Abstract

Tanzania and the renewed EAC process

Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania have come a long way on the regional integration "march". They have a background of failed attempt following the collapse of the (first) East African Community (EAC) in 1977, after ten years of impressive existence. This failure exposed the risks that countries should address this time around. The renewed effort to pick the integration effort up once again has proceeded from the preferential trade area (PFTA) to a customs union (CU). This essay reflects on, among other things, various factors that need to be taken into account towards a firm CU and the capacity of a country like Tanzania to fulfil the demands that arise from multiple memberships in various trade integration blocs which pursue different timetables. It is viewed that as part of the process of economic transformation, the consolidation of the CU should take into consideration the harmonization of the relationships of ownership of the means of production, in particular, the natural resources. Therein lies the essence of politics and governance in the steering of the integration schemes. The paper discusses major steps that have to be implemented and required institutional cooperation in carrying them out and issues for immediate attention to bolster participation in trade. It is driven by the desire to stimulate discussion on the challenges, many of them often familiar, rather than propose answers or instructions.