By Charles Ndushabandi;

Rwanda will on the 16th to 19th of April this year host the 4th edition of the East African Congress of Accountants (EACOA) with over 800 participants from the region and beyond expected to physically attend while an additional 300 virtual delegates, including accountants and other professionals from business, the public sector, NGOs, are expected to join the deliberations in a hybrid format.

The Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Rwanda (ICPAR) will host EACOA at the Kigali Exhibition and Conference Centre (KECV) under the theme “Beyond Borders: Exploring Global Perspectives.”

This year’s theme suggests a forward-thinking and inclusive approach to the congress, encouraging participants to look beyond traditional boundaries, embrace diversity, and gain insights from a global perspective to drive innovation and excellence in the accounting profession.

According to ICPAR, the biennial event brings together accounting professionals, industry leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders from across East Africa for five days, and it is dedicated to advancing the accounting profession in the region.

EACOA is jointly organised by the five EAC Institutes of Accountants (EACIAs), which include ICPAR, the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya (ICPAK), the National Board of Accountants and Auditors (NBAA) in Tanzania, the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Uganda (ICPAU), and the Ordre Des Professionels Comptables du Burundi (OPC).

EACOA is a flagship event in the region’s accounting calendar known for its high-quality content, thought-provoking discussions, and unparalleled networking opportunities. This year’s edition in Kigali will feature some notable keynote speakers from various sectors and organizations.

The congress will also feature panel discussions, technical workshops, and interactive sessions covering various topics, including but not limited to accounting standards, audit practices, taxation, financial reporting, and digital transformation in the accounting profession.

ICPAR’s President, Obadiah R. Biraro, said, “ICPAR is excited to host EACOA and represent Rwanda. We look forward to hosting the region’s finest in the accounting

profession and industry stakeholders for a week of learning, networking, and collaboration, shaping the future of the accounting landscape in East Africa."

Speaking about the benefits of attending this year's edition, ICPAR's CEO Amin Miramago said that attending EACOA offers numerous advantages to accounting professionals, including networking opportunities with fellow accountants (from the region), finance professionals, regulators, and industry experts across East Africa and beyond, fostering valuable professional relationships and collaborations.

"Participants will not only gain insights from leading experts and practitioners on the latest trends, challenges, and best practices in accounting, audit, taxation, and financial management but also enhance their skills, knowledge, and competencies through educational sessions and professional development programs accredited for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) credits," Miramago said.

The congress will also engage thought leaders to exchange a broader understanding of global accounting practices, standards, and trends, paving the way for those interested in exploring career advancement and others seeking opportunities for professional growth.

Participants attending all sessions shall be awarded 21 CPD hours per the ICPAR CPD policy. CPD refers to the ongoing learning, skill development, and knowledge enhancement process that professionals use to maintain and improve their competence and effectiveness in their respective fields. CPD activities are typically designed to help professionals stay updated with industry trends, developments, and best practices.

Speaking profoundly about the congress' theme, ICPAR Vice President John Kaijuka Bugunya said, "Beyond Borders suggests a call for increased collaboration and cooperation among accounting professionals in countries beyond the EAC. It encourages knowledge sharing, best practice exchanges, and partnerships that transcend geographical limitations, fostering a more robust and interconnected accounting community."

"EACOA facilitates forming partnerships, alliances, and collaborations among accounting bodies, professional associations, and industry stakeholders within the EAC and beyond. These partnerships promote cooperation on education, training, advocacy, and standard-setting initiatives in accounting."