Good morning All,

This collision happened at Rusumo border on the Tanzanian side on Sunday morning. A Lake Oil Fuel Tanker’s brake system failed on the downhill approach to Rusumo OSBP on the Tanzania side and the driver steered the Tanker through the exit gate and into the truck park on the Tanzania side colliding with vehicles in the parking area. Driver died in the vehicle and the conductor was injured, 6 trucks were burnt out.

There is no fire station or emergancy services stationed at the border post so these services would have had to be dispatched from either Kibungo or Kayonza and would have taken several hours to get on site. Another  oversight in OSBP design where there are high volumes of Tanker and DG traffic carrying flammable commodities that could have been minimised if there were emergency services on sight and an issue we have raised continuously at Border Posts in Southern and East Africa. Tankers and other vehicles carrying Dangerous Goods and particular commodities that are flammable, toxic or harmful to communities and the environment need to be separated from other cargoes and be prioritised or fast tracked through border posts. They should also be parked separately from other cargoes and preferably in a containment area with proper drainage and safe run-off in the event of a spillage.

I refer in particular to our report on the Busia OSBP where we clearly identified the potential for a similar situation with tankers queuing through Busia town where there food vendors all along the road cooking on open fires. The 2013 fire at Kasumbalesa border post was caused by two tankers colliding in the queue and rupturing the tank of the one tanker causing a spillage of fuel which ignited when it came into contact with an open fire used for cooking. A total of 43 trucks were burnt out with their cargoes and 12 people were severely injured suffering 3 degree burns. These burnt out wreckages have never been removed by the authorities and are still there today as constant reminder of what happened and what can potentially happen again and which just has happened at Rusumo.

The potential for these situations to be repeated continue to exist at other border post in the region such as Tunduma where there is a similar situation of large volumes of tankers queuing through the town of Tunduma with food vendors cooking on open fires alongside the road where these tankers are queuing. These are potential disasters of catastrophic proportion waiting to happen which could have fatal consequences for many innocent people and communities. Yet the Governments and authorities in the region go on about their business as if these situations are not their problem and continue to do nothing about the situation.

I cannot stress enough that something has to be done about this situation going forward especially when in the planning stage of the development of OSBP’s or Joint border Posts and when upgrading/modernising existing border posts in the region and in fact all regions in Africa i.e. Southern, East, West Central and North Africa.

If you are not able to open view the attached video due its size and the limitations of your server, I will be uploading it onto the FESARTA website shortly for everyone to view.

Regards,

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