



policy forum

PRESS RELEASE
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Policy Forum has decided to dedicate this month's debate to the issue of East African Community (EAC). The debate is titled "**East African Community: Is it taking off?**"

The world economic and financial survey done in 2011 reveals that the members of the East African community (EAC) have been among the fastest growing in sub-Saharan Africa and more broadly in the developing world in recent years. Three countries in the EAC (Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda) were among the fastest growing economies in the world during 2005-09 and the region as a whole has demonstrated commitment to strong policies.

However, will the recent growth path be enough to achieve middle-income status and substantial poverty reduction by the end of the decade of which are the ambition of most countries in the region?

Compared with countries that have achieved successful growth take-offs, the report reveals that the EAC lags in terms of export growth and savings mobilization. The causes are largely due to limited physical and financial infrastructure, high financing and regulatory costs.

There is, however, scope for active policies to unlock potential in these areas. Deeper regional integration, particularly in trade and investment (both public and private), could help raise productivity and reduce costs, facilitating higher exports.

These issues, together with opportunities for the EAC to achieve sustained higher growth and to move to middle-income status over the next 10 to 15 years and the possible implications of ongoing changes in the global economy for the EAC's future growth path will be featured as part of the discussion during the Breakfast Debate on Friday 27th May 2011.

Invited participants at the meeting include representatives of Government, private sector, civil society, donors, the media and concerned citizens. The discussions are held over light breakfast and enable participants to reflect and debate the issues.

The 7:30 People and Policy Debates are held on the last Friday of every month and the venue will be the BRITISH COUNCIL along **Ohio Street**, from 0730 to 0930. Their main purpose is to examine and debate the extent to which policies serve ordinary people, and identify imaginative questions and solutions.

The main presentations will be made by John Wakeman-Linn, IMF's Senior Resident Representative in Tanzania and Godwill Wanga of ESRF.

For more information, contact Alex Ruchyahinduru by email policy2@policyforum.or.tz or telephone number 2772611.

Signed for Policy Forum