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PRESS RELEASE

EAC FLAGS OFF REGIONAL CYCLING TOUR IN MOVE TO FOSTER REGIONAL INTEGRATION

EAC Headquarters, Arusha, Tanzania, 31st August, 2026: The East African Community (EAC) Secretary General, Amb. Stephen P. Mbundi, has today officially flagged off the Great Africa Cycling Safari – East African Community Tour 2026 in Arusha, Tanzania, a regional cycling initiative aimed at promoting regional unity, citizen participation and greater awareness of the EAC integration agenda through sport and cross-border engagement.

The 40 cyclists, comprising citizens from five EAC Partner States and one cyclist from Zimbabwe, will spend 55 days on the road, cycling more than 6,000 kilometres across five East African countries under the theme, “Promoting the Deepening Integration for Improved Livelihoods for the People of East Africa.”

Speaking during the flag-off ceremony at the EAC Headquarters in Arusha, EAC Secretary General, Amb. Stephen P. Mbundi, said the Tour gives practical expression to the 7th EAC Development Strategy, which identifies strengthening social cohesion through culture and sports as a priority area for regional integration.

“The Great Africa Cycling Safari gives practical expression to our vision of a people-centred Community. It uses sport to connect our people, promote interaction across borders and strengthen the sense of belonging to one East African Community,” said Amb. Mbundi.

The Secretary General noted that the Tour demonstrates that regional integration must be owned and carried forward by citizens, communities, young people, the private sector and civil society.

The cyclists began their journey in Kampala, Uganda, where the Tour was officially flagged off by the Minister for East African Community Affairs of the Republic of Uganda, Rt. Hon. Rebecca Alitwala Kadaga. The journey has since taken the cyclists through Uganda and Kenya into Tanzania and will continue to Burundi and Rwanda.

Along the route, the Tour has combined cycling with community engagement, environmental action, youth participation and awareness of the EAC integration agenda. For instance, in Uganda, the cyclists planted trees supporting environmental conservation and established an EAC Integration Club at Cheptegei Primary School in Kapchorwa. As they crossed over via the Suam border, the team also engaged border communities on the EAC integration process.

In Kenya, the Tour has continued to use cycling as a platform for strengthening citizen participation. For instance, in Kenya, the team launched an EAC Integration Club at Menengai High School in Nakuru and another at Umoja One Primary School, further expanding the network of young people participating in discussions

The founding Director of the Great Africa Cycling Safari, Mr. John Balongo, said the Tour has expanded beyond cycling to include activities that promote environmental conservation, community engagement and EAC integration.

“This year, we have launched four EAC Integration Clubs in schools across the region and planted more than 3,000 trees along the cycling route,” said Mr. Balongo, adding that the cyclists have also conducted community sensitisation on EAC integration and the benefits of regional cooperation along their journey.

The Chairman of the Great Africa Cycling Safari, Mr. Ben Twine, appreciated the EAC Secretariat for its support and partnership and called for stronger collaboration to enable the initiative to reach more communities and grow its impact across the region. He expressed the organisers’ commitment to working with the EAC and Partner States to make the Tour bigger and better in the coming years.

The EAC Secretariat has committed to continue exploring areas of collaboration with the Great Africa Cycling Safari organisers and Partner States to strengthen the initiative and maximise its contribution to regional integration.

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