President Paul Kagame and the Secretary-General of the East African Community (EAC), Amb. Stephen Mbundi, discussed efforts to strengthen regional integration and deepen cooperation among member states during a meeting in Kigali on Wednesday.

Kagame received Mbundi at Village Urugwiro, where the two discussed Rwanda's role in supporting initiatives aimed at advancing regional unity and promoting development through closer cooperation among EAC countries.

The meeting was also attended by Minister of State in charge of Regional Cooperation, Dr. Usta Kaitesi.

Mbundi was in Rwanda to participate in public consultations on a proposed framework to strengthen political integration within the EAC, an initiative considered an important step toward deeper regional cooperation and shared governance.

The consultations, which began on Monday, June 15, brought together representatives from government institutions, Parliament, the judiciary, universities and other higher learning institutions, civil society, the private sector, youth groups, women's organizations, people with disabilities, faith-based organizations, political parties and the media.

The EAC says the consultations aim to increase citizens' participation in shaping the proposed political integration framework and collect views that will inform a draft legal instrument expected to guide the initiative.

The regional bloc has emphasized that public participation is essential in building strong and sustainable institutions capable of supporting long-term development and stronger cooperation across East Africa.

Mbundi, a Tanzanian national, was appointed Secretary-General of the EAC in March 2026, replacing Veronica Nduva, who had served in the position since June 2024.

Rwanda joined the EAC in 2007 and has since played an active role in initiatives aimed at strengthening cooperation among member states.

The EAC has recorded progress in areas including cross-border trade, easing the movement of people and goods, reducing customs barriers, introducing the EAC passport, advancing the Common Market and coordinating regional peace and

security efforts.

The regional bloc currently has eight member states: Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan and Somalia. Together, the member states have a population of more than 302 million people, according to figures published in 2025.

The discussions in Kigali come as the EAC continues efforts to advance deeper integration, including a proposed framework to strengthen political cooperation and build regional institutions that better serve citizens.

For Rwanda, the engagement reflects its continued support for regional integration as a pathway toward economic growth, easier movement of people and goods, and stronger collective security in East Africa.