



Press Release

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## **Citizens overwhelmingly support integration into the East African Community Large majority are in favour of single tourist visa, regional travel with ID card, joint infrastructure and free movement of labour**

**7 October 2014, Dar es Salaam:** Eight out of ten citizens (80%) think Tanzania should remain in the East African Community (EAC). In addition, nine out of ten (85%) approve (or strongly approve) of greater integration with Kenya and Uganda in particular. Six out of ten citizens also support increased integration with Rwanda (62%) and Burundi (59%).

These findings were released by Twaweza and the Society for International Development (SID) in a research brief titled *Let's build one house! What Tanzanians think about the East African Community*. The brief is based on data from *Sauti za Wananchi*, Africa's first nationally representative high-frequency mobile phone survey that interviews households across Mainland Tanzania. Data were collected in August 2014.

Aside from supporting integration, citizens broadly believe the impact of the East African Community will be positive. The strongest vote of confidence is economic, twice as many citizens think that the EAC will have positive impact (42%) as compared to negative (20%) on the economy of the country. Similarly more citizens think the EAC will have a positive rather than negative impact on security (37% against 20%), politics (35% versus 25%) and culture (33% versus 24%).

Over the past two years, headlines around integration have focused on the formation of the so-called Coalition of the Willing who joined forces and agreed to speed up integration processes. Although only 1 out of 5 citizens (20%) had heard about this development, of those 2 out of 3 (67%) think Tanzania should be part of it. Responses were more mixed among those who had not heard of the group with 40% in favour of joining and 43% against.

Although citizens appear to be largely in favour of the East African Community and greater integration in the region at a conceptual level, the most interesting findings emerged when they were asked about specific proposals. Their support is unequivocal. More than half of citizens approve of the following proposals

- A single tourist visa for the region (82% approve)
- Ability to travel across the region with a national identity card (82% approve)
- Joint infrastructure projects (78% approve)
- Free movement of labour (69% approve)
- A common passport (67% approve)
- Tax free trade (58% approve)
- A single currency (55% approve)

The only proposals which received lukewarm support are the creation of a joint army (64% disapprove), freedom of land ownership (70% disapprove) and a unitary government with a single EAC parliament (71% disapprove).

Looking to the future, Tanzanians are optimistic that the East African Community will be an important part of their lives with 4 out of 10 (42%) saying that the EAC will be strong with Tanzania as a core member. However only 1 out of 10 citizens (12%) think that trading with the EAC is a key opportunity for the country. The focus for the future was about tourism and mining valuable extractives which 6 out of 10 citizens (57%) thought presented the most important opportunities for Tanzania's future.

Aidan Eyakuze, Associate Director of Society for International Development commented on the findings: *"These findings force us to re-frame our thinking on regional integration. Tanzanians have spoken out strongly in favour of continued involvement with the East African Community, the specific proposals for integration and their optimism for our future within the EAC. This is in sharp contrast to narratives that imply that Tanzanians are against, or fearful of, greater integration in the region or that they have concerns about specific countries reaping disproportionate benefits from opening borders for goods, labour services or capital."*

Rakesh Rajani, Head of Twaweza, added: *"Citizens have spoken, almost with one voice, on how strongly they support and are optimistic about integration and the East African Community. The task for our policy-makers is to make sure we honour this demand and we ensure Tanzania is in a strong position to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by integration."*

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**Notes to Editors**

- This brief and the data contained can be accessed at [www.twaweza.org](http://www.twaweza.org), or [www.twaweza.org/sauti](http://www.twaweza.org/sauti)
- Twaweza is a ten year citizen-centered initiative, focusing on large-scale change in East Africa. Twaweza believes that lasting change requires bottom-up action, and seeks to foster conditions and expand opportunities through which millions of people can get information and make change happen in their own communities directly and by holding government to account.
- You can follow Twaweza's work  
**Web:** [www.twaweza.org](http://www.twaweza.org) **Facebook:** Twaweza Tanzania **Twitter:** @Twaweza\_NiSisi
- The Society for International Development (SID) is an international network of individuals and organizations founded in 1957 to promote social justice and foster democratic participation in the development process. Through locally-driven programmes and activities, SID strengthens collective empowerment, facilitates dialogue and knowledge-sharing on people-centered development strategies, and promotes policy change towards inclusiveness, equity and sustainability. SID has over 30 chapters, and 3,000 members in more than 50 countries. While headquartered in Rome, Italy, its main operational offices are located in Nairobi, Kenya, and Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania.
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