

# AFROBAROMETER *Briefing Paper*

## CITIZENS' VIEWS ON THE EAST AFRICAN FEDERATION: A TANZANIAN PERSPECTIVE

54

FEBRUARY

2009

How much do Tanzanians know about the proposed East African Federation? What does the average Tanzanian think about plans being carried forward at largely government-to-government level? Do Tanzanians approve of a unitary government between the Republics of Kenya, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Republic of Burundi and Republic of Rwanda? Do a joint presidency, parliament and army appeal? How about a combined economy of the member states?

By Lucas Katera

Assumptions are often made regarding the public's views on integration but with little hard data to back them up. However, an 'Afrobarometer' survey, ([www.afobarometer.org](http://www.afobarometer.org)), conducted in 2008 specifically sought the opinions of Tanzanians about the East African Community (EAC) integration and the proposed East African Federation.

This brief summarises the key findings of phase 4, which took place on 23 June to 12 July 2008. The first three rounds of the survey were conducted in Tanzania in 2001, 2003 and 2005 respectively.<sup>1</sup> It focuses on Tanzanians perceptions of political, economic and military integration of the five member states. And what, if any, benefits they expect their country to gain from the Federation. In short, we find that Tanzanians are more supportive of economic integration than is commonly assumed; a majority thinks that it would

improve the country's economic prospects. They are considerably more wary, however, of greater political integration.

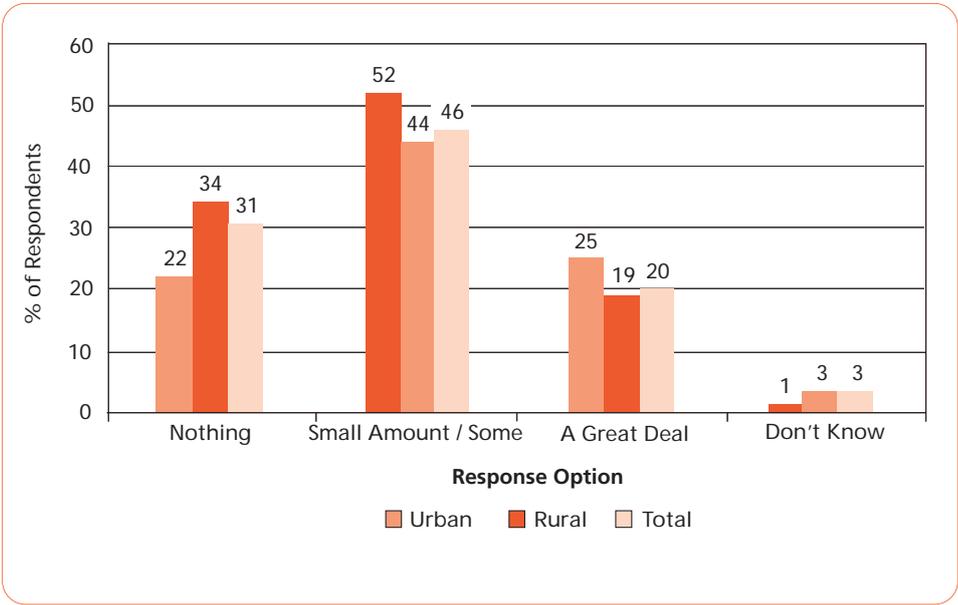
### THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY (EAC)

The East African Community consists of five member states including Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda with its headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania.

The Treaty for Establishment of the East African Community was signed on 30 November 1999 and came into force on 7 July 2000 following its ratification by the original three partner states - Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Rwanda and Burundi joined the EAC Treaty on 18 June 2007 and became full Members of the Community on 1 July 2007.

<sup>1</sup> The previous three surveys did not, however, include questions about East African Community Integration. Therefore, it is not possible to report a trend analysis.

**Figure 1** “How much have you heard about the proposed Federation of East African States? This includes the formation of a unitary government for Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. The integration proposes a joint presidency, parliament, economy and military.”



## THE EAST AFRICAN FEDERATION (EAF)

Within the current EAC, the main accomplishment has been the creation of an EAC Customs Union, which came into force on 1 January 2005.

The Customs Union allows free trade between the member states and the imposition of common tariffs for goods from outside the member states. Member countries are however considering a much more extensive level of integration and unification, known as the East African Federation (EAF). The EAF could include a monetary union, establishing a joint military, or even the creation of a unitary presidency.

## THE SURVEY

Afrobarometer surveys are now conducted in 20 countries in Africa, using a standard survey instrument and methodology. The recent survey in Tanzania was based on a nationally representative random sample of 1,208 adults.

Given Tanzania's estimated population of 38 million people, a sample of this size gives an overall margin of sampling error of +/-3 % at a 95% confidence level.<sup>2</sup> The survey was conducted in all regions of the country, with each region sampled in proportion to its share of the national population.<sup>3</sup> Interviews were conducted in 71 districts on Mainland Tanzania and 8 districts on Zanzibar. Furthermore, 27% of the respondents were drawn from urban areas and the remaining 73% from rural areas, reflecting the national urban/rural distribution.

Fieldwork was conducted by Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA), an independent research organization in Tanzania, with support from the Center for Democratic Development (CDD) of Ghana, an Afrobarometer core partner.

<sup>2</sup> For example, for a survey finding calculated to be 50% there is a 95% probability that the actual percentage would lie within +/- 3% of the finding, i.e., between 47 and 53%.

<sup>3</sup> The only exception is Zanzibar, where an intentional oversample was done to produce a sub-sample, for analyses, which is important given that the region is autonomous in many aspects of economic, social and political management. However, all national results reported here are weighted so that Zanzibar only contributes in proportion to its actual share in the national population.

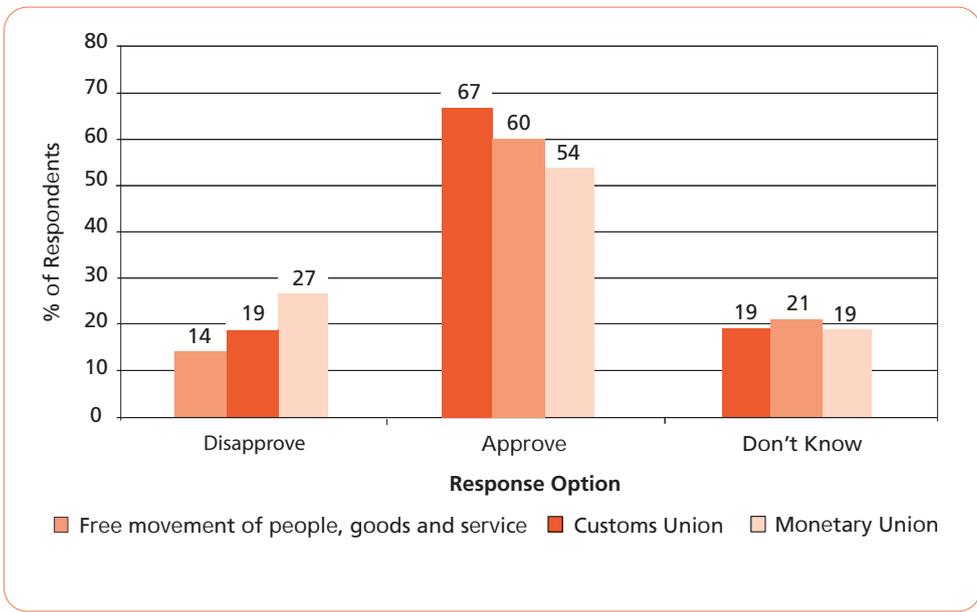


Figure 2 “As a Tanzanian, do you approve or disapprove of any of the following aspects of economic integration?”

**KEY FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY**

**Awareness of the Proposed East African Federation is Limited**

Respondents were first asked how much they had heard about the proposed Federation of East African States. A large majority of Tanzanians had little or no awareness of this proposal. Overall, nearly one-third (31%) of Tanzanians had not heard anything about the Federation, and nearly half (46%) had heard only “some” or “a small amount”. Only 20% of Tanzanians indicated that they had heard a lot about the proposed East African Federation (Figure 1).

Rural respondents were considerably less well-informed about the proposed Federation than their urban counterparts: 34% of rural dwellers had heard nothing about the proposal, compared to 22% of city dwellers.

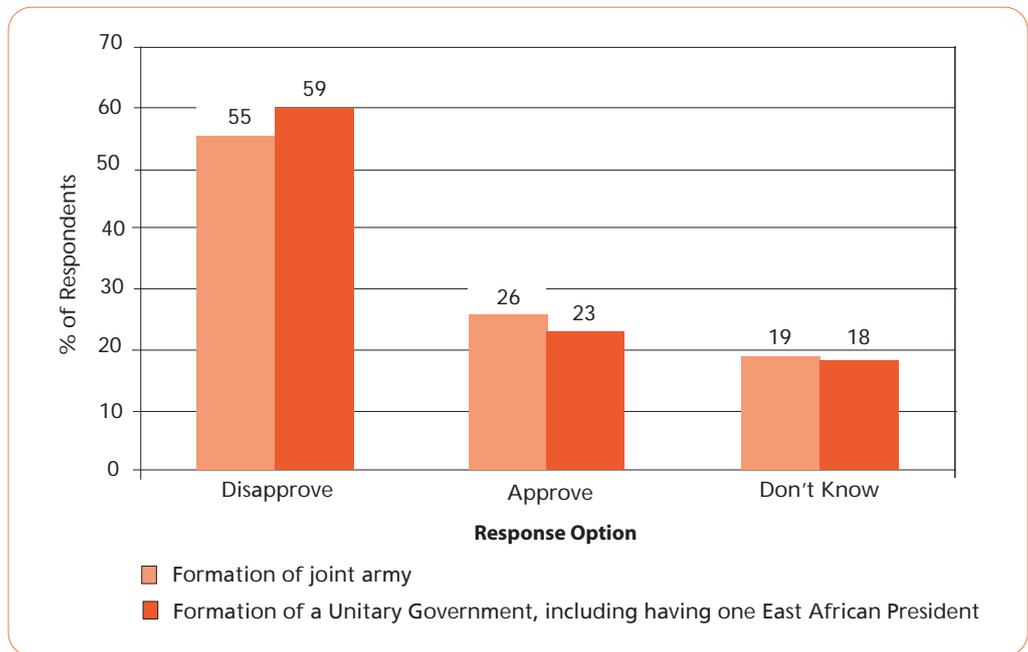
There is also less awareness of the proposed Federation in Zanzibar, where 38% had heard nothing about it, compared to the Mainland, where just 30% were uninformed. Only 14% of respondents in Zanzibar were greatly aware of the proposed Federation, compared to 21% on the Mainland.

**Strong Approval for the Economic Aspects of Integration**

A large majority of Tanzanians are positive about the proposed economic aspects of integration. This includes the free movement of people, goods and services, a Customs Union and a monetary union. More than 50 % of Tanzanians approve of each of these elements, (Figure 2).

Tanzanians are especially interested in the free movement of people, goods and services (67% approve), followed by a Customs Union (60%) and finally a monetary union (54%).

**Figure 3** “As a Tanzanian, do you approve or disapprove of any of the following aspects of political integration?”



These results may come as some surprise, since the conventional wisdom suggests that Tanzanians fear competition from not only the more developed industrial sector in Kenya, but also from Kenya's skilled labour force. Members of Parliament, for example, have raised concerns about economic integration, pointing out that the labour force in Kenya is more skilled than that of Tanzania, and arguing that integration would therefore lead to the loss of many Tanzanian jobs.<sup>4</sup>

Further concerns are that Kenya is also more industrialized and may eventually turn to Tanzania as a market and source of raw materials, a relationship which benefits more the former. Such debates are not new; they started even at the level of negotiation on various stages. As a result, while a Customs Union allows for free trade for member states, there is also a provision that Uganda and Tanzania can still impose tariffs on selected Kenyan manufactures for an interim five-year period, (see Economic Intelligence Unit, Tanzania Country Profile 2007). This survey has shown that Tanzanians do not fear economic aspects of integration. For a long period of time, many of the

manufactured goods used in Tanzania, have originated in Kenya, and the latter is considerably more industrialized than the former.

It is likely that respondents in this survey are expressing optimism by wanting free movement of people, goods and services that will in turn make commodities available at cheaper prices. It is also possible that they expect to get jobs in a more industrialized Kenyan economy. There are few notable differences between urban and rural inhabitants on these issues.

More substantial differences are evident between Mainlanders and Zanzibaris. Most strikingly, twice as many respondents in Zanzibar (averaging 40%, compared to 18% for Mainlanders) could not offer an opinion on the economic aspects of the integration. This is because they have not heard enough to enable them to form their own opinions. However, if we consider only those who had opinions, the views in both regions are quite similar, with more than 60% from both Mainland and Zanzibar approving each of the economic aspects of the alliance.

<sup>4</sup> Sauti ya Watu, “Tanzania Daima” Issue No. 1460, 2 December 2008



Figure 4 “Do you think a Federation of the East African States would make the following better or worse for Tanzanians?”

Tanzanians' support for the economic aspects of integration, especially free movement, is reinforced by their strong support for the creation of a common East African passport. When asked whether Tanzanians approve or disapprove of the common East African passport, 59% of the respondents approve, compared to only 20% who disapprove. As with other aspects of integration, however, a sizeable number of Tanzanians (21%) indicated that they do not know and so cannot offer an opinion on this issue.

### Strong Disapproval for the Political and Military Components of Integration

In general, Tanzanians do not support the political and military aspects of the proposed East African Community integration. We asked respondents their opinion of both the formation of a unitary government and of the formation of a joint army with one East African President. More than 50% of respondents rejected each of these aspects of the integration, more than twice as many as those who approved, (Figure 3).

Once again, respondents on Zanzibar are much less inclined to offer an opinion on these questions on the basis that they do not know enough to be able to state their position. Around 40% of respondents in Zanzibar indicated that they do not know, compared to 16% of Mainland respondents. There are, however, notable differences among those who indicated their position. If we exclude “don't know” responses, we find that about 70% of respondents on the Mainland reject political and military unification, whereas on Zanzibar, opinion is much more evenly divided on this issue; 53% approve the formation of a joint army, compared to 47% who disapprove. However, Zanzibaris are less inclined toward the formation of a unitary government; 56 % of those with an opinion reject this option, compared to only 44% who approve it.

### Why these Preferences?

Why are there differences between Tanzanians' opinions about the economy as compared to political and military integration? Figure 4 offers some explanation. Debates and discussions among policy makers and civil society have suggested that Tanzanians are not ready for

economic integration because they fear possible competition from their counterparts in the other member states.

However, we find, in contrast, that many Tanzanians believe that integration will make them better off economically. More than 40% believe that economic integration would make, “the availability of jobs, markets and trading opportunities” better for Tanzanians. This is compared to 21% who think it would make the situation worse. Tanzanians therefore appear to anticipate the possibility that integration may offer greater opportunities more than they fear the risks of potentially greater competition from outsiders.

Overall, a majority expects that integration will offer some political benefits in terms of improving democracy and reducing conflict in the region. But the margin is far slimmer - only about one-in three expect such improvements, compared to around 20% who think integration would make the situation worse, and higher proportions who say they don't know.

Thus, confidence in these political benefits is considerably weaker than confidence in economic benefits. And when it comes to corruption, we actually find that 29% of Tanzanians think that integration will make the situation worse. Therefore, it is not particularly surprising to find that support for political integration is much weaker than for economic

integration.

Since independence, Tanzania has remained politically stable compared to other East African member states. And since the introduction of the multiparty system in 1995, Tanzania has had peaceful political transitions, and its presidents have obeyed the constitutional limit of two terms in office. Uganda, in contrast, has experienced on-going border conflicts with its neighbours in Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. In fact, the northern part of Uganda is only recently emerging from a low-grade civil war that endured for more than two decades. Likewise, Kenya has experienced serious political conflict within the past year that has claimed many lives, and displaced tens of thousands from their homes.

Rwanda and Burundi, the newest members of the Community, have experienced far worse conflict than any of the other member countries, leading at times to a destabilizing influx of refugees into Tanzania, with negative impacts on the lives of average Tanzanians in particular regions.

Tanzanians may therefore have ample reason to be wary of allying their political fortunes so directly to their neighbours who have yet to fully resolve their own internal political tensions and conflicts. Tanzanians may also feel that any integration in this direction would extend these problems into Tanzania.

## CONCLUSION

Contrary to popular belief, most Tanzanians do not fear the economic aspects of joining the East African Federation. Various policy debates have created the impression that Tanzanians do not support economic integration due to concerns that they will not be able to cope with competition from their counterparts, particularly those in Kenya.

Therefore, we find that Tanzanians are more supportive of economic integration than is commonly assumed, and the multitude thinks it would improve the country's economic prospects by enhancing, rather than worsening, their access to jobs, markets and trading opportunities.

Tanzanians, however, do not support political and military unification. These findings signal that Tanzanians do not want to put at risk their political stability, which they have enjoyed for a long time.

It seems likely that the political and military unification in the East African Community will only get popular support if the other member states resolve their internal conflicts and disputes. Member states should therefore concentrate their energies on settling existing disputes before an East African Federation can realistically emerge.

Map 1: Member countries of the East African Community



Afrobarometer is a comparative series of national public attitude surveys on democracy, markets and civil society in Africa. It is an independent, non-partisan research project that measures the social, political and economic atmosphere in Africa. Afrobarometer surveys are conducted in more than a dozen African countries and are repeated on a regular cycle. Because the instrument asks standard set questions, countries can be systematically compared and trends in public attitudes can be tracked over time.

**Country and regional reports can be obtained from the Afrobarometer website: [www.afrobarometer.org](http://www.afrobarometer.org)**

Countries participating in the Afrobarometer include: Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

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Coordination is provided by the Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), and the Institute for Research in Empirical Political Economy (IREEP, Benin).

Several donors support the Afrobarometer's research, capacity building and outreach activities, including the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

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