as food security, climate change, and environmental sustainability. The event serves as a platform to highlight the importance of ecological restoration and sustainable farming practices. By bringing attention to these pressing issues, GACS encourages collective action for climate resilience, food security, and the protection of East Africa's unique ecosystems.

### GACS: Bridging the Gap in EAC Integration Through Adventure and Awareness”

As EAC integration advances, the inclusion of citizens from all levels, society remains one of the biggest challenges. Despite the advances made towards uniting this community of nations, most East African citizens are unaware of the integration agenda and the rights and freedoms granted to them.

A key aspect of GACS is that the Tour is planned and managed by Africans, which has been highly motivating, especially for women and girls who see women participating as equals to men. In some cases, schools have traveled over 100km to witness the event, finding it inspiring for their students.

Initially focused on cycling, the Tour has evolved since 2020 to include a dual focus: The Tour remains a long-distance cycling event that attracts global participants and promotes tourism, but it has expanded to include community-based projects and awareness activities in the locations it visits. These projects highlight local issues such as food security, education, and women's empowerment.

**To streamline operations, the management of the Tour has been divided into two separate entities:**

- GACS Cycling Africa, which coordinates and manages the non-cycling community-based projects.
- The GACS planning team, which oversees the cycling logistics, route planning, and cycling-related activities. This separation has simplified coordination with sponsors and partners, making the management of funds and activities more efficient.

We have forged strong partnerships with a diverse range of organizations and groups across the region, including non-profit organizations, academic institutions, and cycling communities. These collaborations allow us to harness their expertise, resources, and networks, enabling us to achieve our shared objectives and drive lasting impact within the East African Community (EAC).

“  
*He who has done his best  
 for his own time has lived  
 all times.*  
 ”



#	NON- PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS	ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS	CYCLING GROUPS
1	IBANDA COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION NETWORK	COASTAL HIGH SCHOOL IN TANGA	PEDAL TZ IN ARUSHA TZ
2	TANZANIA ENVIRONMENT AND AGRO- SMART	ARUSHA TECHNICAL INSTITUTE	SSALI BIKES UGANDA
3	MILLION TREE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION	KAGIRA SKILLS CENTRE IN IBANDA-UGANDA	TEAM VUMBI IN ARUSHA, TANZANIA
4	JOURNEY HOUSE IN GASHORA –RWANDA	BULONDE SECONDARY SCHOOL NZEGA TANZANIA	TAVETA CYCLING GROUP, IN VOI KENYA
5	SAIT PIERRE SCOUTS GROUP IN NGOZI BURUNDI TAUPE OUVERT SCOUTS GROUP, BUJUMBURA	GAIRO SECONDARY SCHOOL SUNITE GROUP AT TABORA BOYS, TANZANIA	CHABADO (CHAMA CHA BAISKELI DODOMA)
6	MVIN MOTEL KAMPALA	KALIUA TZ	FUN CYCLING UGANDA
7	PAN AFRICA FEDERALIST MOVEMENT	MOI AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOL	
8	PAN AFRICAN MOVEMENT	BUKEDEA COMPREHENSIVE- UGANDA	



**Deputy Secretary General**  
Hon. Andrea Ariik Aguer Malauth

- After flagging off GACS 2024 cyclists in Arusha

# Speeches & Messages

## Messages from East African Community Leaders

Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga  
*The First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of East African Community Affairs, Uganda*



“**T**his is an important East African Community event that promotes unity, peace and development. It inspires grassroots mobilization towards regional integration, as well as fostering cultural exchange and cooperation among member states. The event provides a platform for participants from different countries to be part of a larger collective effort in achieving common goals and addressing shared challenges. GACS also serves as an opportunity for leaders at all levels to engage in constructive dialogues and collaboration, ultimately strengthening the bonds between East African partner states and paving the way for a prosperous future together.” ***Rt Hon Rebecca Kadaga said this during the flag off ceremonies of the 6th Great Africa cycling Safari on 1st August 2023 at the source of the Nile in Jinja.***

The First Deputy Premier questioned why the ministry had planned and budgeted for the event, but none of her staff members participated in it or were present. This statement highlights the importance of events like the GACS in fostering unity and cooperation among East African nations. However, her concern regarding the absence of her staff members raises questions about the coordination and communication within the MINISTRY and their interest in such initiatives. I'll use every resource at my disposal to ensure that GACS meets its objectives.

This commitment from Rt. Hon. Kadaga demonstrates her determination to support the goals of GACS and ensure its success. It also reflects her willingness to address any shortcomings in coordination and communication within the ministry, showing a proactive approach towards improving future participation in similar initiatives.



*group photo with Rt Hon. Kadaga and GACS 2023 team at Jinja source of the Nile during the Tour's Official flag off.*

Prof. Nshuti Manasseh

**Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Rwanda**



Prof. Nshuti insisted that the people of East Africa have every reason to support the tour. This will act as a huge symbol of cooperation among the people of East Africa, and aside from that, it tightens our collaboration, particularly among leaders. He highlighted that such collaborations are essential for addressing regional challenges and promoting economic growth in the region.

Prof. Nshuti continued, not only do these cyclists ride bikes, but they also contribute to our awareness-building efforts regarding the importance of the East African Community and the unity of the continent's population. The gold medal is the community awareness you are raising, even though you aren't searching for any. In the upcoming year, as a ministry, we will allocate funds for this project. If the integration is driven by the private sector and is people-centered, then you are driving it to the right place.

By prioritizing community engagement and actively participating in grassroots initiatives, you are fostering a sense of unity and empowerment among the people. It is crucial for people to understand the significance of such efforts in order to truly appreciate the positive changes. The integration is ours, and it's ours to stay. Those who think the EAC is going to die are prophets of doom. The East African Community (EAC) has proven to be resilient and adaptable, continuously evolving to meet the needs and aspirations of its member states.

Its success lies in the commitment and collaboration of both the public and private sectors, working together towards common goals. In the interest of time, let me express my gratitude on behalf of Foreign Affairs and the Government of Rwanda. We will extend our assistance and will be delighted if you accomplish the goals you set out to accomplish.



*“Integration is not just about trade, it is also about security”.*  
By president Kagame



Madam Beatrice Askul Moe  
Minister on EAC Affairs in Kenya

Cabinet Secretary Beatrice Moe praised the Great Africa Cycling Safari (GACS) for its significant role in promoting cycling as a sport, boosting tourism, and highlighting key opportunities and challenges faced by the citizens of the East African Community (EAC). She emphasized that the annual event serves as an important regional advocacy platform, supporting the EAC integration process through initiatives focused on awareness creation, cross-cultural interaction, environmentally responsible tourism, economic growth, gender empowerment, human capital development, food security, and public health.

While addressing the EAC cyclists who participated in the 7th edition of the cycling event, which began on August 1st, 2024, in Gitega, Burundi, and made its way through Tanzania before reaching Kenya at the Namanga Border Post on August 17th, 2024, CS Moe expressed her gratitude for their active involvement in climate change mitigation efforts during their 10-day stay in Kenya. These efforts included activities such as tree planting, establishing integration clubs, creating Mama cycling clubs, and raising awareness about food security, among other initiatives.

CS Moe also highlighted Kenya's focus on the monetization of talent as a key strategy for youth empowerment and employment, urging EAC partner states to explore ways to make cycling a more competitive and commercially viable enterprise. She noted that in previous editions of the event, participants included People Living with Disabilities (PWDs), thus promoting inclusivity, peace, and integration among the citizens of the EAC. The event has also played a crucial role in raising awareness on issues such as food security, climate change, and environmental sustainability, while accelerating the transition towards a regional confederation.

Furthermore, she pointed out that GACS has been a catalyst for sports development, trade, and e-commerce, serving as a platform for identifying talent and skills, as well as stimulating local economies along its route. The event promotes trade in cycling gear, local products, and services, while also showcasing the potential for e-commerce platforms to support both sports events and tourism. According to CS Moe, the safari acts as a mobile advertisement, highlighting the diverse landscapes and cultures of the EAC, with the potential to boost both intra-regional and international tourism.



**Speech by Amb. Remy Barampama**  
*Director General in charge of political, security, Legal and communication Affairs*  
**At the ministry of EAC Affairs Burundi.**  
*During GACS 2024 Flagg off Ceremony*



Honorable guests, participants of the Great Africa Cycling Safari, distinguished guests from the East African Community, members of the media, ladies and gentlemen. Good morning.

It is an honor and privilege to stand before you today as we flag off the 7th edition of the GACS here in our beautiful and historic city of Gitega.

On behalf of the government of Burundi and the ministry of the East African Community Affairs, youth, sports and culture. I warmly welcome all of you who have gathered here to celebrate this momentous occasion.

The Great Africa cycling safari is more than just a cycling event; it's a powerful symbol of unity, integration, and shared purpose among the EAC partner states. This event embodies the spirit of "one people, one destiny." As enshrined in the EAC treaty.

As cyclists' journey through our diverse landscapes engaging with communities and carrying out the message of regional integration, they remind us of the immense potential we have as a region when we move forward together.

Ladies and gentlemen, this year's tour is significant as it coincides with Burundi's growing role within the East African Community. Hosting this event underscores our country's unwavering commitment to advancing the ideals of the EAC economic, integration, social cohesion and people centered development. Through this safari, we are reminded that the EAC is not just about treaties and policies, but about people, ordinary citizens from farmers to students, traders to entrepreneurs whose lives enriched through cooperation, trade, shared opportunities.

To our cyclists, you are the ambassadors of this noble mission. As you pedal through the hills and valleys of our region, you carry the flag of unity, hope and determination. May your journey inspire others to join hands. Thank you, our partners, for making this event possible.

Ladies and gentlemen, let us support initiatives that bridge borders, strengthen partnerships and create opportunities for all our people. With that I declare the 7th great Africa cycling safari officially flagged off.

***Marakoze cane!***  
***Asante sana!***  
***Merci beaucoup!***  
***Thank you so much!***



Dr. Sarah Hasaba (PhD)  
**Regional Coordinator PAFM Eastern Africa**

The Pan-African Federalist Movement has been a strong advocate for the Great African Cycling Safari (GACS) in East Africa. This remarkable initiative serves as an inspiring platform for fostering regional integration, promoting environmental sustainability, and advancing unity and peace among communities.

Pan-Africanism, regional integration and cycling intersect as dynamic avenues for fostering unity, mobility, and solidarity across the East African region and African continent as a whole. Regional integration seeks to dissolve barriers between countries, enabling unified trade, cultural exchange, and shared development. Cycling, as both a sport and a mode of eco-friendly transportation, connects communities while promoting health and sustainable mobility. Pan-Africanism, rooted in the ideals of African unity and self-determination, complements these efforts by emphasizing shared identity and collaboration. Together, these fundamentals symbolize a vision of strengthened bonds across communities, where integration, shared identity and empowerment go hand in hand, powered by the collective movement of its people.

As the Pan African Federalist Movement in East Africa, we believe that our collective action and potential are limitless because together, we can build a future where Africa is not just a symbol of resilience but a beacon of progress, creativity, and hope for the world. Let us continue to carry this flame of unity, wherever we are, and honour those who paved the way for us to dream and achieve today.  
 In solidarity and hope,



**THE PAN AFRICAN FEDERALIST MOVEMENT  
 (PAFM)**

*A grassroots coalition for African Unity*



Mr. Njima Ben Bob Bolt  
**Chairman Pan African Movement Uganda**

*Dear African Brothers and Sisters,*

As we embark on the extraordinary journey of the Great Africa Cycling Safari, we are not just traversing landscapes; we are riding through the rich tapestry of our shared history, cultures, and aspirations as a united continent. This event is more than a cycling safari; it is a celebration of our unity, resilience, and the indomitable spirit of Africa.

Africa has always been a land of promise, filled with boundless potential and vibrant communities. Together, we rise and embrace our diversity as our strength, fostering collaboration that transcends borders. This event symbolizes our commitment to sustainable development and the promotion of healthy lifestyles while nurturing our bond as one people.

As we cycle through breathtaking terrains, let us reflect on our journey toward a brighter, more integrated Africa. Each pedal forward is a statement of our determination to overcome challenges and strive for a continent where peace, prosperity, and progress reign supreme.

We must remember that the journey does not end here; it is merely the beginning. Together, we must work to empower each other, uplift our brothers and sisters, and build bridges of understanding and cooperation among our nations. Let this safari inspire our youth, encourage our communities, and ignite a spirit of Pan-African solidarity that echoes across the globe.

To our riders, supporters, and communities: let us cycle with pride, purpose, and passion. Your presence here is a testament to the optimism that fuels the Pan African Movement—a dream for a unified, thriving Africa.

***May this message inspire all who partake in this unforgettable journey!***

**Ride on, Africa!  
Ride on to Unity!  
In solidarity and  
hope,**



## Messages From The GACS Fraternity



**Honoring Ambassador  
Ann Katusiime:**

**The Beloved “Mama  
GACS”**

The Great African Cycling Safari (GACS) wishes to extend its deepest gratitude and recognition to Ambassador Ann for her unwavering support and commitment to our cause since 2016. From her early days in Kigali to her continued advocacy over the years.

In honor of her exceptional support and maternal guidance, she was deservedly conferred the title of “Mama GACS”. This title symbolizes her nurturing spirit, steadfast commitment, and the profound impact she has had on the GACS journey.



Hon. Hajjat Sarah Kanyike

**Chairperson Planning Committee, Uganda Chapter**

**I** boast about GACS everywhere I go. Who wouldn't want to be part of the Great Africa Cycling Safari? With its thrilling adventures and immersive cultural experiences, GACS offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to explore the diverse beauty of Africa while indulging in an unforgettable cycling journey.

Whether you're an avid cyclist or simply seeking a unique travel experience, GACS promises to leave you with cherished memories and a deeper appreciation for the wonders of this incredible region. Serving as the chair of the planning team in Uganda for the past two years, I have gained a lot of knowledge from working with GACS despite the challenges and obstacles that come with organizing such a large-scale event. From coordinating logistics to ensuring the safety and comfort of participants, being a part of GACS has allowed me to develop invaluable skills in event management and teamwork. Additionally, witnessing the positive impact that GACS has on local communities through their support of various charitable initiatives is truly inspiring.

Mbowa Vincent  
Finance Administrator



The most relentless question in my mind has always been, what will be the value of my memories to the evening of my life? Will it be a measure of material wealth possessions or a measure of life lived to the fullest and comfortable with adventure of populated passports ???? All that was enough to soothe my joining the daunting and yet a mind storming tour.

***This event is not about speeding or competitiveness, its about adventure, in other-wards, it's a tour and everyone can take part no matter the ability for as long as you have the will to ride.***

Faith Munga Achieng  
GACS Media Contact Person



Being a part of something large makes me joyful. I'm glad to help people. My name is Faith Achieng Munga. I am a journalist by profession, living in Nairobi, Kenya. The dynamic and diverse community of GACS gives me a wealth of stories to share, which enhances the fulfillment of my profession. Volunteering at GACS as the media contact person connects me with people from various backgrounds and cultures, broadening my perspective and understanding of the world. This enriches my storytelling and enables me to bring unique perspectives to the forefront.

Overall, being part of the GACS community amplifies my passion for journalism and reinforces my commitment to making a positive impact on society.

Mobutu Machaba  
**GACS coordinator Tanzania**



Habari,  
Natamai ujumbe huu utakupata vyema. Nataka kutoa shukrani zangu za dhati kwa kuendelea kujitolea na kuunga mkono mpango wa GACS. Ziara hiyo nchini Tanzania iliweka msingi imara wa kukuza umoja na ushirikiano wa kizalendo.

Tunapotazamia ziara za siku zijazo, maarifa na uzoefu wako hubaki kuwa muhimu. Tafadhali jisikie huru kushiriki mawazo au ushauri wowote ambao unaweza kutusaidia kuimarisha athari za GACS katika kukuza ushirikiano wa EAC.  
Shukran

# The GACS Tour



**ONE TEAM  
ONE DREAM**

**ONE PEOPLE  
ONE DESTINEY**

## The Tour

The GACS tour has hosted more than 100 themed workshops, activities, and events that take place along the route.

In essence, the activities are aimed to raise awareness and promote discussions on critical issues affecting the region, including Regional integration, peace and Security, Climate change and Food security.

**The data collected from the sessions is used for two main purpose:**

- 1.** Inform Public - Private dialogue;  
facilitatind discussions betwee public sector and private sector.
- 2.** Policy Recommendations:  
the insights gained from data and PD are used to inform policy proposals



**HE Amb Maj Gen  
Mathius Kyaligonza  
(in black)**

**The GACS Patron**

## Facts about the GACS Route

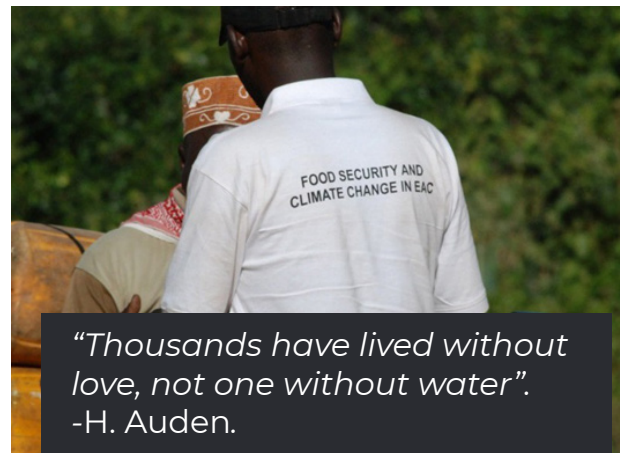
- Its rotational
- Starts August & Ends September each year.
- Non-cycling Events & activities were held in 30 of 55 overnight locations.
- Over 1700 Riders from all have taken part and completed the full tour (both men, women and para-riders).
- Is the longest endurance bicycle tour in Africa
- Is followed by millions of spectators and online
- Many stages are world class in their challenge to cyclists
- The scenery is world class
- The learnings and experiences are both uplifting and breathtaking.

## “Climate change and food security”

### Exploring how climate change is affecting food security in East Africa

The EAC partner regional heads of states place a high priority on ensuring food security and safety for all people living in East Africa. This entails addressing problems like postharvest losses, food waste, and market access in addition to raising agricultural productivity. The urgent problem of climate change should not be disregarded in efforts to address the difficulties in the region’s food systems. This not only endangers people’s lives but also increases risks to the nation and society like civil unrest, intergroup conflict, and violence.

*The 2023 Global Hunger Index (GHI) note that today’s youth are poised to inherit food systems that are unsustainable, inequitable, non-inclusive, and increasingly vulnerable to the dangerous effects of climate change.* The actions we take now—and those we fail to take—will determine future food system outcomes, but it is today’s young people who will live with these outcomes for decades to come



*“Thousands have lived without love, not one without water”.*  
-H. Auden.



**Dr Jenkins Rubahamya**, The National Co-ordinator, Pan African Federalist Movement Uganda hands over the EAC Flag to Rwanda’s Burera District mayor **Ms Mukamana Soline** who officially welcomed the GACS team to Rwanda on behalf of the Rwanda Government at Kyanika Boarder.

# The Tour

## Activities

Matters of climate change and food security are closely interconnected. The impact of climate change on agriculture and food production is already being felt globally.

The activities carried out during the GACS tour are in line with the core objectives to achieve the main goal which is;

### **“Climate change and food security,”**

The objectives are;

1. *Focus on climate change and food security awareness.*
2. *Creation of community forests in selected locations.*
3. *Establishment of nursery plots for growing crops capable of withstanding the effects of climate change.*
4. *Creation of climate change and food security clubs and workshops on water security.*
5. *Public Private Dialogues (PPDs)*
6. *Themed workshops*

### **Nursery Beds/Plots**

GACS has seen the establishment of 5 nurseries along the route. There are numerous species in each nursery, including fruit trees and therapeutic herbs.



*Richard Akoolo the GACS team Captain watering the seedlings.*

Nursery plots were established in:

1. Gairo - Tanzania
6. Shelui -Tanzania
2. Singida -Tanzania
7. Ibanda - Uganda
3. Kabaale - Uganda
8. Naivasha - Kenya
4. Voi - Kenya
9. Mwanga - Tanzania
5. Mityana - Uganda
10. Morogoro - Tanzania



*Mr. Jabiri O Makame, the District Commissioner of Gairo in Morogoro launches the Gairo Nursery plot.*



*Nursery Bed Establishment at Sekwao Secondary school in Dodoma*

These nursery plots are set up at local government offices, schools and within different communities. The establishment of nursery plots at local government offices allows for easy access and coordination in distributing the seedlings to nearby schools. This initiative not only promotes the growth of additional community forests but also fosters environmental awareness and education among students.

## FOOD SECURITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CLUBS

Over 10 climate change and food security clubs have been created and launched in response to climate change. Each club focuses on specific solutions and initiatives to combat the challenges posed by climate change, fostering collaboration and innovation among its members. This also aims at bringing students to the forefront of climate action and empowering them to make a positive impact in their communities.

### **The clubs were created in the schools bellow;**

1. ARUSHA TECHNICAL INSTITUTE - EMMANUEL ISHIKA PATRON
2. COASTAL HIGH IN TANGA - TR. SHABANI PATRON
3. KAGIRA SKILL IN UBANDA - BIRUNGI WINNIE CHAIRPESON
4. KABALE NATIONAL TEACHERS COLLEGE
5. GAIRO SECONDARY - MADAM HAWA WAMUPONELA PATRON
5. NGOZI SCOUTS
6. TUMAINI CHILDREN`S CENTRE IN VOI - GEORGE OLWAL PATRON
7. BULUNDE SECONDARY
8. BAGAMOYO SECONDARY - TR WILLAIM PATRON
9. KALIUA SECONDARY - TR DANCAN PATRON
10. TABORA BOYS HIG SCHOOL - TR DEDAN PATRON.



*Bagamoyo Secondary school climate change club. Mr. William Munganga is the patron of the club.*



*The Patron of Kaliua Secondary GACS Climate Change Club Mr. Dancan, centre. And Benard GACS route manager*



*Tabora boys High School Unite club. Also working as the climate change club. The Patron is Mr. Dedun*



*Kabaale Teachers college Climate change club*

## GACS Community Forest Initiative

Seven community forests have been established and launched. This is a GACS initiative aimed at promoting sustainable forest management and community participation in forest conservation. A donation of two or more acres of land is used to plant the forest, which is then managed by GACS for a year before being turned over to the community. These community forests provide local communities with opportunities for livelihoods, such as sustainable harvesting of non-timber forest products and ecotourism activities. These community forests are typically managed by local residents who work together to protect and sustainably utilize the forest resources.



*Community Forest establishment at Gashora, Bugesera District, Rwanda*



The equinox forest at Ibanda's equator was officially launched on the day of the equinox. In order to officially launch the equinox forest, 600 trees were planted by members of the Ibanda Community Organization network organization, Kagira skill students, the Ibanda Treckers, and the GACS 2023 tour team. Over ten kilometers of trees will be planted along the equator.



*Photo taken at Land Donated by Mr. Nuwamanya David, Director Kagira skills in Ibanda also the patron of the Climate club.*



*The Equinox Forest in Ibanda.*

*The GACS community forests are managed by a team of local residents who have been trained in basic sustainable forest management practices. GACS coordinators to ensure that the forests are protected. Community forests will serve as a valuable educational resource, providing opportunities for local schools and organizations to learn about the importance of conservation and environmental stewardship.*

## Themed Workshops

The GACS community engagement program educates and raises awareness among communities and schools about the integration process, Peace, security and how climate change affects food security.



*Mr. Max Middeke Deputy Program Manager, EACGIZ and Mr Jean Baptiste Havugimana, Director, Productive and Social Sectors, EAC Secretariat Program launched a climate change club at Arusha Technical*

*At Arusha Technical, trees were planted and a climate change club was established.*





*At Arusha Technical, trees were planted and a climate change club was established.*



*Madam Naome, parish secretary, discusses GACS's activities with Kazuramimba community, emphasizing unity, collaboration, and knowledge sharing to positively impact society.*



*Climate change poses a significant threat to Tanzania's agricultural sector, which heavily relies on rain-fed farming. The guild president of Arusha Technical Institute, highlights the increased frequency and intensity of droughts and floods, leading to crop failures and reduced yields.*

## Public Private Dialogues (PPD's)

Public-private dialogues are essential platforms for collaboration and communication between the government and private sector. GACS uses these dialogues for discussions on key issues and challenges faced by communities members.

Dialogues facilitate discussions on policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation, ensuring that the interests of both parties are taken into account. GACS aims to foster mutual understanding, identify common goals, and develop effective solutions.



*Esteemed panelists during a PPD at the Protea Hotel: **Counsel Naome** from **Million Trees International** and **Mr. Valencia** from the **Ministry of Water and Environment**, discussing valuable insights, ensuring a comprehensive and well-rounded exploration of the theme.*

*H.E. Col. Rutabana Joseph, the Rwandan High Commissioner to Uganda, and the Kenyan High Commissioner to Uganda, together with the most revered Lwnada, during the 2023 GACS Grand Finale.*



## THE MESSAGE

The role of a bicycle on food security is crucial, particularly in rural areas where access to transportation may be limited. Bicycles provide a cost-effective and sustainable means of transporting food from farms to markets or distribution centers. Additionally, bicycles can also be used for small-scale food production, such as urban farming or delivering fresh produce directly to consumers.



*The message of unity, peace, and reconciliation that was delivered by the riders was received with open hearts and minds by the local communities they encountered along the way. The riders' commitment to spreading positivity and fostering understanding created a powerful impact, inspiring conversations and connections that will continue long after the trip has ended.*

# Experiences and Challenges during the GACS Tours

We are happy to report as well that, during the gacs tours, we had the opportunity to engage with diverse groups of people and We wish to boldly report thus:

## **Elimination of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs)**

Talking about the Period Guaranteed Program on the elimination of Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs), we can confidently state that, as of 2024, there has been a significant reduction in the number of roadblocks and police checks compared to the 2016 Tour d'EAC event. However, many East Africans continue to face exploitation at the hands of immigration officials. According to the EAC Treaty, no tax should be applied to goods valued at less than USD 2,000, yet 100 kg of rice worth USD 59.85 is still being taxed.

Yes, the reduction in roadblocks and police checks demonstrates the EAC's progress in addressing NTBs, yet exploitation and policy inconsistencies continue to undermine the region's potential for seamless integration. By prioritizing accountability, education, and digitalization, the EAC can create an equitable and efficient trade environment, ensuring that the benefits of integration are felt by all East Africans. The path forward is clear: a united and committed effort to eliminate NTBs will foster trust, enhance livelihoods, and bring the vision of a truly borderless East Africa closer to reality.

## **East African Community (EAC) Customs Union: Operationalization of the Electronic Cargo Tracking System**

Operationalization of the Electronic Cargo Tracking System – There is a new electronic monitoring system, which permits, better monitoring of transit goods as they move from the ports of Entry (Mombasa/Dar-es-salaam) to various destinations within the

region. According to the Malaba customs Supervisor, ..... during a briefing when the Team arrived at Malaba one-stop Border Post. He said, "Officers of Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) are stationed at the Ports of Mombasa and Dar-es-salaam" A three band Common External Tariff (CET) is operational for goods imported from outside the EAC i.e. (25% for finished goods, 10% for semi-finished goods, and 0% for raw materials).

However, re-alignment of national laws to the EAC Common Market Protocol is seriously required. One Stop Boarder Post (OSBP) facilities have been established at the following border points i.e. Malaba, Busia, Mirama Hills, Mutukula, and Katuna, Rusomo, Kabanga, Namanga. Uganda and Kenya have opened a Regional Integration Centre (RIC) at their borders to foster integration.

## **Free Movement of Goods and Persons**

Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda are three EAC Partner States that allow the use of national identification cards as travel credentials. This policy was highlighted in 2016 by Madam Flavia Sarafina, then Director of Communications at the Ministry of East African Community Affairs in Rwanda.

During a press conference at the Ministry in Kigali, Madam Sarafina also announced the elimination of payments for student passes as part of the free movement of workers initiative. Furthermore, she stated that there are no longer costs associated with work permits within the region.



*GACS Team at the Customs Union Offices in Kenya*

progress was reported on Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs), which facilitate professional mobility across borders. Several associations, including those for engineers, architects, surveyors, and accountants, have successfully signed MRAs, aiming to ease cross-border professional engagements.

However, despite these claims, our on-the-ground experiences reveal significant challenges. For instance, using national ID cards for cross-border travel between Uganda and Kenya, remains problematic. Travelers are often asked for passports or charged fees, contradicting the stated policies.

For Tanzania and Burundi, it does not matter if you are an East African or not; you must present a passport. National IDs do not apply at any of the Tanzanian borders. Despite the efforts to promote regional integration, the reality on the ground is that border crossings between these EAC countries are still plagued by inefficiencies and restrictions. This can be attributed to a lack of harmonization in immigration policies and procedures.

As a result, travelers often face frustrating delays and bureaucratic hurdles, underscoring the need for streamlined processes and improved cooperation between the EAC partner states. John Baptism Semujju raised an important question regarding the location of the EAC Secretariat, suggesting that it might be worth considering relocating it to a country that demonstrates a stronger commitment to regional integration.

This question arises from concerns about Tanzania, which currently hosts the EAC headquarters, but appears to show limited enthusiasm for fully embracing the goals of integration.

The discrepancies between policy and implementation in the East African Community undermine the region's goal of integration. To achieve the vision of a seamless, borderless region, consistent enforcement of agreed-upon protocols is critical.

By focusing on improving enforcement, enhancing public awareness, utilizing digital solutions, and ensuring professional recognition, advocacy for policy consistency can significantly contribute to realizing the true potential of regional integration. Addressing these challenges will not only increase trust among EAC citizens but also foster a more dynamic, interconnected, and prosperous East Africa.

### **Security**

Yes, and no. In 2021, before we set out on our bike tour, some of us imagined security would be a major issue, especially in Uganda and Rwanda, where borders were closed for reasons known to the leaders, and COVID restrictions were at the top of the picture.

However, The EAC governments have demonstrated remarkable initiative in addressing security concerns and guaranteeing the safety of the locals and the GACS participants, even in the face of obstacles. This reassures the fact that East Africa is not only a beautiful destination but also a

region that prioritizes the well-being of its visitors and is safe for both trade and tourism. The commitment shown by the EAC governments towards security measures has resulted in an increase in tourism and investment opportunities within the region.



### Roads

What we couldn't imagine was the state of the roads—especially during the rainy season. Some roads really became impassible, but on the other hand, it's so sweet taking on the challenge. "There is always a third way, if you can only find it". Sometimes the roads were quite rough, or even non-existent, we undertook so many difficult stretches in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Burundi. One particularly horrible section that comes to mind is the Kenya-Oloitok via Ambosseli conservancy to Naman-ga. Every time we go by, something changes. Either it's lengthier or something else. It is even more ominous due to the hazardous dust. Sometimes you can travel there in a day, and other times it takes two days. Then comes Tanzania. The "highway" was actually a tiny dirt track that had become drenched in dust from too many days in the heat. The road was exceptionally strong. Not that I regret it, mind you. However, the team day leader, Micheal Langati, stated, "I think I'll take a more active role in route planning in the future." We do our usual combination of camping, staying at schools, and just pitching up in the middle of nowhere. Tanzania has lots of empty spaces so wild camping isn't without its dangers.



### Heat and Cold

Dealing with extreme heat is really tough on the body, but you have to learn to adapt. Water became a huge issue in most cases, and to quench our thirst, we rely on the good will of the people of East Africa along the trail. Because do not have a big budget to cater for every necessary need along the way, God bless the good people of East Africa, who always really save us from thirst. In major towns or cities, there were regular water cuts, and in rural areas, boreholes are often broken or locked except during certain hours to avoid wastefulness. As we ride on, there are plenty of natural water bodies. These natural water bodies include rivers, lakes, and streams, which provide us with a refreshing source of water. However, it is important to note that we must take precautions and ensure the water is safe for consumption before quenching our thirst from these sources.



## Food and Water

To be open, it's very easy to find something to eat along the way but also, there parts where you need to park your own food, if any preferences. It's also good to have a taste of the local foods. Exploring local cuisine can be a delightful way to immerse yourself in the culture and flavors of the place you're visiting.

From street food stalls to traditional restaurants, there are plenty of options to satisfy your taste buds and try new dishes. Based on where you come from, if you are East African or someone who likes testing various cookerries, East Africa has really delicious food. Kenya, Rwanda, and Burundi are not so well known for their food. Maize bread (UGALI, RICE) one of the strongholds throughout the EAC.



*A bicycle plays a significant role in securing food and water security*



Throughout our 55 days of GACS tours, we nearly ate rice and beans and maize bread every day. In rural areas, that's about the only option for vegetarians.

Naturally, you won't go hungry in East Africa; there are many produce markets, but they're not like the big, well-stocked western-style supermarkets that are prevalent throughout the region. In these produce markets, you can find a wide variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, and local delicacies. However, it's important to note that the prices in these markets are relatively lower.

## Cost and Budget

Kenya and Rwanda are more expensive than any other part of East Africa. A lot of basic items, food, accommodation is quite expensive than in Uganda, Burundi and Tanzania. Costs vary widely.

In Tanzania, food for 30 people cost 60 USD a day. We could have one meal in a cheap restaurant and still afford buying drinking water and sometimes repair bikes. At some points we stealthily camp to save on the hustles of finding accommodation or space to camp, Begging police and other authorities. We spend on average of about \$15 per person per day, occasionally staying at churches, mosques and police canteens are very normal. We eat most of our meals at roadside food stands or self-catered.

## Do we need to take camping gear during the GACS Tours?

We definitely have to bring along some camping gear though not enough. We couldn't want to miss spending a night under a star-filled sky or be forced to take cover in plthy accommodations near police stations trading centers. Organized campsites are rare in East Africa, but pitching up in a village or hidden away off the road is always possible.

### Spares and repairs

Well, you might need to carry a lot more tools and spare parts than are necessary when biking in other parts of the world. Otherwise, you might not need special equipment to bike through East Africa. If you plan on cycling through East Africa, what you need is to invest more in a high-quality, well-made bike that can take the shock of rough roads. Cameras and extra phone batteries or Solar-chargers are also practical in parts where many areas are still without electricity



### Favorite parts

We have been cycling through 6 countries in East Africa, so picking a favorite part is a tough task. But still we must say that bicycling in Tanzania where people are so hospitable is just an experience.

Tanzania is a huge country, we spend the biggest portion of the tour time riding through Tanzania, there are lots of challenges, at some parts, we are cut off communication completely, it is too hot and some points too cold, there is not much food stalls along the route, but the people of Tanzania make our life a little lighter, the hospitality and reception, oh my God!!!!

But still, nothing beats the sense of vastness and total solitude that can be found in Tanzania. And the most favorite terrain of the East African Community GACS is DARE THE GORRILA section. This section has cuts views, and sceneries. There is enough to adventure.



From Bujumbura to Kampala, up the hills then through the park with elephants, buffaloes wandering across the road, giraffes mating by the roadside and hippos outside the tent. Waking up in the early hours of morning is at the top of the list. That's about as unusual and adventurous as it gets. And then the mighty 36km climb of Bugarama in Burundi and the slope steep climb Nyanza Lec to Mabanda in Burundi, oh wooooow!!!! Eh!!! The ride from Nakuru to Kimborowa in Kenya... hahahaha. You should also check out the Machakosi Nairobi route via Kyamwilu. where water moves upwards, defying gravity...

### How about the bureaucracy?

Could we get visas as we travelled? Bureaucracy can be a huge headache in some parts of East Africa. Getting a response from government of Pce in Burundi is relatively straightforward and can normally be obtained instantly. In 2021, We spent more than three days at Bugesera Border of Rwanda and Burundi because of Covid Test. We were required to pay \$ 100 per rider, which money we did not have. This took a big bite out of our budget and time. We were later saved after the EAC Secretariat wrote a letter to the Government of Burundi. "Why do I need a COMESA insurance while traveling through East Africa by car?" Can I not use an East African Insurance policy cover?



### Do we need to take camping gear during the GACS Tours?

We definitely have to bring along some camping gear though not enough. We couldn't want to miss spending a night under a star-filled sky or be forced to take cover in filthy accommodations near police stations trading centers. Organized campsites are rare in East Africa, but pitching up in a village or hidden away off the road is always possible.

### The most challenging parts

The most challenging section of the route is called 'Dare the Gorillas.' This section stretches from Kigali, Rwanda and follows a path through Ruhengyere, crosses the border via Kisoro, continues past Bwindi Impenetrable rain forest, then Kihikihi through Queen Elizabeth to Katunguru, then Ibanda to Mbarara. This section presents several problems for the group, including punctures, tough terrain, low temperatures, rain, cold, hunger. Undeterred by these problems, the team pulls through and perseveres.

### What was the toughest challenge overall?

Although cycling through East Africa is physically demanding, Riding with less Water, it is really challenging to almost everyone. Yes, some people have money but cannot share. This taught most of us to make friends along the way and in this, "I learned not to be selfish". said Ben Bor a 2019 tour participant. as an admin, the most difficult aspect is dealing with the constant attention we attracted. There's something very confusing about being surrounded by a sea of 30 curious faces. Often, we just want to be alone.

To be anonymous, to blend in with the crowd. We get tired of explaining 'our mission' to everyone and greeting every yearling who could shout 'hello'. Well, this is because of the stress having failed to raise the funds needed to facilitate every necessity. But we know that many of the people

we meet have had little or no contact with such events. It is our duty to be good ambassadors and show friendliness and interest. Ignoring the locals, would feel hurt and this would have an effect on the welcome the next time we pass through.

Once when we were biking through Tanzania, Bango from Tanzania got so exhausted that he could just not summon up the energy to wave, smile and greet all of the villagers as we passed. Ssali hunkered down and ignored the locals calling out.

Emmanuel Karamaji says, "It is always hard and challenging at the beginning of every challenge. I remember when Benard had to push Bango so as to keep with the pace of the team. To me everything is really very challenging but I thank God that at every destination there is laughter and wait for the next day. I reached a point where I could no longer afford anything, but by the time we got to Cyanika, I was convinced that I didn't need money. It was a time for survival.

### The good Things

You can agree with us that East Africa is synonymous with adventure. If you're someone who wants to test your limits, get way out of your comfort zone and explore a region of raw natural beauty, East Africa is the place for you. East Africa has the potential of a wonderful source of information and inspiration for the Bicycle touring community anyway, it's a little tough, there are quite a number of hills, 20 to 35km climbing, on a trail, going through parks, game reserves and through the jungle.

Cycling in Major towns in East Africa is a night mare.

There no cycling lanes and so you have to hustle alongside cars, trucks, matatu and other motorists. We spotted each other out and about the wave. Cycling is the cheapest way to get from A to B for millions of poor residents. Cycling allows us to be part of East Africa.

### CATCHING LIFTS:

The muddy trails of Tanzania were proving to be an impossible challenge. it was downright impassable. Kusi, Mercy, and Jose found themselves pushing their bikes through thick, clinging mud, their progress painfully slow.

There was no sign of life—no villages, no vehicles, no escape. The only sounds were the squelching of wet earth beneath their feet and the occasional sigh of frustration.

Then, in the distance, a faint blaring of a horn broke through the stillness. Kusi's ears perked up. She stopped, turned, and squinted down the trail behind them. There it was—a massive truck, grinding its way laboriously through the mud. Its towering frame seemed to defy the odds as it inched forward, wheels spinning and churning up great sprays of muck.

Normally, the thought of catching a lift wouldn't have even crossed our minds. This was, after all, a cycling tour. But desperate times called for desperate measures. Without hesitation, they flagged down the approaching vehicle, waving their arms and shouting to catch the driver's attention.

When the truck finally came to a halt. The driver leaned out of the cab, his face weathered but kind. The three wasted no time explaining their plight.

We're stuck," Kusi said breathlessly, gesturing to the mud-caked bikes. "We can't make it through this on our own. Please, can you help us?"

Without hesitation, he motioned for them to climb aboard. Somehow, they managed to squeeze themselves and their bikes into the cramped space, surrounded by sacks of grain, bundles of firewood, and crates of supplies.

As the truck lurched forward, the three exchanged grateful smiles. The journey ahead was still daunting, but for now, they had found a lifeline.

### Culture

Each day, we cycled up to 100km and sometimes up to 130km, enjoying in the history, culture and people of areas covered.

In the evenings, accommodation and evening meals were provided locally with meals consisting of locally sourced food often prepared sometimes by the team and the communities, from having breakfast with school children to visiting embassies in Kenya, Bujumbura, Dar re salaam and Kigali while spreading the message of each year's theme and the benefits of the East African Community.

On the other hand, We have had a clash of cultures. With many participants failing to appreciate others. Especially the People from 1000 hills (Burundi and Rwanda). As for the Tanzanians, they had to learn the hard way, but at least they learnt. Kenyans and Ugandans were OK.



*I attribute this to high self-esteem and exposure. Attitudes that were not willing to appreciate other attitudes. - Lutwama Acram*

# Findings, Remarks and Recommendations

## Significance of the GACS Food Security Survey

**This is a non-scientific survey. It looks closely at how the East African Community's food security is affected by climate change.** This study involves local communities and youth in schools in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the specific challenges they face due to climate change. Their participation allows for the development of context-specific solutions that can effectively mitigate the impact of climate change on food security in the East African Community. The study's findings may be a helpful resource for policymakers, governmental and non-governmental groups, and other stakeholders engaged in creating plans to enhance adaptive abilities and resilience in the face of climate change.

## What They said

**Speech by Mr. Max Middekes, the Deputy Programs Manager at EAC- GIZ in Arusha, Tanzania.**

In East Africa, climate change is causing devastating impacts on food security, leading to harvest failure, deteriorating pasture conditions, decreased water availability, and livestock losses in both farming and pastoral communities. Therefore, it is essential to share information on how different stakeholders can help manage the adverse impacts of climate change and reduce the threat of food insecurity.

In the EAC, small family farms are the main victims of climate change. The scale and speed of climate change often exceed their adaptability, threatening their livelihoods as they lack the resources and knowledge needed to cope with the consequences of climate change.



The EAC-GIZ Support to Market Driven and People's Centered Integration SEAMPEC II supports the development and implementation of regional agreements and policy measures that facilitate adaptation and mitigation of climate change. The EAC-GIZ GFA partnership supports activities that target strengthening framework conditions, institutional structures, exchange, and capacities of public and private sector stakeholders for the implementation of key policy measures on the regional and national level on research and innovation with a focus on environmental and social sustainability.

We thank the cyclist for raising awareness of climate change and food security in affected communities. The Great African Cyclists Safaris (GACs) promotes people-centered integration through awareness creation on climate change and food security. They engage in activities such as tree planting to conserve the environment and community and school dialogue as they cycle across the EAC Partner States. The cyclists have planted over 25000 trees and established school and community clubs on climate in East Africa.

Thanks to the EAC Secretariat and Arusha Technical College for the partnership and for hosting this event.

**Amina Said, a Form 5 student, stated the following during the PPD at a coastal high school in the Tanga region of Tanzania.**

“Understandably, the youth are more likely than adults to be affected by extreme poverty and food insecurity, with young women particularly affected, despite the importance of their health and nutrition status for future generations.” The unemployment rate is three times higher among young people.

a) They do not have access to the tools and modern technologies, like tractors or irrigation systems which can enhance productivity and efficiency.

b) Limited access to land ownership or secure land tenure makes it very difficult for young people to engage in agricultural activities.

c) Lastly, limited availability of financial resources and credit options. Numerous young people have abandoned agricultural and rural livelihoods due to these obstacles, as well as the problems posed by climate change, land degradation, risk exposure, tough or precarious working conditions, and low social recognition.

young people make up a sizable and expanding portion of the population, especially in nations where food is insecure (about 46% of the world population is under 25 years of age. By investing in their education, skills development, and access to resources, we can empower young



individuals to become active participants in finding sustainable solutions to food insecurity and creating a brighter future for themselves and their communities.

***There are 1.2 billion teenagers and young adults on the earth, making it the largest demographic in history. Forty-two percent of all people live below the age of 25. Welthungerhilfe (WHH) and Concern call for increased representation of youth in policy- and decision-making related to food systems. To break down the barriers to their full participation in food systems, young people's capacities must be strengthened and agriculture and food systems must be promoted as viable and attractive livelihoods.***

### **Shamal Nakabuye cyclist from Uganda**



A study conducted in Uganda by the Government of Uganda and its partners discovered a new weather pattern that, if nothing is done, might make the food insecurity in the Karamoja region worse. The study revealed that the new weather pattern is characterized by prolonged droughts and unpredictable rainfall, leading to crop failures and livestock losses. A large majority of people in Karamoja, particularly women, were not aware that changes to the climate had been taking place over decades, the study states. However, most of the people who had perceived changes to the climate had not taken any action to adapt, typically because they did not know how to do so.

Where trees were planted as an adaptation measure, the sale of charcoal and irewood was also a common measure that people took in response to climate-related crop failure.

**George Olwal from Kenya and GACS official team doctor.**



It is vital that the East African governments do much more to end hunger by 2030 and work beyond that to transform food systems. An exceptional effort is needed to ensure that the right to adequate food is respected, protected, and fulfilled, not only for the millions of people who go to bed hungry every night but also for the billions who will bear the weight of crises they did not create, such as the escalating effect

**Dedan E. Runoba. The Unite Club Patron at Tabora Boys' secondary School.**

The lack of training and education opportunities related to agriculture and food systems hinder young people from acquiring the necessary skills and knowledge to participate effectively in the sectors. The agricultural studies curriculum in both primary and secondary schools in Tanzania has been scrapped for the past ten years, according to teacher Dedan from Tabora Boys High School. This decision has greatly affected the younger generation's understanding of agricultural practices and their ability to engage in the field.

Consequently, many young people lack the foundational knowledge and practical experience required to contribute meaningfully to agriculture and food systems.



The Build a Better Tomorrow youth program (BBT) is a project that the TZ minister of agriculture came up with and believes will be successful.

Young individuals are chosen for this program from all over without taking into account whether or not they have a foundation. After being brought to college, they receive four months of training and a start-up. Without the necessary foundational and practical experience, it is unlikely that these young men and girls will effectively be able to make significant contributions to the outcomes of food systems.

The success of the program may be hindered by this lack of expertise, as it takes time and hands-on experience to truly understand and effectively address the complexities of these industries. Therefore, it is crucial to provide additional support and resources to ensure that participants can acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to make a meaningful impact in their agricultural endeavors.

**Micheal Langati cyclist from Kenya**

Food insecurity is highest and most persistent in Kenya, which is also home to the largest share of the youth population in East Africa. At the same time, many young people perceive farming as unappealing and unprofitable.

This shift in occupation not only exacerbates the issue of food insecurity but also contributes to the environmental degradation caused by increased motorized transportation.



The lack of interest in farming among the youth hinders the potential for agricultural innovation and sustainable practices that could help alleviate food insecurity in Kenya.

**Dr. Victor Ramo, Deputy Regional Administrative Secretary Singida Region.**



People's ability to realize their right to food is ways that are socially, culturally, and ecologically appropriate for their particular local context is a prerequisite for the right to food being at the center of food system policies, programs, and governance processes. It is also critical to note that women play a vital role in food system transformation.

Therefore, investing in women's capacities to become leaders in food system transformation is crucial for achieving sustainable and inclusive change. Also, promoting gender equality in the agricultural sector can contribute to increased productivity and resilience, benefiting both individuals and communities.

**Désiré Nsabimana leader of Saint Pierre Scouts in Ngozi Burundi**



Who will handle our problems if we don't? We know the difficulties a small-scale farmer endures, our parents are farmers and our predecessors were farmers. Food insecurity in Burundi is a result of a number of causes, including the fast population increase, climate-related shocks, and limited access to clean water, health care, and education. Just like any other nation in the region, Burundi needs to improve food security and empower small scale farmers. such as climate change.

It is crucial for the government and international organizations to prioritize support for agricultural sector and invest in infrastructure, technology, and training to improve productivity and ensure food security for its population.

We can take steps to lessen poverty and build a sustainable future by giving small-scale farmers the tools and support they need. By empowering small-scale farmers, we enable them to increase their yields and income. Additionally, providing access to credit and financial services can help them invest in better seeds, fertilizers, and equipment, further improving their productivity and resilience against challenges.

### Hamli Daniel a Cyclist from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

In our community, conflict is typically the primary source of famine. When fighting or war breaks out, we all run, leaving the gardens and the crops behind. Everywhere we move, we become strangers and abandon everything we own back in our hometown. We find it difficult to support our families and ourselves without access to resources and land. The already severe hunger situation in our neighborhood is made worse by the instability and dislocation brought on by fighting.



As a result, many families are forced to rely on limited aid and humanitarian assistance, which is often insufficient to meet their basic needs. Additionally, the constant displacement and lack of stability make it challenging for individuals to rebuild their lives and cultivate sustainable food sources. This vicious cycle of conflict and famine perpetuates the cycle of poverty and hunger in our community, making it crucial for us to address the root causes of conflict in order to alleviate the hunger crisis.

Above all, I also declare peace in my country because many international organizations come like they are going to give peace but in reality they are there to steal our wealth.

### Abdul Hakim - Director HMK MULTI MEDIA LTD - Tanzania

Shida yangu ni kwa eneo la Forodha Moja ilianzishwa ili kuwezesha kufanya utowaji wa mizigo kwa haraka na usafirishaji wa mizigo husika ndani ya Afrika Mashariki. Inakuwa na mfumo ulioratibiwa wa forodha kuwezesha harakati za pamoja za habari kati ya vituo vya forodha na mfumo wa malipo ya kusima mia uhamishaji wa mapato kati ya Nchi za Washirika wa EAC.

EAC inahitaji kutoka kwa sauti kubwa na wazi na kuelezea kwa Waafrika wote Mashariki njia halisi ya mifumo ya eneo moja la kitamaduni hufanya kazi. Kuna haja ya EAC kubwa kuelezea zaidi wamiliki wa biashara wa Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Sudan ya kusin, Burundi na Rwanda. Huko Tanzania, ukilipia bidhaa zako, habari hutumwa moja kwa moja kwa Uganda ikiwajulisha juu ya bidhaa ambazo zimelipwa na kusafirishwa na Mamlaka ya Mapato ya Tanzania basi uko huru kusafirisha bidhaa zako.

Nchini Uganda, ikiwa unataka kontena moja, lazima uweke pesa zenye thamani ya kontena mbili basi unaweza kuwa na kontena yako moja.

Kwamufano, utaratibu uliowekwa na serikali ya Uganda na Tanzania, ni kwamba unapo lipia mali yako kabla hujapewa mali yako, lazima ulipie kodi ndipo unaruhusiwa kupewa mali yako. Lakini baadhi ya viwanda nchini Uganda, zinakiuka huo utaratibu. Nakuwaomba bon di wafanya biashara. Utaratibu huo ni kero kubwa kwa wafanya biashara Afrika Mashariki.



*EAC must speak louder and clear to enable smooth movement of business and services within its boundaries*



## Final Remarks

Six consecutive rainy seasons with below-normal rainfall have made crop production and care for

livestock nearly impossible in Kenya. Jackson Ti-pape Masaai from Inchorra boma in the Amboseli conservation area. (IRC 2023; UNHCR 2023a). The country was estimated to have incurred approximately 48,000 excess deaths in 2022, with half of these occurring in children under age five. In addition to drought, the crisis has been driven by global price rises, ongoing insecurity

The food insecurity is primarily driven by a combination of shocks, including a fourth successive below average rainy season which was poorly distributed in space and short-lived.

This resulted in below average crop production to near crop failure and poor livestock production; localised resource-based conflict; and high food prices as a result of the war in Ukraine and low in-country production.

The most affected counties, representing 40% of the total country population in IPC Phase 3 or above are: Kenya, Isiolo (50%), Turkana (50%), Garissa (45%), Mandera (45%), Marsabit (45%), Samburu (45%), Wa-jir (45%) and Baringo (40%). These are predominantly pastoral livelihoods. (IPC, 28 Sep 2022).

Food sovereignty, the right to healthy, culturally appropriate food produced sustainably, is lacking in current food systems, posing a significant threat to indigenous farming and knowledge systems. Said Mr. Kimuli Rogers, CEO journey house organization in Gashora Rwanda.

## Recommendations

Therefore, the EAC partner states, including development partners, international organizations, the private sector, civil society, and other levels of governance, must recognize food security as a critical component of sustainable development. Without access to enough food, communities are more likely to experience unrest, displacement and disruption of economic activities. therefore, addressing food security is crucial for maintaining peace, stability and promoting economic growth in the region.

- 1 In a setting where climate change and environmental degradation are becoming more common, young people are growing up in an unsustainable and unequal food system that does not give them enough food.

However, there is little involvement from young people in making decisions that may impact their future.

The fight for food sovereignty, the idea that everyone has the right to eat wholesome, culturally relevant food that is produced in an environmentally responsible and sustainable manner offers a chance to involve young people in the reform of broken food systems. In order to ensure a sustainable and inclusive food system, it is crucial to involve young people in the decision making process. Their unique perspectives and innovative ideas can contribute to finding effective solutions to global challenges such as hunger, malnutrition, and climate change.

- 2 Improve data collection and knowledge sharing on food security: Strategies and interventions to address this global issue can be more effective if data on food security is better collected and knowledge is shared.

By improving data collection methods, policymakers and organizations can gain a more accurate understanding of the specific challenges and vulnerabilities related to food security. This knowledge can then be shared among different stakeholders, enabling them to collaborate and implement targeted interventions that address the root causes of food insecurity in on a regional scale.

- 3 Encourage everyone to participate in public campaigns, youth education, and consumer awareness, raising awareness about the significance of minimizing food waste, especially among women.
- 4 Explore the impact of short supply chains: Short supply chains, community-supported agriculture, and local markets have emerged as effective strategies for maximizing food security along the entire food chain.

These strategies prioritize the production and consumption of locally

sourced food, reducing dependence on long-distance transportation and global supply chains.

By fostering connections between farmers, producers, and consumers within a community, these approaches promote resilience, sustainability, and a sense of shared responsibility for food security.

- 5 All stakeholders, as appropriate, should carry out training and capacity building to promote the use of appropriate practices, technologies, and best practices to secure food in the region. This will ensure that all stakeholders are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively secure food in the region. Additionally, fostering collaboration and knowledge sharing among stakeholders will further enhance the implementation of these practices and technologies, leading to a more sustainable and resilient food system in the region.
- 6 Encourage consumers to reduce the level of food waste in households through advice and the dissemination of evidence-based information and traditional knowledge. By educating consumers about the environmental and economic impacts of food waste, they can make more informed choices and adopt sustainable practices in their daily lives.
- 7 Encourage consumers to reduce the level of food waste in households through advice and the dissemination of evidence-based information and traditional knowledge. By educating consumers about the environmental and economic impacts of food waste, they can make more informed choices and adopt sustainable practices in their daily lives.

- 8 The alarming finding highlights the urgent need for adaptive measures and sustainable agricultural practices to mitigate the potential exacerbation of food insecurity in the already vulnerable Karamoja region. The lack of awareness among the majority of people not only in Karamoja but through the region, especially women, about long-term climate change is concerning. This therefore highlights the need for effective communication and education programs to inform and empower the local community to adapt to these changing conditions... It is crucial to develop accessible and practical strategies that provide clear guidance on how individuals can adapt to climate change in Karamoja. And also, efforts should be made to involve local leaders and community organizations in these programs, as they can play a vital role in disseminating information and encouraging action within their communities.
- 9 Furthermore, it is crucial to address the underlying socio-economic factors that drive the sale of charcoal and firewood. This can be done by promoting alternative income-generating activities that are sustainable and climate-resilient, such as eco-tourism or agroforestry.

***“One thing relates to the other. When the routes are blocked because of the armed gangs, women vendors can’t go through, and therefore the food goes to waste and then the ones who have food sell it more expensively. When the reserves run out, we can’t get more food.”***

**—Alexis Lourdrona.**

# Beyond Borders

Sylvia Naturinda - Chief Executive Officer of the Ibanda Community Organization Network (ICON)

“My heart is for development ventures that embrace peace, unity and spiritual sanctity.” Under Dr. Patrick Bitature’s patronage, ICON, aims to empower communities through networks, collaborations, and public advocacy.

The GACS` choice to focus on the crucial topic of food security is very significant and is acknowledging the urgent need to ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all individuals, especially in the face of increasing global challenges such as climate change and population growth. This decision reflects a proactive approach towards finding sustainable solutions and fostering resilience in food systems worldwide.



2024 marks ICON`s second year of collaboration with the GACS. In 2022, together with other partners, like Kagira Skills development center in Ibanda and Kiryabushoro Aqua park, we launched an Equator Monument at Atano Namunana. This year 2024, we successfully launched an Equinox forest along the equator line. Additionally, the GACS addressed the issue of food security at the Kagira Skills Development Centre, where young people are trained in agricultural and food technology. Access to safe, nutritious, and sufficient food is a basic human right, with priority given to the most vulnerable. Future projects with GACS is something we are excited to collaborate on. the Chief Executive Officer of the Ibanda Community Organization Network (ICON) and a teacher of physics at Equatorial College School Ibanda.

DR Jibril Semakura Owomugisha  
GACS National Coordinator Uganda and CEO  
Million Trees International organization

“A fragmented Africa will remain open and accessible by any categories of self-seeking European countries in the name of investors towards Africa’s Social Economic Transformation”, says Dr Jibril.

The call for EAC integration is beyond business development, it generally encases food security, healthy and environment protection in the entire region! Communicating to the local people is crucially needed since they’re at the center of achieving the target of objectives. This brings the Great Africa Cycling Safari, GACS branding the message through cycling.



The bike goes deep everywhere with a lot of people accessed. This EAC cycling tour requires our total submission and support, if we genuinely wish to achieve the 5

parameters of EAC integration, these are; regional Security, Business Development, Food Security & Safety, Climate Change with Environment Protection, Health and Education.

In Uganda, we're blessed with HE Kaguta Museveni, whom we branded as the Regional father for EAC integration. He has been supportive towards this call of uniting Africa starting with the smaller EAC Region. It's from him, we're learning to perfect & spread the good news. Amidst challenges, the EAC-GACS annual cycling event will one day be shortlisted among the leading media for EAC integration.



### Bernard Enock From Arusha

I am happy to be part of this historical tour of East Africa for the fifth time.

I had the opportunity to ride with the team for only 6 days in 2016 and the great memories drove me to join again 2017 then on the Directors request, 2019 as the event mechanic.

As an East African, am sure this is a step in the right direction of promoting peace and unity in the East African community.

I am happy to have served as the 2021, 2022 2023 GACS route Manager



### Bango Abdul Ali From Arusha

Culture makes people understand each other better. And it is easier to overcome the economic and political barriers.

But first they have to understand that their neighbor is in the end just like them. With the same problems, the same questions.

God Bless GACS. May it achieve its goals. Am happy to have served as the event official mechanic GACS



### Maureen Nakajja Kwagala 2016, 2017 Team Captain Uganda

Cosmetologist by training. I had an amazing experience with GACS 2016 and will always remember everything. I learned riding two weeks to the expedition in 2016 but I was able to make. Am sure I have been able to inspire the girl riders, and am happy that we shall be more than one female riding. I would like to invite everyone to join us during the ride.

Follow us on our social media platforms and many other avenues. I am looking forward to seeing what, one people, and one destination means. I want to see it in reality.





### Gift Charles Munga

I studied business administration but currently working with a family business. Being an East African, I decided to join GACS team, because I want to see change in the region.

The tour provides me the platform to do just that and I relish the opportunity. Once we create the opportunities, we create a better east Africa.



### Kubwimana Fabris From Kigali, Rwanda

Rwandans living in Kigali, a freelance bicycle mechanic, and a trainer can be traced to the Nyabugogo trading center.

I joined GACS because my friend told me about her experience with GACS 2022. I swore to her that I would definitely participate. It was quite challenging; I was used to competitive riding, and I had quite a lot of suffering adjusting to the speed of my fellow cyclists who were riding at their pace. I would speed off and wait for the rest of the team for over two hours.

Sometimes I would miss out on a lot of captions and moments with the team. I hope I can be part of the next event if given the chance. Anyhow, we had a really great time with teams from Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi.



### Mugabe Brian

Unity is Strength and strength is power. By all of us from different countries cycling together across the great East African Community, portrays unity. This is what we need in East Africa, Africa and indeed in the world



### Filomena Alphonse From Arusha

I am Tanzanian from Arusha but Kigamboni, I take tourist on tours for a living, am a love adventure so much. I was inspired by Mahamed Fadhil to join the GACS 2021. I love traveling and I thank God for GACS initiative.

Am I have managed to travel through 5 countries on a two wheel, what an experience!





**Kagoda Mercy  
Participant**

**26** yrs old, Ugandan and a professional social worker. I joined campfire Logs Guild in 2015 during the 300Km hike from Mbarara to Entebbe. I did not participate in 2016 tour d EAC because I feared, we would be killed in Burundi, but after hearing the reports from the tour, I said to myself, 2023 will not leave me, here I am riding over 6000km. wow.....



**Joyce Nyaruri Kenya flag bearer**

I am very passionate about the youth coupling and as a youth and Bicycle Trainer in Kisumu, I would like the youth empowered to impact their Communities especially in matters of food security. GACS will be a venture to bring about the change we want for the East African EAC youth both spiritually and socially.



**Niyonkuru Abubaka From Rwanda**

I got to know about GACS through Saidat. He had participated in the previous tour. Well, everything to me was just strange, the people, the routes, the event, everything but I was able to adjust and fit in. by the time I joined, I had never slept in a tent but by the time I left team in Kampala, I was an expert tent constructor. I did not speak Swahili, but now I am good at it.



**Ntahangondera Benjamin**

**Burundi  
Bwacu!!!!**

**VISIT  
BURUNDI**






### Paula May From German

**J**ohn, Direktor des IIDEA Partners Campfire Logs Guild, organisiert seit 2016 die Tour d' EAC, eine Fahrradtour durch die EAC Länder. Er ist ein Ostafrikaner mit Leidenschaft für Outdoor-Lern- und Trainingsprogramme und hat schon viele abenteuerliche Outdoor Programme durchgeführt. 2016 nahmen 14 Personen teil; für August 2017 haben sich bereits 35 Personen angemeldet. Die Radfahrer/innen radeln 4.500 km durch die EAC Partnerländer und propagieren dabei den Integrationsprozess.

Während der Tour übernachten sie in Dörfern und informieren dabei Bürger über die Vorteile der EAC. Ein weiteres Ziel der Tour d'EAC ist es, das große Potential Ost Afrikas als integrierter Tourismusregion zu entwickeln.

Deshalb ist die Tour auch offen für Teilnehmer, was die zukünftige Bedeutung noch erhöhen wird. Auch die Unterstützung durch IIDEA trägt zur höheren Sichtbarkeit bei.



### Obedi Ciiza Burundian Flag Bearer

**C**arrying the Burundian flag as I cycled across East Africa during the GACS Bicycle Tour is an incredibly proud and fulfilling experience. It symbolized unity, resilience, and the spirit of the East Africansm. Representing Burundi on such a journey allows me to connect with diverse cultures, promote regional integration, and showcase the beauty of our shared heritage. Each pedal stroke felt like a step toward greater collaboration and solidarity within our community.



### Mutibukeye Saidati

**I** am honored to be one of the pioneers of the Tour d' EAC in Rwanda. I am very sure that this will help bring the people of East Africa together. We invite all the people of Rwanda and all East Africans to join and support this peace and unity building East African Bicycle Tour.





## BEYOND BORDERS: NYERERE'S SELFLESS DREAM OF A UNITED AFRICA.

At Mwanzi High School in Monyoni, Tanzania, we had the opportunity to sing the national anthems of several East African partner states. Each anthem tells a story of national pride and collective identity, but there's a striking contrast when we look at the Tanzanian anthem compared to those of its neighbors. Take, for example, the Kenyan national anthem. The opening line, "Ee Mungu nguvu yetu, ilete baraka kwetu," translates to "O God, our strength, bring blessings to us." Here, God is invoked as the source of strength, but it is clearly a prayer for the Kenyan people.

Similarly, the **Rwandan anthem** begins with "*Rwanda nziza Gihugu cyacu,*" meaning "*Rwanda, our beautiful and dear country,*" while the **Burundian anthem** opens with "*Burundi Bwacu, Burundi buhire,*" which translates as "*Our Burundi, beautiful and worthy of tenderness.*" *The Ugandan anthem starts with "Oh Uganda, may God uphold thee,"* who? Its definitely Uganda and its people. The **anthem of the Democratic Republic of Congo** begins with "*Debout Congolais, Unis par le sort,*" meaning "*Arise, Congolese, united by fate.*"

So why am I highlighting these opening lines? It's because, when comparing them to **Tanzania's anthem**, we see something remarkable. The Tanzanian anthem begins with "*Mungu ibariki Afrika, Wabariki Viongozi wake, Hekima Umoja na Amani, Hizi ni ngao zetu, Afrika na watu wake,*" which translates to: "*God bless Africa, bless all its leaders, bless the African children. Wisdom, unity, and peace are our shields, Africa and its people.*" Not that in this first stanza, Tanzania, its people, and its leaders are not mentioned at all. The focus is on Africa as a whole, reflecting **the vision of Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere**, a true **Pan-Africanist and visionary leader**.

This is not just a reflection of the Tanzanian national anthem but of Nyerere's character. Unlike many other leaders whose national anthems focus on their own countries and people, Nyerere's humility and selflessness are evident. His vision was not just for Tanzania but for the entire African continent. He prioritized African unity over national interests, and this spirit is woven into the very fabric of Tanzania's anthem. The second stanza mentions Tanzania, but before it, Africa as a whole comes first.

You may wonder why achieving full unity across Africa is such a challenging task. If we look at the power of the United States, Europe, or the United Kingdom, Russia and or China. it's clear that their strength lies in the collaboration of multiple nations working together towards common goals. For Africa to stand strong on the global stage, it too, must unite its diverse nations to pursue a shared vision of progress and prosperity. However, this is no small task. The legacy of colonialism, the diversity of cultures, and the historical divisions all contribute to the complexity of achieving African unity.

Yet, despite these challenges, the potential for a united and prosperous Africa is within reach. Initiatives like the Great African Cycling Safari (GACS) demonstrate the power of bringing people together from different backgrounds to create a sense of shared purpose. By fostering connections and mutual understanding, we can lay the groundwork for a stronger, more united Africa.

Nyerere's legacy reminds us that the journey to African unity begins with selflessness, humility, and a vision that transcends national boundaries. If we continue to honor this vision, we can build a united and thriving Africa for future generations.

**-By JohnBosco Balongo**



***“EAST AFRICA  
IS ENOUGH FOR  
ALL OF US”***

**- ANONYMOUS**

The Great African Cycling Safari is owned by GACS Cycling Africa. GACS Cycling Africa is registered as a non-profit organization in Uganda. The main office is located in Kampala, Uganda and Dar- re salaam in Tanzania.

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