

**EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY ECONOMIC INITIATIVES TO REDUCE
CONFLICT AMONG THE MEMBERS STATES**

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the economic achievements registered by East African Community (EAC) to reduce intrastate conflict in the region to promote peacebuilding. Partner States of EAC with exception of Tanzania have witnessed intrastate conflicts. The partner states of East African Community such as Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi have suffered from conflicts for many years, which needs a regional approach to address it. The aim of this study was to examine the economic achievement initiatives of East African Community to reduce conflict. The study used document study analysis, group discussion and interview to collect data besides extensive literature review on the subject. The findings of the research reveal that EAC has made a number of achievements which have had direct or indirect significant contribution in reducing conflict in East Africa. These among others include establishment of common identity to reduce tension among the citizens in the region; establishment of custom union which provides details policies to harmonize economic policies. The study concludes with some recommendations that there is need to implement policies and programmes initiated by EAC if it is to have taste of time.

Key Words: Socio-economic Cooperation, Intrastate Conflict, Common Institutions, Peacebuilding

Introduction

The East African Community (EAC) is one of the regional organisations on the African continent. It was first established in 1967 by three countries Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda but due to political difference among the heads of states of Uganda and Tanzania, it collapsed in 1977. However in 1999 the three heads of states, signed a treaty to re-establish it; but it came into force in 2000 after the three original members Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania ratified the East African Treaty with Burundi and Rwanda joining it in 2007 as full members.¹ It is now an umbrella of five states i.e. Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda. Interestingly,

¹www.easc.int/about-html (accessed on 21/11/2016).

the original EAC member states Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania were colonised by the British, while Rwanda and Burundi were under the banner of French and German (then Belgium).² The main objective of its revival was to promote and deepen “a people-centred economic, political, social and cultural cooperation on the basis of balanced, equity and mutual benefit of the partner states of EAC to ensure peace and stability in the region.”³ This is as a result of the fact that these countries experience similar problems such as intrastate conflict, poverty, and economic dependence, which hinder them to realise their socio-economic and political development. It is argued that transnational organisations are not only good and efficient provider of citizen welfare, but also “help to reduce the chances of international conflicts.”⁴ In this context, Article 5 of the East African Community Treaty states that “the objective of the community shall be to develop policies and programmes aimed at widening and deepening cooperation among the partner states in political, economic, social and cultural fields.”⁵ This has given EAC a role of formulating policies and designing programmes to create a common socio-economic, cultural and political entity. Thus, it was established to enhance cooperation and development among the states of the East African region. In the light of this, the organisation “envisages a political federation by 2013.”⁶

The Treaty spells out theoretical regional initiatives to serve as a roadmap to establish regional cooperation so that political federation is attained by 2013 rather than creating common regional market alone but political federation has not hit the set target year. Article 5(1) states that: “the objective of the community shall be to develop policies and programmes aimed at widening and deepening cooperation among the partner states in political, economic, social and cultural fields, research and technology, defence, security and legal judicial affairs, for their mutual benefits,” while Article 123(5) provided for peace and security as a major preoccupation of the partner states of East African states.⁷ Similarly, Chapter 23 emphasises that there shall exist collective effort in defence and inter-state security matters to create

², Baruti. “Pan Africanism and Development: The East African Community Model.” *The Journal of Pan African Studies*. Vol.2, No.4 (June 2008), pp. 107-116.

³Kituo Cha Katiba. “Citizenship and Identity Struggle in East Africa: Towards More Inclusive Policies and Practices.” Draft Report of the Fact Finding Mission, 2005, 8.

⁴Rosamond, B. *Theories of European Integration*. London: Macmillan Press. 2000, 33.

⁵East African Community. *The Treaty for Establishment of East African Community*. East African Secretariat, Arusha, Tanzania. 2002.

⁶Musonda, M. Flora. “Migration Legislation in East Africa: International Migration Papers 82.” Geneva: International Labour Organisation. 2006, 10.

⁷ Treaty Establishing East African Community, Article 5, Chapter 23

favourable environment for the region's development. Meanwhile, Article 5(2) and 76(1) of the East African Community Treaty empowered partner states of East African Community to establish custom union and common market. Therefore, this study intends to investigate what has been achieved and the challenges facing East African Community in the process of pursuing the objectives it set out.

Statement of the Problem

For so many years, East African countries have gone through a number of conflicts ranging from border disputes, interstate to civil conflict. This has resulted into underdevelopment of the region and suffering of the citizens. Hence, this undermines peace building in the region. In that perspective, East African Community was re-established to promote economic, political, social and cultural cooperation among its member states so that peace can be built based on common interests. It is within this interest that one of the objectives of EAC is to collectively prevent conflicts that have claimed several lives in the region. For so many years, conflicts have existed in all EAC countries except Tanzania, which has enjoyed relative peace. In Rwanda and Burundi, the Hutu-Tutsi conflict claimed million lives with the conflict climaxing into 1994 genocide in Rwanda. In Uganda, the decades' long Lord Resistance Army (LRA) civil war has witnessed several brutal killings and in Kenya, the post-election violence as well as constant border dispute with Uganda left many killed. In an effort to reduce these conflicts, EAC has been preoccupied by efforts to make greater linkages among the East African states to build cooperation and subsequently a political federation to reduce these conflicting hostilities. The perception is that many conflicts that have occurred in the region and the Hutu-Tutsi conflict, Kenya-Uganda dispute over Migingo affected all EAC states differently. It becomes increasing obvious that forming greater linkages through socio-economic and political cooperation among EAC member states would have spill over effects and result in peace and political stability in the region. In that regard, they have made common strategies aimed at reducing conflicts and to form a regional integration.⁸

⁸Mpangala, P. Gaudens. "Origins of Political Conflicts and Peace Building in the Great Lakes Region." Paper presented at a Symposium Organised by the Command and Staff College, Arusha, Held on 23rd February, 2004.

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to identify the achievements of EAC's initiatives to prevent trans-border conflict. In that regard, the specific objectives of this study are to:

1. Explore the economic achievements registered by East African Community to prevent trans-border and interstate conflicts in the region.

Study Questions

1. What are the East African Community economic achievements registered in the period 2000-2016 to reduce conflict in the region?

Justification of the Study

There is a still very limited study that has examined or explored the economic achievements East African Community has registered to reduce intrastate conflict in the period 2000-2016. This study focused on the generation of knowledge in this context. East African Community is understood by the citizens of partner states as a movement towards providing economic opportunities and to move freely in the region without strict identification documents; as well as having opportunity to work anywhere within the region.⁹

The focus of this study is to evaluate the economic achievements of East African Community to realise full potential towards peace building in the region. Therefore, carrying out an investigation like this one, which aims to establish the economic achievements of East African Community to realise its full potential in building peace in the region is important in a number of ways. One, results of the study may provide East African Community officials with a list of achievements they have been made and re-plan to pursue those aspects that have not been achieved. The results also are relevant in helping the East African Community officials to revisit their policies and practices to make further success in conflict resolution and management. Two, the outcomes of this research are also useful as source information to other researchers who wish to carry out investigation on East African Community particularly regarding EAC partner states' target of not only achieving economic integration but political federation to form a Federal State.

⁹Karega, G. Mwatha. Benefits Experienced by Ordinary Citizens from East African Community Regional Integration. 2009.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The study carried out by Voronko on the dynamics of the EU as a regional arrangement was initiated by the agreement of the states involved to deepen economic interaction between themselves in certain fields of common interest.¹⁰ Considering the fostering of interdependence between regions which usually brought about economic and political integration, argument has been made that bilateral free trade reduces the risk of conflict particularly if the level of this trade is high.¹¹ In other words the regional resources and economic cooperation efforts are geared towards interventions to prevent or mitigate conflicts stemming from disputes as this actually will reduce the influence of the risk of war both within and between regional states. Arguing along similar lines, Schiff and Winters point out that regional integration induced trade can be an important promoter of peace on the ground that: (i) increased trade through regional integration means greater economic interdependence between countries involved.¹² They stressed that more trade means increased interaction between people and governments of the member states, common sharing of goods and services and greater understanding of cultural, political and social institutions. All these according to them increase trust among citizens and develop common identity in beliefs and values, hence looking at themselves as one community. They further state that securing trade relations reduces likelihood of war by increasing security access to partner's supplies of strategic raw materials and reducing the threat of trade embargo.

A study by Shaheen Rafi Khan, found that regional trade agreements between states had a potential as a tool for reducing regional and state conflict.¹³ His finding suggests a link between trade, conflict and peace in different and varying contexts. While analysing the factors that hinder or promote regional trade integration by considering their economic and political impacts, a series of case studies in four regions such as South America, the southern African region, South Asia, and South East Asia were also presented. De Lombaerde puts up similar argument that the contemporary demand for more cooperation and integration at the

¹⁰Voronkov, Lev. "Regional Cooperation: Conflict Prevention and Security Through Interdependence". *The International Journal of Peace Studies* Vol. 4, No. 4. 1999.

¹¹ Bolton, Roland, and Spolaore (1996)

¹²Schiff, M and Winters, A.L. *Regional Integration and Development*. Washington DC: international Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ World Bank. 2003, 190.

¹³ Khan, Rafi Shaheen, Yusuf, Moeed, Shaheen, Haq Faisal and Tanveer. "Regional Trade Agreements in South Asia: Trade and Conflict Linkages". in Khan, Rafi Shaheen. (Ed.). (Ed.). *Regional Trade Integration and Conflict Resolution*. London and New York: Routledge Taylor and Fransi Group. 2009, 69.

regional level carries the benefit of avoiding or ending regional and domestic conflicts.¹⁴ To this effect De Lombaerde cites the European integration as the most undisputed example where regional integration has promoted peace and stability.

This study adopts functionalist and neo-functionalist approaches as framework of analysis. These approaches attempt to explain why states come together to form regional institutions and keep this alliance by surrendering some national loyalty to regional bodies. Functional approach as claimed by structural realist like Kenneth Waltz is a mechanism which views states as having similar functional units and experience same problems caused by international anarchy.¹⁵ In this regard, David Mitrany (1966) provided useful insights about how to establish peace and stability through international cooperation and integration based on functional policy areas and practices. David Mitrany argued in the functionalist approach that the inability of states to preserve peace and improve on socio-economic welfare of their citizens needed an alternative to such inefficiency and suggested that there should be gradual establishment of regional socio-economic and political organizations as a linkage to cover cooperation in socio-economic and political fields. It is within this context that David Mitrany pleaded for the establishment of “the plenitude of relationships of legitimised character between all manners of diverse actors, which form the very fabric of world society.”¹⁶ The establishment East African Community perfectly fits into the idea suggested by David Mitrany in the functionalist approach.

The ideas postulations of functionalist theory, propose that regional integration became a better alternative to deal with the problem of war after the League of Nations failing to ensure peace and stability in the world.¹⁷ This way, in the functionalist theory, Mitrany proposed that “functional programme best builds a living and lasting international peace.”¹⁸ Thus, peace

¹⁴ De Lombaerde, Phillippe. *Regional Integration and Peace*. 2005.

available at: www.monitor.upeace.org/innerpg.cfm?id_article=268. Accessed on 15/9/2016.

¹⁵ Baylis, John, Owens, Patricia and Smith, Steve. *The Globalisation of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*. Oxford University Press. 2008

¹⁶ A.J.R. Groom and Paul Taylor (Eds.). *Functionalism: Theory and practice in International Relations*. London: University-level of Londonderry Press. 1975, pp. vi+354.

¹⁷ Biswaro, MukamaJoram. *The Quest for Regional Integration in Africa, Latin America and Beyond in the Twenty First Century: Experience, Progress and Prospects: Rhetoric versus Reality: A Comparative Study*. Brasilia: Fundacao Alexandre de Gusmao. 2011, 75-76.

¹⁸ Tanter, Raymond (1969). "Discussions and Reviews: A working functionalism? - a review 1 David Mitrany, A Working Peace System Chicago: Quadrangle Press, 1966. Pp. 221. \$2.25 (paperback). James P. Sewell, Functionalism and World Politics Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1966. Pp. 359. \$6.50." *Journal of*

and social progress can be achieved through a common action by a combination of governments paying attention to cooperation in certain specific needs. For instance, it is argued that Mitrany acknowledged there is a link between economic cooperation and a stable political society.¹⁹

Mitrany too, hypothesized that existence of effective functional cooperation and coordination in the provision of welfare through transnational institution could result in the reduction of conflict. He argued that the problem of war could be solved through functional international institutions. In this regard, there should be central institutions and policies that need to be in place to provide a conducive environment for building capacity to kick-start social and economic process. The responsibilities assigned to these institutions should be expansive enough to cater to the common interests of all states in the partnership. This theory considers international agencies as very significant in building peace through international relations. It postulates that these agencies render war impossible through collective transnational problem solving and mutual dependence. It is also argued that these agencies are more conducive to the maintenance of international peace and stability. That is, peaceful international society can emerge through doing things together. This should particularly involve strengthening economic relations and activities to produce a more rational order capable of satisfying the needs of the people.²⁰ Thus, it emphasizes deliberate actions by national leaders to create international institutions to deal with common problems experienced across borders.²¹ It is emphasised “that if states work together in certain limited areas or sectors by designing new bodies to direct that particular cooperation, they will diffuse it by working together in other sectors by means of invisible hand of integration.”²² In the light of this, it is assumed that conscious political decisions reached by national leaders together would accelerate political integration.²³ It should be remembered that functionalism places the root causes of violence

Conflict Resolution 3(13): 398-401. (www.google.com.my/#hl=en&scient=psy-ab&q=7.%09) Accessed on 7/10/2016.

¹⁹ Book Review: Lucian M. Ashworth, *Creating International Studies: Angell, Mitrany and Liberal Tradition* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999, 208 pp., 37.50 hbk.) *Journal of International Studies* 2000 29: 176.

²⁰Ogbeidi, M. Michael. “The Relevance of Regional Integration as a Global Developmental Strategy: A theoretical Analysis”. *The Journal of International Social Research Vol. 4 Issue 16. 2011, 311.*

²¹Ibid.

²²Kurt, Umit. “Europe of Monnet, Schumann and Mitrany: A Historical Glance to the EU from the Functionalist Perspective.” *European Journal of Economic and Political Studies Vol. 2, No. 2. 2009, 41-60.*

²³Ibid.

in social and economic situation of the people. It is argued that if people are given moderately sufficient of what they want and ought to have, they will keep peace.²⁴

Therefore, functionalist theory hypothesises that establishment of common institutions to link mutual cooperation between or among states coming together to form one body is necessary for peace building.²⁵ In this regard, the assumptions of this theory put more emphasis on a practical approach to solving problems through international activities and agencies. It insists that this could be realised by putting in place a check list of common interests and economic unification, which could gradually create a foundation for common political decisions. Functionalists put that when “states give up to a certain extent its authority” to transnational bodies, this transfer of loyalty results into integration.²⁶

A slightly modified version of functionalist approach shifted the focus of inter-state cooperation from global to regional level, which emphasises focusing on process. Neo-functional approach assumes that states experience complex problems, which they cannot solve alone. States therefore, should focus on the process of regional cooperation and create regional functional organisation. Its main idea is that “once the process of economic and technical integration is launched, spill-over from one functional area would be extended to another, which will propel the process towards eventual political and economic unification.”²⁷ Neo-Functionalists argue that creation of regionalism becomes important among states, which are vulnerable to conflicts. Leaders could prevent them through taking deliberate action to establish international regional organisation to deal with them.²⁸ They pointed out that interdependence and cooperation among states can be created by delegating some functions to cross-border agencies, each charged with a particular responsibility to answer the demands of citizens without threatening freedom of individual state. For example, for establishment of communication system, agencies such as “railways would be organised on continental basis; shipping would be organised on an intercontinental basis; aviation

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵ Dent, M. Christopher. *The European Economy: The Global Context*. London: Routledge. 1997,29.

²⁶Kurt, Umit. “Europe of Monnet, Schumann and Mitrany: A Historical Glance to the EU from the Functionalist Perspective.”2009.

²⁷Biswaro, J. Mukama. *The Quest for Regional Integration in Africa, Latin America and Beyond in the 21st Century: Experience, Progress and Prospects*. Brasilia: Alexandre De Gusmao Foundation. 2011, 77.

²⁸Ibid. 76.

would be organised on a universal basis.”²⁹ In this context states dependence on these agencies for their functioning would make it difficult for these states never to be closer to each other. This way, citizens within this kind of arrangement will adopt less nationalist attitudes. This action they take to surrender their responsibility to international agencies creates better or nearly equal distribution of resources, which is the main cause of conflicts in many societies in Africa and elsewhere.³⁰

Neo-functionalists emphasise that creation of regional organisations are important for solving cross-border problems. The underlying argument is that regional organisations such as East African Community gives wider opportunities to member states to meet desire and interests of their citizens. This is facilitated by certain regional policies and practices. Regional organisations are created to pursue mutual interests to benefit member states. For example, free movements of capital among nations with the purpose of promoting investments quicken flow of resources, which offers improvement of human well-being.³¹ States’ interests will increasingly become interlinked by international cooperation in different aspects, which is relevant to advance people’s welfare. In other words, the more states increase on their cooperation in trade matters, the more they are willing to maintain political and economic stability in their relation. This might help reduce tension in East African countries, which is a result of inequality in the distribution of resources.³² Thus, development of cooperation among states through an international regional organisation could foster stability.

Neo-functionalist approach has been advanced by many scholars. The study carried out by Voronko on the dynamics of the EU as a regional arrangement argues that EU was initiated by the agreement of the states involved to deepen economic interaction between themselves in certain fields of common interest.³³ Considering the fostering of interdependence between regions which usually brought about by economic and political integration, an argument has

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Mpangala, P. Gaudens. “Origin of Political Conflicts and Peace Building in the Great Lakes Region”. Paper Presented at a Symposium Organised by the Command and Staff College, Arusha, 23rd February 2004. Available at: www.grandslacs.net/doc/3000.pdf Accessed on 5/10/2016.

³¹ Mazur, Ann Laurte and Sechler, E. Susan. Global Interdependence and the Need for Social Stewardship. Paper No.1. New York: Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Inc. 1997, 15.

³²Francis, Diana. “Culture, Power Asymmetries and Gender in Conflict Transformation.” Bergoff Research Centre for Constructive Conflict Management. 2004. (http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/power_inequalities) Access on 28/4/2016.

³³Voronkov, Lev. “Regional Cooperation: Conflict Prevention and Security Though Interdependence”. *The International Journal of Peace Studies* Vol. 4, No. 4. 1999.

been made that bilateral free trade reduces the risk of conflict particularly if the level of this trade is high.³⁴ In other words the regional resources and economic cooperation efforts are geared towards interventions to prevent or mitigate conflicts stemming from disputes to reduce the risk of war both within and between regional states. This way, EU has been able to promote equitable balanced development and political cooperation. Arguing along similar lines, Schiff and Winters point out that regional integration induced trade can be an important promoter of peace on the ground that: (i) increased trade through EU organisation as a means greater economic interdependence between countries involved.³⁵ They stressed that more trade means increased interaction between people and governments of the member states, common sharing of goods and services and greater understanding of cultural, political and social institutions. All these according to them increased trust among citizens. They further state that securing trade relations reduces likelihood of war by increasing security access to partner's supplies of strategic raw materials and reducing the threat of trade embargo.

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In this same context, Morton Deutsch has argued that cooperation in different matters of their states induces similarity in “beliefs and attitudes, readiness to be helpful, openness in communication, trusting and friendly attitudes, sensitivity to common interests, and

³⁴ Bolton, Roland, and Spolaore (1996)

³⁵ Schiff, M and Winters, A.L. *Regional Integration and Development*. Washington DC: international Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ World Bank. 2003, 190.

³⁶ Khan, Rafi Shaheen, Yusuf, Moeed, Shaheen, Haq Faisal and Tanveer. “Regional Trade Agreements in South Asia: Trade and Conflict Linkages”. In Khan, Rafi Shaheen. (Ed.). *Regional Trade Integration and Conflict Resolution*. London and New York: Routledge Taylor and Fransi Group. 2009, 69.

³⁷ De Lombaerde, Phillippe. *Regional Integration and Peace*. 2005.

available at: www.monitor.upeace.org/innerpg.cfm?id_article=268. accessed on 13/3/2016.

discourage opposed interests, and orientation towards enhancing mutual power” among others.³⁸ This builds peace among the people when they share common beliefs and interests.

Vaitsos in his survey of the crisis of regional economic cooperation (integration) among developing countries mentioned that the criteria used to qualify the degree of economic integration have to a large extent relate to interactions which refer to exchanges of goods, services and their inputs. Such exchanges are usually evaluated with respect to the conditions which determine prices, quantities and the policy affecting them.³⁹ In another study on the dynamic relationship between trade agreements and other international cooperation by Estevadeordal and Suominen found that countries, which cooperate most extensively with each other on trade are in most cases favoured partner for non-trade related cooperation such as security.⁴⁰ This finding is supported by Slocum-Bradley and Felicio’s study. They found that these aspects were interlinked with regional integration.⁴¹ They argued that regional cooperation is an essential prerequisite to attain peace and security. Therefore, arguably East African Community could be an important regional organisation to promote economic development, peace and security among member states. Despite the above arguments raised about functionalist and neo-functionalist approach, these approaches undermines the significance of nationalism and assumes an automatic transfer of loyalty from national to a federal institutions. Thus, the theory underestimates the sovereignty concepts. The theory also fails to put into account the background conditions and costs of integration.

Methodology

This study has adopted a comprehensive historical theoretical framework to analyze the study in question. Thus, a contextual analysis is done with the aim of establishing the economic achievements EAC has registered to prevent conflict and foster peacebuilding in the region. This study mainly based on document review, interview and content analysis. That is data is obtained through a critical and extensive examination of the available literature on the

³⁸Deutsch, Morton. “Cooperation and Competition”. In Deutsch, Morton and Coleman, P.T and Marcus, E.C (Eds.). *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution: Theory and Practice*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass. 2006, 30.

³⁹Vaitsos, C. V. Crisis in regional economic cooperation (integration) among developing countries: A survey

⁴⁰Estevadeordal, A and Suominen, K. “Sequencing Regional Trade Integration and Cooperation Agreements”. *The World Economy*. 2008, (112-140).

⁴¹Slocum-Bradley, Nikki and Felicio Tania. “The Role of Integration in the Promotion of Peace and Security”. UNU-CRIS Occasional Paper. 2006.

subject. Therefore, the primary source of data was interviews and secondary sources included textbooks, magazines and internet sources.

Economic Achievements Registered to Reduce Conflict in the EAC States

The economic cooperation target of EAC member states is to have a wider market in an environment with peace and stability. Governments' initiatives and programmes are driven in the direction of finding supportive regional institutional structures and policies to secure peace and coexistence of their citizens. This is because leaders of EAC realised that wars and conflicts greatly threaten peace and security whenever they occur and create violence which affects countries at large regardless of whether it is justified on any ground or not. In that regard, reducing conflict between and/or among conflicting parties require multidimensional approach which can develop the culture which consists of attitudes, values and behaviour that reject conflict or violence (UNESCO, 2002). In this context, EAC adopted a comprehensive approach in the pursuit of regional peace and security especially in dealing with the root causes of conflicts such as the Hutu-Tutsi conflict.

Respondents interviewed revealed that EAC member states have taken holistic approach for the purposes of establishing EAC federal states. One respondent specifically said *“we cooperate in every aspect. EAC stretches into the economic field to empower our community to work towards development.* The dominant views of the respondents were that empowering EAC citizens economically would reduce on peace and security threat that emerge beyond ethnic conflicts. One respondent stated that *“many think that conflict like Lord Resistance Army conflict in Uganda, Hutu-Tutsi conflict in Rwanda and Burundi are ethnic conflict but it's beyond ethnicity. These conflicts have to do with economic inequalities and we feel that our approach in EAC will partly address these age-long conflicts because since we now work together as sister member.* This is in line with Kotite, (2012; Amamio), (2002) and Resolution A/53/243 of UNESCO which concurred that fostering a culture of peace through education; promoting sustainable economic and social development; promoting respect for all human rights; ensuring equality between women and men; fostering democratic participation; advancing understanding, tolerance and solidarity; supporting participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge; and promoting international peace and security are instrumental in reducing conflict.

It is emphasised that economic gains and stability are associated with reducing conflict and establishing peace and security in a society (WHO, 2002). East African Community was re-established to promote cooperation and development in all the socio-economic and political fields on much larger scale to help in addressing conflicts caused by socio-economic and political inequalities among the people of East Africa. In other words, it was hoped that establishing such arrangement of a larger scale that would provide a lot benefits associated with reducing conflicts among the people who are dissatisfied.

During interviews, participant made the link between EAC economic achievements and the decline in the conflict in the region citing LRA in Uganda and Hutu-Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi. It was reported that in areas of common market and custom union EAC achieved three common external tariffs i.e. 25 per cent on finished goods, 10 per cent on intermediate goods and a zero per cent tariff on raw material imports among the member states (interview). Thus, the development of cooperation in trade and harmonisation of economic policies among the East African member states is important. It has showed the need for regional integration to build regional market forces. The East African Community Treaty provides mechanisms for integration in form of institutions and policies. Thus, it was revived to address new realities, notably poor economic situation of the citizens of the member states, poor infrastructure and generally economic performances of the partner states of the East African Community. It can safely be said that EAC has taken a broad view in attempting to address the socio-economic and political threats that resulted into Hutu-Tutsi conflict.

The re-establishment of East African Community, partner states have taken bold steps to expand cooperation in areas deemed fit to create development and peace. Most East African states particularly Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda are very small not only in economic strength but also in population. In that regard, East African Community has successfully developed into a dynamic regional organisation now built on economic cooperation among the partner states. The partner states of East African Community identified key sectors for cooperation to include “defence and security, cross-border trade, infrastructure and energy; education and research, communication and information technology among others” (Candia, 2012). Thus, among the main key purpose of the East African Community was to establish a common

market and custom union to create integration that would give wider space for people to earn a better living. This article examines the policy achievements on trade and economic fields.

One of the objectives of East African Community integration was to establish common market and custom union. In this regard, they were to adopt common tariff and commercial policies to regulate trade and commerce with non-member states of East African Community. This too, could eliminate internal tariff and adopt common external trade tariff practices in the intra- East African trade. From the data obtained showed that in 2004, the East African countries Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi signed a protocol to establish East African custom union and came into full force in 2005. During the study respondents who were contacted revealed that East African Community had achieved some success in the trade and economic field. They said that under provision of the treaty, East African custom union was adopted by the East African member states. They pointed out that through this custom union the East African partner states had eliminated tariffs on imports and exports. Thus, they adopted a common policy tariff on imports and exports to member states that goods made within the member states move across border without taxation. The purpose of this was boost domestic and foreign investment in the region to provide employment to the people and be productive instead of engaging in hostile conflicts.

The data obtained from interviews of the respondents revealed there had been some economic development gained among the East African Community member countries. They mentioned that in the period 2005-2010 there was an increase from \$2 billion to \$4 billion in trade as well as revenues as a result of liberalising international trade through the East African Community established custom union adopted in 2005. It was emphasized that sharing good practices such as custom union had brought partner states of East African Community partner states closer to better performances in their economies. In other words, it had boosted the economies of EAC member states. This had improved partly the lives of their people. These achievements consistently support earlier study findings that found that the level of per capita income of a country is significantly related to risks of conflict therefore increasing economic growth of a country would reduce its chance of risking conflicts.

In addition, the data obtained during the study showed that in 2010 East African Community partner states launched and adopted common market. This policy was adopted to enhance public participation in business at regional level and push for higher level of social justice and wealth distribution which is one of the centre factors bred hostility between Hutu and Tutsi. Respondents interviewed stressed that this policy measure is to promote and encourage citizens to engage in investments and trade across borders within the East African states with limited constraints. It was reported by respondents that East African common market had helped to put the partner states of East African Community on the road to deepen and speed up economic and trade relations among them. They emphasised that Article 76 and 104 of the East African Treaty, which accounts for free movement of citizens, free movement of goods and services, free movement of labour, free movement of capital were implemented by the partner states of East African Community. In this regard, it was reported by respondents that partner states of East Africa had scored high in becoming friendlier in trading partner in region than ever before the re-establishment of the East African Community.

Respondents noted that socio-economic underdevelopment in East Africa is one of the key players in causing conflict among the people. One respondent stated “*EAC has provided conducive business environment at the borders of all partner states of EAC. The border post at Namanga between Rwanda and Burundi, Katuna between Rwanda and Uganda, Lwakhaka, Busia and Malaba between Uganda and Kenya are busy on daily basis as people move freely across borders.*” It was mentioned by the respondents that this is a result of East African common market and that it had boosted financial markets among the partner states of the East African Community and improved trade performance. Jaramogi (2012) quoting Moki one of the officials of EAC revealed that “the trade performance had increased with total intra-trade figures growing from \$1.6 billion in 2005 to \$3.8 billion in 2010 which is more than 100 per cent increase. He adds that “percentage of intra-trade to total trade has increased from 7.8 per cent in 2006 to 11.4 per cent in 2010. The total EAC exports grew from \$6.4 billion in 2006 to \$11.1 billion in 2010 indicating 73 per cent increase” (Jaramogi, 2012). According to International Monetary statistics reveals similar results indicating that trade among EAC member states is on an increase as indicated Tables for individual EAC member performance in trade within their common market. Data collected revealed that common market greatly improved trade among EAC member states. One respondent noted

that *“adopting common market has provided our people with opportunities to sell their goods especially agricultural products. Respondents stressed that EAC common market is non-discriminatory to member states as well as to citizen; it is accessible to all.”*

The data also discloses that the introduction of customs union marginally affected Tanzania’s trade performance. Nonetheless, it is noticeable it has slightly increased its trading activities in the region. Such development is achieved through universal unity markets for the products produced within the region could be enhanced. This in part answers what Nyerere argued that scarce resources in both Rwanda and Burundi exacerbated the conflict between the Hutu and Tutsi (Mpangala, 2004). Therefore, implementing Custom Union demands especially its protocol will enhance intra-trade among member states has attracted foreign direct investment which in turn has increased on the scarce resources in the region; goods within member states are allowed to move across border without taxation.

It can be observed that foreign direct investment in EAC appears to be picking up as a result of common market. Achievements registered in trade performance by EAC member states is a result of their willingness to work together to harmonize policies, incentives and laws to promote investment in the region to answer the pressing socio-economic and political needs. During interviews one respondent specifically disclosed *we consider EAC as a crucial element in facilitating member states in reducing barriers to promote trade and investment in the region. Today, non-tariff barriers have greatly reduced with collective effort. We can now establish businesses in any EAC member state. In fact, EAC integration is providing favourable competition for employment opportunities in private and public sectors in the region.* Respondents mentioned that both Rwandese and Burundian have equal opportunity in sharing these employment opportunities. A respondent said that *“as a result of inability to find employment many youth actively took part in Hutu-Tutsi conflict at its peak because they felt that their disempowered position would be improved. In Uganda many youth have been lured and coerced into conflict*

In similar interview, another respondent said that *“our ordinary citizens are benefiting from the bloc common market; before EAC was revived we experienced difficult to interact. People were restricted to ferry their goods across borders but now people strive hard to benefit from*

the regional market.” Available evidence obtained from analysis EAC annual reports show that EAC member states have established national statutory bodies which are mandated with the responsibility of facilitating promotion of investments in the region. These are Tanzania Investment Centre (TIC), Rwanda Investment and Export Promotion Agency (RIEPA), Kenya Investment Authority (KenInvest) and Uganda Investment Authority (UIA). These statutory bodies follow similar processes to approve investments in the region.

Transport and communications are important in the development of the region. Respondents disclosed that the EAC member states signed and ratified Agreement on Road transport. They said that the purpose of this agreement is to facilitate interstate transport to reduce on delays of vehicles at border crossing. They revealed that there is operational EAC road network project which is working to construct and improve the infrastructure in the member states. During interview one respondent disclosed that through EAC “”member states have begun *road network construction projects in Kenya the Momba-Malaba, Isebania-Lokichogio and Namanga-Moyale; in Uganda the Malaba/Busia-Katuna, Masaka-Mutukula and Kapchorwa; while in Tanzania Dar-es-Salaam-Dodoma-Isaka-Mutukula-Masaka, Baharamulo-Sumbawanga-Kasulu-Nyakanazi and Tunduma-Sumbawanga-Nyakanazi to improve on infrastructures in the region. On railway transport, work is in progress to construct the Tanga-Musoma-Port Bell-Jinja to improve on this transport sector; similarly improving the ports of Mombasa and Dar-es-Salaam which are the main gateway to landlocked countries such as Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi is on-going.*” Another respondent added that “*we are happy with this kind of development initiatives. We need improved road network to bring down maintenance costs and lower business cost, transport and border-transit time. This will help our citizens who are involved in doing business across borders.*” Respondents further reported that as a result wide opportunities are created by EAC, Rwanda is working towards establishing a development state to protect a repeat of the ethnic conflict.

Conclusion

The East African Community has made progress in the economic sector which is instrumental in preventing conflict in the region paving way for increased economic cooperation among the member states of East African Community. East African Community states seek to use enhanced economic cooperation as a means for peace-building. Trade and

commerce is more successful terms, implementing Customs Union and Common Market where each state's efforts in this field is commendable for advancing regional economic development. It is important to note that the steps taken so far by the partner states of the East African Community have greatly contributed to regional development, which is fostering peace and stability. The full implementation of Common Market and Custom Union has created spill-over effects in enhancing cooperation and acceptance of hostile ethnic groups in the region. Further successes can be achieved through strengthening political will by the EAC partner states to totally harmonise economic initiatives to promote economic growth and development by putting in place effective system and structures to support bottom-up development.

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