

The NEWSLETTER Catalyst

Impact Beyond Borders

Kenya Shipyards Limited Courts Zanzibar in Strategic Maritime Push



KSL General Manager, Maintenance, Repairs & Overhaul Col. Francis Mutiso (R) hands over a gift to Dr. Khalid Salum Mohammed, Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, during a courtesy visit to the minister's office.

By The Catalyst News Team

Kenya Shipyards Limited (KSL) has intensified its regional expansion drive with a high-level five-day market reconnaissance mission to Zanzibar, a move that is already being hailed as a bold step toward cementing Kenya's leadership in shipbuilding, vessel maintenance and maritime logistics across Eastern Africa.

The multidisciplinary delegation led by General Manager for Maintenance, Repairs and Overhaul Col Francis Mutiso, undertook the strategic pre-visit as part of a broader plan to position KSL ahead of regional competition in the fast-growing maritime market of Zanzibar and the wider Eastern Seaboard of Africa (ESA).

Zanzibar, a semi-autonomous archipelago under Tanzania, is increasingly emerging as a critical maritime hub linking mainland



Catalyzing Shipbuilding Industry

MANDATE

To lead and catalyze the introduction of the new shipbuilding industry in Eastern Africa with a focus on meeting the local demand from Kenya Navy, Ministries, Departments and Agencies with maritime assets and other public and private domestic and regional clients.

VISION

To be the leading catalyst in the development of the shipbuilding industry in Eastern Africa.

MISSION

To establish and develop the growth of shipbuilding industry through the provision of world-class construction, refit, maintenance and repair of ships and other maritime services in a sustainable and efficient manner.

CORE VALUES

- 1. Integrity:** Observing the highest standards of ethics, honesty and accountability always.
- 2. Professionalism:** Delivering the best quality service to customers with utmost rigor and efficiency.
- 3. Team Spirit:** Working together in a spirit of creativity and mutual respect to achieve common objectives.
- 4. Excellence:** Quest for the highest level of performance through continuous improvement of skills and best practices.

CONTACT US

Office of the Managing Director

P.O. Box 9706 - 00200

Nairobi

Email: info@kenyashipyards.co.ke

Tel: +254 700 278 278

Public Affairs Office

Email: publicaffairs@kenyashipyards.co.ke

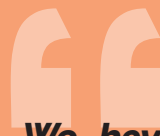
Tel: +254 726 277 377

Editorial Consultant

Jason Nyantino

jason@intentmediaafrica.com

Tel: +254 722 611 505



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East Africa with the Indian Ocean trade corridor. Its economy, historically anchored on spice trade and tourism, is now undergoing a significant transformation with authorities placing renewed emphasis on maritime transport and the blue economy as pillars of sustainable growth.

At the centre of the visit was a high-level engagement with the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport in the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar, Dr. Khalid Salum Mohammed, who warmly welcomed KSL's entry into the island's maritime ecosystem.

"I did not know about Kenya Shipyards Limited and so your coming here is an eye-opener for us that there is a government agency within the East African Community that we can collaborate with on a government-to-government basis to improve the lives of our people," said Dr. Mohammed.

The Minister acknowledged longstanding operational challenges faced by Zanzibar in maintaining its growing fleet of vessels, noting that reliance on distant private shipyards has often resulted in costly delays.

"We have been experiencing a lot of delays with the private entities where we have been sending our vessels for repairs and servicing because we didn't know about Kenya Shipyards Limited. From now on, we will be your ambassadors," he added.

Zanzibar's maritime sector is expanding rapidly, driven by increased demand for passenger ferries, cargo vessels, fishing fleets and tourism-related marine services. According to the Minister, the island currently has over 100 vessels registered under the Zanzibar Maritime Authority, underscoring the urgent need for reliable and accessible ship repair and maintenance services.

"Being an island, Zanzibar is fully focused on maritime transport and the blue economy as key drivers of our economy. We have over 100 ships registered with the Zanzibar Maritime Authority that offer transport, cargo, fishing and other services," he said.

The government is also investing heavily in new maritime assets, including vessels currently under construction abroad.

"We have new ships being constructed in Goa Shipyard in India which will be delivered in June. When they are delivered, they will definitely need servicing and repairs from time to time and we will need the services of Kenya Shipyards Limited in that regard," Dr. Mohammed noted.

Beyond conventional shipyard services, Zanzibar has also expressed interest in KSL's innovative offerings, particularly in safety-focused vessel design.

"With this partnership with Kenya Shipyards Limited, we will be glad to have KSL do our GRP boats and water ambulances because they are very critical in promoting our government's blue economy agenda," he said.

The endorsement from Zanzibar's leadership signals a significant opportunity for KSL to deepen its footprint in the region, especially as African nations push for greater self-reliance in maritime infrastructure under continental frameworks such as the East African Community and the African Union.

During the mission, the KSL team also engaged key industry players, including executives from Azam Marine Company Limited, one of the region's largest ferry operators and an existing KSL client.

Speaking during a courtesy call in Dar es Salaam, Azam Marine Chief Executive Officer Abubakar Aziz reaffirmed his company's confidence in KSL's technical capabilities.

"Azam Marine has confidence in Kenya Shipyards Limited and we will continue sending our vessels over to Mombasa Shipyard because your facility has the technical capability to handle our modern vessels," said Aziz.

However, he cautioned that rising demand for shipyard services in the region could strain KSL's current capacity



KSL General Manager, Maintenance, Repairs & Overhaul Col. Francis Mutiso (R) gifts Ms. Badria Atai Masoud, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar. On the left is Dr. Khalid Salum Mohammed, Minister for Infrastructure & Transport

if urgent expansion measures are not undertaken.

“But because of great demand for shipbuilding services, repairs and maintenance, Kenya Shipyards Limited might lose customers because of delays in scheduling vessels for repairs in your yard in Mombasa. You must expand and modernize your facility to meet the growing demand,” he advised.

Aziz further warned that increasing competition within the region could erode KSL’s market share if strategic investments are not made in time.

“If an investor puts up a shipyard in Tanzania, Kenya Shipyards Limited will lose business. It is time to expand your services by investing in more efficiency to handle more vessels,” he said.

Col Mutiso, who led the delegation, reiterated KSL’s commitment to delivering integrated maritime solutions tailored to the needs of regional partners.

“KSL is always committed to offer integrated maritime and engineering services such as shipbuilding and vessel construction, ship repairs and maintenance,” he said.

He emphasized that the company is positioning itself as a comprehensive maritime solutions provider, capable of meeting diverse client needs across the value chain.

“As one of the region’s major maritime players, we have now come out to tell the world that we do vessel refits and overhauls, marine engineering and

fabrication civil maritime works in addition to a rich bouquet of logistics and maritime support services,” he added.

According to Col Mutiso, these services are anchored on modern shipyard infrastructure in Mombasa and Kisumu, supported by a growing network of regional partnerships aimed at improving efficiency and turnaround times.

The five-day mission, which brought together technical, commercial and communications experts from KSL, also involved engagements with port authorities, maritime regulators, ferry operators and media stakeholders. The objective was to gain first-hand insights into Zanzibar’s maritime ecosystem, assess service gaps and identify strategic partnership opportunities.

Industry analysts say the timing of KSL’s move is strategic, as the Western Indian Ocean region experiences increased maritime traffic driven by intra-African trade, tourism and fisheries. With no major high-capacity ship repair facility in close proximity to Zanzibar, KSL is well-positioned to fill a critical gap in the market.

The reconnaissance mission is expected to culminate in a comprehensive market intelligence report that will inform KSL’s entry strategy, including partnership models, pricing frameworks and stakeholder engagement approaches.



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For Zanzibar, the partnership promises faster turnaround times for vessel maintenance, reduced operational costs and enhanced maritime safety. For KSL, it represents a gateway into one of Africa's most dynamic maritime corridors. As Africa pushes to strengthen intra-continental trade and industrial capacity, initiatives such as KSL's Zanzibar outreach are increasingly being viewed as

practical steps toward ensuring that the continent builds, repairs and sustains its own maritime assets.

If successfully executed, the collaboration could redefine maritime cooperation in Eastern Africa, anchoring a future where regional expertise meets regional demand, and where Africa's waters are serviced by African capability.



KSL General Manager, Maintenance, Repairs & Overhaul Col. Francis Mutiso (R) gifts Mr. Ali Said Bakar, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, The Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar. On the left is Dr. Khalid Salum Mohammed, Minister for Infrastructure and Transport



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KSL General Manager, Maintenance, Repairs & Overhaul Col. Francis Mutiso (R) presents a plaque to Azam Marine Managing Director Abubakar Aziz in Dar es Salaam.

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From Fear to Freedom: How New Marine Technology is Rewriting Life on Lake Turkana



By Belinda Osoro

The winds over Lake Turkana do not announce themselves. They rise without warning, whipping the water into sudden fury. For years, men like Philemon Emase and Chief Paul Egonyo Lonyait have watched this lake turn from provider to predator, capsizing fragile wooden boats and shattering families in an instant.

They know the stories too well. Fishermen who never returned. Traders swallowed by the currents. Children left waiting on the shore.

That is why, when a new kind of boat touched the waters of Eliye Springs recently, it was not received as equipment. It was received as hope.

At the heart of this transformation is a Glass Reinforced Polymer (GRP) boat engineered by Kenya Shipyards Limited and recently handed over to the Catholic Diocese of Lodwar. But beyond the ceremony, beyond the speeches, lies a deeper story: a community quietly stepping out of fear and into possibility.

Eliye Springs, home to roughly 7,500 residents, sits along a shoreline of immense beauty and unforgiving waters. Life here revolves around fishing, trade and a slowly growing tourism economy. Yet for decades, the lake has carried a hidden cost. One measured in lives lost to unsafe vessels and unpredictable weather.

“Owned by the community members, there are only two tourist fiber boats, 150HP. Fishing is minimal within certain areas of the lake. There are several campsites necessitating domestic tourism to thrive along the sandy coastline,” says Emase, the Eliye Catholic Church Moderator.

His words reflect both promise and limitation. A region rich in potential, yet held back by fragile infrastructure. Chief Paul Egonyo Lonyait sees the new boat as a turning point.

“We thank the donors MIVA Austria and the Catholic Diocese of Lodwar. This is a blessing that our community deserves,” he says.

It is not lost on him what this moment represents. In



a region where every journey on water carries risk, reliability becomes life itself.

The fishing sector along Lake Turkana directly employs about 3,000 fishers and supports livelihoods for an estimated 300,000 Kenyans. Every reliable boat on this lake is more than transport. It is a multiplier of income, food security and human possibility.

Manufactured at KSL's Kisumu Shipyard, a facility fast emerging as the heartbeat of Eastern Africa's maritime industrial base, the GRP boat embodies a shift from dependence to self-reliance. It is built from fiberglass reinforcements bonded with marine-grade resin and sealed with a protective gel coat, giving it strength against the lake's harsh conditions.

Unlike the timber vessels that have long defined Lake Turkana, these boats are designed for stability, durability and environmental compliance. They are not just safer. They are smarter.

For Father Daniel Muhame of St. Joseph Parish in Eliye, the change is as much philosophical as it is practical. "The Catholic church is interested in new technology. The fiber provides an ecofriendly option moving the locals from timber to fibre," he says.

In that simple statement lies a quiet revolution: a community embracing innovation without losing its identity.

The impact is already visible. The boat is expected to strengthen search and rescue operations, reduce fatalities and improve connectivity across the lake. Fishermen can venture out with greater confidence. Traders can move goods more reliably. Tourism

operators can begin to reimagine Eliye not as a remote outpost, but as a destination.

Even more importantly, it is opening doors for young people by creating opportunities for boat operators, technicians and support crews.

Yet perhaps the most profound change is less tangible. For years, Lake Turkana has dictated the terms of life in Eliye. It has decided who returns home and who does not. But with the arrival of this new technology, the balance is beginning to shift.

The lake is still vast. The winds are still unpredictable. But the people now have something they did not have before: control.

What Kenya Shipyards Limited has placed in the hands of this community is not just a vessel. It is a statement that Kenyan engineering can solve Kenyan challenges; that safety should not be a privilege; that even in the most remote corners, dignity matters.

For the people of Eliye, the story of this boat will not be told in speeches or reports. It will be told in quieter ways: in fishermen returning safely at dusk, in children watching their fathers step ashore, in traders arriving on time, in tourists discovering a coastline once hidden by risk.

And on the waters of Lake Turkana, that is no small victory.



Usenge Pier Project Will Fix the System — Not Just the Shoreline

By Njambi Njoroge

By the time the sun rises over Lake Victoria, Nelson Omondi is already thinking about taxes. As Secretary General of the Usenge Beach Management Unit (BMU), he represents more than 1,200 fisher folk whose daily hustle keeps the lake's economy alive. Yet, for many of them, the problem is not just the unpredictable waters. It is the invisible weight of layered taxation that chips away at already thin margins.

Fishermen buy fuel and basic supplies through informal channels, already taxed at source. When they land their catch, that same fish enters formal markets where it is taxed again. The result is a cycle that punishes productivity rather than rewarding it. It is from this place of quiet frustration that the story of the new Usenge Pier must be told. In March, President William Ruto presided over the groundbreaking of the Usenge Pier in Siaya County, a project that signals Kenya's growing ambition to reposition Lake Victoria as a strategic commercial maritime hub under the African Continental Free Trade Area.

On paper, the numbers are impressive. A 200-metre jetty. A 520-metre perimeter wall. Land reclamation works. Future phases promising a ferry ramp, warehouse facilities and a passenger terminal. The project is being implemented by Kenya Shipyards Limited on behalf of Kenya Ports Authority.

But beyond the statistics lies a more important question: will this infrastructure solve the everyday struggles of the people it is meant to serve? To his credit, President Ruto has framed the project within a broader national vision. "This project is part of our deliberate plan to unlock the immense potential of Lake Victoria and integrate our local economies into the broader African market," he said.

There is no doubt that the Usenge Pier is a necessary intervention. For years, the lake's economic ecosystem has operated with minimal structure: chaotic landing sites, high post-harvest losses and weak links to formal markets. The new pier promises to change that.

Improved landing and handling systems will reduce spoilage. Better docking infrastructure will enhance safety. Structured processes will bring order to an otherwise fragmented value chain.

In theory, this is how you build a modern Blue Economy. But infrastructure alone cannot fix structural inefficiencies.

Omondi's concerns point to a deeper policy gap. If fisher folk continue to face double taxation, then increased efficiency at the landing site may simply translate into higher volumes passing through a flawed system, not better incomes for those doing the work. This is where the Usenge Pier becomes more than a construction project. It becomes a symbol of hope.

Kenya has committed over Sh9.5 billion to Blue Economy investments from fish hatcheries to maritime safety systems. The ambition is clear: transform the lake from an under-utilised resource into a centre of economic growth.

Yet success will not be measured by kilometres of jetty built or funds disbursed. It will be measured by

whether a fisherman in Usenge can take home more at the end of the day.

Encouragingly, the pier is designed to do more than improve fisheries. It is expected to catalyse trade, strengthen cross-border commerce with neighbouring countries like Uganda and open new economic pathways for island communities.

It also aligns with the East African Community's integration agenda, where efficient inland water transport is critical for moving goods and people across borders.

In that sense, Usenge is not just a local project. It is a regional statement.

For decades, Lake Victoria has fed families, sustained trade and connected communities. What has been missing is not activity, but structure and fairness.

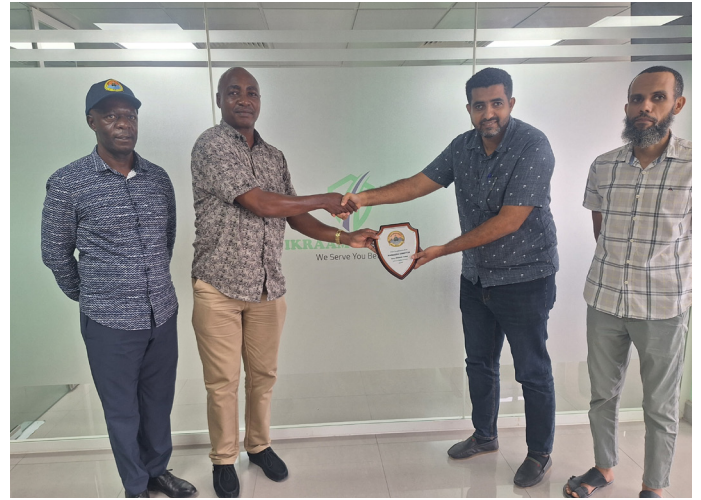
The Usenge Pier brings structure and hope for those at the base of the value chain. That is a significant step. For Nelson Omondi and the thousands he represents, the hope that the Usenge Pier brings is not just for better infrastructure. It is for a system that finally works in their favour.



This project is part of our deliberate plan to unlock the immense potential of Lake Victoria...



Pictorial



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Pictorial



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