

AFRICAN UNION

الاتحاد الأفريقي



UNION AFRICAINE

UNIÃO AFRICANA

THIRD SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE
OF AFRICAN MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT
07-11 APRIL 2014
MALABO, EQUATORIAL GUINEA

CONCEPT NOTE

Theme: *Speeding-up transport programme delivery for facilitating Africa's economic growth*

Addis Ababa, February 2014

I. BACKGROUND

1. The first Strategic Plan of the Commission of the African Union, covering the period 2004 to 2007 provided a strong impetus on infrastructure development as a priority in its efforts to accelerate socio-economic development and integration of Africa. In that context, the transport sector has been considered as important means to establish whether spatial and sectoral linkages essential to achieving growth and continental integration desired. Thus, a "Linking Africa" (Africa network) special thematic program was formulated within the framework of the Strategic Plan, with transport as a major component.

2. The transport sector continued enjoying a priority status when the Strategic Plan of the AU Commission entered its second phase (2009-2012) due to acknowledgement of the economic dynamics that without a cost-effective and integrated transport network, Africa would never be able to achieve significant development that would lift its people out of poverty and ensure them a respectable place in the global economic system. Similarly, the unity of Africa, envisaged by its founders, will remain a dream.

3. The third Strategic Plan of the Commission of the African Union, covering the period from 2014 to 2017 gave priority to the implementation of the Program of Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) which covers the sectors of Transport, Energy, ICT and Trans-Boundary Waters.

4. In the context of transport, the African Union has already adopted the African Maritime Transport Charter which is yet to enter into force due to shortfall in the minimum number of ratifications required as well as the African Common Aviation Policy (AFCAP) in accordance with the Standards and Recommended Practices of ICAO. Significant progress has also been made on the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision on the Liberalization of Air Transport Markets in Africa. In addition, the African Union Commission is currently finalizing the Intergovernmental Agreement on Road Standards and Norms for the Trans-African Highways and the African Road Safety Charter.

5. Efforts to improve infrastructure and transport services have been deployed for several decades at the national, regional and continental levels. It should be recalled that the colonial powers built a minimal transport infrastructure to enable them to exploit the vast natural resources of the continent. They left most of the continent without sustainable transport networks. Since then, African countries, which have the primary responsibility for developing this sector in their territories, have strived to mobilize resources for the construction and upgrading of roads, bridges, ports, airports, railways and related facilities. However, because of the huge resource requirements and weak economies, most countries have not been able to develop transport infrastructure that would enable them to meet their development needs.

6. Despite significant progress made in the transport sector, in general, the situation of the transport industry in Africa has not changed much. Transport costs in Africa are among the highest in the world, which obviously undermines the competitiveness of African products in local and international markets. According to recent studies, the transportation costs as a share of the value of exports in Africa vary between 30% and 50%. In landlocked countries can reach three-quarters of the

value of exports, which is unfavourable relative to the average in other developing countries, which is around 17%.

7. Transport costs in terms of high freight rates, delayed delivery fees, freight losses and missed opportunities. This situation is caused mainly by inadequate, poor quality and poorly functioning transport infrastructure and related services.

8. To highlight the importance of infrastructure in Africa, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union dedicated its Twelfth Ordinary Session, held in February 2009 in Addis Ababa, to the development transport and energy infrastructure in Africa. To this end, the Heads of State and Government adopted a Declaration which defines strategies and states their commitment to accelerate the implementation of priority transport and energy infrastructure projects in the continent.

9. Since 2004, when the first Strategic Plan (2004-2008) was adopted, the AU Commission has held a number of ministerial conferences to address the pressing problems of different transport modes and recommend appropriate solutions. These conferences have produced action plans, declarations and resolutions involving African States, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the AU Commission and other stakeholders to take specific steps to solve the problems in this sector.

10. The conferences resulted in the organization of the first session of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, which took place from 21 to 25 April 2008 in Algiers, Algeria. It was a historic conference that established the CAMT as a statutory conference of the African Union. The Conference has its own Rules of Procedure which provides for a Bureau of the Conference with a two (2) year term of Office and a meeting once every two years. The second session of the CAMT took place from 21 to 25 November 2011, in Luanda, Angola and the third session is scheduled from 07 to 11 April 2014 in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

II. CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE

11. In the new framework of the AU, the conference will be convened as a Sub-Committee of the Specialised technical Committee (STC) No. 4 on Transport, Transcontinental and Interregional Infrastructures, Energy and Tourism. Following execution of several activities to address the policy, strategic and programme issues, time has now come to take stock of the progress made to-date and determine the way forward for the new measures to accelerate the development of transport infrastructure and services in line with the vision of the African Union of an Africa with reliable transport infrastructure, efficient, inexpensive and sustainable transport services that would facilitate speedy socio-economic development, regional integration and, hence, ensure the continent's competitiveness in the global economy.

12. To that end, the main objectives of the conference are to review the implementation of the various sub-sector plans of action, target specific outcomes, and identify constraints as well as new challenges to facilitate rapid implementation of transport development activities. The conference will, finally, provide strategic direction to the AU Commission and all stakeholders on the appropriate actions to take for a coherent development of the transport sector on the continent.

III. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

13. The conference will elect a new Bureau to manage its activities during the period from 2014 to 2015 and consider, inter alia, the following main agenda items:

1. Status of the implementation of PIDA;
2. Transport sector development strategy in the context of the African Agenda 2063;
3. Report on the implementation of the Plans of Action of transport sub-sectors;
4. Intergovernmental Agreement on Road Standards and Norms for the Trans-African Highways;
5. African Road Safety Charter;
6. Implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action;
7. Vision 2040 for Railway Development in Africa;
8. Regulatory instruments for the Yamoussoukro Decision on the liberalisation of Air Transport Markets in Africa; and
9. Specifications of a database for the implementation of the YD

IV. EXPECTED RESULTS

14. The main outcomes of the conference are:

1. Ministerial Decision on:
 - i. Accelerating the ratification and implementation of the African Maritime Transport Charter and the Constitution of the CAFCAC;
 - ii. Implementation of the Plans of Action of the transport modes
 - iii. Implementation of the PIDA transport component.
2. Adoption of:
 - i. The Intergovernmental Agreement on Road Standards and Norms for the Trans-African Highways;
 - ii. The African Road Safety Charter;
 - iii. Vision 2040 for Railway Development in Africa; and
 - iv. Regulatory instruments for the Yamoussoukro Decision on the liberalisation of Air Transport Markets in Africa.

15. The recommendations of the third session of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport will be submitted for consideration and adoption at the next regular session of the Executive Council and the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Union in June 2014.

V. PARTICIPATION

16. Participants of the conference will include:

1. African Ministers responsible for Transport;
2. Senior officials of Ministries and agencies responsible for transport regulation of Member States of the African Union;
3. Heads of African regional and continental transport specialized institutions;
4. CEOs of national authorities of road, port facilities, airports and railways;

5. African Union Commission;
6. NEPAD Planning and Coordination Agency;
7. Regional Economic Communities (RECs);
8. African Development Bank;
9. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa;
10. International technical organizations;
11. Regional and international financial organizations;
12. Various development partners.

VI. DATE AND VENUE OF THE CONFERENCE

17. The third session of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport will take place on the 10th and 11th April 2014 at the Ciudad de Sipopo, Malabo II, Equatorial Guinea. It will be preceded by a preparatory meeting of experts from the 7th to 9th April 2014 at the same place.