**Welcome remarks by Ms.Lilian Kafiti , PRESIDENT ARIN-EA**

**At the ARIN-EA AGM-SAFARI PARK HOTEL -NAIROBI on 15th March,2022.**

**Hon .Ngor Kolong Ngor-EAAACA President**

 **Dr .Patricia Achan Okiria-Vice President EAAACA**

**Mr.Twalib Mbarak, Secretary/CEO EACC,**

**Members of the EAAACA Executive Present and the Heads of Institutions-Present**

**Ms. Juliet Mule, GIZ Regional Representative, and the team from GIZ**

**Ms. Munira Ali, Ag.General Secretary of EAAACA/ARIN-EA, and her team**

**ARIN-EA Focal Persons,**

**The Directors and staff of EACC**

**Members of the Media Fraternity**

**Invited Guests**

**Distinguished Participants,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

**Good Morning you all.**

First and foremost, I thank the Almighty God for enabling us to congregate here today. This meeting would have been a virtual meeting but by his grace, the pandemic has eased enough to allow us travel and meet in person in this meeting.

I welcome you all to our AGM under the theme: Fighting Corruption Post Covid 19 pandemic.

On behalf of ARIN-EA family, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the EACC Kenya for hosting our 6th ARINEA AGM and ARINEA Secretariat in conjunction with the EACC Management for organizing this week’s event.

Mr Twalib Mbarak, CEO EACC, I must say your staff have shown us hospitality since the arrival from the airport, swift airport clearance to the hotel check-in, we are truly honored and thank you very much (asante sana).

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

I would also like to express our sincere gratitude to our Heads of Institutions for facilitating the Focal persons to attend this very important series of meetings, beginning from yesterday, when we had our steering group meeting where we deliberated on number of issues geared towards advancing our Network.

I also wish to convey our appreciation to GIZ-IFF Program, Ms Juliet Mule the Regional Coordinator and her team, for funding this event and ensuring that it is hybrid to enable other participants to attend the meeting. Without their support and commitment to the network we wouldn’t be here today. I salute you GIZ.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

The success of an investigation and a case is dependent on the amount of the information you have at hand and the earlier you receive the information, the higher the chances of securing information that will aid subsequent confiscation and recovery of illicit assets. ARINEA is meant to facilitate the flow of such information. It is therefore important to know that Focal Persons are the backbone of this network and are the link between the investigators and repository of the information. It is critical that they are supported to aid the flow of information and without their existence there would be serious challenges impacting on the information shared to aid the investigation and cases.

In this regard, it is my humble request to the Heads of Institutions to see that Focap persons are nominated and that they are supported to enable them execute this important mandate of the network. As you all aware, yesterday we held our steering group meeting which ideally should have the Eight (8) Lead Focal Persons or a minimun of six(6) present, unfortunately we could not reach quorum due to the absence of four (4) Focal Persons. We also did not make quorum in the past meetings held in Tanzania, severely hampering our operations. This keeping in mind the support of our partners and failing to meet. I urge the Focal Persons to commit themselves to serve the network with an open heart, to ensure we deprive criminals from enjoying the fruits of their criminal conducts.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

As you have heard from the Lead Focal -Kenya about the success stories of Romania and Mauritius, you will agree with me that the network has potential. But this can only be achieved if we are all committed as Institutions. And I call upon the Heads present to please take this matter seriously.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

As we all know Africa is losing billions of dollars in illicit financial flows twice as much as it receives in Aid. The region might not be a tax haven compared to other jurisdiction but it is a financial hemorrhage.

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

It is now globally accepted that asset confiscation is an effective tool/ mode of combating corruption, money laundering and other organized crime. And therefore, our priority number one should be well invested by ensuring that assets are recovered, and emphasis should be placed on ensuring that we trace, freeze, confiscate and ultimately return asset to the country of origin and victim. As we all appreciate the process starts with the effective and efficient flow of intelligence information. And this is where I must say again, that the Focal persons are very key and the role of the network in critical.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**,

Since the establishment of ARINEA, we have been able to register a number of achievements, namely; assets traced through the network are of a value of $ one billion and assets confiscated is of the value of $ 10 Millions, we have also built the capacity building of our investigators and lawyers through trainings, workshops, benchmarking visits and experience sharing forums. Our development partners have secured experts in the emerging areas of interest including cryptocurrency, virtual assets, Dark web, trade -based money laundering and informal value transfer system amongst others.

We have gone ahead to sign MOUs with AML/THB, the Basel Institute and we are looking to signing other important partners that have pledged to support the network in capacity budling, financial assistance and technical assistance

For a network which is almost marking a decade this reported achievement is minimal. Therefore, there is a need for joint effort from both the Focal Persons and the Heads of the Institutions to champion the cause. I believe with this joint efforts; it will definitely take us to the next level and become a center of expertise on asset recovery in the region and beyond.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

I would like once again, to reiterate our gratitude for your support and undertake as the President of the network to execute the mandate until the completion of my term as President and to support the incoming leadership.

I also sincerely thank the Hotel Administration for, our translators and the other supporting staff for making sure that our meeting is going on well and we are communicating with each other in the different languages.

I take this opportunity to welcome you all to our 6th ARIN-EA AGM.

Thank you.

**ASANTENI SANA**