

## **Tanzania and the East African Federation Agenda: a Committed or Reluctant Party to Full Integration?**

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### **Abstract**

*This article takes as its point of departure the directive of the Heads of State of the three founding EAC (East African Community) members - Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda - to set up National Consultative Committees to collect peoples' views on whether to fast-track the creation of a political union. The outcome of the national consultations was that while Kenyans and Ugandans were eager to embrace an immediate federation, Tanzanians felt that the 120 million-plus bloc should instead create an economic union before evolving into a political union. The article notes ironically, nearly fifty years after Julius Nyerere, Tanzania's first President, challenged the "let's put our house in order first" argument, East Africans are still enmeshed in a similar debate, but this time around the voices of "let's put our house in order first" have largely come from Tanzania, especially the Isles. In this article it is argued that the current EAC is no longer insulated from domestic politics. Therefore, policy makers in Tanzania will not cut deals with their counterparts at the regional level for the sake of the regional organization at the expense of their domestic support. It is further argued that the Dar Government's push to collect people's views on the agenda was a tactical move to suppress the subject. Statements expressing top policy makers' commitment to strengthening the EAC have not silenced claims that the country is dragging its feet to reach the goal of a political federation by 2013. Prospects of a political federation by 2013 are also dim because the block still lacks the 'institutional prerequisites' of federalism.*

### **Introduction**

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The East African region has a long experience with regional integration dating from as early as 1918 when Kenya and Uganda (still under colonialism) operated a customs union. Tanganyika became a part of the customs union from 1922 to 1927. This long history of regional integration has gone through four main phases. From 1948-1961 there was the East African High Commission. The 1961-1967 phase featured the East African Common Services Organisation. The third phase saw the operation of the East African Community (EAC) (1967-1977) and the fourth phase began in the early 1990s with efforts to revive the EAC.

Since independence in the early 1960s there have been hopes that full economic and political integration can be achieved. The highest representation of this optimism was when the Heads of State of independent Kenya, Tanganyika and Uganda publicly pronounced their intention to move from economic cooperation to a full political federation. Unfortunately, after independence leaders became domestically oriented 'clinging to sovereignty' as opposed to embracing a regional 'shared sovereignty'. Indeed, the pledges of the first generation of East African Heads of State to forge a working political federation were empty promises. The dream of a political federation faded and tensions strained economic cooperation even though relations between the three pioneer states improved as was evidenced by the signing of the EAC Treaty in 1967. Tensions came to the fore with the imposition of various restrictions on trade accompanied by the crumbling of the common monetary system and its replacement with three separate currencies. EAC finally collapsed from the trauma of Cold War ideological conflicts and the Iddi Amin dictatorship in 1977.

On 30<sup>th</sup> May 2005 Benjamin William Mkapa of the United Republic of Tanzania, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of the Republic of Uganda, and Mwai Kibaki of Republic of Kenya, the Presidents of the three founding members of the EAC, recommitted themselves to creating a political federation by setting up the Wako Committee to examine ways for expediting the cooperation process so that the ultimate goal of political federation could be achieved. The Heads of State felt that a strong federation would only be possible if it was owned by the East African people through effective consultations from its early stages to the end. Therefore, they emphasized the need to broaden the consultation processes to include all important shareholders directing their respective Governments to set up National Consultative Committees to collect people's views. The consultation process was officially launched in major East African cities in October, 2006 and concluded in June 2007.

Discussion of the consultation process findings will be covered in subsequent sections.

While it is not possible within the confines of this article to fully assess the extent to which people's views have historically been taken into account prior to making major decisions, it is notable that the political elite's current concern for the worries of the people over EAC integration stands in sharp contrast to the previous practice of sidelining people's views on major issues. For example, political elites in Tanzania downplayed people's views on the implementation of much-opposed World Bank and IMF policies that resulted in the liberalization of the economy, privatization, and massive retrenchments in the public sector. On the switch to a multi-party political system, political elites took little direction from the views of ordinary Tanzanians' expressed to the Nyalali Commission and instead chose to pick-and-choose from the Commission's recommendations in a bid to ensure that the ruling establishment remained in control of the transition process. Why has the political establishment in Dar,<sup>1</sup> this time around, decided to rally behind the 'worries and concerns' of its people on the federation to the extent of associating people's opinions with 'national interests'?<sup>2</sup> The central argument of this article is that the Tanzanian government has shunned an elite consensus at the regional interstate level on the federation agenda by taking advantage of domestic scepticism. It appears, therefore, that the Dar Government has favourably redefined the term *national interests* to align it with its own interests, the foremost being extending its forty-year plus reign, a strategy prevalent among political regimes in the developing world that are petrified about future political arrangements, especially those that will require them to relinquish sovereignty to a higher supranational authority. I further argue that the Dar government is happy with the outcome of the consultation process because it is indifferent to the idea of a political federation. There is evidence that Tanzania is dragging its feet over political federation by 2013. Furthermore, prospects of a political federation by that date are also dim because Tanzania and the other members of the regional block still lack the 'institutional prerequisites' of federalism. Research for this article also reveals that there is little or no awareness of the proposed Federation of East African States among ordinary Tanzanians.

### **The EAC Federation Agenda: Some Theoretical Reflections**

What is referred to as the 'federation agenda' represents recent attempts (both decisions and actions) initiated by the three pioneer states of the EAC to fast track making the regional body a political union. These attempts resulted

forming the Committee on Fast Tracking East African Federation (the Wako Committee). The Wako Committee submitted its report to the EAC Summit in November 2004.<sup>3</sup> This report was further considered by the Heads of State during their Extraordinary Summit held in Dar es Salaam on 29-30 May 2005. This particular Summit, in addition to reaffirming the 'federation agenda', paved way for the creation of the Post of Deputy Secretary General at the EAC Secretariat in charge of coordinating the political federation fast track process.<sup>4</sup> The Summit went on to direct the establishment of national consultative mechanisms for wider consultations with the East African people on the Federation. The national consultations in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda were launched in October 2006 and concluded in June 2007. The outcome of the national consultations was that while Kenyans and Ugandans were eager to embrace an immediate federation, Tanzanians felt that the 120 million-plus bloc should instead fast track an economic union before evolving into a political federation. Has the decision by Tanzania to stick to its people's opinion against fast-tracking political federation served to hold EAC integration hostage at the expense of the other member states? This section attempts to answer this and other related questions by revisiting a number of theoretical perspectives.

Two main issues can be deduced from this latest attempt at fast tracking political federation. First, is the *elitist outlook* of the process itself. The whole process was conceived, designed and executed by elites in positions of state authority. East Africans learned about the 'idea' of fast tracking a political federation during the national consultations at a time when many were unfamiliar with the operations, activities and goals of the regional body in its current form. In brief, the process was at best top-down. Second, the Tanzania's leadership opted for seeking people's opinions when governments in the other member states expressed their readiness to take a decision on fast-tracking without hearing the voices of their citizens. Surely, these issues call for theoretical reflection to make sense of how things have turned out.

The literature on regional integration is awash with theories and perspectives offering explanations as to why states form regional integration schemes; why some regional actors join a certain integration arrangement and not others, and also reasons for leaving a cooperative arrangement; pros and cons of supranational bodies; and why do some RIAs (Regional Integration Arrangements) do extremely well, while others either exist in name or simply die out. While it is challenging to come up with an overarching theoretical

framework as the process of integration is complex, considerable effort has been directed at advancing theoretical understandings of European integration. Of particular interest is the literature that emphasizes the fact that European Union matters and member states' domestic politics are nowadays tightly coupled. As observed by Hooghe and Marks (2008) "the European Union is no longer insulated from domestic politics; domestic politics is no longer insulated from Europe." International relations scholars have employed a combination of theories to come out with a theoretical framework that would be best suited to explain how public opinion impacts on decision making at the supranational level.

In the case of EAC, for instance, as a RIA in a developing world setting, one can run into trouble trying to make sense of the recent decisions and actions by the regional body by using conventional theories of regional integration without making appropriate adjustments. For example, the Hegemonic Stability Theory as observed by Miriam Prys (2008) has not properly incorporated the notion of 'the region' into the concept of 'hegemony' despite the tendency to portray countries like South Africa, Nigeria or Brazil as regional hegemonic states. Prys attempted to fill a gap in the writings of hegemonic stability theorists who tended not to make a clear differentiation between regional and global hegemony. By avoiding popular terms in the contemporary literature on regional integration in the developing world like 'regional great powers' or 'emerging regional powers', Prys has reconceptualized the term 'regional hegemony', isolating it from other forms of hierarchical power relations by delineating three key defining features of regional hegemony: 'perception', 'projection' and 'provision'. 'Perception' refers to the question of "self-perception and the perception of the respective secondary powers of the region." The projection of values and interests and a unilateral provision of public goods such as regional security respectively represent the 'projection and 'provision' dimensions of regional hegemonic states (Prys, 2008).

Nevertheless, the above reconceptualisation and other descriptions in conventional theories of regional hegemony can least aid us in explaining some of the happenings within the EAC. In the first place, the East African region lacks a regional actor, one that fits the true 'traits' of a regional hegemon. Despite being the regional economic power, Kenya<sup>5</sup> does not portray the character of a regional hegemonic power in the previously described sense. Within the EAC framework Kenya has strived to work with partner states on almost an equal footing and has not played a role akin to

that played by South Africa in SADC, Nigeria in ECOWAS or India in South Asia. However, this does not take away the fact that Kenya remains the largest and most developed economy in the EAC with a well-developed financial sector compared to Uganda and Tanzania (IMF, 2008).

Growing pressure for expediting regional integration has not only come from Kenya. As it will be shown in later sections, Uganda has been at the forefront of persuading Tanzania to include issues of land, labour and an EAC identification in the customs union negotiations. If political forces from the governments of Kenya and Uganda are to be given theoretical interpretations, then it would appear that they are more concerned with finding regional quick solutions to their internal economic and political problems than competing to play the role of a regional hegemon. Neither can I say with firm conviction that the two countries' latest drive for a fast tracked political federation renders them as 'aspiring regional hegemonic states.' The 'behind-the-scenes' diplomatic efforts to make Tanzania rethink the decision to rejoin COMESA;<sup>6</sup> Tanzania's direct and indirect involvement in the resolution of political conflicts in Burundi and Rwanda and President Kikwete's role in the Koffi Anan brokered power sharing deal in Kenya, can be used to describe Tanzania's position in the region as a 'pivotal state'. Much as Tanzania would not fancy the idea of losing Kenya or Uganda from the EAC, the latter group would not risk pursuing a regional cooperative arrangement that excludes Tanzania. This is to say all the partner states need each other.

Other theories that have been employed to explain the creation and development of RIAs are *Neofunctionalism* and *Intergovernmentalism*. Without digging into their several varieties, *Neofunctionalism* has been concerned with the process of elite decision making within the European integration, while *Intergovernmentalism* has focused on the outcomes of bargaining among nation states (Hooghe and Marks, 2008). The core argument of the neofunctionalist theory has been the idea of 'spillover' from economic to political integration. At this stage a particular RIA must have acquired another key element, that is the existence of a higher authority above the member states, to oversee the accomplishment of the goals of the RIA in question. This higher authority in charge of guiding the direction of the integration process, according to neofunctionalists, is expected to be led by technocratic elites who would not base their governance on ideological grounds "but on [the] pragmatic satisfaction of interests and on technical expertise" (Ujupan, n.d). According to Edmund Haas, one of the chief

proponents of neofunctionalism, the process of spillover from economic to political integration is made possible by an equally important process of the transfer of loyalty from the member states to the supranational authorities.

Whilst the idea of spillover portrayed regional integration as a one directional process, Lindberg and Scheingold (1970) argued that the process itself could be halted or slowed down owing to the strains it imposes on member states, a dimension which they described as 'spillback'. Further critical reviews of Haas's idea of spillover come from the theory of intergovernmentalism. Stanley Hofmann has been in the forefront of advocating the need to make a distinction between high politics and low politics in analyzing integration arrangements. Hofmann contended that in area of high politics (defence, foreign policy, security, taxation) member states would be reluctant to surrender sovereignty in favour of a supranational authority although for low politics (primarily technocratic issues which do not require much sovereignty transfer) states would be more willing. The Hofmann's dichotomy of high and low politics as independent issue-areas has been challenged by developments within the European Union (EU) culminating in the creation of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) (Rosamond, 2000).

The intellectual appeal of intergovernmentalism has been retained by Andrew Moravcsik's liberal intergovernmentalism. Focusing on the EU project, Moravcsik argued that "integration goes as far as member states want it to go and European institutions exist due to the deliberate will of member states to satisfy their interests and are instruments for achieving member states' objectives" (Ujupan on Moravcsik). Although some analysts warned against relying too often on some concepts of integration that have been applied in studies of the European Commission, as they may be too specific if one were to conduct a comparative inquiry (Laursen, 2003), there is some relevance in understanding what is transpiring within the EAC. For instance, on the aspect of member states shaping the extent of integration, the current pace of the integration process in the EAC has largely been determined by the readiness of member states to agree on important decisions that move the integration from one phase to another (for instance, from cooperation to custom union and currently efforts to move to create a common market). The future of EAC primarily relies on how far its member states want it to go. Whether a fully functioning common market and monetary union will be established will be determined by concrete state actions rather than the mere aspirations and pronouncements of state

officials. Occasionally, Tanzania has been accused of delaying the integration process by holding back during negotiations. However, the attitude portrayed by Tanzania, or any other member state in Community negotiations, is not new for any arrangement that brings together multiple actors who are likely to have different interests and goals. It is useful to recall Ujupan (no date) has borrowed concepts from organization theorists in an attempt to understand aspects of integration processes through organizational lenses. Ujupan posits that both competition and collaboration among actors are inherent in an organization. Taking the EAC as a regional 'organization' and member states as its stakeholders, and assuming that each has joined for its own interests and is fighting to satisfy its own interests, then the tendency by one member state to veto some decisions should not come as a surprise. Alina-Stefania Ujupan's explanation on these two concepts is well captured in the following passage:

One paradox of the organization, which is also characteristic for the EU, is that stakeholder groups are engaged in a process of continuous and simultaneous competition and collaboration, which is actually the essence of the organization (Jones, 2004; Morgan, 1998). All stakeholders are interested in the survival of the organization, as an elementary condition for pursuing their goals, and in this sense they collaborate. They compete over the allocation of gains in order to maximize their interests. As Bacharach and Lawler (1998) argue, actors generally operate between cooperation and competition, they compete when necessary and they collaborate when necessary; no actor aims to annihilate the others, but in the same time, **no actor will give up its own goals to cooperate on every issue purely for the purpose of organizational harmony or for the gains of the total organization.** [my emphasis].

The policy makers in Tanzania were not in a hurry to cut deals with their counterparts at the regional level for the sake of the regional organization (EAC) but at the expense of their domestic support. In essence the ruling elites in Tanzania were pleased with the outcome of the consultation process. The elites saw it coming. They knew that Tanzanians were not in favour of a fast-tracked political union. The government has at its disposal several ways of gauging political opinion on issues of national importance. Some of these



include making use of intelligence reports, following closely parliamentary debates and commentaries in the print and electronic media, and opinion surveys conducted either by state agencies or universities, research units and reputable non-governmental institutions. There is no study to cite a specific method that was used by the government to measure the political temperature on the issue of fast-tracking ahead of the EAC consultation process. However, it is feasible that opting to collect people's views on whether to fast-track political federation was the best way to suppress the subject for the time being because the Dar Government knew well in advance its people would object to the idea. Thus, this sudden elite 'fondness' with people's views is not a natural occurrence. The sudden affection for people's opinions was a break from the past practice of expressing a not-to-be-bothered-with attitude when it comes to the views of those who in the first place gave the government a mandate to rule. The sudden affection with people's opinions was propelled by the need to ensure that the government protects its 'political capital', i.e. the domestic electorate. This is to suggest that the move by the government to declare its will to support the views of the people before the national consultation processes started was driven by political forces. The ruling elite would not cut deals for the harmony of the regional organization if it meant going contrary to its domestic constituency.

In the second place, the Dar Government's insistence on seeking people's views to inform a future course of action would resonate well with the touted theme of a 'people-centred Community', and thus score some political points among its peers, both at home and abroad. It has been promoted in the official documents of the EAC and echoed by statesmen that the revived EAC would be different from the previous arrangement owing to the way it pays attention to the people in the region and this would include the people themselves owning the integration process. Therefore, Tanzania scored a few diplomatic points by reminding other partner states that the process has to be owned by the people, even when the people are against fast-tracking the federation.

At any point in time EAC member states can fail to agree on major steps to further integration, then the Community can be said to have reached a point of 'integration stagnation', which simply refers to resistance to change. Examples of resistance to change brought by processes and efforts started at the supranational level are not hard to find. Rejections of the Maastricht Treaty by Danish people, the Nice Treaty by the Irish, and the European Constitution by the French and Dutch are classic examples of resistance to

change (Ujupan, no date). Tanzanian rejection of fast-tracking political federation within the EAC bears a semblance to this. Tanzanians rejected a political future about which they are not sure and are mostly unaware of its benefits, especially in protecting their interests as a people. If serious about fast-tracking, the Dar Government should have mounted a robust and relentless public awareness campaign. If the political elites in Tanzania are happy with the current disenchantment with the whole idea of a fast-tracked federation, then they will either put up a lacklustre performance or do nothing to enlighten people on the potential benefits of a regional federal arrangement. And if that will be the case, then the dream of a federation by 2013 may be in tatters. It would then be apparent that Tanzania policy makers took advantage of scepticism among citizens to avoid reaching an elite consensus at the regional level.

#### **Historical Background of Political Forces and Perceptions against the East African Federation**

Tanzania is a United Republic formed by two previously sovereign and independent countries, namely Tanganyika and Zanzibar. In the early 1960s, when Tanganyika got her independence, the federation agenda dominated the political scene around East Africa. As described by the Minister for the first East African Community responsible for finance and administration, Al Noor Kassum (1977), the early years of independence for countries of this region witnessed talks on federation taking place in various forums. Presidents and Prime Ministers met, parliamentarians came together, and political parties held public rallies. There was a strong belief in resolving the existing problems and ultimately establishing a political federation. Certainly, the political context by then was in sharp contrast to the current one. In the sixties stakeholders were the political elites who exerted influence for the establishment of a federation without a commission for gathering people's opinions. In the last decade, a tradition of seeking people's opinions prior to taking any major decision - such as changing the political system, amending the constitution, and fast-tracking the federation - has become a feature of Tanzanian politics. However, not on all occasions have the opinions of people on major policy decisions been espoused by the government in power, save for the attempt to fast-track the East African federation.

It can be recalled that efforts to unite the East African region began when its people were still under colonial rule. A customs union between Kenya and Uganda was established in 1918, and five years later Tanganyika joined the

union. By 1927 a free transfer of imported goods took place between the three political entities and from 1920-1965 a common currency was operational. These efforts ran parallel to the establishment of various institutions and commissions including the Ormsby-Gore (1924), Hilton-Young (1927), and the East Africa High Commission (1948) - which was replaced by the East Africa Commission Services Organization in 1961 - and finally culminating in the formation of the EAC in 1967.

When Tanganyika, Kenya and Uganda got their independence in the first half of the 1960s there was great enthusiasm for a federation in pan-African thinking, and support for a regional community was endemic among local people (Tarrosy, 2005). Tanganyika was the first country to gain independence in this region and immediately after independence people warmed up to the idea of a federation. For instance, it is reported that "Tanganyika offered to postpone her independence for a year if Britain would grant independence to Kenya and Uganda at the same time" (Sebalu, 1972). In fact, Nyerere prudently played down any thoughts of leading the East Africa Federation in favour of Kenya's elder Statesman, Jomo Kenyatta (Nyerere, 1961).

On the international stage, leaders' verbal statements and actions expressed, without the slightest hint of doubt, that Tanzania supported the federation agenda. Starting with matters of PAFMECA,<sup>7</sup> the liberation of Southern Africa, and African unity through regional cooperation, political leaders gave their support for the federation idea whilst national leaders contemplated the best methods for equally sharing the costs and benefits of regional cooperation. Tanzania's first President, Mwalimu "Nyerere saw [that] Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania provided a unique opportunity for co-operation because the three states had a long history of co-operation dating back to the colonial period" (Msambichaka et al., 2002, as quoted in Tarrosy, 2005). Mwalimu Nyerere insisted on the need to establish a federation for the East African region, even before the independence of all three East African countries, comparing the *bado kidogo* debate with the one that was used by imperialists to delay independence. Mwalimu knew that federation after independence would imply surrendering sovereignty, which would make it more difficult for the realization of the East African Federation. Nyerere vehemently opposed the argument coming from what he described as "some of our friends in Uganda", that before forming a federation the respective countries should 'put their house in order'. He argued against this preposition on two grounds. First, Nyerere pointed to a practical problem

that would arise in the course of implementing the proposition itself: when does one satisfy oneself that our house has been put in order? To him, it would make sense to think of addressing domestic concerns first when there was internal chaos to deal with. He argued that "If we were all in chaos it would be silly to add chaos to chaos (although one can ask the difference it would make)". Second, he contended that federation prior to independence would in fact help to put each house in order before the lure of individual state sovereignty undermined the attraction of federation. To Nyerere, it was sensible to capture the moment when the argument to form a federation enjoyed considerable appeal. Nyerere (1964; 1966) said:

...Federation after complete independence means the surrender of sovereignty and all the prestige and symbols of such sovereignty. Surely, if it is difficult now to convince some of our friends that Federation is desirable, when it does not involve surrendering any sovereignty, it is going to be a million times more difficult to convince them later ... Surely, the argument of "let's put our house in order first" will be made much stronger after independence ... Federation before independence can help to put each house in order. Federation after independence will not even have this attraction which appears to be so dear to our friends ... .

Figuratively speaking, you go into a marriage regardless of each partner's problems, but with the prospect that they will be dealt with more effectively after wedlock. If partners contemplating a marriage are held hostage by fears about fresh problems that may crop up from marital life, then both possibilities (a marriage and solving the problems) will definitely vanish into thin air.

Nyerere firmly believed in the idea of an East Africa Federation at a time when the influential African Statesman Kwame Nkrumah advanced the idea of continental unity. In one of several interviews Nyerere had on this subject he explained his opposition to Nkrumah's idea of an immediately creating a United States of Africa. Nyerere stated "...And I said to him [Nkrumah] in so many words that we're not going to have an African Napoleon, who is going to conquer the continent and put it under one flag" (Sutherland and Meyer, 2000). Nyerere actually thought Nkrumah was at that time over-influenced by the way the US and the Soviet Union came together.

Ironically, nearly fifty years after Nyerere challenged the 'let's put our house in order' argument, East Africans are enmeshed in a similar debate, but this time around voices of 'let's put our house in order' have largely come from Tanzania, especially from the Isles. As it will be explained in a later section, arguments have been raised that the United Republic of Tanzania should first address domestic political and economic concerns, one of which includes the Union itself, which has in recent years experienced growing strains. There have also been calls from Tanzanian politicians and ordinary citizens for the government to make major structural improvements to the economy before it subjects the country to deepened East African integration. It appears, this time around, that it is Tanzania's turn to respond and come up with convincing arguments in favour of, and not against the idea, of putting each house in order first. Understandably, the other EAC member states, eager to fast-track the integration process, pose the question: 'When will Tanzania satisfy itself that it has put its house in order?' And if each country is given unlimited time to 'put its house in order' would that not hold back further integration of the block? Reference to Museveni's unsuccessful attempt to quash the Northern Uganda rebellion has helped to inform East African policy makers that fixing domestic problems may take more time than expected.

Indeed, Mwalimu Nyerere's early 1960s prediction came true. The situation changed after Kenya and Uganda became independent. Enthusiasm for political federation waned. One of the factors that contributed to the declining enthusiasm for political federation was the fact that "the ruling regimes in the three countries were engaged in intensive battles for political domination and hegemony at that time, and their hold on political power was still fragile. Challenges to nation-building and regime consolidation demanded a national focus" (Mukandala and Killian, 2000). Mukandala and Killian (2000) further explain that "the fights and disagreements over the distribution of the pains and benefits of cooperation must also be seen in the above light", thus making it politically inconvenient for reaching meaningful concessions as evidenced in the failure to effectively implement the recommendations of the Raisman Commission (1961), The Nairobi Declaration (1963), the Kampala Agreement (1964), and the Minister's Commission (1965) (ibid.)

Tanzania had earlier expressed readiness to make sacrifices, even when her economic interests were at stake, for the sake of fulfilling the federation

dream. During early 1964, Tanzania's Minister of External Affairs Oscar Kambona stated:

...when we became independent in 1961 we acquiesced to a continuation of the existing arrangements for the common market - not because we believed that they were fair and equitable, but because we were prepared to treat them as an interim measure leading to eventual federation. If federation was to be postponed indefinitely, however, we could not continue to ignore the disadvantages to Tanganyika inherent in that common market ... (Kituo Cha Katiba, n.d)

A similar message was conveyed by Mwalimu Nyerere in a speech to the Legislative Assembly in August 1965:

... Let me stress again that Tanzania understands the economic problem of her neighbours and deeply regrets any temporary complication which her need creates. We have tried to avoid it. Although our problem was clear to us long before our independence, we took no action until 1964 because we hoped the matter could be dealt within the framework for an East African Federation. For a time we were willing and able to accept the status quo, and all its disadvantages to us, as a necessary price to pay for East African unity. But in the absence of any progress or any hope of any early federation, we had no alternative but to seek actively for an equalization of the advantages and disadvantages of the common market. Only when our efforts failed to bring practical agreement on an East African basis did we, reluctantly, take steps on our own ... (ibid.)

A series of events that followed thereafter have been described at great length in other works that dealt with the failure to forge a strong regional cooperation, and henceforth will not be repeated here. Suffice to say that a combination of political or ideological, administrative and economic factors were largely to blame for the eventual breakup of the EAC in 1977. Bearing in mind that when the Phillips Commission was formed and gave recommendations that led to the establishment of the East African

Community in 1967, ideological differences were at their highest point. Fortunately, the former Member States negotiated a Mediation Agreement for the Division of Assets and Liabilities, which was signed in 1984. A provision in the Mediation Agreement offered the opportunity to explore areas of future co-operation. This opportunity was taken up by the Heads of State of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, when they held a series of meetings which led to the signing of the Agreement for the Establishment of the Permanent Tripartite Commission for East African Cooperation on November 30, 1993. On March 14 1996, the Secretariat of the Permanent Tripartite Commission was launched in Arusha, Tanzania. Three years later, on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1999, the Heads of State of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania signed the Treaty for the re-establishment of the East African Community. The Treaty entered into force on July 7<sup>th</sup>, 2000 after ratification by the respective national Parliaments. The EAC was then inaugurated in January 2001. Headquartered in Arusha, the current EAC expanded on June 18, 2007 to include the Republics of Burundi and Rwanda as full members. The vision of the EAC is to have a prosperous, competitive, secure and politically united region. To that end, the EAC partner states established a Customs Union in 2005 and are currently working toward the establishment of a Common Market in 2010, a Monetary Union by 2012 and thereafter a Political Federation by 2013.<sup>8</sup>

In the following section, I focus on how successive post-Nyerere regimes have dealt with matters related to revamping the EAC and moving the integration process from one stage to another. I have deliberately skipped the first-phase government because developments during Nyerere's reign have already been covered in this article. The main focus is on the third- and fourth-phase governments, which persuaded their counterparts in Kampala and Nairobi to seek people's views before taking a decision to fast-track East African federation.

### **The Post-Nyerere Regimes and the East African Community**

#### *The Second-Phase Government and the East African Community*

When Ali Hassan Mwinyi's second-phase Government came to power in 1985, already the countries of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania had reached an agreement to distribute the assets and debts of the defunct EAC. One fine thing that came out of the 1984 agreement was a provision about the possibility of re-establishing cooperation in the future. The second-phase Government made efforts to restore good relations with Kenya and Uganda, after a period of episodic tension. The mid-1980s was a time when East African countries experienced leadership changes and Tanzania went

through a difficult economic situation. In 1991 the second-phase Government, during a meeting with the Heads of State of Kenya and Uganda in Nairobi, issued a statement of intent to re-establish the EAC. Mwinyi's Government also succeeded in restoring cordial relations with neighbouring Malawi, Zaire (now the DRC) and the Comoro Islands. It is in such an atmosphere that the President of Malawi, Kamuzu Banda, reviled by Julius Nyerere, paid an unexpected State visit to Dar es Salaam in October 1991 (Kiondo, 1994).

The second-phase Government was not only busy with domestic political and economic reforms but also initiatives to revitalize regional cooperation. The initiatives culminated in the signing of an agreement to establish the East African Cooperation on November 30, 1993. The Agreement provided for the establishment of the *Permanent Tripartite Commission*, which was charged with coordinating regional cooperation efforts. Following Tanzania's first multiparty elections in 1995, and the subsequent change of its top leadership, the question facing the third-phase government was whether to continue to give credence to East African Community affairs, or, alternatively to erode the foundation built by the second-phase Government?

#### *The Third-Phase Government and the East African Community*

The third-phase Government led by Benjamin William Mkapa came to power in 1995 after the country held its first multiparty General election in thirty years. Mkapa's Government found its predecessor had portrayed in clear terms, on behalf of Tanzanians, the country's resolve to participate in efforts to bolster regional cooperation. Mkapa's Government still faced the challenge of carrying forward the cooperation agenda and confirming Tanzania's intention of collaborating with her neighbours. It is during the third-phase Government that major strides regarding the new EAC were made. On March 1996, the Secretariat of the East African Cooperation was launched, followed by the decision to endorse the regional Development Strategy (1997-2000). Mkapa signed the Treaty for the East African Community (November 30, 1999); and signed the Custom Union Protocol (January 1, 2004). In 2004, President Mkapa, together with his East African counterparts, agreed to set up the Wako Committee to examine the possibility of expediting the establishment of the East African Federation. President Mkapa believed that there was much to gain from a regional bloc on both the political and economic fronts. He said, "We have everything to gain in an East African Federation in terms of political stability, greater feeling in safety in numbers and as an economic entity better able to fight poverty" (Wako Report, 2004).



### *The Fourth Phase Government and the East African Community*

While Tanzania's participation in the activities of the EAC was gaining momentum under the third-phase Government, President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete was the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Therefore, he fully understood the Community's progress and his country's position on various pertinent issues regarding regional cooperation. While Kikwete was serving as the country's Foreign Minister, Tanzania bowed out of the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the Government decided to direct its focus on regional cooperation to SADC and EAC. Since being elected President, Kikwete's fourth-phase Government has been obliged on several occasions, in response to constant calls from some stakeholders including local businessmen, to issue statements maintaining the country's position to stay out of COMESA. The fourth-phase Government also had to make clear its position on COMESA following pressure from other EAC member-countries to reinstate Tanzania's COMESA membership. During a State Banquet to mark his first state visit to Uganda since being elected, President Kikwete pledged Tanzania's commitment to the EAC amid an atmosphere of fears that the new leader would relocate the country's focus to SADC. Kikwete stressed that "We in Tanzania are wholeheartedly committed to this project and we will play our part of the bargain as effectively as possible so as to ensure successful realization of the long standing dream" (*The New Times*, November 30, 2006).

When President Mkapa introduced President-elect Jakaya Kikwete to Development Partners, he assured them that the fourth-phase President would carry on with policies instituted by the previous regime including those regarding the East African Community. It can be recalled that even when the decision was passed to examine the possibility of fast-tracking the federation in 2004, it was Tanzania that presented the idea of setting up national consultative committees in the three countries. The fourth-phase Government accentuated the country's position on the matter and influenced its implementation despite the cost implications, as attested by President Kikwete when he met the special national committee under Professor Wangwe for collecting people's views on fast-tracking the East African Federation. President Kikwete said that:

[T]he idea that views should be sought from the general public with a view to give them power to decide on the political federation was Tanzania's. Our colleagues (other partner states) perceived the initiative as wastage of time.

They were of the view that leaders alone could decide on the formation of the federation. Those who say we are wrong to involve the general public surprise me (Guardian, February 5, 2007).

The President further said that:

One country had actually gone to the point of starting to prepare a road map towards formation of the East African political federation, without involving the people or other EAC member countries. On discovering the move, President Mkapa sent me as Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to visit Kenya and Uganda. We told our partners that this was not the way we should go about the issue. They eventually understood us. They, however, were of the view that referring the matter to the people amounted to stepping down from our entrusted responsibilities (ibid.).

Let us now turn to Tanzanians views on the federation agenda.

#### **Findings of the Wangwe Committee, other Surveys and the Government Stance**

The President's decision to set up the committee met some cries of foul-play from one of the opposition parties. A small debate emerged about whether the decision to form the *Wangwe Committee* was constitutional. James Mbatia, a leader of NCCR-Mageuzi, said that the President was wrongly advised into 'usurping' the powers of Parliament by forming the committee to collect opinions on such a sensitive issue as federation that involves giving up our country's sovereignty.<sup>9</sup> This argument received responses from the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Mary Nagu, and from the Speaker of the National Parliament, Samwel Sitta, that the President has the constitutional powers to form commissions and committees (*Guardian*, January 27, 2007).

It was during the July 13, 2009 meeting with the Wangwe committee that President Kikwete assured that views given by the people would be respected, adhered to and given commensurate weight. Meanwhile, the Vice President, Dr. Ali Mohamed Shein, once again stressed the need to consult people when the outgoing Kenyan High Commissioner to Tanzania, Zacharia Domic Muburi-Muita, visited his office to bid him farewell in August, 2006. He expressed Tanzania's commitment to strengthening the EAC for the benefit of its member states and was reported to have said that although

there was a plan to establish the East African Federation within three years, there was still a need to involve citizens in the negotiations (*Guardian*, August 16, 2006).

The findings of the consultation processes revealed that Tanzanians are cagey about a fast-tracked political federation. According to Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete, both reports of the Wako Committee<sup>10</sup> and the Wangwe Committee, came out with similar findings, that the people of Tanzania have serious reservations about the free movement of labour and land becoming an East African property (*Guardian*, August 8, 2009). Addressing the EALA in Dar es Salaam, the President made a diplomatic attempt to show that Tanzanians' views on the subject of fast-tracking have been misunderstood to mean that they are against East African Federation. President Kikwete insisted that more Tanzanians supported the Federation than in any of the three East African countries. The Wangwe Committee report revealed that 96.7 % of Tanzanians (more than in Kenya and Uganda), gave a green light to the idea of establishing a political Federation but 75 % felt that fast-tracking the federation was not a good idea (*Guardian*, August 8, 2009).

The findings of a survey conducted by the research firm Steadman Group from June 26-July 3, 2007 in the major cities of Dar es Salaam, Kampala and Nairobi to establish awareness and support levels about the EAC within these cities showed that "whereas a minority rejected the EAC formation in Nairobi and Kampala - 10 per cent and 16 per cent respectively - nearly half (46 per cent) of residents in the Tanzanian major coastal city oppose its formation" (*RNA online*, August 24, 2007). It can be noted that it is in the major cities of Dar es Salaam, Kampala and Nairobi, as it is often put in local papers, 'where most of the action take place', and people in these areas are expected to be more aware about the regional body and its operations. The Steadman survey helped to get a comparative picture of people's views in the three major cities.

Interestingly, an opinion poll carried out in November 2006, just a month after launching the national consultation process, by the Research and Democracy Education in Tanzania Programme (REDET)<sup>11</sup> of the University of Dar es Salaam, showed significant opposition against the federation agenda. "The people were asked to give their views on what span of time should the process of uniting Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya to a Federation take. The respondents were divided almost equally. 33.5% said they did not want these countries to unite to form a federation. The majority of these were

respondents from Zanzibar. But 33.4% of them would like the federation to be formed by the year 2013 as envisaged. The other respondents (15%) said more time was needed for these countries to unite, that is after 15 years or more. 18.2% said they don't know" (REDET, 2006). More interestingly, the Afrobarometer survey conducted in 2008 revealed that Tanzanians are more supportive of economic integration; however, they are considerably more wary of greater political integration. Moreover, this survey once again validated the claim that Tanzanians have little or no awareness of the proposed Federation of East African States, as shown in figure 1 below. If one is to combine the figures of those completely opposed to forming a federation and those who would want more time to prepare for the eventual federal arrangement, then slightly over fifty percent of the people are not convinced by the fast-tracking idea. This is quite a substantial amount by any standard.

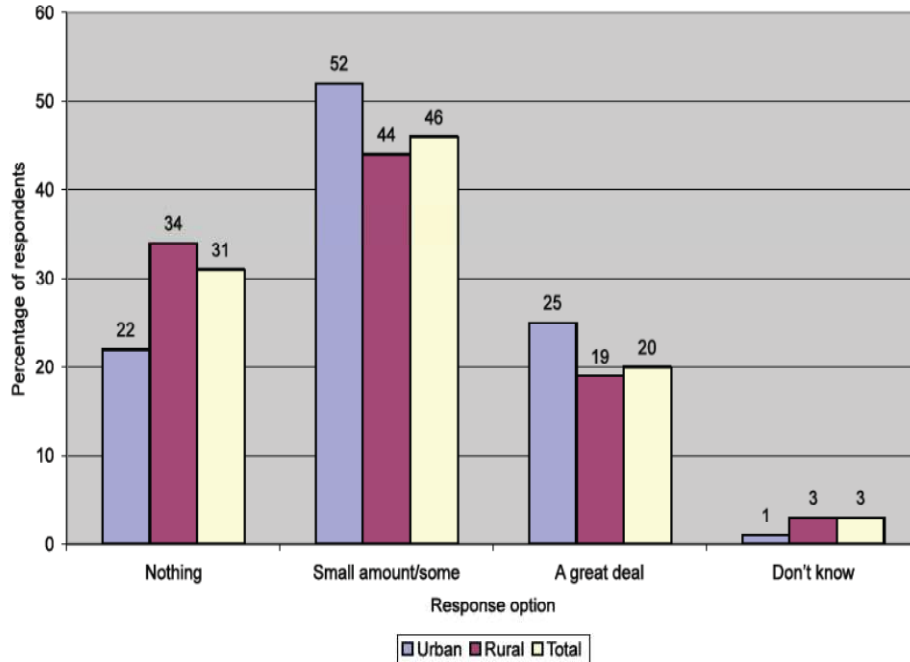
**Table: Tanzanians Views on the EAC and the Federation Agenda**

<b>Opinion Gathering Organization</b>	<b>REDET</b>	<b>Steadman Group</b>	<b>Wangwe Committee</b>	<b>Afrobarometer</b>
<b>Time when opinions were collected</b>	November, 2006	June-July 2007	October 2006-June 2007	June-July 2008
<b>The idea of an E.A. Political Federation</b>	35.5 % disapproved	More than 50 % approved	96.7 % support the idea	59% and 55% respectively disapproved political and military integration
<b>The idea of fast-tracking Political Federation</b>	33.4% would like the federation to be formed by 2013; 15% after 15 years or more.	46% opposed the formation of EAC	75 % not a good idea	More than 50% are positive about the proposed economic aspects of integration.
<b>Coverage</b>	About 1,300 respondents	Sampled cities of Dar es	All 26 Regions	1,208 respondents

	from 26 Regions,	Salaam, Kampala & Nairobi, about 1500 respondents from each city	covered. 65,379 participants in 426 public meetings; 9,519 questionnaires administered; 307 newspaper responses (articles and letters); 58 contributions from TV/Radio Talk Shows; 61 Internet contributions; 15 Memoranda from organized groups and individuals	from 26 Regions.
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Source: Author's compilation.

Figure 1: Knowledge of Federation for the East African States



*How much have you heard about the proposed federation of the East African States, that is, the formation of unitary government for Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, with a joint army, parliament, presidency and economy?*

Source: *Afrobarometer Briefing Paper No. 54* December, 2008

Questions may be raised in terms of the methodology used in these four cases, but each exercise in collecting peoples' views had more or less a similar story to tell - that is the people of Tanzania have been harbouring reservations about the East African Federation. Whether it is the Wangwe Committee that collected opinions through public hearings, questionnaires, radio, television and internet; the Steadman Group survey confined to the capitals of the three EAC founding states; the REDET opinion poll, or the Afrobarometer survey conducted in all regions of the country, with each region (with the exception of Zanzibar) sampled in proportion to its share of the national population, the message from the people was clear: a fast-tracked federation would not be welcome.

President Kikwete's effort to 'put-the-record-straight' while pleading for the regional bloc not to downplay, ridicule or ignore fears expressed by Tanzanians over the integration process came amid repeated claims from other partner states that his country is in fact holding back the full integration of the region. The five-state negotiations on the Common Market Protocol have been eclipsed by an atmosphere of suspicion about Dar es Salaam's commitment to further integration. There is a strong feeling among other partner states that there is more than Tanzania's objection to a fast-tracking and a reluctance to include issues of land, national IDs and the free movement of labour in the Common Market Protocol. Officials from the other member states have increasingly become cynical of the commitment of the Dar government, suspecting the latter of dragging its feet because it is not keen on the idea of a political federation! Certainly, Tanzania's involvement in the negotiations to deepen East African integration and repeated assurances of continued support to the regional project have not helped to cast away doubts about the country's commitment to regional integration.

#### **An East Africa Political Federation by 2013?**

Having explored these different scenarios and having attempted to make sense of them theoretically, questions remain: will an East Africa political federation be in place by 2013? Or is the dream of political federation a distant reality due to factors other than Tanzania's behaviour at the negotiating table?

In actual sense, while the actions and inactions of Tanzania might have sent a message to other partner states that the country is indifferent to the idea of political federation, unfortunately a federation by 2013 seems an unattainable dream simply because the region still does not have what it takes to realize an enduring political federation by the set date. Daniel Ziblatt's *infrastructural model of federalism's origins* puts forward the hypothesis that "the infrastructurally more developed the constituent states, the more likely federalism" (Ziblatt, 2004). By this Ziblatt means that a federal set-up will be a function of high levels of infrastructural capacity capable of delivering to both the core and the subunits the gains that were sought in the first place when a federation was being contemplated. Infrastructural capacity<sup>12</sup> refers to the degree of institutionalization as well as embeddedness of pre-existing units of a potential federation in their respective societies. According to Ziblatt, an infrastructural capacity account calls for proponents of federalism to pay attention to the institutional prerequisites of federalism. Put in a simple form, the key institutional prerequisites include (1) the vertical

relations of constituent states vis-à-vis their own societies, and (2) presence of well-developed governance structures with the capacity to deliver the public goods of federalism to the political core and to other constituent states. The East African region seriously lacks this infrastructural capacity. Arguably, the region is still volatile both politically and economically.

The East African region in the past experienced a number of conflicts which contributed to the collapse of the earlier integration effort. To date, the region is still faced with real and potential threats to peace and security at both national and inter-state levels, and these threats pose a destabilising effect especially to the social and economic development goals of the community. Accordingly, the partner states have acknowledged that “peace and security are pre-requisites to social and economic development within the community and vital to the achievement of the objectives of the community” (EAC, 2002).

While the EAC is contemplating establishing a political federation by 2013, the region is still not free from both local and regional threats to its security. The ‘Iron fist’ approach to the northern Uganda conflict has not only led to a stalemate between the warring parties but more tragically has created a humanitarian situation in the East African region. Likewise, the heavy-handed reaction to the political demonstrations of January 2001 in Pemba left several people dead and produced for the first time in the history of the region flows of refugees from Tanzania to another EAC partner state, Kenya. Some areas of the region are still notorious ‘trouble-spots’ for cattle-rustling, armed robberies and ethnic tensions. Moreover, the political situation in Burundi is far from calm. And to cap it all, painful memories of Kenya’s 2007 post-election violence are still fresh in the minds of East Africans.

One criticism against the implementation of a people-centred integration is that there is yet to be seen a real concern for the rights of the East Africans in the current EAC. Critics have faulted not using direct elections for members of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), which would directly link the participation of the people of East Africa to the short-and long-term projects of the EAC (Adar, 2008).

Although there have been marked improvements in macro-economic fundamentals, still there is volatility of business fluctuations across the EAC countries, a situation that “calls for further policy reforms to stabilize the national economies” (Opolot and Osoro, n.d). The first launching date for the political federation, as proposed by the Wako Committee, was 1 January



2010, at which time a federal president would be expected to be sworn in even though the Committee cited several political, economic and bureaucratic challenges. According to Kibua and Tostensten (2005), who assessed the feasibility of a political federation by 2010, “the dates and time tables were put in to accommodate pressure from the heads of state, not because all the committee members really believed in their realism”. It was also revealed from this study that some of the members of the fast-track committee saw challenges in the economic sphere as the main hurdles. It fittingly alluded to implementation of the customs union and negotiations for a protocol on the free movement of labour as two major test cases for a political federation. On these aspects Kibua and Tostensten (2005) note:

The implementation of the customs union protocol was seen as a milestone and the test case of a political federation because the behaviour of the partner states during the implementation phase would be indicative of real political commitment. A second test case of a political federation is the negotiations for a protocol on the free movement of labour and rights of establishment and residence; a political federation is not feasible without free movement across borders. Besides, one of the fundamentals of a federation is involvement of populations, and East Africa is still far from that goal (Kibua and Tostensten, *ibid.*).

The Kikwete government claimed that its decision to embrace Tanzanians’ views on the federation agenda was based on serious reservations that people expressed on certain issues. What are those issues? The next section presents some of these issues that have stalled negotiations on the Common Market Protocol, which is an intermediate stage in the incremental progression of the integration process as envisaged in the EAC Treaty.

#### **EAC Federation and Political and Socio-Economic Issues**

One of the issues that concerned not only Tanzanians, but also decision makers and politicians from other EAC partner states, has been the sensitive question of land. Of specific concern are the differences in land management policies among member states of the East African Community. During the three-month long citizen consultations over EAC political federation, it became apparent that Tanzanians are cagey, expressing fears that Kenya and Uganda, with less arable land might infringe on their vast land. It can be

noted that Tanzania has the largest land area (945,087 sq. km) compared to the total land coverage of the other four member states altogether (872,858 sq. km).<sup>13</sup> The Government in Dar es Salaam has insisted that the planned common market of the EAC that is expected to become operational in 2010 will not affect Tanzania's land policy. Opening a parliamentary seminar<sup>14</sup> that discussed the EAC common market debate in Dodoma in November 2008, the Minister for East African Cooperation, Diodorus Kamala, insisted that 'foreigners' would not be allowed to buy or own land in Tanzania (Daily News, 01.11. 2008). Minister Kamala's statement in fact confirmed an earlier decision made by Cabinet of Ministers that the country's land should continue to be owned by the state.

The lack of harmonized policies and legislation coupled with fears of losing land concerned Tanzanians and these concerns were closely scrutinized by the other partner states. At a news conference in Kampala, the then Ugandan Minister for EAC, Eriya Kategaya had this to say: "I have learnt that many Tanzanians are expressing fears of losing land to Kenyans and Ugandans ... Knowing that Kenya has less arable land and is economically superior, it can cause its land policies to be applied across the region. Uganda is also feared since, like Kenya, they have more control on land as opposed to Tanzania where the land is owned communally, save for public land like game reserves and forests ... At the elitist level, there are questions over Kenyan and Ugandan environment policies, which Tanzania finds wanting with regard to conservation of forests and wetlands among others" (*Panapress*, 2007). Even in Uganda Public hearings by members of the East African Legislative Assembly conducted in January 2009 revealed that a majority of Ugandans consulted totally rejected ownership of land by citizens from other East African states. A majority of those consulted felt that the issue of land should be suspended from the Common Market negotiations until a political union was in place (*Africanpress*, January 3, 2009). In one of the public hearings held in Mbarara Town, a Ugandan Legislator and a District Commissioner urged the partner states to move slowly and cautiously on the land issue given its sensitivity, different tenure systems and legal regimes. Indeed, they did not mince words on the land issue (*ibid.*).<sup>15</sup> In actual fact, as the EAC partner states were conducting negotiations on the Common Market Protocol through a High Level Task Force (HLTF), they were yet to harmonize their policies and legislation on land.

Another sticking point in the discussions on the draft provisions of the EAC Common Market Protocol was the issue of national IDs. The ID was

envisaged as one convenient instrument for easing the free movement of East Africans across borders. However, the government in Dar thinks otherwise. It is of the opinion that National IDs are a sensitive issue that needs to be handled carefully as they are susceptible to abuse. On the specific provision of the Protocol, Tanzania is of the view that a national identification document may, among other standard travel documents, facilitate the free movement of the ID holders from partner states that accept its use. Tanzania has preferred using the traditional travel documents of a national passport and an EAC passport. The other partner states' position is that the national identification document shall, among other standard travel documents, facilitate the free movement of the holders.

A similar contention in the proposed Protocol is permanent residence. A permanent resident, according to the Protocol, is any citizen of a partner state who will have resided in a territory of another partner state for a period exceeding five years as a resident. Such a person, the draft says, shall be entitled to permanent residence status upon undergoing necessary administration procedures with a competent authority. At its 20<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> July 2009 meeting of the HLTF a clear division on this issue among the five partner states surfaced. While Burundi and Rwanda maintained that any citizen of a partner state who will have resided in the territory of another partner state may be eligible to permanent residence status, upon fulfilling such other conditions as may be determined by the host partner state; Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda were of the view that matters pertaining to permanent residence should not be governed by the Common Market Protocol but by respective national laws of the partner states.

Discrepancies in education systems should not be ignored. The partner states have varying education systems and the quality also differs as some countries are good at certain fields and others are not. At least Tanzania and Uganda have similar education systems which are organized into 7 years primary school, 4 years secondary school, 2 years in high school, and at least 3 years in university (i.e. 7-4-2-3). Kenya, Rwanda and Burundi have quite different education systems. For instance, Kenya has the 8-4-4 system whereby 8 years are spent in primary school and 4 years each for secondary school and university education. Rwanda has 6 years in primary school, 6 years in secondary school and at least 4 years in university (i.e. 6-6-4); while Burundi has 6 years in primary school, 7 years in secondary school and at least 4 years in university (i.e. 6-7-4) (EAC, 2006).

One of the major commitments under the EAC five-year development strategy (2001-2005) was the move towards the establishment of an EAC Customs Union. Tanzania joined the EAC customs union in January 2005. Even though the level of awareness on the existence of the EAC customs union is quite high among the business community in the region (Uganda, 100%; Tanzania, 92%; Kenya, 88%; Burundi, 50%; and Rwanda, 40%), a recent EABC study showed that support for the principle of asymmetry among the business community in the region and the impact of the EAC Customs Union implementation on businesses is much lower in Tanzania than in other countries. Only 67% of businesses in Tanzania agree with the principle while support for the same in Kenya and Uganda was at 73% and 75% respectively. On the overall benefit derived by companies from the free movement of goods among EAC members, while 77% and 73% of companies in Kenya and Uganda respectively agree that it has been a major boost to business, a mere 46% of Tanzania companies support this position (EABC, 2008b). These figures point to the fact that there is also a significant degree of scepticism among the Tanzanian business elite on the custom union itself. As such, this picture waters-down a claim that it is only the ordinary Tanzanians who have expressed scepticism towards the future of the regional body.

The other part of the United Republic of Tanzania, Zanzibar, has its share of reservations expressed by Zanzibaris themselves, especially with the status of the twin islands within the EAC set-up. Let us now turn to the debate on the federation agenda in Zanzibar and the direction it has taken.

#### **Perceptions from Zanzibar on the EAC and the Federation Agenda**

The federation agenda has spurred lively debate in Zanzibar due the feeling of many Zanzibaris that solutions need to be found for problems afflicting the Union. Debate on the East African Federation is carried out against the background of an intense rivalry between CCM and CUF over who will control Zanzibar's government. The federation debate in the domestic political scene has come as a blessing in disguise for Tanzanians who wanted more open discussions over the status of the Zanzibar-Mainland Union. The federation debate presented a forum for people to air their grievances on the Union but debate has also touched on Zanzibar's position in the EAC. Two main issues have emerged during the discussion of the federation agenda. The first is about Zanzibar's membership in the EAC, which was raised and received explanations from both the House of Representatives and the National Assembly. When answering queries from Zanzibar Representatives who wanted to know why Zanzibar was not an independent member of the

Community, the Attorney General of the Zanzibar Revolutionary Council, Idd Pandu Hassan, said that Zanzibar cannot become a member of the EAC because it does not have the attributes of a State (Sadallah, 2007a). Similar clarification was given by the Donge MP, Ali Ameir Mohamed, who was also a member of the Wangwe Committee. Likewise, the Deputy Minister in the Ministry for East African Cooperation, Dr. Diodorous Kamala, was obliged to respond during a parliament session to a question posed by a Member who wanted to know the amount of membership fees that Zanzibar pays to the EAC. The Deputy Minister said that the EAC Treaty recognizes Zanzibar as part of Tanzania, and therefore it is not obliged to pay any membership fee (Thomas, 2007). Even after those explanations, calls for an independent membership for the Isles continued to flow during a seminar publicizing the EAC, which was held at Bwawani Hotel, in Zanzibar in March 2007.

Support for Zanzibar interests in the enlarged Community have also come from the Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), Hon Abdirahin Haithar Abdi. According to the Speaker, Zanzibar is not in any way relegated in the affairs of the East African Community and is an active participant in the Community with three out of the nine Tanzanian Members of EALA coming from Zanzibar. Tanzanian delegations to the Meetings of the Council of Ministers, Sectoral Councils, Committees and various Task Force Meetings of the Community include representatives from Zanzibar. Furthermore, according to Magaga Alot, Head, EAC Directorate of Communications and Public Affairs, the EALA Speaker said "Zanzibar participated fully and benefited from the ongoing projects and programmes of the Community, noting specifically the planned development of the Zanzibar port as well as Zanzibar's airport; and promotion of Zanzibar tourism in a bid to establish Zanzibar as the regional hub of trade" (EAC, 2007).

The second issue is about the plight of the Union, which has been linked with the federation debate. There are those who used the forum to discuss the federation to instigate debates on the troubles and tribulations confronting the Union. In this issue there are two major groups. There are those who espouse that Union problems should be attended to prior to Tanzania's entry into the East Africa Federation. There are also those who want to scrutinize Zanzibar's interests in the Community before entering the Federation. Those in this later group focus more intimately on business and economic matters. In the Bwawani seminar, mentioned earlier, one of the contributors was the Minister of State in the President's Office responsible for Finance and

Economy in Zanzibar, Dr. Mwinyihaji Makame Mwadini, who said that the issue of tariffs in the member-countries of the Community needs to be looked at with great care because Zanzibar will not benefit from protecting internal trade as endorsed by the Community. Minister Makame said that Zanzibar depends on imports such as flour, rice and sugar from abroad and that if she uses products from member-countries of the Community people will suffer because they are sold at higher prices (Sadallah, 2007b).

The argument raised here is that when Tanzanians ponder the issue of federation, they ought not only to give attention to matters of political identity but they have to also consider economic interests. In another sense, stakeholders ought to deliberate on the federation from the standpoint of an enhanced 'telescope' that stares beyond the threat of being swallowed, thus losing a political identity, and instead reflect circumspectly on economic and business interests.

### **Conclusion**

To return to our original question: Is Tanzania a committed or reluctant party to full integration? This article has demonstrated that while it is true that Tanzanians hold serious reservations about sensitive issues of free movement of labour and land, the government itself is indifferent to the idea of a political federation, after all it was Tanzania that called for partner states to give people the opportunity to express their views on the political federation. This decision to seek people's views in the name of 'widening the consultation process' will come to be understood as the Achilles' heel of the federation dream. This is to suggest that the move to form national consultative committees has strategically muted calls for a fast-tracked political federation. In the meantime, repeated statements from the country's top policy makers expressing Tanzania's commitment to strengthening the EAC have not helped to get rid of claims that the country is dragging its feet to deepen integration and attain the ultimate goal of a political federation by 2013. Prospects of a political federation by 2013 are dim, not only because of Tanzania's decision to stick with people's views but also due to the fact that the block still lacks the 'institutional prerequisites' of federalism. The region still experiences volatility in economic spheres, and the notion of a people-centred integration scheme is yet to receive the attention it deserves.

The discussion has also revealed that there is still little knowledge on the activities of EAC. This state of affairs has necessitated launching an awareness program to publicize Community activities. Thus far, the current

program is yet to record significant impact as surveys continue to show that there is still a lack of awareness on the EAC in Tanzania, including understanding the successive stages of integration (customs union, common market, monetary union and political federation). However, efforts to allay fears over the outcomes of successive stages of integration require a robust approach, and not just sporadic awareness campaigns. At this point it is worthwhile to recall scholar, turned diplomat, Augustine P. Mahiga's analysis on the defunct EAC done in 1977. He said that "regional integration which addresses itself to the phenomenon of underdevelopment has of course to take into account the different conceptions and levels of understanding of the phenomenon among the partner states. A regional scheme may never materialize if it waits until all the partners have reached the same level of understanding and interpretation of the causes of underdevelopment. What is important is to devise a regional scheme which can lay the foundation for re-orienting the economics of the partner states from the inherited structures of dependency while accommodating the difference among the partners ... "(Mahiga, 1977).

Finally, it has also been shown that the exercise of collecting people's opinions on the federation agenda has provided a 'golden chance' for Tanzanians of all walks of life to discuss the Union and Zanzibar's interests in the current EAC. An emerging message is that Tanzanians are closely following the federation agenda while being mindful of their economic and business interests.

### End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Dar is short for Dar es Salaam, the largest city and the seat of Tanzania's Government.

<sup>2</sup> Speaking to a local daily on the country's position on the free movement of labour, Tanzania's Deputy Minister for East African Cooperation, Mr Mohamed Aboud, said "In principle, Tanzania has no objection to foreigners working in the country because we are short of doctors, engineers and other experts. If it is decided that the decision will serve **national interests**, then that would be fine. If not, it will have to be looked into afresh," (*afronews*, September 30, emphasis mine).

<sup>3</sup> In Kenya the fast-track committee report was debated and approved in the National Assembly in the presence of only a small number of MPs. The report was also debated in the Tanzanian National Parliament (Bunge) but was rejected. In Uganda the report received executive approval without being tabled in parliament.

<sup>4</sup> According to Carl Friedrich, (1954 [1962]) as quoted by Finn Laursen (2008), federalism is viewed as “the process by which a number of separate political organizations, be they states or any other kind of associations, enter into arrangements for making joint decisions on joint problems.” In a federal arrangement “unity is combined with diversity in such fashion that there coexist spheres of autonomy for the inclusive community and exclusive community”. For further discussion on federal arrangements see Mohabe Nyirabu (2007) “Regional Federal Arrangements: Theoretical Underpinnings and Practical Experiences”, Paper Presented at the 10th Workshop on Democratic Transition in East Africa on the Theme: The Validity of the East African Federation, Organised by the Research and Education for Democracy in Tanzania (REDET) of the University of Dar es Salaam.

<sup>5</sup> According to Macroeconomic Convergence Indicators for EAC from the period 2006/2007 Kenya’s GDP was the highest in the region at 18.78 (US \$ Billion) followed by Tanzania (13.1 US \$ Billion); Uganda (8.7 US \$ Billion); Rwanda (2.2 US \$ Billion), and Burundi (0.8 US \$ Billion). For further details see Regional Economic Outlook-Sub Saharan Africa, IMF (2007); EAC Database.

<sup>6</sup> The EC Head of Delegation was reported to have ‘advised’ Tanzania to pull out of SADC and rejoin COMESA, a statement which was not well taken as it was construed as undue interference in an affair considered within the confines a country’s foreign policy. See *East African*, 16-22 May, 2005.

<sup>7</sup> PAFMECA stands for Pan-African Freedom Movement for East and Central Africa. It was established at Mwanza, Tanzania, September 1958, with Tanzania providing its first Secretary General.

<sup>8</sup> For the sequencing of events towards full integration of East Africa, see Article 5 (20) of the EAC Treaty.



<sup>9</sup> A Swahili version of the Statement by the NCCR-Mageuzi Chairman, James Mbatia, was copied to the Speaker of the National Assembly, Samwel Sitta, and the then Chief Justice, Barnabas Samatta.

<sup>10</sup> The Wako Committee submitted its report to the Heads of State at the November 26th, 2004 Summit in Arusha. The Committee recommended that the East African integration process be fast-tracked and the transition to political federation should start by 2010.

<sup>11</sup> REDET has been collecting peoples' opinions on different issues of national importance for over ten years. REDET's Poll on November 2006 was on "Peoples' Opinion on the Government's Work Performance". The opinion poll covered all the 26 regions of Tanzania. Random sampling was used to select one district in each region. The total number of those polled was 1300, which amounted to 50 respondents per selected district.

<sup>12</sup> Daniel Ziblatt has borrowed the term 'infrastructural capacity' from Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 59-61.

<sup>13</sup> Tanzania contains a total area of 945,087 sq. km (364,900 square miles) including 59,050 sq. km of inland water, while Kenya has a total area of 582,650 sq. km (224, 962 square miles); Uganda's land area is 236, 040 sq. km (91, 136 sq. km) of which 36,330sq. km is inland water; Burundi's area is 27,830 sq. km (10, 745 square miles) and, Rwanda has an area of 26, 338 sq. km.

<sup>14</sup> It was at this seminar that views of Members of Parliament on EAC matters exhibited a significant degree of scepticism on the motives and actions of neighbouring EAC Partner States, particularly Kenya. One MP whose constituency is in a region that lies near the Kenyan border "warned the government to be wary of Kenyans who were flocking into the country in thousands, saying such a sign shows that the neighbouring country was facing land scarcity." He went on to allege that "trans-border trade between Kenya and Tanzania benefited Kenyans more because their currency is stronger than the Tanzanian one". Another MP "told the seminar participants that the Kenyan government had banned businessmen and women from the neighbouring country to stop buying meat from his Rukwa meat canning factory" (Daily News, 01.11.2008).

<sup>15</sup> The Legislator was reported to have said, “the land issue is very sensitive and crucial within Uganda and Tanzania. There is no need to rush”. And on his part the District Commissioner said, “If Tanzania is concerned about land, why can’t we go slow... They harbor quiet suspicions about our people (occupying Tanzania) when we are talking about slow tracking, they talk about comprehensively, look at the underlying factors. Let us first build consensus in the region” (Africanpress online, 2009).

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