



**Opening Remarks by Twalib Mbarak, CBS, Secretary/ Chief
Executive Officer of the Ethics and Anti-Corruption
Commission During the 6th ARIN-EA Annual General Meeting
Held at Safari Park Hotel & Casino, Nairobi,
on Tuesday, 15th March, 2022**

a) Salutations

- ✚ President, Eastern Africa Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities (EAAACA) - **Hon. Ngor Kolong Ngor;**
- ✚ Ag. General Secretary, EAAACA- **Ms. Munira Ali;**
- ✚ President, Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for Eastern Africa (ARIN-EA) - **Ms. Lillian Kafiti;**
- ✚ GIZ Representative - Illicit Financial Flows (IFF) Programme, **Ms. Juliet Mule;**
- ✚ ARIN-EA **Lead Focal Persons;**
- ✚ Distinguished Guests;
- ✚ Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning!

b) Opening Remarks

1. I am delighted to join you this morning as we officially open the **6th Annual General Meeting** for the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for Eastern Africa.
2. We appreciate you for finding time out of your busy schedules in your respective countries to attend this AGM which is one in a series of events running the whole week.
3. Noting that this is a hybrid meeting, I welcome all those who travelled from different countries to join us in-person as well as those attending virtually.

4. Your participation is a testament to the commitment of your institutions to regional cooperation in the fight against corruption through asset recovery. This is essential given the trans-national nature of corruption especially where it entails illicit financial flows.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

5. This AGM comes at a time when the world is recovering from the challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The virus has shaken the social, economic, political, and cultural order of our respective countries in different ways.
6. This AGM and other events for the week provide us a platform to reflect on what we can individually and collectively do better as we

combat and prevent corruption post COVID-19. Certainly, each country has learnt unique lessons that should inform its anti-corruption strategies, moving forward.

7. The broad objective of ARIN-EA is to facilitate the effective tracing and recovery of proceeds of crime, including corruption. Recovery of corruptly acquired assets serves to ensure no person benefits from proceeds of crime. The upshot is that if effectively implemented, asset recovery could be a very effective anti-corruption strategy.
8. As EACC, we have benefitted from ARIN-EA which has enabled us access critical information held by foreign jurisdictions during our corruption investigations.

9. For instance, in June 2020, the Kenyan Courts convicted and sentenced suspects to serve over **67 years** in prison or pay fines amounting to over **USD 20 Million** in a matter whose investigations were facilitated through regional collaboration. This is a classic example of the potential of formal and informal asset recovery networks in facilitating complex trans-boundary investigations.
10. Consequently, EACC remains committed to its international and regional commitments and will continue to strengthen its participation in ARIN-EA programmes and activities.

11. I am pleased to note that **ARIN-EA** has collaborative networks with similar associations from other regions such as the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network of Southern Africa (**ARIN-SA**) and Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network Asia-Pacific (**ARIN-AP**) among others.

12. These extended networks are critical given the transnational nature of corruption and related crimes. Indeed, emerging trends and patterns point to increasing complexity in unraveling stolen public assets that are stashed in foreign jurisdictions.

13. In Kenya, EACC **has prioritized Asset tracing and recovery** as part of the Commission's strategic focus in the execution of its mandate. This is a strategy we recommend to be replicated in all your respective agencies. As the ARIN-EA focal persons, therefore, you should take keen interest and provide strategic direction to the agencies you represent.

Ladies and Gentlemen

14. Let me point out that even as we strive to strengthen asset recovery as a strategy in fighting corruption, we must not lose sight of the other critical factors necessary for the success of the fight. I particularly note that the **role of citizens** is significant in this discourse.

15. Undoubtedly, ordinary citizens are the direct victims as they suffer the adverse effects of corruption which include high cost of living; insecurity; unemployment and political instability among others.
16. I therefore urge all member countries to develop mechanism to ensure that citizens take up their civic responsibilities including electing leaders of integrity, reporting corruption and proactively participating in governance processes.
17. **As I conclude**, I once again convey the gratitude of EACC for the continued support and cooperation that we have so far received from ARIN-EA. I reiterate the commitment of the EACC to the overall goals and objectives for which ARIN-EA was established.

18. With those remarks, I thank you for your audience and wish you fruitful deliberations.

19. Allow me at this point to now invite the President, Eastern Africa Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities (EAAACA) **Honourable Ngor Kolong Ngor** to deliver his address and officially open the forum.

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Twalib Mbarak, CBS
Chief Executive Officer/Secretary
ETHICS AND ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION