

The Role of Kenya's Economic Diplomacy in Enhancing Economic Resilience in the East African Community (EAC) Region

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ABSTRACT

Economic diplomacy is emerging as a critical pillar in the foreign policy of states around the world. The Kenya Foreign Policy Framework (2014) recognizes economic diplomacy as one of the key pillars of the state's foreign policy alongside peace diplomacy, environmental diplomacy, cultural diplomacy and diaspora diplomacy. The East African Community (EAC) region has a long history of fostering economic cooperation right from the time of the East African Cooperation up to date. This is the foundation of the shared economic objective of enhancing economic development for the region as a way of building resilient economies that can overcome global economic challenges that have been occasioned by globalization and the related complex inter dependencies among states. This has seen EAC states move towards regional integration efforts. This study examined broadly how this pillar is cast towards the realization of resilient economies in the East African region and how this contributes towards the region's economic development. It specifically focused on three crucial research objectives: first, is to examine the foreign policy formulation process touching on economic interests; secondly, is to investigate the key economic diplomacy strategies that Kenya employs in the region towards enhancing economic resilience; thirdly is to evaluate the achievements of Kenya's economic diplomacy towards the EAC region. The study employed an explanatory research design anchored on a mixed method of data collection employing the use of questionnaires and interviews.

Keywords: Economic diplomacy, economic cooperation, foreign policy, globalization and regional integration.

INTRODUCTION

Economic diplomacy is gradually emerging as an important component in inter-state relations. States are developing progressive strategies towards pursuing their foreign policy and national interest goals. This can be seen in light of changes taking place within the global political economic framework attributed to the emergent forces of globalization, regional integration, economic interdependence as well as complex multi lateralism around global and regional issues. These changes call for greater resilient measures on the part of states towards responding to these complexities. This has been exacerbated by severe global crises in recent years like the global economic crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic and more recently the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war. The 2021 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report prepared for the UK presidency of the G7 group of countries roots strongly for the need to enhance economic resilience by examining three core issues affecting the global economy: the risks, acute shocks and the chronic vulnerabilities the world faces (OECD, 2021).

This is vital towards the process of building sustainable economies around the world and the East African

Community (EAC) is not an exception. This paper argues that Kenya has adopted economic diplomacy as one of the key approaches towards enhancing resilient responses to her economic development needs as well as that of her neighbors regionally. The ultimate objective of economic diplomacy is the achievement of a state's economic growth and the associated development. Economic diplomacy can be generally defined as the process of international economic decision making that focuses on how states conduct their external economic relations, how they make decisions domestically, how they negotiate internationally and how these processes interact. The focus therefore is on trade, external investments, financial flows, aid, technological exchanges as well as bilateral and multilateral economic negotiations (Kurtulu?, 2008).

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Economic diplomacy has been greatly accepted as a viable strategy by other states across the world in both acceptance and wide application across the world by both industrialized and non-industrialized states. This presents new opportunities for states that need to be considered by foreign policy decision makers (Bergeijk et al, 2011). Foreign policy makers have to more than ever before contend with the need to link the relationship between economic diplomacy and their development needs (Hurd, 2011). The reality from the experiences of world states is that the developed and industrialized nations have taken economic diplomacy more seriously than their developing counterparts and for a much longer time. This therefore places it at the epicenter of Kenya's pursuit of her economic interests within the region.

Kenya's foreign policy formulation around economic interests does not depart from the underlying aspects guiding other components of her foreign policy. The major difference is that the focus is solely on key economic interests and concerns that the state has and how these are geared towards the attainment of her economic progress. The other aspect has to do with the key actors involved in the process as well as the input these individual actors play towards the formulation.

Wanyama (2013) asserts that with the changing global and regional order in the post-cold war dispensation, Kenya has had to reconsider her engagement in the pursuit of economic interests. In this regard, the state has had to adopt a pragmatic engagement on multiple levels. One, there is the national engagement as guided by the numerous economic policies and plans. The main component of this has been Vision 2030 that aims to make Kenya an economically advanced middle-income country by 2030. Second, there is the engagement at the regional and sub-regional levels. This is where the EAC as a focal point of her engagement comes in. To adapt to the changing international economic environment, Kenya positions herself regionally to harness cooperation and partnerships towards the promotion and advancement of her economic interests. Third is the international engagement with other economic and development partners to achieve her economic interests. This has seen her focus on her West and East partners.

Kenya continues to take an active role and engagement within the EAC owing largely to the long history of cooperation and partnership enjoyed with her partner states. Kenya has pragmatically positioned herself to advance her economic interests within this regional framework (Kisiangani, 2014). This can also be viewed from the focus Kenya receives from non-African partners as a key and strategic ally in the region primarily owing to its economic progress as well as its positioning as a regional diplomatic hub. This has seen it host a number of significant multilateral forums discussing pertinent economic issues. These include: a session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Trade Organization's Ministerial Conference and Japan's Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) VI.

Commenting on Kenya's foreign policy priorities, former Foreign Affairs Cabinet Secretary Ambassador Amina Mohamed indicated the triple components of peace, security and prosperity. She underscored the primacy of economic interests towards the pursuit of economic prosperity, a factor pursued through economic diplomacy (Kilmartin, 2016). In this regard, Kenya has emphasized on three key components;

first, the promotion of the country as the preferred investment destination; secondly, expanding the market access for Kenyan exports and third, strengthening regional economic communities and blocs. In this regard, Kenya favours the position of strengthening the EAC as a move towards expanding markets and also accelerating economic growth in the region.

The formulation process entails a multiplicity of actors and players, both state and non-state. In the former category, the President's role cannot be over-emphasized. Foreign policy has traditionally remained as an executive function since independence with the president taking a lead role. Successive Kenyan Presidents have remained at the forefront of enhancing Kenya's interests through their engagements with foreign leaders in the form of state visits and presidential visits and engagements. From a coordinating position, the MFA under the direction of the president coordinates all foreign policy related matters. This it does while engaging collaboratively and consultatively with other government ministries and agencies. Most of these government agencies play a critical advisory role regarding the key economic issues under consideration (Wanyama, 2013).

The input of the various actors involved in foreign policy formulation is significant towards the implementation of the foreign policies that are arrived at. The primacy of both categories of state and non-state actors is central towards a realistic and successful implementation of the foreign policies so arrived. Despite this, there is a considerable bias in implementation processes that see non-state actors ignored in the implementation of foreign policies (Stengel & Baumann, 2017). This is traceable to the domination of the implementation processes by state actors and in particular the Heads of State and Heads of Government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and also the diplomatic missions. It is needful to pinpoint that the multiplicity of actors involved present an environment that is characterized by continuous learning and all actors thus consequently enrich the implementation process and its environment.

Internationally, the dominant practice is that the respective heads of the executive spearhead and direct the foreign policy of their state and how it is implemented. This is key to giving the implementation a special focus to what the key national interests of the state are and providing a strategic direction of what aids in the foreign goals realization to achieve specified domestic interests (Clinton, 2011). The president for instance, as the head of the executive in a presidential system is solely responsible for the direction that foreign policy and its implementation take. Among the key areas of input are in terms of promoting the status and stature of the state within the international system, taking a lead in investment and trade promotion and also providing direction to activities of the MFA which in turn coordinate diplomatic missions overseas (Danda & Bako, 2012). It is necessary that these missions remain in firm control of what the strategic priorities of the state are at all times. With the growing importance of economic interests, it is notable that they have to take leadership in the implementation of all related policies addressing them.

For the MFAs, the key input is anchored around the coordination of the key efforts, activities and strategies that are geared towards the implementation of a state's foreign policy. The significance of this is that MFA as an entity is required to set the key priorities of what is to be pursued and what outcomes are to be realized. This has the implications that touch on resource allocation towards those initiatives. It is also incumbent upon MFA to provide the strategic direction that is necessary towards the formulation of a Grand National Strategy (GNS) to guide the implementation processes and strategies. There is the need to emphasize the primary role that any typical MFA has: that of managing the foreign policy of the state (Moses & Knutsen, 2001).

Towards this end, the MFA must endeavour to liaise with all the entities and players that are central to the achievement of its role. This thus calls for the need towards a reorganization of how MFAs are structured. The traditional structure envisaged MFAs that predominantly engaged with state players and key government actors whether domestic, bilateral and even multilateral. The new structure and approach that MFAs take must appreciate a number of dynamics that are manifesting themselves in the current

dispensation. These include; the new forms of interactions beyond state-sanctioned channels that have enhanced more individualized contacts, the growing involvement of non-government institutions in foreign policy concerns, the ever-increasing role of the private sector (Ibid). This changing environment presents a new opportunity for better, more refined approaches towards the implementation frameworks. In addition, it also provides a reflective opportunity to assess what implementation components have been undertaken in the past and the success level and impact they have led to.

A number of approaches are presented towards this end. One major focus from the literature has to do with the appreciation of the growing role of non-state private sector players in key areas of concern within the international system (Stengel & Baumann, 2017). This had led to an enhanced international positioning of these institutions particularly in the pursuit of private business and commercial interests. They are emerging in the current globalized world as the key drivers of the process of the integration and interdependence of the world through trade, investments and international advocacy and lobbying.

Keppner et al (2019) underscore the need to integrate the private sector in the efforts of states towards addressing pressing issues that touch on the economic development needs of the world. They call for a deliberate approach by governments to become intentional about how they engage with the private sector and other non-state players. There must be clear roles to be assigned in order to facilitate the implementation of foreign policies. This can however be seen within the broader context of the quest by states to enhance the survival of the nation-state as the primary actor within the international system. The reality is that the role that states continue to play continues to diminish with time. To the extent that states want to implement foreign policies for the achievement of their national interests, this must be backed by recognition of the mutual coexistence of non-state players within these states and with their own interests as non-state entities (Stengel & Baumann, 2017).

For meaningful implementation of foreign policies geared towards economic interests, the literature points to a number of engagements that have worked in different dispensations around the world. One key perspective is the need to adopt and implement multi-stakeholder collaboration (Valencia, 2006). This entails state and non-state actors to engage around implementation of pertinent interests. This entails finding a framework of how to engage private sector business players, NGOs and CSOs. Saner (2006) emphasizes the roles that non-state actors can play in foreign policy implementation through diplomacy particularly in the areas of campaigning, advocacy and lobbying. In this they can make use of their networks across regions and also globally to shape and direct discourse on matters of interest.

Viewed from the perspective of economic interests and economic diplomacy, this may be a worthy area of cooperation for state actors to explore. This can be understood through the prism of piecemeal social engineering. In bringing the various players together to work towards such implementations, it enhances a robust learning environment for all players. On the one hand they learn from the experiences of each other and on the other hand they enhance a contribution towards what effective implementation of foreign policies on economic interests portends for each of the actors.

In the area of implementing economic interests as a facet of foreign policy, the preferred instrument has been economic diplomacy. Moons & Bergeijk (2013) in a study focusing on 29 empirical studies on the trade and investment impact of economic diplomacy conclude that economic diplomacy aims to influence decisions on cross border economic activities pursued by governments and non-state actors. In this pursuit, it may cover a range of international representations like embassies, consulates and public sector business support facilities, domestic institutions like investment and export promotion offices, diplomatic bilateral activities like trade and state visits.

Economic diplomacy implementation is a critical task for diplomats whose main role (s) is to target actual and potential foreign investors, building on the presence in markets where such investors are to be found,

their knowledge of the local political and economic situation, their networks which they are expected to establish in the local business community and in government circles and their contact making skills (UNCTAD, 2011).

This therefore calls for critical skills and facilitation to enhance their work performance. Ruël (2013) notes commercial diplomats [used interchangeably in this context with economic diplomats] often lack resources to monitor activities undertaken by companies after trade missions and follow their progress. This implies lack of sufficient follow up to see through the realization of tangible interests for their sending states. This need will be even more persistent in today's globalization era where as Pogoso (2011) argues the challenge facing nations is how best to integrate into the world system, in a manner that not only preserves their sovereignty but also enhances their development. This calls for states to pay special attention to how their economic diplomacy is implemented to see to it that these twin goals [sovereignty and development] are realized.

Economic diplomacy is one of the five fundamental pillars of Kenya's foreign policy alongside peace diplomacy, diaspora diplomacy, environment diplomacy and cultural diplomacy. Economic diplomacy is inextricably linked to Kenya's quest as a developing nation to enhance her economic prospects. Ambassador Dr. Amina Mohamed, Kenya's then Cabinet Secretary in charge of the MFA in a preface to the foreign policy (2014) pointed out that economic diplomacy aims to realize a robust and sustained economic transformation so as to secure Kenya's social and economic development. The primacy of economic diplomacy has seen the state make an economic transition where a lot of focus is put on trade and investments necessitating a change in foreign policy to concentrate on economic diplomacy.

Kenya's rigorous pursuit of economic diplomacy therefore is closely linked to her national development aspirations. This can be attained through a pursuit of the key focal points towards the economic needs of the state that collectively constitute its economic interests particularly during economically tumultuous times which the immediate former Kenyan President H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, then as Finance Minister, recognized the need for more focused and structured partnerships built on past experiences to fully maximize the country's economic potential as a way of attaining the development objectives outlined under Vision 2030 (Republic of Kenya, 2009).

These collective aspirations seem to suggest the motivation for Kenya to continuously seek ways and means of remaining economically relevant. This has called for great dynamism in her economic diplomacy. This is yet another facet of Karl Popper's piecemeal social engineering that fosters continuous learning and re-invention towards responding to changing environments. Without such learning there would be serious implementation lapses that would hinder the realization of the optimal economic interests for the state. There is however scanty literature on the evolution of Kenya's economic diplomacy, a testament of the limited scholarly attention given to this critical subject. This can be viewed from the perspective of a serious limitation of viewing foreign policy focusing on economic matters as distinct from the broader aims of general economic policy.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study for this paper was guided by three objectives:

1. To examine the foreign policy formulation process towards Kenya's economic interests in the region.
2. To investigate the economic diplomacy strategies Kenya employs in the region towards enhancing economic resilience.
3. To evaluate the achievements of Kenya's economic diplomacy towards the EAC region.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted an explanatory research design that used a mixed method approach with a specific focus on the East African Community as the reference point. A mixed method approach was preferred since the focus of this study was on people's perceptions. Mixed method approaches are becoming increasingly important in understanding many social science phenomena that cannot be out rightly quantified and that are dependent on people's perceptions and opinions (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). On the other hand, this approach was informed by the need to contextualize the findings to a particular focus: in this case the EAC. Data was collected using semi-structured interviews where the study conducted 41 interviews from key informants situated in Nairobi City, Kenya. Secondary data sources were also referred to augment primary data sources. This was derived from a target population of 110 through stratified sampling as convenience sampling techniques.

The actual field work was organized into two components; first, interviews were conducted. Data analysis was consequently carried out. The initial interview schedule had to be reformulated after some inefficiencies touching on the depth of the questions posed were observed from a pilot on three respondents. Secondly, the researcher collected secondary data on the targeted institutions and in line with their relevance to addressing the research objectives and analyzed this as well. The study respondents were derived from organizations and entities most relevant to the focus of the study. These included the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Foreign Service Academy, the Ministry of East African Cooperation and Regional Development, Ministry of Trade, Industrialization and Enterprise Development and other key agencies supporting Kenya's economic interests namely the Kenya Investment Authority, Kenya Tourism Board and the Kenya Export Promotion and Branding Agency.

The study also targeted the following: private sector organizations with interests in the EAC (Kenya Private Sector Alliance and the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry), individual business players, members of Kenya's diplomatic community in the EAC region, academicians, scholars and analysts. In this latter category the Institute of Economic Affairs and the Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research and Analysis were considered due to their relevant work on Kenya's economic interests. All these categories of persons even when domiciled outside the city frequently travel to the capital for personal or official business. These respondents were targeted due to their involvement in core aspects relevant to the study, their access to information relevant to the study as well as their expert knowledge on the subject matter of study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was guided in its theoretical framework by the constructivism theory of international relations as propounded by Alexander Wendt in 1995. It was guided by three salient issues in constructivism: first, the idea of the social order around being a social construct of our own making; second, the perception of the nature of international relations as a byproduct of the interactions of state and non-state actors and these can influence foreign policy related outcomes and developments; third is the assertion that states adopt an identity anchored on interests that reflect the aforementioned interactions between state and non-state actors (Wendt, 1995). This theory was preferred since the desired foreign policy outcome that Kenya seeks to attain through her economic diplomacy can only be regarded as a construct that can or cannot be achieved depending on the appropriateness of the strategies employed. Secondly, the theory presents an analytical tool that can study in an isolated manner the different roles played by both state and non-state actors towards the different strategies employed in economic diplomacy

KENYA'S ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY AND ECONOMIC RESILIENCE IN THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY (EAC)

Kenya has in recent years prioritized economic diplomacy and this culminated in making it one of the key

pillars of the foreign policy as is contained in the Kenya Foreign Policy Framework 2014. From a constructivist standpoint, this can be viewed as informing the prevailing construct of what the state seeks to achieve in terms of her economic diplomacy and how this fits into her broader foreign policy formulation. Since independence, the state has paid close attention to economic growth and this has always been closely linked to the interests of her neighbouring states in the region. This went on from the 1960s all through to the turn of the current century. Economic diplomacy emerged as a key pillar of Kenya’s foreign policy during the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government (2003-2007) headed by H.E. Mwai Kibaki with the adoption of the Foreign Policy Framework which defined the vision of Kenya’s Foreign Policy as “to advance the interests of Kenya through innovative diplomacy.” (Republic of Kenya, 2009). It is clear that part of this ‘innovative diplomacy’ extends to economic diplomacy.

The success of Kenya’s foreign policy therefore can be evaluated on a broader perspective by the success of its economic diplomacy pillar. It thus presents a significant challenge for Kenya with regard to the effectiveness as well as the efficiency of this critical pillar in shaping the pursuit of its foreign policy goal(s). The economic diplomacy pillar of Kenya’s foreign policy is premised on among other objectives; to increase capital flows to Kenya and the East African region, to support export promotion and investment by Kenyan enterprises within the region and beyond, to strengthen regional economic communities and organizations to serve as competitive springboards to emerging and global markets and promotion of fair trade and equitable bilateral, regional and multilateral trade agreements (Republic of Kenya, 2014).

Economic diplomacy has been greatly accepted as a viable strategy by other states across the world in both acceptance and wide application across the world by both industrialized and non-industrialized states. This presents new opportunities for states that need to be considered by foreign policy decision makers (Bergeijk et al, 2011). Foreign policy makers have to more than ever before contend with the need to link the relationship between economic diplomacy and their development needs (Hurd, 2011). The reality from the experiences of world states is that the developed and industrialized nations have taken economic diplomacy more seriously than their developing counterparts and for a much longer time. This therefore places it at the epicenter of Kenya’s pursuit of her economic interests within the region. This is in tandem with a constructivist viewpoint that informs how states shape their international relations as informed by how they manage various complex components of their relations and in this case around economic interests and economic diplomacy.

The EAC as a region currently comprises Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The region’s real GDP growth for 2014-2017 excluding the DRC is presented as shown in figure 1.1 below.

Table 1.1: Real GDP Growths of East African Countries (2014-2017)

	2014	2015	2016	2017
EAC	5.9%	5.8%	6.1%	6.3%
Kenya	5.4%	5.7%	5.8%	6.1%
Tanzania	7.0%	7.0%	7.2%	7.2%
Uganda	4.9%	4.8%	4.9%	5.5%
Rwanda	7.0%	6.9%	6.0%	6.0%
Burundi	4.5%	-4.0%	-0.5%	2.0%

Source: Economic Survey (2017).

Data presented in table 1.1 above shows Kenya comes third behind Tanzania and Rwanda in terms of real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rising from 5.4% in 2014 to 6.1% in 2017. This contrasted with the real GDP growth for the entire EAC region on the same time frame shows that the state is not marginally off the region's growth rate. This underscores a context for the state's pursuit of a foreign policy anchored on a robust strategy to pursue a resilient strategy towards her economic interests within the region. This underpins the constructivist assertion of a social order that is regarded as a social construct of the state's making in terms of what can be defined as an acceptable economic objective. In this regard, Kenya's economic diplomacy has been pragmatically deployed in the context of the EAC and its integration initiatives. Cerere (2012) argues that this has to be viewed from both bilateral as well as multilateral perspectives. This entails Kenya's pursuit of economic interests at the regional level as well as when it has to do with bilateral relations with each EAC partner state. From the perspective of how Kenya's foreign policy is fashioned it is worth observing that there are multiple principles that have guided Kenya's foreign policy over the years.

This paper finds that over the years, the guiding principles particularly between 1963-1978 were Pan-Africanism, anti-colonialism, peace, non-alignment, African unity, African socialism, economic development, regional cooperation and good neighbourliness. In 1978-2002, the major principles were peace; love, unity, regional peace, regional cooperation, cold war politics and trade. From 2003 -2022, the key principles were economic development, economic recovery, the global economy, trade, investment, international cooperation, regional integration, economic diplomacy and the look East policy. This points to the fact that economic interests have progressively become the key concerns for Kenya's foreign policy and this includes the EAC region.

On a separate note, with regard to the foreign policy formulation, the findings from the field data point to the fact that Kenya's foreign policy formulation goes through a six stage process that begins with the drafting of a sessional paper by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) for cabinet discussion, followed by the collection of stakeholder views, thirdly is the formation of a deliberations committee by the MFA, fourth is the public participation exercise, fifth is sending the policy proposal to parliament for discussion and approval and finally is the integration of the policy within the MFA. This agrees with the constructivist assertion of the construct adopted by a state reflecting the interests of both state actors as well as non-state actors. In this context, the formulation process brings on board the views and interests of various non-state actor stakeholders to the formulation process. Whereas state actors play a dominant role in foreign policy formulation and in particular with regard to economic interests and economic diplomacy in particular, wider stakeholder engagement dictates that multiple interests have to be considered emanating from the aforementioned public participation exercise that includes non-state participants.

From the study findings, the foreign policy formulation, specifically on Kenya's economic interests in the EAC region involves multiple actors that can be categorized into two broad categories. These are the special role actors and the informal actors. Special role actors entails: the President, the cabinet, MFA, Kenyan missions abroad in the EAC region, parliament, security and intelligence agencies and government bureaucrats and technocrats. On the other hand, informal actors include: pressure groups particularly the business sector, the media, think tanks, academics, Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), civil society and regional players. These actors broaden the platform for state versus non-state actors' participation as reckoned from a constructivist angle.

Kenya has channeled a number of economic diplomacy strategies in its economic pursuits within the region. Musau (2015) observes that the promotion of economic interests is now given key priority. This calls for the resort to a number of strategies towards that end. The findings of this study show that Kenya has maintained very good relations with her EAC neighbors with 48.78% of the interviewees indicating this as 'very good', 29.27% indicated it to be 'good', 19.51% showed it was cooperative while 2.44% indicated it to be

‘competitive’. These findings underscore Kenya’s commitment to perceiving her economic development as being closely tied and intertwined with that of the EAC region. From a constructivist leaning, Kenya thus adopts a social construct that her economic development contributes to and advances that of the entire region as a whole. Towards this end, the key economic diplomacy strategies employed are as detailed in the table below:

Table 1.2: Kenya’s Economic Diplomacy Strategies in the EAC Region

Economic Diplomacy Strategies	Ranking
State Visits and Presidential Visits	20
Kenya’s EAC Diplomatic Missions	18
Infrastructural Development Partnerships	17
Investments, FDI and Trade Promotion	15
Kenya’s Branding Strategy	09
(Tourism, Culture, Heritage and Sports)	

Source: Author (2023)

From the table above, state visits and presidential visits are the most actively used with 20 interviewees indicating that they are the most dominant. The others are Kenya’s diplomatic missions to the EAC, infrastructural development partnerships, investments, Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and trade promotion as well as Kenya’s branding strategy that is mainly anchored on tourism, culture, heritage and sports activities. These strategies are in Kenya’s construct an embodiment of the measures that enhance the state’s resilience domestically and by extension the EAC region’s collective economic resilience. Grant (2011) notes that these intertwined strategies are pivotal towards the enhancement of economic interests.

The formidable relations created by states in the EAC region particularly around joint infrastructural developments like the northern corridor that connects states in the Great Lakes Region (GLR), the Lamu Port South Sudan Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) Corridor and also the remodeling of Kenya-Uganda railway are all great initiatives towards enhancing the realization of sustainable and resilient growth for the region. It is worthwhile to note that these infrastructural development partnerships are a byproduct of diplomatic negotiations between the region’s partner states. Their achievement helps in creating a conducive environment for trade and investment for the region as a whole.

In line with building economic resilience in the region, the paper finds that Kenya’s economic diplomacy has attained major achievements as detailed in the table below:

Table 1.3: Key Achievements of Kenya’s Economic Diplomacy

Area of Achievement	Ranking
Regional integration and development	33
Trade and investment	30
Regional cooperation	25

Source: Author (2023)

From table 1.3, Kenya's economic diplomacy has significantly contributed towards the EAC region's integration and development. This is in line with deepening the EAC integration framework as a way of enhancing the region's development. In addition, it has also achieved great milestones in terms of trade and investment opportunities for the state within the region both in promoting and securing markets and investment opportunities for Kenyan businesses and investors respectively. In addition, it has also been instrumental in attracting investment from other EAC partner states into Kenya. All this has collectively fostered a culture of promoting the region's cooperation not only on economic matters but also on non-economic matters.

Kenya remains to be the most dominant economy in the EAC region, a fact that is a testament to not only her economic standing but also the efficiency of her economic diplomacy. However, this growth trajectory is not gradual as compared to other states in the region. For instance, between 2013 and 2018, the real GDP growth rate was 5.9 per cent (2013), 5.4 per cent (2014), 5.7 per cent (2015), 5.9 per cent (2016), 4.9 per cent (2017) and 6.3 per cent (2018). On the other hand, real GDP [United States Dollar (USD) millions at constant prices] stood at 47,146 (2013), 49,671 (2014), 52,512 (2015), 55,599 (2016), 58,303 (2017) and 61,987 (2018) (EAC Facts and Figures, 2019). One can observe a sustained level of economic growth that is being realized which can be harnessed through a more robust approach to economic diplomacy by Kenya.

Kenya's economic interests within the EAC continue to be premised on an export oriented economic diplomacy. Vahid & Gitonga-Mutetha (2021) observe Kenya's focus has been to invigorate Kenyan exports to its traditional markets like the EAC and beyond as well as other non-traditional markets. This calls for a reliance on proactive bilateral and multilateral trade related agreements within the region. This serves the interest of countering a lot of the negative perception towards Kenya in the region that has fueled growing suspicion of the state as reaping more benefits from the region.

CONCLUSION

The Foreign Policy Framework 2014 asserts that Kenya's economic development is inextricably tied to that of the EAC region. This thus informs the state's pursuit of a robust foreign policy that is anchored on her economic diplomacy towards promoting economic resilience particularly in an increasingly globalized international economic environment. In this, guided by the desired social construct of seeing her economic progress and resilience being intertwined with that of the EAC region, Kenya must push towards efforts to create a sustainable and resilient economy in order to overcome the economic shocks that need to be surmounted in the wake of global and regional economic challenges. Towards this end, Kenya has pursued economic diplomacy as the most significant component of her foreign policy pillar. This paper highlighted the key guiding principles that informed Kenya's foreign policy formulation as well as the foreign policy formulation stages alongside the key actors in the process. It also addressed the key economic diplomacy strategies that have been employed towards the pursuit of her economic interests and finally the key achievements that economic diplomacy has achieved for the state in the region.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper makes three recommendations towards the enhancement of Kenya's economic diplomacy to promote greater economic resilience domestically and within the region. First, greater participation of non-state actors particularly those within the business and economic sectors in the private sector should be enhanced right from the formulation process of the state's foreign policy on economic interests to its eventual implementation. Secondly, there is the need to enhance the role of Kenya's EAC diplomatic missions in her economic diplomacy. This is cognizant of the fact that this strategy can be galvanized to coordinate the others to achieve a resilient economic outcome for the state and the region as a whole.

Finally, there is the need for the state to work towards a deepening of the EAC regional integration since Kenya views an economically resilient EAC region as good for her own domestic economic resilience.

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