

Tanzania's Foreign Policy Considerations Across Mozambique and East Africa

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Across the East African region Tanzania has always been a stable actor. In fact, Tanzania has been the politically most balanced country in the region, with a keen eye on good neighborhood relations despite regular conflicts along its borders. The border issue has stayed high on its foreign policy agenda, not only because the lingering prospect of refugee crisis, but also because of demarcation disputes. After functioning as Minister for Foreign Affairs for ten years, Jakaya Kikwete's presidency featured an enhanced focus on foreign policy within its own region and beyond its borders in the form of a gradually strengthening neighborhood policy. He has always been a leader of building peace in the Region of the Great Lakes and an advocate for re-launching the defunct East Africa Community (EAC) at the end of the 1990s.¹ For Tanzania, regional integration has been seen as the best method of easing ethnic tensions and avoiding marginalization in world affairs.²

Regarding border issues, the long colonial history left a legacy of numerous disputed national boundaries after independence.³ In the case of Tanzania, strengthening border relations could involve encouraging businessmen to engage more in joint activities with fellow communities in Mozambique, for instance. When it comes to Malawi, the border dispute on the Lake Nyasa represents a bigger challenge for deepening collaboration. Although the two countries have enjoyed cordial diplomatic relations since the mid-1990s – highlighted by co-operation in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and within the African Union – the unresolved boundary along the Songwe River has caused some tension.⁴

Tanzania has a long-standing and close relationship with Mozambique, the former Portuguese colony along the East African coast. Former presidents Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and Samora Machel of Mozambique had the vision in the mid-1970s to connect the two countries with proper infrastructure, including a symbolic bridge over River Ruvuma. Finally, in May 2010 it became an important reality for linking the neighboring countries,

1 For more information on the history and development of the EAC, see István Tarrósy, "'Past Fears – Future Hopes'. An example for regional co-operation outside Europe: From the East African Community to an East African Federation", in István Tarrósy and Gerald Rosskogler (eds.), *Regional Co-operation as Central European Perspective* (Pécs: Europe Centre PBC – IDM, Vienna, 2005), pp. 161–169.

2 Gaudens P. Mpangala, *Ethnic Conflicts in the Region of the Great Lakes: Origins and Prospects for Change* (Dar es Salaam: Institute of Kiswahili Research, University of Dar es Salaam, 2000), pp. 144–145.

3 See the project "Support to the African Union Border Programme" (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH).

4 See "Tanzania, Malawi agree road map on boundary" (*The Guardian*, 11 September 2010).



improving trade relations to boot.⁵ By the end of the 1990s several investigations reported that cross-border trade – formal and informal – faced obstacles due to a lack of decent roads and high transportation costs.⁶ Already in 2008, Luísa Diogo, then prime minister of Mozambique, emphasized developing bilateral economic ties⁷.

Mozambique's fight for freedom was openly supported by Tanzania in the early 1960s. The Soviet Union-led eastern bloc backed the ten-year war of Mozambican independence, with which Tanzania also had affectionate ties. But from a Tanzanian perspective it was more about ridding African soil of Portuguese colonial rule. In light of pan-African solidarity, Tanzania was even more intensively behind the Mozambique Liberation Front, or FRELIMO.

Today, cross-border collaboration includes efforts to further regional economic growth within a peaceful and secure environment, as well as a focus on water development, conservation and sustainable development.⁸ Security considerations offer sufficient ground for extending co-operation between the two countries beyond. In February 2012 Tanzania, Mozambique and South Africa signed a pact on maritime security to enhance collective efforts in fighting piracy, drug trafficking and other criminal activities in the Indian Ocean.⁹ The new alliance presents a good opportunity for

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Tanzania and its neighbors are important to many actors of our globalized world. A lot of them come to the region with a desire to tap energy resources; in the process, some offer complex packages including schol-

arships, the building of hospitals and schools, and grabbing the exploration rights of natural resources, while building also infrastructure. The government of Mozambique was looking for investment to develop an offshore gas field in 1995. On the basis of some reports, after some threats coming from a US diplomat to withhold development aid if the tender was not given to a US company, Enron finally won the contract.¹⁰ A top-level EU visit to Mozambique and Tanzania in July 2012 was announced as something about immediate development assistance at a local level, including strengthening the rule of law. The Durão Barroso-led delegation, however, was aware of the very long-term goal of diversifying the EU's dependence on gas: as long as both sub-Saharan African countries sit on enormous

reserves of offshore gas, they will remain important to the European Union. In addition, both countries will remain in need of aid,¹¹ external support and investment for years.

Tanzania's pan-African position and penchant for regional co-operation will remain at the heart of its future relations. Today, Tanzania's pragmatic foreign policy naturally prioritizes national interest, but with an extended scope for how the region can develop at the same time. The five-member EAC at present may become capable of accommodating more partners, such as Mozambique and

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5 Wolfgang H. Thome, "New bridge connecting Tanzania to Mozambique opened" (*eTN*, Global Travel Industry News, 25 May 2010).

6 José Luís Macamo, "Estimates of Unrecorded Cross-Border Trade Between Mozambique and Her Neighbours. Implications for Food Security" (Office of Sustainable Development, Bureau for Africa, USAID, Technical Paper No. 88, June 1999), p. xv.

7 According to 2010 figures, Tanzania ranked eighth on the list of Mozambique's major trade partners after the EU27, South Africa, India, China, Japan, the US and Zimbabwe with a total volume of nearly €50 million.

8 These issues were put on the agenda of the 1st Joint Informal Workshop of Mtwara Development Corridor held on 10 February 2006, in Maputo.

9 Ludovick Kazoka, "Tanzania: Country Signs Joint Anti-Piracy Pact" (*Tanzania Daily News*, 8 February 2012).

10 Stephen Ellis, *Season of Rain. Africa in the World* (London: Hurst and Company, 2011), p. 40.

11 See Gemma La Guardia, "EU targets aid to gas-rich Mozambique, Tanzania" (*Reuters*, 19 July 2012).



Malawi, but working out how parallel regional aspirations of other organizations – SADC, for instance – can live together in a sophisticated way by, for example, anti-terrorist alliances. There have been rather critical voices about the future of foreign policy being jointly conducted in East Africa, as if an integrated East Africa could compare with the EU. But, as Robert Pinkney points out, at least the importance of greater co-operation is recognized.¹² In the forthcoming years the EAC with Tanzania as its lead political actor will focus on the co-ordination of foreign policies of member states in order to formulate common positions regarding third-party countries. While there might be plans for further enlargement along the lines of inclusion of South Sudan or the Democratic Republic of the Congo, past experience begs some caution. Closer Tanzanian co-operation with Mozambique certainly is reality and reserves more mutual benefits in the coming years.

¹² Robert Pinkney, *The international politics of East Africa* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2001), pp. 206–207.

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