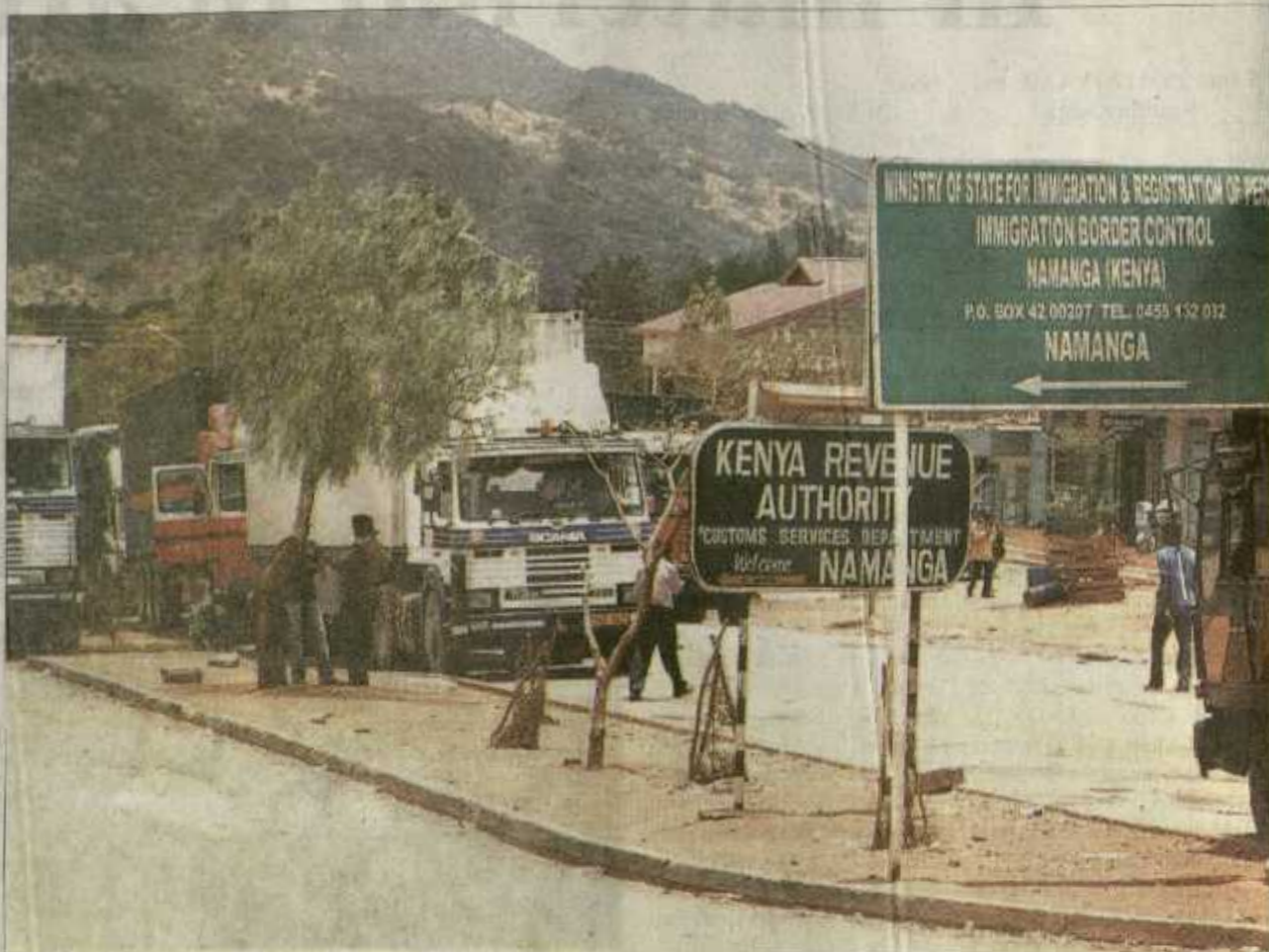


Cheers as EAC single customs territory rolls out further



LORRIES at the Holili border post. Tanzania has increased goods to be cleared under the EAC Single Customs Territory (SCT) arrangement that is aimed at easing cross-border trade in the region.

By **DAILY NEWS REPORTER**

THE integration process for the East African Community (EAC) member states is moving a notch further as Tanzania increased goods to be cleared under the EAC Single Customs Territory (SCT).

The Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA) released a list of goods that will be cleared under the new arrangement effective yesterday whereby clearance of goods will be done at the country of destination while the goods are at the first point of entry.

In its notice to importers, exporters clearing and forwarding agents, TRA said sugar, rice, maize and edible oil manufactured and traded within the East African Community region between Kenya and Tanzania will be cleared under Single Customs Territory as of yesterday.

Other goods falling under the same category include neutral spirits, alcoholic products, cigarettes, iron and steel products and soaps and detergents.

The new arrangement applies also to cement and

salt manufactured and traded within the East African Community region between Tanzania and Rwanda, the revenue body said.

And this applies also to all goods originating from Uganda or Tanzania and traded between the two countries.

Likewise, transit regimes shall only apply to goods originating from foreign country and destined to a foreign country through the Partner States or a Partner State. The arrangement further reveals that a single regional bond system shall apply on transit goods.

While goods imported for temporary use into a Partner State will not be subjected to customs duty, temporary imported goods when removed from one Partner State to another shall be subject to a regional bond.

Tanzania had joined Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda in rolling out the clearance of goods under the East Africa Community Single Customs Territory (SCT) from 30th June this year with cigarettes, neutral spirits and detergents.

The new development in the EAC Single Customs Territory is an important

milestone in the integration process in the region initiated with the re-establishment of the East African Community which aims at deepening political, economic and cultural integration between the countries through trade and investment and working to improve the quality of life for their people.

With an area of 1.82 million square kilometres and a market base of more than 141.1 million people who share history, language, culture and infrastructure the five EAC partner states have a unique framework for regional co-operation and integration.

The integration process is expected to be achieved through regional free trade areas, progressing towards customs union, a common market and ultimately monetary union before political federation.

The journey to integration was cemented in 2004 when a Customs Union protocol was signed for its implementation to begin a year later. In 2010 the EAC Common Market was established and in 2012 EAC summit decided to implement single customs territory albeit in phases where it began at the

Northern Corridor. It was agreed that this year the SCT will be fully rolled out.

It is expected under SCT there will be seamless flow of goods to enhance intra EAC trade by lowering clearance costs of goods within the EAC region through shifting of physical controls to electronic clearance processes.

So far so good. We have registered tremendous success. It is a great leap in the integration process. However, the progress so far has also brought up some challenges which hold back the ordinary people in East Africa from enjoying the benefits of integration.

I am referring to the challenges in the form of non-tariff barriers to trade manifested in form of the roadblocks, weigh bridges, inspection requirements and cumbersome documentation procedures at customs points. All these are leading to an increase in the cost of doing business in the region.

We bank on the governments of EAC member states to continue addressing these challenges so that the aspirations of establishing the block will be realized for the benefits of the people of the region.