



Rusumo International Bridge and One Stop Border Post Improve East Africa's inland logistics

BY MUDINGU JOSEPH

As you approach the border, the sights of the new One Stop Border Post complex structure that houses the Customs and the Immigration offices, clearing agents and the banks plus the paved spacious parking lot for trucks in transit are something to reckon with. Stakeholders from Rwanda and Tanzania and officials from the Japanese Government convened at the Rusumo border to inaugurate a state-of-the-art bridge (inaugurated on January 2015) and premises of a one stop border post (inaugurated on 6th April 2016), the Japanese Embassy invited representatives of media to observe this site of Official Development Assistance (ODA) on October 12th 2016.

Constructed on the grant aid of the Japanese Government through the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to a tune of Rwf 14 billion for the Rwandan Government and the equivalent for the Tanzanian counterparts, the Rusumo Border Project plays a big role in improving the flow of goods and people between Rwanda and Tanzania and thus the central corridor of the East African region.

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Republic of Rwanda, Mr Takayuki Miyashita, said that the Government of Japan wishes to see a uniform system of a one stop border posts adopted throughout Africa's distribution network so as to enhance the interconnectivity among the countries of the continent.

He said that for Japan, infrastructure development is a key pillar for boosting economic growth in Africa and that there are many more Japan funded projects



that are underway, including rehabilitation of the Rusumo-Kayanza road that is to start soon.

RUSUMO INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE

Rusumo Border which is located in the central corridor of the East African Community serves not only

the trade needs of Rwanda but also is a passageway for cargo destined for Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and beyond.

An 80 meter long and 10.5 meter carriage way wide structure, the Rusumo International Bridge is a two-lane road infrastructure and has a loading capacity of up

to eight trucks with a total wheel-impact weight of 50 tons.

The infrastructure comes in to reinforce the old bridge commissioned into service in 1972 which, at over 40 years, according to engineers, was outdated and no longer matched the prevailing trade demands for the border.

Unlike the old bridge which had a single lane, meaning it could only take a single car with a wheel-impact weight of 8 tons at a time, the new bridge is a two-lane road infrastructure implying that, coupled with its loading capacity, can accommodate eight trucks at once; four from the Tanzanian and Rwandan sides respectively.

THE ONE STOP BORDER POST

The One Stop Border Post is one of a kind in the East African Community and sub-Saharan Africa in general,

will have everything cleared and ready to continue their journey.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Rusumo is one of East Africa's frontiers connecting the East African Community region to its two gateways to the rest of the world, the Port of Dar es Salaam and that of Mombasa, in Tanzania and Kenya respectively, which two connect the five member-state bloc to the Indian Ocean.

According to the Rusumo Border manager, Mr. Moses Kalisa, the introduction of the one stop border post has brought many benefits for both people and goods in transit.

"These new facilities have eased the movement of people and goods between our countries and the resulting effect has increased coherence in the border regions successively."

As the name suggests, the new structure has eliminated the need for both cargo trucks and passengers to make two stops in every crossing, at the Rwandan and Tanzanian side respectively.

The time passengers spend at the border has reduced from four hours to 30 minutes making the process more efficient now that both countries have immigration officials working together under the same unit and applying the same juxtaposed system.

According to the Deputy Commissioner for Customs Service, Rwanda Revenue Authority, Mr. William Musoni, the new facilities at the Rusumo border post have not only contributed to strengthen economic ties but also promoted the bilateral relationship between the two countries.

"The project has promoted private sector development, providing better living standards for the region's residents and supporting the development of the Central Corridor," he said.

The two-lane bridge built with high Japanese technology is easing passage by allowing two way traffic, thus increasing speed and easing movement of trucks,

in full operation having the immigration and emigration authorities of both Rwanda and Tanzania converging into one structure to serve the needs of people utilizing the border.

Under the new facility, goods and people in transit will only be required to make "one stop" after which they