



Tanzania signs deal on new bridge to cut time on central corridor

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TANZANIA: -

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania - Tanzania has struck a blow for the Central Corridor transport system, after the country signed a deal with two Chinese groups -- China Civil Engineering Construction and China Railway 15th Bureau -- for the construction of a 3.2km bridge over parts of Lake Victoria.

CEOAfrica gathered that the bridge will connect Kigongo and Busisi areas in Mwanza region, and help to link Tanzania to Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi via road. Currently, vehicles take about three hours to cross to either side of the lake via a ferry -- two hours in a queue to get onto the ferry and another hour to get to the other side.

"The bridge will reduce transport time and facilitate trade among countries in the region," said the chief executive of the Tanzania Roads Agency, Patrick Mfugale.

The government, through the Marine Service Company Ltd and Uganda Railway Corporation, has also set up a one-stop centre for the smooth haulage of cargo and passengers.

Tanzania's Minister of Works Transport and Communication Isaac Kamwelwe said that cargo lorries arriving at

Mwanza from the Dar es Salaam port will go directly to the freight ship destined for Uganda via Port Bell without their content being offloaded.

Efforts by Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda to revive trade and transport on Lake Victoria received a boost in November last year when Presidents John Magufuli and Yoweri Museveni signed a landmark deal.

Charles Kateeba, executive director of the Uganda Railways Corporation, the body that runs the port, said in a statement that Uganda's Mv Kaawa and Tanzania's Mv Umoja currently travel to Mwanza port via Port Bell.

Plans for a new ship to operate between Mwanza and ports in Kenya and Uganda in the next one year are ongoing as the ship is about 35 per cent complete, an official with information on the project said.

Uganda also plans to acquire a second ship -- with each running about 10 to 12 trips.