

Tanzanian Non-state Actors engagement in SADC Regional Integration from then to now



Background

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is committed to effective and genuine engagement with Non-State Actors (NSAs) in Southern Africa in order to deepen regional integration thereby reducing poverty among the people and attaining sustainable development. This is achieved through, among others, the creation of defined platforms for engagement, mobilization of financial, human, and technical resources for NSA engagement, and upholding of set principles and values that ensure citizen participation in the affairs of the region.

However, NSAs in Tanzania have for the last decade not had a functional national focal point and an SNC despite many halfway efforts. Efforts were made by TANGO which for a long time coordinated the various members and associate networks which included Human Rights (LHRC), Gender & Development (TGNDP), Media MISA, Youth (TYC), Faith-based organizations (TDG, CARITUS, BAKWATA, CCT) and Private Sector TPSE, Education (HAKI ELIMU), Agriculture (MVIWATA & ANSAF) Health (SIKIKI), Climate Change (FORUM CC), Land (HAKI Ardhi), Natural Resources (TNRF) Poverty Reduction (Policy Forum), Regional Integration (SADC-CNGO & EACSO national chapters) and the Trade Union Congress of Tanzania (TUCTA), Cross-border Traders (VIBINDO & TWCC) and HIV/AIDS (NACOPHA+).

TANGO was affiliated with the SADC-NGO and engaged in the SADC processes through these SADC-CNGO. The Non-state Actors reached out to the government and formed a national steering committee on SADC affairs which was coordinated by the SADC Desk in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and has two core-coordinator TANGO representing NSAs and the Poverty Unit of the Ministry of Finance. This arrangement was funded by SADC –CNGO of NGOs through the GIZ funding however no sooner had the funding ended than the mechanism stopped. It should also be noted at the onset that this was exacerbated by the fact that both TANGO and SADC-CNGO have been inactive for the last 4 years (SADC-CNGO Annual Meeting 2022).

Other halfway efforts to ensure effective CSOs engagement have been by collaboration of ESAFF and GIZ SADC Regional office in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2021 organized a meeting of a broad section of NSAs to strategize how they will collaborate in the implementation of the SADC Regional Indicative Development Plan (RISPID). A good work plan was formulated but has not been implemented up to now. More recent efforts have been by the SDGCA and ESAFF which have been under the engagement for Results: Capacitating National Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and their networks to effectively participate in the SADC regional Integration process which started last September. NSAs have since put in place an action for collective engagement with the government in the entire SADC Integration process. However, this plan has also not been implemented.

Rationale

Not only does the SADC Treaty provide for NSA participation and engagement but it has also put in place an engagement mechanism, guidelines, and a code of conduct for NSAs. However, evidence from the desktop research shows that Tanzanian NSAs (NGOs, CSOs, FBOs, Academic Associations, Labor Organizations, and Media) have not benefited from the engagement mechanisms due to lack of a formalized way of engaging in the SADC Process. This has largely been due to the lack of a national focal point and a SADC National Committee (SNC).

The SADC both through the engagement mechanism and the Code of Conduct for the NSA emphasizes the importance of the NSA's effective participation in ensuring inclusive and sustainable economic, social, and political development in Southern Africa (NSA Code of Conduct xx). As a result unlike other SADC States Tanzania has not done well on effective, institutionalized, and coordinated engagement NSA of NSA in the SADC integration processes. This can be evidenced by Tanzania's collective failure to mobilize financial, human, and technical resources for NSA engagement. This is coupled with Tanzania's lack of seriousness on the issues of upholding set principles and values that ensure effective citizen participation in the affairs of the SADC region.

Purpose of the case study

The study sought to see what the impact of lacking a national NSA focal point and SNC is on the Tanzanian NSA's capacity to effectively and beneficially engage in the SADC regional integration processes. The study also aimed to provide recommendations on steps that should be taken by the government and the NSAs themselves to ensure that Tanzanian NSAs effectively and beneficially engage in the SADC Integration process.

Summary of findings

Opportunities, best practices, barriers, challenges, and points of learning Opportunities An opportunity exists in that the government is very willing to form the SNC and has left the process of formulation to NSAs (CSOs & PSOs) to organize themselves and then deliberate with the government on ways of formalizing the SNC. On the other hand, the NSAs have since last December put in place a loose coordination mechanism that is representative of a broad section of CSOs. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been and is willing to play the coordination role of all government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) responsible for the SADC integration process. This can be evidenced by bringing together senior officials from the Planning Commission, Ministry of Industries/Trade and Agriculture to a multi-stakeholders meeting called to deliberate how Tanzania will collectively engage in the SADC RISDP which was jointly organized by ESAFF and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is envisaged that if the NSAs and Government can ride on the already existing linkages the Tanzania SNC will be very effective and inclusive—this is so because the NSA themselves did in a meeting organized by the SDGs Center and ESAFF agreed on the road map and process for formalizing the SNC.

Another opportunity is the SDGA and ESAFF ongoing Engagement for Results: Capacitating Regional Civil Society Organizations and their networks to effectively participate in the SADC regional integration process. The project has provided meeting space for the government, NSA (PSO/CSOS), and the Media and these have made them come up with very good road-maps for collaboration and formalization of the SADC National Committee (SNC) and selection of a National focal point. In fact, the last SDGA/ESAFF meeting put in place a multi-stakeholders steering committee which comprises PSO (chamber of commerce & private sector coordination organizations), media (association networks), and Civil Society (thematic area lead coalitions). Last but not least opportunity is the availability of academic and in-the-field experts on regional integration who are willing to drive the process of building the NSA's capacity for engaging in the SADC process as is the case with the NSA's engagement in the East African Community (EAC) integration which is more successful.

Another opportunity is the integration of the media in the NSA loose coalition which is proving effective at rolling out the SADC integration agenda to the majority of ordinary Tanzania (SADGA/ESAFF 2022). Best practice There have been previous and current best practices of government collective engagement on regional integration and these are the good ESAFF engagement of agriculture, the TWCC, PSPF, and TCCIA good engagement regarding business, and TANGO engagement with government in having a collective agenda regarding the SADC. The best practices have been explained in detail in specific case studies. According to TPSF, ESAFF, TANGO and TWCC the government has very appreciated the expertise PSOs and CSOs, especially on issues that need the perceptions and opinions of ordinary citizens because they have and reach and means to get such opinions/perceptions. The trio when sharing their experiences reported that the government has during the planning, budgeting, and evaluation of various SADC interventions worked with CSO and PSO who are referred to as NSA but this has been in an ad-hoc manner and due to lack of a national focal point and SNC it is the governance which has a prerogative of choosing whom to work with or consult on SADC issues.

Barriers

There is a lack of a national focal point and an SNC and this is coupled with the fact that the private sector does not have the same zeal as other NSAs because they have other and more direct means to engage in the SADC processes among them the SADC Business Council. The other barrier is that only a limited number of Tanzanian NSAs are knowledgeable about the SADC integration process and the benefits thereof (SDGA Mapping 2022).

As a result Tanzanian NSA has not benefited from Article 16 A (4) of the Treaty which states the roles of the SNC as being, inputting in the SADC Policy, Strategies and Action planning at a national level, coordinating and overseeing the implementation of SADC program design at a national level, initiating project and issue papers as input to the formulation of the RISDP and having sub-committees which are responsible for ensuring rapid implementation of programs which would have otherwise waited for a formal SNC meeting.

For sustainability, FORUMCC also provided space to embrace the voices, actions, and contributions of young people in building a better world and climate-neutral future. We gave Primary, and secondary school students an opportunity to highlight their engagement in climate action at the local, national, and global levels building momentum for their full participation in the UN Climate Change process. For the last three years (2019-2021), more than 6000 youth including those from Higher Learning Institutions were involved in various scales and approaches such as Youth Digital Activism (YDAs), and Community Resources Persons (CRPs).

In conclusion:

Addressing climate change requires bold actions and massive investments across key economic sectors. This is because Climate change is one of the most important issues on the global political and economic agenda, yet it has taken at least 20 years to become an international priority. In many ways, this is because climate change was originally communicated as a scientific problem. Complex, confusing, and at times contested scientific information resulted in a slow public and political response to the climate crisis. The climate change debate has also taken place in industrialized nations, among a public largely safe from its worst effects. For many, climate change is an abstract concept.

Learning points

The Tanzania NSAs which have tried to engage the government in regard to participation in the SADC processes have been very successful, therefore collective engagement through a formalized manner can be even more beneficial. Through the SDGA's Engaging for Results program and the ESAFF GIZ initiative there is a fairly good loose network of multi-stakeholder NSAs in Tanzania what remains is to formalize this network into an SNC and put in place a strong national focal point (in fact there is also a steering committee in place). The planned activities under the SDGA's Engaging for Results present an opportunity to actualize the Tanzania SNC and the national focal. To this end, URT has engaged with Tanzania NSAs for many years, albeit on an unstructured and ad hoc basis By the implementation of such initiatives as the Engaging for Results there is a new impetus by the SADC in regard to improving the coordination and management of NSA's engagement in the SADC process.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusion

To this end, URT has engaged with Tanzania NSAs for many years, albeit on an unstructured and ad hoc basis which is evidenced by the lack of formal and strong NSA engagement structures. But good working relationships between NSAs and the Government exist and there is political and government will to support NSA participation in the SADC processes (Government & NSAs RISDP Meeting Report 2021).

Recommendations

For NSAs to effectively and beneficially participate in the actualization of the recently adopted Mechanism for Engagement with Non-State Actors Frame there is a need to put in place a strong national focal point and an SNC for Tanzania. This should be preceded by consensus building first among the NSAs and between the NSAs and the government. The NSAs should ensure that a broad section of citizenry formation is represented on the SNC.

There is a need for government to institutionally support the establishment and operation of the national focal point.

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