

PORTS AND SHIPPING

Ports, probably more than any other natural or man-made amenity, have been extremely influential in determining the course of history for the Kenyan Coast. From as far back as the 8th Century, Manda and Shanga were acting as important gateways for communication, trade and commerce between the native African people and the Arab travellers from further north. Pate, Lamu and Mombasa are recorded from not much later (between the 9th and 11th centuries) and they are still in existence today. Another two ports established a bit later but which are also still in existence today are Siyu and Malindi. Among those which have declined are the ports of Ungwana (the only Kenyan historic port not on an island), Kiunga, Omwe, Mwana, Mtwapa and Vumba Kuu.

Ports which are still currently operational along the Kenyan Coast are Mombasa, Lamu, Kipini, Malindi, Kilifi, Mtwapa, Gazi and Shimoni. All Kenyan ports are administered by the Kenya Ports Authority.

PORT OF MOMBASA

The major port on the Coast is the Port of Mombasa. It has 16 deep water berths with 10.0m draft and a total length of 3,044m; two bulk oil jetties and one cased oil jetty; three container berths with a total length of nearly 600m; two bulk cement berths with three cement silos each with a 6,000 tonnes capacity; two lighterage and dhow wharves; and one explosives jetty.



Figure 50 : Mombasa's modern port at Kilindini, Mombasa Island

The major exports from Mombasa are : coffee, petroleum products, meat and meat products, hides and skins, cement, pineapple, and tea.

Main imports include : industrial and electrical machinery, crude petroleum, assembled motor vehicles and chassis, iron and steel, agricultural machinery and tractors, pharmaceuticals, fertilizers, textiles, mineral fuels, chemicals, food and live animals.

The number of shipping movements in 1990/91 was 1,213 which amounted to nearly 11% less than the previous year. However, the net registered tonnage of this smaller number of ships, was 6,345,171, which was over 7% higher than the previous year. The total number of passengers going through the port in 1990/91 was 26,194 which was a significant increase of over 73% over the previous year. Increases of around 10% were also recorded in all types of cargo handled by the port in 1991.

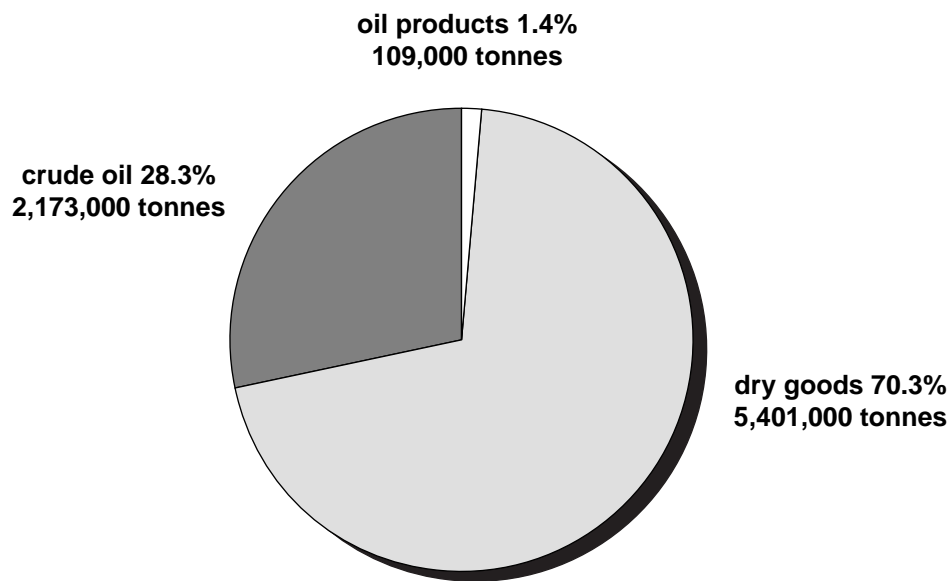


Figure 51 : Average annual cargo volumes at the Port of Mombasa

SHIPPING LANES

The Kenya coastal area is bordered offshore by a busy tanker route from the Middle East to various global destinations. It is estimated that 50 ships of various types are in the major shipping lanes off the coast of Kenya at any given time. Up to nine of these are likely to be oil tankers with capacities ranging from 50,000 to 250,000 tonnes. Most of this traffic passes more than 250 nautical miles offshore, however, tar balls originating from bilge discharges and tank washings reach the Kenya coast occasionally.

Closer inshore, the shipping lanes are more confined due to fringing coral reefs which must be negotiated. They are also more congested if the multitude of small inshore craft are also taken into account.

Coastal Resources and Their Use

Figure 52 : The Port of Mombasa acts as a container gateway