**EAAACA/ARINEA AGM on 17.03.2022**(Contact: Juliet Mule, +254 722 562750)

1. **Protocol**:

* Honourable Chief Justice of the Republic of Kenya, Lady Justice Martha Koome;
* Honourable Chief Executive Officer of the Ethics & Anti-Corruption Commission, Mr. Twalib Mbarak;
* Honourable members of the Eastern Africa Association of Anti-corruption Authorities present, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen: Good morning.
* I am greatly honoured to speak here today at the 14th Eastern Africa Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities Annual General Meeting.

1. **Setting the scene**

* Ladies and Gentleman,
* Today, money easily flows across borders. This connectivity between financial systems promotes economic growth, but it also gives rise to an increasing global problem: Illicit financial flows.
* Globally, there are billions of dollars lost through illicit financial flows, also in Africa. According to the United Nations, African countries lose about 40 billion USD per year through illicit financial flows linked to extractive commodities alone – the overall figure is much higher.
* Illicit outflows from organized crime, tax evasion, international trade fraud, money laundering or corruption deprive the affected countries of much-needed public revenues. Revenues which are needed for investments in education, health, infrastructure, justice and security, to name just a few.
* But not only do countries lose resources directly: access to international finance – which is necessary to fund developmental investments - depends on how well countries can prevent ‘dirty money’ from entering the financial system. So illicit financial flows also hinder countries in accessing external financing which is urgently needed in many countries.
* And last but not least: crimes related to illicit financial flows, which include human and drug trafficking, destabilize countries and increase the risk of violent conflict.
* Therefore, the fight against illicit financial flows is a very, very important fight and requires concerted efforts by all actors: state and non-state actors and the private sector, but it also requires cooperation between countries. As illicit financial flows cross borders, international cooperation is key. We need inter-agency, inter-state, and inter-national cooperation!

1. **Support of German Development Cooperation**

* Ladies and Gentleman,
* I am therefore very happy to speak here today as a representative of the German government that is funding a global GIZ programme called “Combating Illicit Financial Flows”.
* The project supports key actors worldwide – including some of you - to implement international standards for fighting Illicit Financial Flows, money laundering and terrorism financing. It does so through an holistic approach which covers three areas of intervention:
  1. Prevention: To prevent illicit financial flows, the programme supports partner countries in strengthening their legislative framework. It systematically increases the traceability of suspicious financial transactions, for example by supporting the establishment of beneficial ownership registers.
  2. Financial investigation: The programme assists national law enforcement agencies to adopt new investigation methods, to overcome challenges of cross-border investigations and to improve inter-agency cooperation.
  3. Asset Recovery: To ensure that illicit activities “do not pay”, the programme supports the recovery of illicitly obtained assets. It does so by fostering collaboration among relevant agencies at the national, regional, and global levels.
* Speaking in concrete terms, GIZ has successfully partnered with the Eastern Africa Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities and the Asset Recovery Inter-Agency Network for Eastern Africa to foster regional cooperation. It does so through, for example, capacity building, institutional strengthening of the Secretariat and the development of a secure platform for information exchange.

1. **Impact/results achieved**

* This approach works: For example, Kenya has established multi-agency teams to conduct joint financial investigations. Due to this new method of collaboration, the national Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission increased its conviction rate by over 50 percent from 2017 to 2018. Moreover, the agency recovered a record sum of more than 9 billion Kenyan Shillings in stolen assets in the first half of the financial year 2019/2020 alone.
* This successful approach is now being replicated at the regional level so other institutions can learn from this success story and replicate it at home. And this is exactly what we mean by international cooperation: sharing knowledge about what works best and building on each other’s successes for the benefit of everybody and every country involved. This is international cooperation at its best!

1. **Conclusion**

* Ladies and Gentleman,
* I am very much impressed by the work not only of our Kenyan colleagues, but by what all of you are doing and the successes you have achieved.
* We as the German government are therefore committed to continue our support for this network and look forward to our continued cooperation.
* I wish you all the best for this Annual General meeting and hope that the discussions you will have today and the work plan you will agree on will shape the fight against illicit financial flows in the Eastern Africa region and beyond.
* Thank you very much!