



Tanzania – Host Country of the Next CBF Plenary Assembly

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Tanzania is a United Republic formed on April 26, 1964 by the union of the states of Tanganyika on the East African mainland and Zanzibar (the Indian Ocean islands of Unguja and Pemba). Mainland Tanzania became independent on December 9, 1961. It was a German colony before it was passed to the British by the end of the First World War in 1918. Zanzibar became independent on January 12, 1964 after overthrowing the Sultan of Oman.

I. Geography

Tanzania, East Africa's largest country, covers 945,087 km² (364,875 mi²). The country consists of Tanzania mainland and four islands: Ukerewe, Mafia, Unguja and Pemba (the two last-mentioned build the archipelago Zanzibar). There are four major cities: Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, Mbeya and Arusha. Dar es Salaam for all practical purposes is the capital as Dodoma, the proposed political capital, is still under construction. Nevertheless, the 323 member parliament sits here. But the state house, many ministerial offices and many offices of parliamentary committees are still hosted by Dar es Salaam. Actually, Dar es Salaam is the country's busiest port and the terminus of three main railway lines: the southern line to Zambia, the western line with branches to the shores of Lakes Victoria and Tanganyika and the northern line to Kenya.



Covering a very big area, Tanzania has varied climatic conditions varying from the very humid tropical coastal region to the dry central plateau, semi-temperate mountains, grasslands, bush and semi-desert. Temperatures vary substantially. Highlands have cool or cold temperatures whereas lowlands, especially the coast of the Indian Ocean have hot and humid temperatures, so altogether temperatures vary from below 0° to approx. 38° C. As expected, the low lying archipelago Zanzibar has a tropical climate suitable for the production of spices for export and the bulk of the world's cloves comes from the Pemba Island plantations.

The Indian Ocean lies to the east of mainland Tanzania (Tanganyika); to the north is Lake Victoria, Kenya and Uganda. To the west lie Rwanda and Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire) across Lake Tanganyika and to the south lie Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique. This considerable topographical variety is accounted for by volcanic activity and faults associated with the rift valley which have given mainland Tanzania the highest and lowest points of Africa. The highest point in Africa is Mount Kilimanjaro with a permanent ice-cap at 5,950 metres above sea level and opposite to Mount Kilimanjaro is the floor of Lake Tanganyika which is 358 metres below sea level.

Tanzania has several rivers both seasonal and perennial; among the latter ones are Rufiji, Ruaha, Ruvuma, Ruvu, Malagarasi and Pangani. The largest river, Rufiji, has considerable potential for irrigation and hydroelectric power. Power is generated at Mtera and Kihansi on Ruaha River, Nyumba ya Mungu on Pangani River and at Kidatu on Rufiji. Rufiji is one of the major rivers draining into the Indian Ocean. Other rivers drain into the interior basins of lakes Tanganyika, Victoria and Malawi.



Tanzania is divided into two rainfall patterns: one-season and two-season rainfall regimes. In the southern, south-western, central and western regions, there is the one-season rainfall regime from November or December to April. Two-season rainfall regime occurs over the coast north of Mafia and its hinterland, the islands of Unguja and Pemba, the north-eastern highlands and Lake Victoria basin. The long rains fall between March and May while the short rains fall between September and December.

II. Economy

Tanzania's economy is growing at present. Since 1964 there has been a marked contrast between Tanzania's economic problems and its political achievements, although some of the economic problems can be ascribed to President Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere's political decisions. He committed the country to African socialism (Ujamaa) and rural development and gave massive economic power to the state. The consequences included corruption and inefficiency. Rigid state marketing policies and low prices discouraged many large scale producers, and production of many cash crops declined.

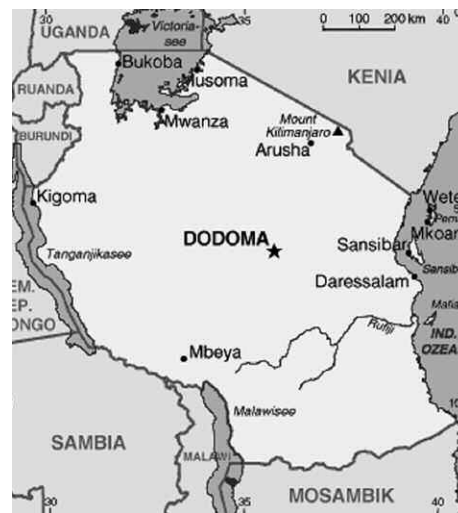
The country depends heavily on farming. Yet there are very few plantations and so it depends on small scale farmers and peasants. More than 85 percent of Tanzanians are peasants living in rural villages, cultivating crops to feed the country and cash crops for export. Principal exports are coffee, cotton, tobacco, tea, cloves, diamonds and cashew nuts. Pastoralists, especially the Wamasai and the Wasukuma keep cattle, goats and sheep. The contribution of livestock keeping is yet to be encouraged as the country has not benefited very much from it.

Tourism is a chief foreign currency earner in Tanzania. The country is blessed with many tourist attractions ranging from Mount Kilimanjaro to the beaches of Zanzibar. There are big game reserves, including Selous and famous national parks Serengeti being the most well-known.

Upon gaining independence Tanzania was self-sufficient food-wise and remained so even during the First Five-Year Plan (1964 to 1969). In those days agricultural production grew faster than the population. Unfortunately, in the course of time, political decisions, drought and rampant economic mismanagement by many state-run companies have changed the situation. Consequently, Tanzania is forced to import cereals like rice and wheat to meet the needs of its quickly rising population. In the same environment, there have been embarrassing problems in the production of major export crops, compounded by falling world prices, free

market and globalization. As expected, the decline in cash crops production causes a serious shortage of foreign currency earnings and the problems caused by this shortage are felt by every Tanzanian.

History has it that in the late 1970's economic problems and the cost of the war against Idi Amin of Uganda led to a crisis in Tanzania. It is to be admitted that for many years the economy has not grown



to meet the needs of the people and Tanzania has failed to solve its problems without outside financial and technological assistance. There were problems of shortage of foreign currency, mounting trade deficits, inflation, high

level of international debt and very slow economic growth. To start solving these problems the government devalued its currency. It also imposed austerity measures and began negotiating with the big international financial bodies, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, but at first, Tanzania hesitated to meet IMF conditions especially austerity measures and liberalization of the economy.

It was only in 1986 that an agreement was reached. Thereafter, Tanzania devalued its money, checked official expenditure and gave incentives to private producers of export crops. It also strengthened the private sector, though at the expense of the public sector. These steps and decisions seemed to pay good dividends. The country was rewarded firstly by easier servicing and repayment of its international debt, secondly by substantial foreign aid and thirdly by debt cancellation by some friendly countries. Due to these developments the economic recovery programme started working from the late 1980's on; mining and agriculture picked up and exports rose.

Being one of the developing countries, the mining and industrial sectors are very small. For many years, diamonds, mostly from the Williamson Mine, Mwadui, Shinyanga Region, were an important export. Right now there are gold mining activities going on in Kahama and Geita Districts but how much Tanzania gains from them remains to be seen. Iron and coal reserves are yet to be exploited. Gas deposits have been discovered and gas is already helping to gener-



ate power for Lindi and Mtwara Regions as well as for the national grid. Recent prospecting fills Tanzanians with great hope. It may lead to the discovery of rich oil and mineral deposits worth developing for eradication of poverty. Due to privatization, the limited industrial sector was working far below capacity. There were two reasons for the poor performance: serious lack of foreign capital to buy necessary equipment and the inefficiency and dogmatism of officials in state-run industries. Of late, foreign companies have been welcomed to invest in the country. With its peace and security, Tanzania is right now known as a heaven of investment. Still, simple citizens wait for change in their day-to-day life. What is claimed in the mass media has yet to filter down to the common people.



Dar es Salaam

III. The people

The population is estimated at 38,300,000. It is a mere estimation for the last census was held five years ago. Tanzania has 120 Bantu ethnic groups, and scores of Nilotes, Shirazi, Arabs and Indians besides. Harmony reigns among these groups. No single group is as large as to attempt to dominate the others. Tanzania is one of the very few African states which have not experienced tribal rivalries. Though its people are aware of tribal distinctions, they tend to put their nation first. Tribute to this rather unusual fact should be made to the first President, Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere whose deliberate efforts to unite his people through education, national service program and the use of Kiswahili as a common first or second language successfully managed to soften the differences among the Tanzanians.

In Zanzibar, there are more non-Bantu ethnic groups. There are three groups of people on the islands: Arabs, "mainlanders" and Indians. Arabs are the

descendants of Arab immigrants whose ancestors came from Shiraz in Persia and who ran the slave trade before its abolition in 1880's. The "mainlanders" are descendants of the slaves plus more recent immigrants from the mainland. Lastly, there are people of Asian descent, especially Indians, who entered the county mainly as traders.

English and Swahili are the official languages, but each ethnic group has its own mother tongue.

Dominant religions in Tanzania are Christianity (43%) and Islam (40%). The majority of the rest (17%) are followers of traditional religions but have no official organisation. Hinduism is the religion of Indians and some other Asians practise Buddhism. With exception of some religious skirmishes caused by some Moslem fundamentalists and fanatics from 1986 to 1995, Tanzanians live in a committed religious harmony and mutual tolerance. By constitution, Tanzania is a secular republic. It has no state religion but its citizens are free to join and practise any religion of their choice.

Just like in many other countries in the world, in Tanzania Christians are divided. The majority are Catholics, followed by Lutherans and Anglicans. Pentecostal Churches have been "prolific" as elsewhere. Among them, more than 200 sects can be located mainly in five metropolitans: Dar es Salaam, Songea, Tabora, Mwanza and Arusha. The Episcopal Conference is well organised and it runs its activities through a secretariat seated in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania Episcopal Conference Centre, Kurasini. It is at this Centre the 7th CBF Plenary Assembly is going to take place from June 24 to July 4, 2008.

Moslems are not free of divisions, either. The majority are Sunnites, followed by Shiites. Together with them, there are some followers of much smaller groups such as the Ahmadiyya and the Ismailiya. The Sunnites are usually peaceful Moslems, that is, most probably, another reason why so far religious differences have caused no special problems in Tanzania. Some radicals, however, seek confrontation between Moslems and Christians. Radical Moslems formed groups to circulate in the country. In response, radical young Christians formed their own team called "Biblia ni Jibu" to work in the same fashion. All official bodies of both religions do not support the activities of these people, as they sow hatred and intolerance among, otherwise, peaceful believers.

Christian denominations, as it were, are competing for followers. The Catholic Church is trying her level best to keep her flock together through preaching, and to the radio station "Radio Maria" as well as through diocesan radio programs and the national Catholic weekly, *Kiongozi*.



The Episcopal Conference Centre in Dar es Salaam

IV. Political situation

Tanzania is a democracy and since 1995 a multi-party republic although it was a single-party republic till then. The present head of state is President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete who won the multiparty elections held on December 14, 2005. According to the constitution, a president is brought to power for a five-year term, but he is allowed to run for a second term. In Tanzania, the President does not rule alone but with the help of two ruling bodies: the Cabinet and the National Assembly. The system is somehow different in Zanzibar whereby the ruling bodies are the Supreme Revolutionary Council of Zanzibar and the House of Representatives. President Jakaya Kikwete is the fourth president of the Republic, his predecessors were the Father of the Nation, Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere (1962-1985), Ali Hassan Mwinyi (1985-1995) and Benjamin William Mkapa (1995-2005).

At present the ruling party is Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) which – in a way – has been ruling since independence was brought about. Alongside CCM, there exist seventeen other registered political parties e.g. Civic United Front (CUF) and Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (CHADEMA). The opposition is, however, still very young and inexperienced.

Despite economic problems, outlined above, Tanzania has been in many ways a model of political and social stability. So far it has experienced very little tension in its life history. There was very little effective opposition to Presidents Julius Kambarage Nyerere and Ali Hassan Mwinyi. Usually, there is a very peaceful power transition. Only in Zanzibar due to its own history and culture, have there been some serious political upheavals. The island retained its own government under a Revolutionary Council and a president who is

also vice-president of Tanzania. What is more, Zanzibar has been allowed to share the revenues which are principally generated by resources located mainly on mainland Tanzania.

Information on Tanzania cannot be complete without giving President Julius Nyerere his due. During the 1960's and 1970's the history of Tanzania was dominated by him and his commitment to African socialism. Through his plans TANU became the only legal political party on mainland Tanzania in 1965. In 1967, the Arusha Declaration was announced. This declaration advocated the principles of egalitarianism and self-reliance and was followed by a novelty: the nationalization of schools, hospitals, banks and major industries which was accompanied by the construction of state run schools, hospitals, factories and the creation of community or co-operative farms (Ujamaa). Four years afterwards came the Dar es Salaam Declaration (1971) which called for political education and a people's militia. National service was compulsory for all college and high school leavers. Again, President Julius Nyerere championed decentralization and resolved to move the capital from Dar es Salaam to Dodoma.

In 1975, the National Assembly granted TANU legal supremacy as the only national political party. Following the formation of CCM (1977), a union between the TANU and the Afro-Shirazi-Party (ASP), as a means to strengthen the union, President Nyerere reshuffled his cabinet and picked a tireless follower, Edward Moringe Sokoine for Prime Minister Office (1977-80). President Nyerere was re-elected with massive support in 1980. But the fact that many members of the National Assembly lost their seats in the elections is interpreted by political analysts as a display of voters' anger at corruption, inefficiency and shortages. Some planned to stage a revolution in early 1983. Following its discovery, Julius Nyerere made Edward Sokoine Prime Minister again and declared a series of purges against corruption, smuggling and the black



Zanzibar attracts many tourists



market. The war waged against evil was tense and Prime Minister Edward Sokoine died before it ended.

In 1985 President Nyerere resigned the presidency but continued to influence the country through his position as the Chairman of the CCM. After Nyerere, matters took a different course. Under his successor, President Ali Hassan Mwinyi, Tanzania started to open the door to a more liberal path. Ex-President Nyerere and the party ideologists were not very happy at the move away from socialism, however, they admitted that economic problems had forced the country to modify its socialist position.

Tanzania has not remained an island to avoid its role in the international arena. In foreign affairs it has played a recommendable role. On his part, President Nyerere was one of the leading spokesmen for Third World and African causes. Tanzania was a front-line state to advance the liberation of countries like Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa.



Julius Kambarage Nyerere

Nyerere believed his country would not enjoy its freedom unless its neighbours were also free. Again, as a member of the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADC) Tanzania was a strong campaigner against racist policy in South Africa, the Apartheid. There were, however, two problems dwarfing Tanzania's influence in the world: its own

internal economic problems and problems with its neighbours.

Nyerere was among the first leaders to propose one African unified government. He differed with the then President of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, in the sense that he wanted gradual unification of the states. Kwame Nkrumah wanted instant unification. This problem resurfaced in this year's AU (African Union) meeting in Accra, Ghana. The African leaders were again divided between the two positions.

In the 1970's East Africa tried to think and live as a bloc. When Julius Nyerere led his country to independence he was wholeheartedly committed to serious cooperation with Kenya and Uganda. The three countries joined to establish the East African Community in 1967. With Kenya adhering to capitalism and Tanzania advocating Nyerere's African socialism quarrels issued leading to the closure of the border in 1976. In 1979, when Idi Amin of Uganda occupied Kagera area, even greater tension between Tanzania and Uganda broke open. President Nyerere who had given refuge and support to President Emilton Obote after he was ousted by Idi Amin Dada in 1971 had no

other option but to fight against Amin. This is one of the factors accounting for some economic problems which Tanzania has so far not managed to solve. To the uninformed audience, the mass media suggested that Tanzania was at war with Uganda just to help Ugandan dissidents to overthrow Amin (1979) and reinstate the ousted President. The real reason, however, was territorial occupation provoked by Idi Amin.

The East African Community collapsed in 1977 due to differences in outlook among the three countries. The page of the Community closed, it took a number of years to sort out the division of the assets and liabilities. To the west of Tanzania, there are two countries, Burundi and Rwanda, with deplorable history. In both countries, the Tutsi and the Hutu are struggling for supremacy. History has it that in early 1973 political relations with Burundi were very much strained after 342 tribal massacres. The massacres drove many people out of the country leading to an influx of refugees into Tanzania and to open battles on the border between Tanzanian and Burundi troops. Other influxes of refugees took place following genocide in Rwanda (1994) and civil war in the then Zaire (1996). Peace has been brought about and wounds substantially healed with the passage of time. That is why the borders with Kenya were reopened in 1983. Political and economic relations with Uganda have improved under the presidency of Yoweri Kaguta Museveni since January 1986. The East African Community is partially revived. It has its parliamentary seat and headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania. What is more, now the three countries are dreaming and planning of an East African Federation by 2015.

To conclude this short description of the position and situation of Tanzania, it can safely be admitted that Tanzania and its leaders made some mistakes in some options. To implement the idea of African socialism, President Nyerere took for granted his people's conviction and readiness to collaborate. As such the hasty implementation of doctrinaire policies by socialist idealists created a good number of internal and external opponents. Open opposition and sabotage ultimately made the people suffer and national growth failed to keep up with the rapid population growth. All the same, politically and socially, Tanzania has given its people recommendable stability and has saved itself from the horrors of military coups and civil war so common in other African countries. Tribute to the ideas of the ex-President, Julius Nyerere! Obviously, he now earns the respect and gratitude of his people, despite his mistakes.

Under his successors, Presidents Ali Hassan Mwinyi, Benjamin Mkapa and Jakaya Kikwete, seemingly more pragmatic policies have led to a higher standard of living for Tanzanians. One sees new tarmac road proj-

*Jakaya Kikwete*

ects, shops filled with imported goods, roads jammed with imported vehicles, new buildings rising up, dispensaries, primary and secondary schools being built. But we have no sure evidence to affirm whether many common people really profit from the change. Obviously to many of them

challenges of poverty, illness and ignorance are still haunting their families.

Problems of poverty, illness and ignorance are rampant in the developing countries, not only in Tanzania. The three cause and feed diseases and diseases cause and feed them, which is a vicious cycle. Indeed, developing countries are afflicted in every way and from every direction. The root causes of their problems are not only poor politics and mistakes committed by their people. In fact there are both internal and external causes accounting for their problems. Among internal causes there are such things as corruption, poor governance, selfish ambition and struggle for power, poor planning, laziness, disease, ignorance etc. but also among external causes there are political and economic interference, unfair world market, sabotage of political and economic plans, sales of arms, imposition of leaders preferred by powerful nations etc. This is to say: unjust world market, exploitation, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and globalization are also to blame. Which country among the developing countries has really been left alone without foreign interference?

*Dodoma, seat of the Tanzanian parliament*

Right now, there is no level playing ground for all countries. Free market is preached, but this is not essential for poor countries. To put developing countries on the right track, it is fair trade which is required instead of free market. How will the countries in question develop if they are only asked and helped to buy and never helped to produce or manufacture goods to sell? Can

a “market” turn into an economic power? Can a buyer, who doesn’t sell anything valuable to others become rich? Is it not an unattainable dream to achieve the millennium development goals by 2015?

*Dodoma, capital of Tanzania*

African countries are considered a profitable market and so they have never been helped to become genuine trade partners. Right now, there is a second scramble for Africa in process. On the continent, Western countries, USA and Japan are battling to ward off new economies. South Korea, Russia, Turkey, India, Brazil, Malaysia and Thailand are new but very aggressive economies. As a sheer market African countries are flooded with cheap goods as well as second-hand ware ranging from underwear to mobile phones and cars. In this situation, greed is fanned in the continent just to enhance the market of guns, bombs and other arms. Wars are destabilizing poor countries and are producing thousands of refugees. There isn’t any desire and deliberation to give the developing countries any substantial technological input. For cruel business magnates even suffering and disease of the people in the developing countries are a blessing for they open the market of medicines and other articles required for treatment.

Quite honestly, assistance to curb AIDS, malaria and other diseases and sporadic financial assistance here and there, even though required and appreciated now, will not take Africa to any appropriate levels of development. Technological input would have taken developing countries in that direction.

There is no problem the effects of which remain within a fenced area. The problems of Africa are spilling over to affect even the developed countries. This is seen in

*Mount Kilimanjaro*



the numbers of Africans and others from poor countries who stowaway to enter European countries and USA. To check these illegal refugees and immigrants, new laws and restrictions are being established.

Finally, what is happening in poor countries, right now, is also a failure of the Gospel, Christianity and all sister religions. Is the love we proclaim totally and sincerely put into action? The answer must surely be no. We have thus to continue appealing to the consciences of all Christians and human beings in general and of whichever faith to translate their words into action. The neighbour is yet to be loved in practice. Only sincere love and fair play will curb economic injustice in the world and extinguish the fires of globalisation which are burning down the developing countries at present. The Catholic Biblical Federation comes to hold its 7th Plenary Assembly on a suffering country and in a suffering continent, what will its contribution be towards the alleviation of the problems of the people? ■

Tanzania



Size:

945,087 km²/364,875 mi²

State form:

United Republic

Population:

38,3 Mio. (estimated)

Languages:

Swahili, English, 127 local languages

Religion:

43 % Christians, 40 % Moslems, 17 % others

Capital:

location of legislature: Dodoma (pop. 300,000);

traditional capital: Dar es Salaam (pop. about 3 Mio.)

Major Cities:

Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, Mbeya, Arusha

Highest Point:

Kilimanjaro (19,340 ft/5,895 m)

Currency: Tanzanian shilling (TZS);

rate of exchange: 1 USD = 1,175 TZS;

1 EUR = 1,734 TZS (Nov. 2007)

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