

The “Northern Corridor Transport System”: Kenya and Rwanda join hands

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, November 21, 2008

[Afrol News](#) 21 November 2008

Region: [sub-Saharan Africa](#)

Theme: [Global Economy](#)

Kenya and Rwanda have agreed to accelerate the removal of all non-tariff barriers so as to enhance the existing bilateral cooperation and promote trade. The bilateral initiative comes after the East African Community (EAC) failed to agree on deepening regional economic integration.

In a communiqué issued in Kigali today at the end of Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki’s three-day state visit to Rwanda, Rwandan President Paul Kagame and his Kenyan counterpart agreed to count on deepening bilateral economic ties.

The two Presidents also directed respective ministries of both countries to work out “speedy implementation” of the agreed enhanced bilateral and technical cooperation by supporting each other through exchange programs, capacity building and skills development.

The two Heads of State underscored the importance of the so-called “Northern Corridor Transport System” to the economic transformation of the region. The corridor connects Rwanda and Burundi with the coast through Uganda and Kenya, instead of the shorter but very poorly developed connexion through Tanzania.

In this regard Kenya invited Rwanda to join a ministerial commission on the construction of a new standard gauge railway, alongside the existing Kenya-Uganda Railway, with the intention of extending it to Kigali and beyond. If realised, this would become Rwanda’s first-ever railway connection. For the Rwandan government, this is believed to represent an irresistible temptation.

At the regional level, President Kagame and Kibaki acknowledged the importance of an integrated regional market and expressed their “support for fast-tracking” the East African Community (EAC) integration process by expediting negotiations for the establishment of an East African Common Market.

For the Kenyan President, it was an important task to get the new EAC member Rwanda to go along with his fast-tracking demand. The Kenyan government is at loggerheads with its Tanzanian neighbours after the failure of an EAC ministerial meeting to agree on the terms for the establishment of a common market. Kenya has outrightly blamed Tanzania for the stalemate in negotiations, while Tanzania maintains cautionary steps must be followed, forcing for outstanding issues to be deferred to a March meeting next year.

The Kenyan Minister responsible for EAC, Amason Jeffah Kingi, thus yesterday proposed a new meeting in Uganda next year which will at least look into amend the 1999 Treaty, establishing EAC, that could see decisions made by a mere majority vote within regional

membership. The proposal has been met with a cold shoulder by Tanzanian officials.

But President Kibaki is now rallying for regional support to pressure Tanzanians to give up on their stances. Rwanda, which borders Tanzania but not Kenya, is already drifting towards the Kenyan viewpoint on EAC integration.

The original source of this article is [Afrol News](#)
Copyright © [Global Research](#), [Afrol News](#), 2008

[**Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page**](#)

[**Become a Member of Global Research**](#)

Articles by: [Global Research](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca