

Tanzania is eyeing more port business from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) with an offer of exclusive transit clearance for cargo, signaling more competition with neighbours Kenya for the lucrative market.

According to a report this week, a delegation of DRC businesspeople and Customs officials toured Dar es Salaam and Tanga ports, assessing the offers and the business environment including tariffs and clearance times.

At the Kwana Dry Port, there is 10-hectare area allocated for handling DRC cargo passing through the Dar es Salaam. Most of the cargo to DRC's eastern regions passes through Kenya's Mombasa port. Tanzania's refurbished Dar port and the new Tanga Port are expected to raise the tempo of rivalry.

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Tanzania's Ambassador to DR Congo Said Juma Mshana said the Congolese were in Tanzania to strengthen trade between the two neighbouring states.

Tanzania currently attracts DRC shipping and transport firms to use the Indian Ocean ports of Dar es Salaam and Tanga then Lake Tanganyika ports of Kibirizi, Kasanga and Karama on Lake Tanganyika.

Karama has been modernised to handle the DRC transit cargo to minimise the time spent through Zambia. It will speed up cargo transport the Zambia route, and which takes up to two weeks for transit cargo from Dar es Salaam to be cleared at final destinations in Congo.

In turn, DRC has established a liaison office at the Dar port to facilitate the establishment and operations of its new shipping line, the state-owned Lignes Maritimes Congolaises.