

# BUSINESS DAILY

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## Uganda takes lion share of trade at Port of Mombasa

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### Summary

- The 2018 port transit report places Uganda as the biggest user of the port where it had imported 7.4 million metric tonnes of goods last year.

Talks between Kenya and Uganda when President Yoweri Museveni came visiting last week mainly focused on the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) and operations at the Port of Mombasa.

The main reason the two facilities took centre stage is obvious to see; the 2018 port transit report places Uganda as the biggest user of the port where it had imported 7.4 million metric tonnes of goods last year. It was an increase from 6.5 million tonnes of goods compared with the previous year. The country's transit market share in 2018 was a massive 82.1 per cent . Between 2017 and 2018 cargo imports into Uganda increased by 0.9 million tones.

According to the report, Uganda was followed by South Sudan that had imported 563,663 tonnes which represented 7.6 per cent of the transit market share. DRC Congo came third with 413,249 imports representing 4.9 per cent.

The rest of the imports were Tanzania s 229,652 (2.6 per cent), Rwanda's 219,650(2.4 per cent), Burundi's 20,610(0.2 per cent). Other countries including Somalia, Ethiopia and Burundi had 0.1 per cent imports through the port. In total the Mombasa port handled 8.8 million metric tonnes of transit goods.

Transport and Infrastructure cabinet secretary James Macharia said Uganda is Kenya's biggest trading partner and one of its huge clients at the Port of Mombasa.

Addressing journalists at the SGR Miritini terminus before Mr Museveni boarded the Madaraka Express to Nairobi, Mr Macharia said out of the over 30 million tonnes of cargo throughput at the port, 25 percent is destined to Kampala.

"We trade hugely with Uganda compared with the rest of the East African Community member states. That is why we were delighted to host President Museveni at the port and at the SGR. He has seen for himself the entire operations of the port," the CS said.

Mr Macharia said the port relief line, with a capacity of 7.5 million tonnes per year, had greatly increased efficiency by facilitating direct transfer of cargo to SGR trains.

"We have shown President Museveni how the railway operates at the relief lines, therefore making the ferrying of cargo more efficiency," said Mr Macharia.

### **Inland Container Depot**

Mr Museveni later witnessed how containers destined to the Inland Container Depot-Nairobi are loaded to the cargo trains at the SGR cargo marshalling yard.

"We have also shown him how we are currently reclaiming the ocean to create an additional of another half a million containers capacity," said Mr Macharia.

With the Uganda-Kenyan trade volume hitting Sh100 billion last year, prospects of increased transport business between the two countries look bright.

Speaking in an interview with Shipping and logistics, Uganda Minister of State for Cooperative Fredrick Gume said his government was happy with the efficiency at the Port of Mombasa.

"For example, before it would take about three weeks to transport goods from the Port of Mombasa to Kampala. Now it takes three days," said Mr Gume.

He further said a one-stop-border post has enhanced cargo clearance.

"We have got the e-clearances, the one-spot-border posts and that has reduced the bureaucracy associated with the cargo clearance. So the trader or the transporter from Mombasa will take three days and equally his truck will be back also taking three days," he said.