

History of East African Regional Integration

Colonial Period

Railway lines across Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika open up the region for colonial development.



1897 - 1901



The mail train to Nairobi at Kampala Railway Station in the early 1960ies; courtesy of Malcolm Mccrow. (<http://www.mccrow.org.uk/eastafrica/eastafricanrailways/KampalaNairobi.htm>)

Customs for goods destined for Uganda are collected at Mombasa port, and a full customs Union comprising Kenya, Uganda and, later, Tanganyika is established in 1917.

1900 - 1917



Mombasa Harbour before World War I

The East African Currency Board, the Postal Union, the Court of Appeal for Eastern Africa, the East African Governors' Conference, the East African Income Tax Board and the Joint Economic Council are established.

1905 - 1940



East African Currency Bill and Stamp

EAST AFRICAN AIRWAYS

The East African Airways Corporation is incorporated. It covered not only the East African region, but operated across Africa, connecting also to Europe and India.



An East African Airways plane awaits its passengers on the ramp in Nairobi

1945



EAA International Flights

1948 - 1961

The East African High Commission (EACH) is the coordinating body to deal with a customs union, a common external tariff, currency and postage; and also with common services in transport and communications, research and education.

Independence and First EA Community

Following independence, the East African High Commission is replaced by the East African Common Services Organisation (EACSO), which many observers thought would lead to a political federation between the three territories. However, the new organisation suffered from a lack of joint planning and fiscal policy, separate political policies and Kenya's dominant economic position.

1961



1964
Union Tanganyika and Zanzibar

On the way to build the East African Community. President Jomo Kenyatta, President Julius "Mwalimu" Nyerere, Prime Minister Obote

1967

Signing of the 'Treaty for East African Cooperation' among Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

The East African Community of 1967-77 aimed at a common market, a common customs tariff and a range of public services so as to achieve balanced economic growth within the region. It was already a monetary union with a currency board and a parity currency (1 Uganda Sh = 1 Kenya Sh = 1 Tanzania Sh). Public enterprises included East African Railways and Harbours, East African Airways, East African Posts and Telecommunications and East African Development Bank.

Other areas of commonality included education, with a single syllabus and a single examination body, the East African Examinations Council; the University of East Africa with specialised colleges in each country; the East African Literature Bureau engaged in publishing, the Inter-University Council of East Africa, and others.

Citizens of the community moved and worked across the region, from the professionals to the casual labourers. Kampala's suburbs, like Namuwongo for example, still have communities whose roots are in Kenya, traceable to the EAC days. As an economic bloc, the region presented a large market for foreign direct investment with many multinationals establishing themselves in the region.

1967
Arusha Declaration, outlining the principles of Ujamaa in TZ



President Jomo Kenyatta, President Julius "Mwalimu" Nyerere, Prime Minister Obote, the "founding fathers" of the first EAC



East African Currency Board breaks down and three separate Central Banks are established, destroying hopes for a monetary union

1968

Breakdown of the First Community, Mediation and Revival

Dissolution of the first East African Community. Causes for the collapse were seen as “lack of strong political will, lack of strong participation from the private sector and the civil society in the cooperation activities, the continued disproportionate sharing of benefits of the Community among the Partner States due to their differences in their levels of development and lack of adequate policies to address this situation”. (Preamble of Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community)

1977

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We made a mistake; we did not involve the public at all. The civil society and the business people should push the bureaucrats. (Julius K. Nyerere)

Now that collapse had, of course, very serious consequences. (...) The borders were closed. (...) There were no inter-country railways, no trade, no airways. We had no post and telecommunications services any more, no joint navigation. We even had a war in 1978-79 between Tanzania and Uganda ... And of course they did not pay their common debts. They not only had assets like railway wagons, they also had common liabilities, say to the World Bank and to many governments, which they had to re-pay as a Community. But the Community having collapsed, nobody re-paid anything, so they were all in default. There was no way to see to it that liabilities would be honored. The three countries lived so much apart from each other that they were unable to talk to each other any more.”

Victor Umbricht, World Bank Mediator, in an interview with WB Archives in 1987

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1979

Uganda-Tanzania war in support of Obote and to overthrow Idi Amin

East African Community mediation agreement for division of assets and liabilities of the first EAC.

1984

In the agreement, the three States also agreed to explore areas of future co-operation and to make concrete arrangements for such co-operation.



Signing of the mediation agreement for the first EAC. Source: Viktor H. Umbrecht, Multilateral Mediation: Practical Experiences and Lessons. Dordrecht (The Netherlands), 1988

Re-launching East African Cooperation: the New EAC

Formation of a tri-partite working group to develop modalities of renewed co-operation.

1986

Ministers of Foreign Affairs to devise a pragmatic programme to reactivate co-operation; tri-partite committee of experts to identify spheres of common economic interest.

1991/92

1991

African Economic Treaty signed in June in Abuja (Nigeria)

First meeting of heads of state of Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda to discuss renewed EA cooperation.

1993

1993

Signing of COMESA Treaty

Permanent Tripartite Commission for East African Co-operation established.

1994

1996
EAC Secretariat in Arusha agreed to establish East African Business Council.
First EAC Development Strategy 1997-2000.

2000
Treaty Establishing the East African Community.

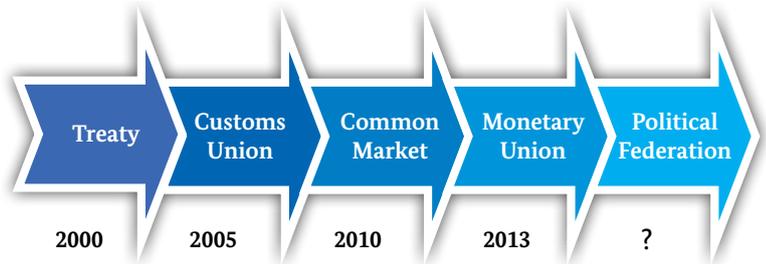


Source: EAC

2001
Inauguration of East African Legal Assembly and East African Court of Justice.

2004
Customs Union Protocol
Common Market Protocol
Monetary Union Protocol

Milestones of the EAC Integration Process



2007
Accession of Rwanda and Burundi to the EAC.



2016
South Sudan becomes new member



Highlights of EAC Integration



2009 - Common Market Implementation underway
2010 - Functioning Customs Union and Free Trade Area



2012 - Mutual Recognition of Qualifications across the EAC



2012 - Institutionalised Dialogue among EAC, Private Sector and Civil Society

2012 - Online Monitoring System for Council of Minister's Decisions in Place



2013 - Protocol of Monetary Union signed



2014 - Bill on harmonised Vehicle Loads across all Partner States
2014 - Cross Border Movement using ID Cards in three Partner States



2016 - Summit of EAC Heads of State decides to grant accession to the Republic of South Sudan