

# Investments



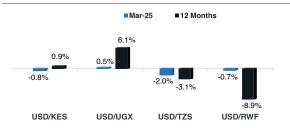
# Sanlam Investments East Africa Limited

#### **Global Markets Dashboard**

Mar-25	YTD 2025	12 Months	
-4.6%	-2.1%	5.6%	
0.4%	2.4%	5.6%	
2.1%	0.1%	-14.6%	
9.3%	19.0%	40.1%	
	-4.6% 0.4% 2.1%	-4.6% -2.1% 0.4% 2.4% 2.1% 0.1%	

Source: Bloomberg. Returns are in US Dollar.

#### **Regional Currency Performance**



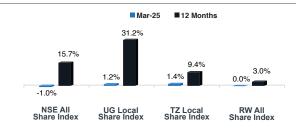
Source: Bank of Uganda, Central Bank of Kenya, National Bank of Rwanda & Bank of Tanzania

#### Regional Inflation & Key Interest Rates for March 2025

	Kenya	Uganda	Tanzania	Rwanda
Inflation Rate (Feb)	3.5%	3.7%	3.1%	5.7%
Central Bank Rate	10.8%	9.8%	6.0%	6.5%
91 Day Treasury Bill	8.9%	9.5%	7.4%	7.1%
1 Year Treasury Bond Yield	10.4%	14.8%	12.3%	7.9%

\*Source: Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Tanzania National Bureau of Statistics & Bloomberg Rates are in respective local currencies.

#### **Regional Stock Market Performance**



Source: Bloomberg. Returns are in respective local currencies.

# 46

# **Market Commentary**

**Global Markets:** In March, equity markets faced a downturn, largely driven by President Trump's reciprocal trade tariffs and ongoing uncertainty surrounding deregulation initiatives. The S&P 500 dropped by 6.3%, while the U.S. Dollar (USD) Index weakened by 3.0% against major developed-market currencies. Global equities as measured by the MSCI World Index declined by 4.6%. The global economic outlook has become more uncertain, driven by concerns over trade tariffs that are expected to weigh down on global growth and inflation expectations.

The US Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) maintained the short-term federal funds target rate at 4.25% to 4.50%. The market expects a maximum of 50 bps cut as Inflation remains well above the 2% FED target rate at 2.6% y/y in February. The FOMC also projected the economy growth at 1.7% this year, down 0.4% from December's projection. They cited concerns that ongoing economic challenges could hinder growth and make inflation more difficult to manage. These factors reinforced its decision to hold rates steady.

In Europe, the ECB cut key interest rate by 25bps to 2.5%, while the Bank of England maintained its rate at 4.5%, given the uncertainties around trade and benign inflation. Meanwhile, China's economy showed resilience in Q1 2025, with strong retail sales and industrial output supporting asset prices and offering some stability amid global market uncertainty.

Inflation: Kenya's headline inflation edged up to 3.6% in March, from 3.5% in February, marking the fifth consecutive monthly increase. Despite this upward trend, inflation remains within the Central Bank's target range of 2.5% to 7.5%. The increase was mainly driven by higher prices for key food items such as vegetables and maize flour. However, declines in the cost of sugar and beans helped to offset some of these pressures. While there are signs of underlying inflationary pressures, the overall outlook suggests that inflation will remain well-contained in the near term.

In Uganda, headline inflation eased to 3.4% in March, down from 3.7% in February. This decline was driven by a slowdown in core inflation, which fell to 3.6% from 3.9%, and a notable drop in food crop inflation—from 4.3% in February to 3.1% in March.

Elsewhere in the region, Tanzania recorded an annual inflation rate of 3.2% in February, while Rwanda's inflation was higher at 6.3% during the same period.

Currencies: The Kenyan shilling (KES) has remained stable at KES 129–130/USD, backed by healthy foreign exchange reserves of USD 9.96 billion (5.1 months of import cover). However, this stability may be threatened by a potential decline in offshore demand for domestic bonds after Kenya and the IMF agreed to cancel the ninth review of the current loan program. The government has requested a new IMF-backed program, though its outcome is uncertain. With deteriorating fiscal metrics and upcoming external debt repayments, securing the new program is vital. In the medium term, the government's efforts in active debt management and securing bilateral loans, such as the UAE's \$1.5 billion loan, should help support forex reserves.

The Ugandan shilling appreciated 0.5% in March and 6.1% over the past year, making it one of Africa's top-performing currencies over that period. The high real rate of return of 11% is attracting foreign investments. Meanwhile, the Tanzanian shilling depreciated by 2% against the dollar, while the Rwandan shilling remained flat in March.



# Investments





### **Market Commentary Cont'd**

Interest Rates: In Kenya, Treasury bill rates continued to decline in March, although the pace of the drop was more gradual compared to the sharp declines observed in January and February. In the March bond auction, the CBK raised KES 35.25 billion through the reopening of a 25-year bond (FXD1/2018/25). The bond attracted strong investor interest, with a subscription rate of 188%.

This strong demand for long-term bonds highlighted investor confidence in Kenya's fixed income market. It also reflects the CBK's cautious strategy in managing the country's debt profile—focusing on lengthening maturities to reduce refinancing risks and control borrowing costs over time. In the secondary bond market, yields initially moved lower in early March, continuing the downward trend seen in recent months. However, this trend reversed due to increased global volatility.

In Uganda, interest rates on government securities have risen to their highest levels since March of last year. This increase is driven by heightened political risk as the country approaches its upcoming general elections, with investors demanding higher yields to offset the potential instability.

**Equities:** In March 2025, the Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE) All-Share Index saw a decline of 1.0%, reflecting broader market pressures. In contrast, both Uganda and Tanzania's stock markets posted positive performances, rising by 1.2% and 1.4%, respectively.

Kenya's top banks reported strong financial results for FY 2024. The average dividend yield across these banks stood at a healthy 9.7%. However, loan book growth declined by 8.4%, partly due to the attractive yields on government securities and a shift towards short-term lending. Despite the challenging macroeconomic environment, profitability remained resilient, with an average return on equity (ROE) of 20.2%. Interestingly, banks continue to trade below their book value, even as ROE has recovered to pre-COVID levels.

MTN announced plans to spin off its financial technology operations in Uganda (MTN Mobile Money Uganda Limited). This will separate the fintech business from the GSM-listed entity on the Uganda Securities Exchange (USE). The company released a strong set of results with a dividend yield of 8.4%.

**Outlook:** Kenya's economy continues to show stability, with the currency holding steady and inflationary pressures remaining moderate. Ongoing discussions between Kenya and the IMF regarding a new program are likely to result in some economic reforms, including fiscal consolidation. Additionally, investor sentiment will be influenced by political developments in Uganda and Tanzania, particularly with the approaching elections in both countries.

On the global front, we expect continued uncertainty, with the April 1 report on reciprocal trade tariffs and President Trump's 'Liberation Day' tariffs likely marking the start of a new phase in trade tensions. While global markets face turbulence due to U.S. trade policies, the long-term economic outlook remains generally supportive of growth and investment, with prospects for recovery once these challenges are addressed.

# Important Information

- · Basis points (bps) A basis point is a standard measure for interest rates and other percentages in finance, representing one one-hundredth of one percent.
- Central Bank Rate refers to the interest rate at which a nation's central bank lends money to domestic banks, often in the form of very short-term loans. The Central Bank may increase or decrease the discount rate to slow down or stimulate the economy.
- Currencies: KES/USD refers to the Kenya Shilling exchange rate with the US Dollar. UGX/USD refers to the Uganda Shilling exchange rate with the US Dollar. TZS/USD refers to the Tanzania Shilling exchange rate with the US Dollar. RWF/USD refers to the Rwandan Franc exchange rate with the US Dollar.
- MSCI, the acronym stands for Morgan Stanley Capital International.
- MSCI World Index, is a broad global equity index that represents large and mid-cap equity performance across twenty-three developed markets countries. It covers approximately 85% of the free float-adjusted market capitalization in each country.
- The MSCI Emerging Markets Index is used to measure the financial performance of companies in fast-growing economies around the world. The index tracks mid-cap and large-cap stocks in 27 countries, dominated by Chinese, Taiwanese, and South Korean companies.
- NSE All Share Index, is a market cap-weighted index consisting of all the securities on the Nairobi Securities Exchange. Prices are based on the latest trade information from NSE's Automated Trading System.
- Purchasing Managers Index (PMI) is a measure of the prevailing direction of economic trends in manufacturing. The PMI is a weighted average of the following five indices: New Orders (30%), Output (25%), Employment (20%), Suppliers' Delivery Times (15%) and Stocks of Purchases (10%).
- Quarter to date (QTD) refers to the period beginning the first day of the current quarter up to the current date. QTD information is useful for analyzing business trends over time or comparing performance data to competitors or peers in the same industry.
- Rwanda Stock Exchange All Share Index is a market cap-weighted index that includes all non-domestic Rwanda listings.
- Sanlam 27 Share Index is a market cap-weighted index. The index universe is the Nairobi Securities Exchange. The index is managed by Sanlam Investments East Africa Limited.

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# Investments



#### Important Information cont'd

- · Tanzania Local Share Index is a market cap-weighted index. It includes only domestic listed companies.
- Tap Sale: A tap issue is a procedure that allows borrowers to sell bonds or other short-term debt instruments from past issues. The bonds are issued at their original face value, maturity, and coupon rate but are sold at the current market price. A tap issue is also referred to as a bond tap or tap sale.
- · Uganda Local Share Index is a market cap-weighted index. It includes only domestic listed companies.
- Year to date (YTD) refers to the period beginning the first day of the current calendar year or fiscal year up to the current date. YTD information is useful for analyzing business trends over time or comparing performance data to competitors or peers in the same industry.
- Year-over-year (Y/Y) is a method of evaluating two or more measured events to compare the results at one period with those of a comparable period on an annualized basis.

#### Disclosure Statement

Sanlam Investments East Africa Limited ("the manager") is regulated by the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) in Kenya and Uganda, and by the Capital Markets and Securities Authority (CMSA) in Tanzania to provide investment advisory and management services. The firm has been operational in Kenya since 1998, in Uganda since 2004, and in Tanzania since 2024. It is a leading fund manager in the region with a strong record of accomplishment in service delivery and performance. Sanlam Investments East Africa is a subsidiary of Sanlam Allianz Africa PTY Limited.

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