



GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ASSEMBLÉE GÉNÉRALE
ASSEMBLEIA GERAL
جمعية عمومية



The relevance of regional integration in Africa is neither new nor surprising. It was a primary objective of the African Development Bank back in 1964 when it set up shop. However, effective integration – particularly in sub-Saharan Africa – has been constrained by inadequate regional infrastructures and a contradictory collection of legal, institutional and regulatory frameworks. These factors have led many pessimists to choose to dismiss regional integration as a nice idea that is not likely to happen.

Geda (2002) observes that major issues of regional economic integration in Africa could be grouped into two interrelated broad areas: issues of implementation and the limitation of insight from both the theoretical and empirical literature regarding the specific approaches that are appropriate for the continent. Implementation issues cover both the economic, political and institutional constraints that surface at the implementation stage of economic integration treaties. The approach issue refers to the menu of options available to pursue economic integration. These options range from a stepwise bilateral cooperation to continent wide integration. Around 2003, the East African states decided to fast track their ambition to have an integrated East African community, although this process has continued to face some serious challenges. With the creation of a new state in South Sudan, the inclusion of Rwanda and the change of regime in Kenya in 2013, a new approach coined as the ‘coalition of the willing’ has emerged. This coalition of the willing did not go well with the Tanzania. This paper therefore focuses on the success of the coalition of the willing countries as a pathway to the realization of regional integration. The fundamental question is whether the coalition of the willing will achieve much towards the realization of this dream. The paper also seeks to examine new political, economic and social challenges and developments that have emerged towards the realization of total regional integration in East Africa in the future.

Historical Foundations of the EAC

Regional Integration has been part of Africa’s strategy for economic transformation since the 1960s and concrete agreements have subsequently been adopted, including the Lagos Plan of Action (1980) and the Abuja Treaty (1991). The Abuja Treaty recommended the rationalization of Regional Economic Cooperations’ (RECs) to address the problem of multiple membership. Using the RECs as building blocks, continental integration culminating in the African Economic Community (AEC) is to be achieved progressively (African development bank, 2010). Other initiatives that have been taken include the Constitutive Act of the African Union and the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). The Eastern Africa region has been taking decisive steps towards the achievement of the continental vision. COMESA and EAC have attained a Customs Union and Common Market status respectively. The programs of both RECs are also closely aligned to the AU/NEPAD African Action Plan (AAP), 2010-2015, anchored on NEPAD’s Guiding Principles. The CES Tripartite Arrangement is in consonant with the continental vision. Development partners active in Africa support the continental vision and recognize that regional integration is vital





for accelerating Africa's development and poverty reduction prospects. Also, private investors, both foreign and domestic, are stakeholders in the objective of larger and well connected markets and can bring their distinct capacities towards its realization, alongside governments, RECs and development partners (African Development Bank, 2010).

Thus, we have to realize first, the genuine unity of African countries around the basic values of freedom, dignity, independence, democracy, autonomous development and collective self-reliance. The AU was seen as a leap forward in Africa's integration process in several important respects. Conceptually, whereas anticolonialism and the securing of national sovereignty were the ideological background of the OAU, the AU has been conceived as transnational organization heading toward political, economic and social integration (Olukoshi and Adejumbi, 2009). This is the foundation upon which regional organizations such as the East African Community are laid.

Percy (2000) observes that since African countries began achieving independence from the 1950 onwards, two conflicting predispositions have influenced their efforts at regional cooperation and integration. The first has been to adhere rigidly to the colonial borders drawn in imperial European capitals, although these borders militate against the economic, political or social viability and coherence of the African nation-states thus artificially created. Their second inclination has been to emphasize from the outset of independence, the indispensability of economic integration across Africa's sub-regions and the continent as a whole. In retrospect, the consequence for Africa of indulging in these two tendencies i.e remaining politically separate while being convinced of the need to achieve economic fusion at arm's length- has been confusion about means and ends. Despite their considered natural resource endowments, most of Africa's nation-states have over the last forty years, proved themselves to be economically unviable as independent sovereign entities. Their inability to integrate effectively has resulted in a record of economic and political performance between 1960 and 2000 that compares very unfavourably with the rest of the developing world.

East African Community (EAC) currently consists of five member countries in East Africa: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. The EAC was formed in 1967 by Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. The EAC was dissolved in 1977, mainly due to political reasons. In the tide of regionalism all over the world, the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community was signed by Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda in November 1999. The newly-created EAC entered into force on July 7, 2000. In 2007, Burundi and Rwanda (both Francophone states) were admitted as members of the EAC. In November 2009, a historic document, the EAC Common Market Protocol, was signed by the five countries, which then established a common market allowing the free movements of goods, labour, persons, and capital as an integral part of the East African Community. Its full implementation is to be completed by 2015. In addition to the creation of the common market, the establishment of a currency union is being seriously negotiated (Goto, 2012:4). Since then, there has been a





protracted effort to fast track social, economic and political integration of the EAC states. Social integration seems to have gone a notch higher with the introduction East African university games as well as East African secondary schools regional games which are currently **underway in Rwanda**. However, political and economic federation or integration have continued to face some serious challenges.

Although there are serious political and economic challenges towards the integration process of the EAC, certain structural institutions have been put in place. EAC organs which are already in place include the East African Legislative Assembly, the East African Court of justice, a Secretariat, the Council of Ministers and the Summit of Heads of States. These political achievements are a good indication of political will to have a strong regional integration. At their Summit in 2007, the heads of States of the EAC Partner States decided to fast tract the achievement of Monetary Union by 2012. Some progress in the preparation for monetary union has been made. A study on the preparedness for a monetary union has been conducted by experts from the European Central Bank in collaboration with experts from the EAC central banks. Good progresses have been made by the EAC central banks' 'Governors Monetary Affairs Committee (MAC). They include the harmonization of banking regulation, the payment system integration, the harmonization of monetary and exchange rate policy implementation. On the fiscal side, Finance ministers conduct pre and post budget consultations, share regularly budget information and budget statements are read the same day (Africa Development Bank, 2010).

It is noteworthy that there are pros and cons for regional economic integration. As for trading arrangements, some argue that preferential trading arrangements (PTAs) complement multilateral WTO trade liberalization, and that such PTAs are beneficial to the economic development of small developing countries such as most African nations. Others argue that PTAs sometimes constitute inefficient trading blocs, which are detrimental to economic growth. Some argue that currency unification encourages economic growth by eliminating instability due to exchange rate fluctuation. But others argue that by forming a currency union, member countries have to give up autonomy in monetary policy, which actually increases instability in the national economy (African Development Bank, 2010).

Supplementing on the pros and cons of the regional integration, **Rusuhuzwa** () observes that the interest in regional integration in Africa has been high over the decades and since independence various regional groupings have been formed. Those initiatives were stimulated by the generally small size of individual economies leading to a desire to exploit economies of scale in production and distribution, as well as having more influence on the world's stage. The small domestic markets, combined with generally high production costs and deficient investment climates result in limited investment in Africa. Regional integration goes beyond simple cooperation, harmonization or coordination; it implies higher degree of loss of sovereignty. There are different degrees of regional integration depending on the agreed





objectives. They include more united markets for goods (custom unions), factors (common markets), common currency and political federation.

Regional integration increases trade among member countries and by enabling firms to operate in more and larger markets, this allows firms to realize the benefits of economies of scale and facilitate further cost reductions. It may also attract more Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) both from within and outside the region resulting especially from the increase in the market size and production rationalization that follows regional integration (Estevadeordal and Robertson, 2002; Estevadeordal and Suominen, 2003). Even if this will not lead to more FDI in each member country, benefits among members can be enhanced by agglomeration effects which refer to a spatial clustering of economic activities (Venables, 1999). East African Community is also anchored on regional trade as the basis upon which other forms of integration (political, Economic) will be achieved. Regional trade arrangements may enable countries to coordinate their positions with more visibility and possibly stronger bargaining power. It also promotes the culture of cooperation and mechanism to address issues of common interest including common defense or mutual military assistance, hence increasing global security. In addition, the regional integration may reduce the risk of conflicts between its country members as it may raise the opportunity cost of war. This has been achieved in the recent past with the deployment of Kenya Defence Forces into Somalia (see, Rusuhuzwa 2014, Odhiambo et al, 2012).

Going by the history of the EAC and the reasons behind its collapse in 1977 and its subsequent revival in 1999, a number of East African residents and the political class believe that the creation of united federation of East Africa has taken too long. Although successive presidents in the three East African states apart from Uganda which has had one president since then have played their part in speeding up the realization of a speedy EAC integration, East African nation states have not been fully integrated socially, politically and economically. With the coming in of President Uhuru Kenyatta as Kenya's fourth president, and the creation of a new independent state in the name of South Sudan, there has been a new energy as far as fast tracking this process is concerned. It is out of these two developments that the coalition of the willing was created. It is therefore important for us to interrogate the driving force behind this new coalition in relation to the realization of an integrated East Africa. The fundamental question here is whether this coalition would be a key driver or a stumbling towards an integrated East African community.

Entry of South Sudan into EAC and the politics of Coalition of the Willing

Southern Sudan applied on November 2011 to join the EAC. This application was so crucial to the wellbeing of the EAC because the Republic of South Sudan currently face serious development and governance challenges which may not only limit its benefits as member of EAC but also negatively impact the viability of EAC as region. South Sudan faces many





difficulties including ensuring economic stability, building institutions to support sustained growth and development, managing oil revenue wisely and building political stability and security. This is important because both theoretical literature and practice show that key principles for successful regional integration include domestic peace, political stability, minimum threshold of macroeconomic stability, good financial management, and sufficient national reforms to open market as well as mutual trust among these countries (Rusuhuzwa, 2014:17).

By joining the EAC, the Republic of South Sudan expected to reduce its dependency on Sudan, especially for its external trade by finding alternative transport corridors. Currently, South Sudan has plans to build domestic refineries to export petroleum products to regional markets such as Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia. The projects include construction of an oil refinery and sea port in Lamu (Kenya- The LAPSSET project), a 1 400 km oil pipeline that will link Juba to Lamu port and construction of a new Mombasa-Kampala standard railway line. Important investment is also being made in a 1 130 km road to link Nairobi to Juba. These projects are expected to serve Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Eastern Congo, Southern Sudan and Ethiopia and likely to attract more Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), especially from Asia's economic giants (Japan and China). Kenya and Uganda are particularly expected to benefit from the thousands of jobs that the large infrastructure projects are expected to create (Rusuhuzwa, 2014:24). The inclusion of South Sudan in these projects and in the wider rubric of East African states would thus mean an increased number of membership as far as the East African Community and cooperation is concerned. Additionally, Ethiopia would also be part of this project.

The traditional K-group theory, however, argues that more participants lower the benefits of cooperation as it increase the enforcement problem (Olson, 1965). The enforcement mechanism is very important because to build a viable regional integration, countries have to agree on surveillance and enforcement mechanisms for convergence criteria. The experience shows that, whereas there are some examples of regional organizations that started small and have been successful, there are no cases of large regional organizations that have achieved the same level of regional integration showing that starting out with few states is a better strategy for regional integration.

In the case of South Sudan and EAC, the main issue here may not be a big number of countries forming the EAC, but the disparities between South Sudan and the rest of EAC members because several domestic characteristics of a state influence the success of regional integration. The differences in economic and socio development fundamentals between South Sudan and the rest of EAC country members can do more to hamper the cooperation in EAC than the number of members itself. In addition, the lack of sufficient capacity (political, human resources,) to implement the obligations of membership in EAC may negatively affect the EAC regional integration efforts (Rusuhuzwa, 2014:27).



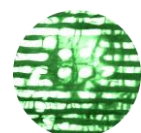


Although, the political leadership especially of Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda have not been able to interrogate the economic and political challenges of South Sudan as a state due to their own national interests, they are now grappling with the problem of civil unrest in South Sudan which has posed a serious threat to the projects (LAPSSET, Oil refinery and pipeline, standard gauge railway) which was meant to fast track East African regional economic integration bringing together members of the Coalition of the Willing.

But also, overlapping membership has proved to be a major hurdle in African experiments with regional integration across the continent. Kenya is a major driving force behind the EAC, yet it is also part of IGAD, COMESA and Community of Sahel Saharan States (CEN-SAD), making it the only country in Africa, which is a part of four separate RECs. Tanzania is the only member nation of the EAC, which is a part of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). For some countries, overlapping membership in different RECs undermines binding commitments for different jurisdiction and policy environments whose mandates and objectives may not always be similar. Many Tanzanians are concerned that the EAC's political federation, which has been envisaged by the member nations, will affect their close relationship with several SADC countries (Khanna, 2013:18). This has informed their aloof nature as far their commitment towards a speedy EAC integration is concerned. Although there are also other underlying reasons which prompted Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and South Sudan to come up with the Coalition of the Willing.

Khanna (2013:19) further argues that, it is clearly not beneficial, and could in fact be problematic, to have multiple regional bodies serving the same purpose since these regimes may not necessarily have similar rules of engagement. It also flies in the face of the principles of efficiency that market integration seeks to achieve. Overlaps make it extremely difficult to integrate markets through common trade policy instruments such as a common external tariff. It is absurd to assume that a country can apply to two different tariffs by virtue of it being part of two separate unions.

The year 2013 was a challenging year for the East African Community, a regional bloc of five member states; Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Burundi and Rwanda (The Citizen, 2/1/2014). In the past, the nagging problems towards the realization of an integrated EAC had been the slow speed with which the member countries jointly or individually took in the implementation of what had been agreed upon and signed by all parties towards fast tracking the EAC. This was not the case for 2013. It is the year that for the first time saw the bloc, which was revived in the 1990s after the first one collapsed in 1977, starting to develop cracks which, in essence, threatened its survival. The trouble, started in the middle of the year (2013) with the coming onto the scene by the Coalition of the Willing (CoW), an alliance of three member countries; Uganda, Rwanda and Kenya. The trio came together ostensibly to fast-track regional projects which they thought were delayed by the heavy bureaucracy within the EAC and some member countries they accused of being “not serious with regional





integration issues (The Citizen, 2/1/2014). It is true that Tanzania's apparent reluctance to fast-track East Africa's integration led to suggestions that the rest of the states should not wait for Dar es Salaam (www.trademarka.com).

Although Tanzania has historically been a key member of the East African community, her missing of two meetings in Entebbe and Mombasa in 2013 raised serious questions of commitment towards fast tracking of the East African Cooperation. The Mombasa meeting which discussed the regional infrastructure and the Single Customs Territory (SCT), led to questions on whether Tanzania was still interested in the integration. The meeting was attended by Presidents Uhuru Kenyatta (Kenya), Yoweri Museveni (Uganda) and Paul Kagame (Rwanda) but Tanzania's Jakaya Kikwete was missing. South Sudan, and Burundi, were represented by their ministers. Tanzania was also not present at the earlier meeting of the three presidents in June 2013 held in Kampala, where the region's infrastructure was high on the agenda. With Tanzania apparently foot-dragging (The Citizen, 2/1/2014)

During their Entebbe summit at the end of June, Presidents Museveni, Paul Kagame of Rwanda and Uhuru Kenyatta of Kenya, pledged their commitment to regional integration, particularly in the development of infrastructure. At face value, one could not have been surprised by the meeting. This is because, it can be argued that, the three countries are linked by what is called the northern transport corridor; from the port of Mombasa through to Nairobi and Kampala all the way to Kigali and beyond. In some way, the new partnership had also been caused by new developments such as the dredging of the port of Lamu and its proposed road and railway links with the hinterland, the coming onto the scene of the oil-rich South Sudan and the new oil wells in Uganda. It is the availability of these resource, the coming in of the newly created independent state of South Sudan and the need to find an alternative outlet of oil and other imported goods from the landlocked states of Uganda, Rwanda and South Sudan that has apparently catalyzed the speedy coming up of the coalition of the willing states as a 'driver' towards a quicker realization of integration among East African States (The Citizen, 2/1/2014).

In the Mombasa meeting the summit agreed on the construction of a standard gauge railway line from Mombasa that would link the three countries, and possibly South Sudan as well as pipelines from Uganda and South Sudan oil fields to the markets; be they within eastern Africa or elsewhere. The three countries were 'loud and clear' on why they had been forced to form a new alliance; they wanted to speed up infrastructure projects so that they could serve as a catalyst for economic integration of the region. They even went further towards fast-tracking the East African Political Federation. In fact, for the latter, an ad hoc committee was formed to work on the matter almost immediately.

As the developments were going on, two members of the bloc; Tanzania and Rwanda were already at loggerheads on a number of issues, one among them the expulsion of Rwandese





(and other people from other countries) who had no proper documents while living in Tanzania. Authorities in Kigali took the issue seriously, although their government did not retaliate. It was a kind of ‘war of words’ between the media of the two neighbouring countries which had everybody worried about the strained relations (The Citizen Newspaper, 2/1/2014).

From the perspective of the Coalition of the Willing, Tanzania and Burundi are lagging behind in four key areas: the development of a single tourist visa, the establishment of a single customs territory, the progress of the EAC political federation, and the use of national ID cards as travel documents for nationals of the bloc (Roy, 2013:1). But why does Tanzania seem uninterested in fast-tracking the federation? Perhaps she has genuine reasons ranging from land and mineral concerns to the amount of trade it has with the member states. Tanzania, first of all, wants the EAC countries to come clear on the issue of land. Tanzania knows there is a big problem about the land ownership in Uganda and Kenya, where it is the rich who own the biggest chunks of land. People are fighting day and night over land and Tanzania has seen all this. Land in Tanzania is property of the state but citizens use it communally (www.Trademarka.com). So land, as far as Tanzania is concerned remains a bigger challenge to EAC integration. The other challenge is the monetary union protocol which Tanzania wants the EAC to go slow on. Their argument that Tanzania is advancing is why the rush (5-10 years for EAC) if it took Europe at least 50 years to realize the monetary union.

And while President Kikwete of Tanzania may have allayed fears that Tanzania could be about to pull out of the EAC, he did little to counter this sense that Tanzania wants to take a slower approach to integration than some of its counterparts. “We did not agree on fast-tracking the political federation without completing the other steps,” said Kikwete in a parliamentary address. “We have been frank about this in the appropriate forums of the EAC. Our stand comes from principle. That is, we must establish first the economic and financial mechanisms and let them take root” (Roy, 2013:1). This even prompted some Tanzanian MPs to express concern that the country wasn’t completely serious about regional integration. However, many others – and not just in Tanzania and Burundi – see value in taking a more cautious approach, pointing out that fast-tracking EAC integration could lead to problems in the future if it means the necessary foundations have not had time to be established.

Divisions within the East African Community (EAC) had deepened after Burundi said it was not party to the “coalition of the willing” that has left Tanzania out. At the heart of current friction is the apparent split in the EAC, with Tanzania and Burundi on the one side, and the ‘Coalition of the Willing’ – so called because it wants to fast track various parts of the integration process – made up of Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda, on the other. Tensions between these groups have particularly intensified over the past few months. Firstly, though not directly related to the EAC, some believe that Tanzania’s relations with Uganda and Rwanda may have frayed over the recent events in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Amidst





ongoing instability in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania committed a large number of peacekeeping troops to the UN mission in the region tasked with removing the M23 rebels, a group both Rwanda and Uganda had been accused of supporting (Roy,2013:1).

Speed of integration, however, is not the only sticking point within the EAC, and in fact a number of more fundamental concerns remain. One particularly crucial issue is the free movement of people. This principle is seen as problematic by various stakeholders, and more so by Tanzania, and the policies and procedures that should regulate people's movement are highly contested. This is especially the case in Tanzania, which has been at the heart of various controversies regarding migration in recent months. To get a work permit, Tanzania currently charges EAC citizens \$2,000. This is considerably more than that charged by any of the EAC member states; Uganda and Kenya have variable rates for different kinds of workers, Burundi charges foreign workers 3% of their gross salary, while Rwanda has waived permit fees for EAC citizens. Tanzania's high charges mean many people from neighbouring countries don't get permits and so work illegally in the country. This situation came to a head in October, 2013 when the Tanzanian government deported over 4,000 Ugandan and Rwandan migrants, leading to further tensions between the countries (Roy. 2013:1). "What is costing us in the EAC is Tanzania's stand on political federation, issues of land, the labour market and immigration". While President Kikwete believes that these issues should be decided on in the domestic policy domain, some sort of agreement will also have to be reached at the EAC level. Indeed, the future of the EAC rests upon being able to marry regional and national advantages (The Citizen, 8/10/2013). Although, this hybridity of regional and national policy may look ideal, it provides a grey area and a hybrid space which Hommi bhabha (1994) describes as a neither this nor that. This space will erode the political sovereignty of the EAC states which Tanzania and probably other EAC nation states are not comfortable with.

Although Tanzania officially renounced the so called 'coalition of the willing' between Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda by arguing that the ongoing tri-lateral talks between the countries were against the EAC protocol. This coalition still remains a threat to EAC integration due to shared national interests that the three member states have with each other (The East African, 21/10/14). According to Tanzanian government, the projects under deliberation by the new coalition, and which have received the blessing of Presidents Uhuru Kenyatta, Yoweri Museveni and Paul Kagame, should have been endorsed first by all the EAC member countries.

The politics of the Coalition of the Willing notwithstanding, the EAC member states have made joint strides in the agricultural sector by establishing a Food Security Action Plan to fight hunger and malnutrition in the region. The EAC single passport is in force and allows multiple entries to citizens of partner states to travel freely within the EAC region for up to six months. This has predominantly been issued to ease border crossing in the region. The





single passport does not entitle its holder to work in any partner state, but the same right is extended to citizens of EAC member states through the EAC Common Market Protocol. This move was enacted in 2010, and Tanzania is currently the only country not to have completely opened up its doors to professionals, technicians, and trade workers. The country hopes to achieve this by 2015 (www.eac.int). It is against this backdrop that the Coalition of the Willing feels that Tanzania has been delaying them in fast tracking the EAC integration process and has vowed to go with their own speed to realize certain initiatives towards the realization of the EAC economic and political integration

Conclusion and Future Prospects of the East African Integration

A number of issues pose challenges for regional integration effort in the Eastern Africa region, but there are also opportunities. The key challenges include: inadequate and poor regional infrastructure network, water scarcity and difficulty in managing shared water resources, weak institutions and human capacity, and insecurity and political instability. Other challenges are diversity across the economies and divergent country attitudes towards regional integration; as well as widespread and onerous food safety, technical and other standards that have a chilling effect on the agricultural exports of countries in the region. The coalition of the willing, as much as it wants to spearhead and fast track EAC integration also poses a challenge of isolating some member states from integrating into the mainstream cooperation. The more these states are isolated the more they are resented and the more they are resented, the more they get isolated. The Coalition of the willing have achieved some little strides in fast tracking EAC integration by coming up with new infrastructural projects linking Mombasa, Kampala and Kigali. However, political integration is yet to be realized. This can only be achieved by making the integration a people driven process and all inclusive without isolating other member states. This process should be done procedurally, however, it is important to note that a clear timetable accepted by all parties should be adhered to so that it is not seen that one member state(s) are dragging the others in the realization of the EAC integration. In my view, once all economic structures have been put in place, a political integration should follow supported by a stronger political will from the various Heads of East African States.

In terms of future prospects, the East region has abundant resources that can sustain its drive towards economic integration. The recent discoveries of oil in Kenya and Uganda as well as the availability of oil in South Sudan points to an emergence of a New International Economic Order which will reduce dependency on the Western states. Although regional integration is a political affair, the private sector which is also key to regional industrial growth also need to be roped into the process. Kenya's vibrant private sector, already operating across the EAC, provides a best practice case for other countries in the region for enhancing the role of the private sector in the regional integration process.





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