



EAC Sexual Reproductive Health Bill Updates

**EAC Integrated Health Programme (EIHP)
Joint Steering Committee Meeting
1st February, 2022**

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Background to the Bill

- 3rd Assembly of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) initiated the bill development process
- The EAC Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) Bill, 2017 was initially introduced as a Private Member's Bill in the 3rd Assembly by Hon. Dr. Odette Nyiramilimo. With the collaboration EAC Secretariat, UNFPA, World Bank/IFC, IPPF AFRO and UNESCO the Zero Draft Bill was finalized in October 2016 and subjected to public hearings in all Partner States in February 2017 led by the mover and the EALA General Purpose Committee (GPC)
- However, the tenure of the 3rd Assembly lapsed before it was passed.
- The Bill is anchored on:
 - Article 118 of the Treaty establishing the EAC,
 - Global instruments and provisions (ICPD 2013, SDGs, among others)
 - The EAC Regional RMNCAH Guidelines 2016 – 2030
 - Maputo Plan of Action

The objectives of the Bill are:

- protect and facilitate the fulfillment of the life-course sexual and reproductive health and rights of all persons in the Community;
 - provide for the progressive realization of integrated sexual and reproductive health information and services as part of the universal health coverage of each Partner State; and
 - prohibit harmful practices in the Community and provide for related matters.
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Updates-Progress in Drafting of the Bill, consultation and advocacy initiatives in the region

- **On 23rd to 28th January 2020** the Committee of General Purpose held an interactive workshop review the Bill in Bujumbura, where it was agreed that the Bill had gaps that needed to be addressed and the views of stakeholders and Partner States incorporated. Specifically, the meeting was convened to:
 - ✚ Examine the challenges and lessons learn from the previous Public Hearings on the Bill;
 - ✚ Analyse the current developments /emerging issues that may require incorporation in the Bill;
 - ✚ Endeavour to generate consensus with stakeholders on the content of the Bill.
 - ✚ Come up with a way forward on when the Bill can be re-drafted and presented to the Assembly
 - **On 12th February 2021**, the Bill was withdrawn from the House for redrafting.
 - **On 20th April 2021**, Hon Kennedy Mukulia moved a motion seeking leave of the House to introduce a Private Member's Bill entitled the **East African Sexual and Reproductive Health Bill, 2021**.
 - Meanwhile, the re-drafting of the bill was taking place incorporating recommendations form the Bujumbura meeting
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Updates ctd.

- **Between 29th November and 3rd December 2020** the EAC Secretariat, EALA and ENANNASO jointly convened a meeting between the EALA MPs and key stakeholders during which the re-drafted Bill was presented. The objective of the meeting is to consider the re-drafted EAC SRHR Bill, 2020 clause by clause. Key issues proposed for consideration in the redrafted bill included:
 - The Bill mainly focused on reproductive health Rights which include legal rights and freedoms relating to reproduction and reproductive health. The Bill does not seek to defend the sexual rights and sexual orientation to be defined or taken to mean gays, lesbians and sexual workers in society but ensure that sexual rights for all individuals are observed, respected and fulfilled.
 - Engaging men in the provision and access to reproductive health services is critical and should be enshrined in the Bill
 - SRHR for elderly i.e. individuals beyond 55 was missing in the draft Bill
 - The Bill did not clearly articulate the place of culture and religion
- During the meeting it was noted that re-introducing the Bill to the new Assembly required new funding to orient the new members as well as undertake consultations with relevant regional and national level stakeholders and also to counter growing opposition from some various sources in the region.



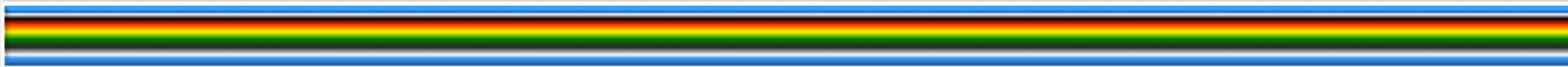
Updates ctd.

- From 1st to 4th May 2021 – meeting convened at Speke Resort Hotel, Munyonyo, Kampala to build the capacity of EALA members and stakeholders on broad issues of Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR). The specific objectives of the meeting were:
 - To sensitize GPC members and stakeholders on EAC SRHR Bill 2020
 - To provide collective inputs to the bill from GPC and stakeholders.
 - To review and refine the EAC SRHR bill incorporating all the inputs from the workshop
 - To develop an engagement strategy to sensitize EALA members and other stakeholders on the EAC SRHR Bill.
 - Members of the Committee on General Purpose and other Stakeholder's views in relation to the EAC SRHR Bill debated.
 - Partner States official submissions and stakeholder views documented and incorporated as amendments to the re-drafted Bill.
 - Finalization/refinement of the review of the EAC SRHR Bill to be presented in the next plenary session due in Mid-May or June
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Updates ctd.

- Following the above forums, all comments were incorporated to enrich the bill.
- On 15th June 2021 the EAC SRH Bill was printed to the East Africa community Gazette
- On 30th June 2021 the Bill was introduced to EALA Assembly for the 1st Reading and accordingly referred to the committee on General Purpose of the 4th Assembly.
- Subsequently the GPC held a consultative meeting with members of parliament from national assemblies for the EAC Partner States on EAC SRH Bill from 14th – 18th July 2021, at Tamarind Hotel in Nairobi.
 - To update members of relevant national parliamentary committees and partners on the content of the EAC Sexual and Reproductive Health Bill, 2021 and to generate input for its further refinement and strengthening before it goes to the EALA for its second reading.
 - Get Members of Parliament and stakeholders on the same level of understanding of the content of the Bill, to analyse current developments and emerging issues that may require incorporation, to generate agreement on the content and to map out a way forward for building wider consensus and enriching the Bill.





Updates ctd.

- From 5th and 9th November 2021 national consultations meetings convened in all Partner States to create awareness, build support with a wide range of stakeholders
 - Participants included CSOs, religious and cultural leaders, health experts, lawyers, media, young people, People living with Disabilities community groups members of parliament- women parliamentary caucuses and EALA GPC members
 - The forums were spearheaded by the EALA General-purpose Committee in partnership with stakeholders to ensure proper cascading of information, and coordinated advocacy on the bill.
 - The objectives for the national dialogue/consensus meeting included:
 - To create awareness on the EAC SRH Bill among different stakeholders at National and Regional level.
 - To build and increase support for the EAC SRH Bill during the public hearings and tabling of the Bill in parliament.
 - To Build consensus with a wide range of stakeholders on the EAC SRH Bill
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Next Steps

- **Next steps and proposed time lines**
 - Presentation / tabling of the bill in the House for 2nd reading **and thereafter** public hearings in all EAC Partner States - March/April 2022
 - Advocacy for adoption of the bill - On going

