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WEST AFRICAN PERMANENT TRANSPORT AND
COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

M67-1054

West African Permanent Transport and Communications Committee

A. Introduction:

Recommendation 2 of the Sub-regional Meeting on Economic Co-operation in West Africa held in Niamey in October 1966, and also Resolution III of the West African Sub-regional Conference on Economic Co-operation held in Accra 27 April - 4 May 1967, recommend the establishment, at the earliest possible time, of a West African Permanent Transport and Communications Committee with membership composed of relevant technical representatives of the member countries.

The structure and the work programmes of the Permanent Committee and its various Technical Sub-Committees are described below.

B. Structure:

(a) The Committee

The West African Permanent Transport and Communications Committee shall consist of ministers or plenipotentiaries of the various member States.

The Chairman, two Vice-Chairmen and the Secretary of the Permanent Transport and Communication Committee will be elected by simple majority and their terms of office will be decided by the Committee.

The committee will work by correspondence and by meeting annually, at least.

(b) Sub-Committees

Each mode of transport will have one technical sub-committee and will be designated as follows:

- (i) Air Transport Technical Sub-Committee
- (ii) Maritime Transport Technical Sub-Committee
- (iii) Railway Transport Technical Sub-Committee
- (iv) Road Transport Technical Sub-Committee

(v) River and Lake Transport Technical Sub-Committee

These Technical Sub-Committees, which will be nominated by the Permanent Transport and Communications Committee, will be composed of technical representatives (chief engineers, managers, etc.) of the national departments responsible for the transport mode in question who will be nominated by their Government.

The size of each Technical Sub-Committee will vary depending on the number of countries that use the mode of transport under consideration.

Under special circumstances, working parties may be appointed by each Technical Sub-Committee to study special problems.

Each Technical Sub-Committee will elect its Chairman and Secretary and will work by correspondence and by meeting as often as desirable.

The terms of office of the Chairman and the Secretary will be determined by the Technical Sub-Committee depending on the type and magnitude of the work to be done.

C. Work Programme:

(a) The Committee

The Permanent Transport and Communications Committee, which will be responsible for the co-ordination of planning and operation of transport on a sub-regional basis, will cover the five modes of transportation: air, maritime, railway, road, and river and lake transport. The most important items that need to be tackled by the Permanent Transport and Communications Committee may include:

- (i) To study the reports and recommendations made by the various transport missions organized by the ECA in West Africa and by the different Technical Sub-Committees;

- (ii) To study and ascertain possibilities for financing programmes for instituting new transport systems; and for improving and connecting the various networks it may propose, and to recommend additional studies it may deem necessary in order to achieve a more complete integration of the transport systems in the sub-region;
- (iii) To follow up the activities of the existing inter-governmental organizations in the field of transport both in the sub-region and in other sub-regions in order to ensure that these activities are co-ordinated to the best advantage;
- (iv) To examine and recommend studies and research for the improvement of conditions governing the establishment, use and maintenance of transport systems;
- (v) To study the possibilities of standardization of transport equipment in order to determine a technical basis for further integration of sub-regional transport services and to encourage the local manufacture of such equipment;
- (vi) To study the technical and economic possibilities for making the maximum use of and co-ordinating all the existing means of transport in the sub-region;
- (vii) To determine the available means for training and providing refresher courses, at all levels, for staff engaged in maritime, railway, road, air, river and lake transport, as well as the possibilities of exchange of experience between technicians of different countries.

(b) Technical Sub-Committees

The different Technical Sub-Committees will operate in a practical way and the problems for which they will have to find concrete solutions may include the following:

Air Transport Technical Sub-Committee: The most important items that need to be tackled by this Sub-Committee may include:

- (i) The establishment of a multinational sub-regional African airline;
- (ii) Standardization of equipment;
- (iii) The establishment of central engineering base or bases in the sub-region to undertake such work as aircraft and engine overhauls;
- (iv) The establishment of a common Technical Service Centre capable of undertaking the provision of services (airworthiness of the aircraft, licencing of personnel, maintenance of flight standards, accident investigations, etc.) which the governments might find difficult to provide individually due to shortage of skilled personnel and funds;
- (v) The establishment of facilities in the sub-region to train personnel in all categories and fields of aviation.

Maritime Transport Technical Sub-Committee: The most important activities to be undertaken include:

- (i) Joint operation of shipping lines with a view to forming a sub-regional African Shipping Company;
- (ii) The simplification of administrative formalities in the sub-region;
- (iii) The establishment of facilities in the sub-region to train personnel in certain categories of maritime functions, including port management.
- (iv) Improvement of port facilities, including access to ports.

- (v) Adherence to the Convention on the Transit Trade of Land-locked Countries adopted at the United Nations Conference of Plenipotentiaries held in New York in July 1965.

Rail Transport Technical Sub-Committee: In order to improve the serviceability of the railway network in the sub-region, items for study may include:

- (i) Proposal for practical steps to minimize existing differences in technical specifications;
- (ii) The establishment of an African Railway Congress of railway officials based on the existing "African and Malagasy Railway Technicians Conference";
- (iii) The establishment of facilities in the sub-region to train personnel in all categories and fields of rail transport;
- (iv) The simplification of formalities at frontier posts.

Road Transport Technical Sub-Committee: Items upon which sub-regional action is urgently required include:

- (i) The designation of an international road network for the sub-region;
- (ii) The compilation of priorities for highway construction and rehabilitation on the basis of the needs of the sub-region;
- (iii) The adoption of minimum standards for international roads and bridges in the sub-region;
- (iv) The preparation of manual "Specifications for the Construction of Roads and Bridges";
- (v) The adoption of the revised United Nations Convention on Road Traffic and of the Protocol of Road Signs and Signals;

- (vi) Standardization of the right-hand rule of the road;
- (vii) The standardization of national driving licence requirements in all countries to facilitate the easy flow of road traffic between the countries of the sub-region;
- (viii) The simplification of formalities at frontier posts;
- (ix) The training of highway personnel;
- (x) The establishment of a Road Research Centre for the sub-region;
- (xi) Standardization of road and road traffic statistics.

River and Lake Transport Technical Sub-Committee: In order to enable the countries of the sub-region to make sufficient use of their inland waterways, items for study include:

- (i) Simplification of administrative formalities;
- (ii) The training of qualified operating personnel;
- (iii) The standardization of types and sizes of crafts.