Speech by FP-ICGLR Secretary General Ambassador Dr. Deo Mwapinga at the signing of the MOU with the Central Corridor Transit Transport Facilitation Agency in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

12 October 2026

HE Executive Secretary of the Central Corridor Transit Transport Facilitation Agency, Advocate Flory Okonge

Staff from the Central Corridor Executive Secretariat,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to join you today for the signing of this Memorandum of Understanding between the Forum of Parliaments of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and the Central Corridor Transit Transport Facilitation Agency ***(hereinafter 'Central Corridor').***

Today's ceremony marks an important step in strengthening cooperation between our organizations around a shared objective: advancing regional integration in ways that improve the lives of our people.

Our organisations bring complementary responsibilities to this endeavour. The Central Corridor facilitates transport, improves connectivity and makes regional trade more efficient. The Forum promotes parliamentary cooperation, the harmonisation of legislation and parliamentary oversight of the implementation of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region.

We also share a strong institutional connection through our membership. With the exception of Malawi, all Member States of the Central Corridor—Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia—are also members of the FP-ICGLR.

This overlap gives our partnership a practical foundation. The governments responsible for developing the Corridor are accountable to Parliaments represented in our Forum. By working together, we can strengthen the connection between regional commitments, national legislation and implementation.

Executive Secretary,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Great Lakes Region has immense economic potential. Its natural resources, agricultural production, growing markets and enterprising population offer substantial opportunities for shared prosperity.

Yet high transport costs, cumbersome border procedures, and differences between national legal and regulatory frameworks constrain these opportunities.

For a farmer, these obstacles can make it difficult to reach a market. For a small business, they can raise costs and limit opportunities. For a family, they mean more expensive food, medicines and essential goods.

The value of regional integration must therefore be measured by the daily lives of our citizens: in easier trade, more reliable services, greater economic opportunity and stronger connections between communities.

This is why the work of the Central Corridor matters. It is also why parliamentary engagement is essential. Infrastructure development requires sound legislation,

responsible financing and effective oversight. Regional agreements require ratification and implementation. Public-private partnerships require clear rules that attract investment while safeguarding the public interest.

Through this Memorandum, we can bring technical expertise and parliamentary responsibility into closer cooperation.

The symposium on public-private partnerships, scheduled for 23 November 2026 in Luanda, Angola, will offer an early opportunity to put this partnership into practice. Held at the opening of the Forum's committee meetings, it will bring together parliamentarians and partners to discuss public-private partnerships in the Great Lakes Region and the Forum's Model Law.

We look forward to the Central Corridor's participation and contribution. Your experience can help parliamentarians understand the practical requirements of regional infrastructure projects and consider how legislation can support investment, transparency and accountability.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our cooperation must also reflect the needs of women, young people, small-scale traders and communities living along transport routes.

Women engaged in cross-border trade make a significant contribution to household incomes and regional economies. Their experiences should inform reforms that make trade safer, simpler, and more accessible.

The Women's Parliamentary Conference, to be held in Dar es Salaam from 2 to 5 November 2026, offers another important opportunity to advance this shared agenda. It will bring together women parliamentarians and partners to address women's leadership, peace, security and development in the Great Lakes Region.

We appreciate the Central Corridor's engagement as a partner in the Conference. Its participation will help connect discussions on women's economic resilience with the practical issues of trade facilitation, mobility and access to regional markets.

Together, the Conference here in Dar Es Salaam and the symposium in Angola provide timely opportunities to begin giving substance to the commitments we make today.

Executive Secretary,

The success of this Memorandum will depend on the work undertaken after signing. Designating focal points within thirty days, preparing an initial joint work plan within ninety days, and following up regularly through the Joint Steering Committee will help us set priorities and maintain momentum.

We should focus on achievable activities and results that can be assessed: better-informed parliamentary decisions, stronger legislative frameworks and more effective oversight of regional commitments.

This partnership also advances the ambitions of the African Continental Free Trade Area, Agenda 2063, and the Sustainable Development Goals. Our responsibility is to help translate these ambitions into laws, budgets, and institutional practices that deliver tangible benefits.

Allow me to thank you, Executive Secretary, and your team for the constructive spirit in which this Memorandum has been developed.

On behalf of the Forum and its twelve Member Parliaments, I reaffirm our commitment to making this partnership productive and responsive to the needs of our region.

May today's signing strengthen cooperation between our organizations, support closer integration between our economies and expand opportunities for the people we serve.

Asanteni sana.

I thank you.