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INFORMATION PAPER ON THE ROAD DEVELOPMENT STUDY TOUR TO INDIA

29 October - 21 November 1968

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List of Participants

Origin and Purpose

1. For some time the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Africa has been studying a number of closely connected problems relating to national transport systems in general and roads in particular. In this connexion, attention is drawn to the following items of the work programme for 1967-1968 approved by the Commission at its VIIIth session:

- 61. Harmonization of road standards, traffic signals;
- 62. Road research development;
- 68. The establishment of an African transport institute;
- 70. Formulation and administration of transport policies;
- 100. Socio-economic surveys of the problems and prospects of rural development.

2. In addition to the foregoing, ECA proposes the establishment of inter-governmental machinery (Permanent Transport and Communications Committees) for the co-ordination of planning and operation of transport on a sub-regional basis which will deal with the five modes of transport: (i) air; (ii) maritime; (iii) rail; (iv) inland water; and (v) road transport.

3. As is well known, African countries spend a considerable part of their annual revenues on road construction and maintenance. Quite clearly investments of such magnitude must be planned and executed in such a way as to ensure that the optimum benefits are derived by the community.

Organization and Attendance

4. In pursuance of the items of the work programme referred to above, the secretariat has been exploring the possibility of a study tour to a developing country outside Africa which offers a range of experience pertinent to these matters. As a result it accepted the generous invitation of the Indian Government to organize a small team of African road engineers to go to India to attend a National Seminar on Roads and Bridges and the 31st session of the Indian Roads Congress, followed by a short Road Development Study Tour to Madras and New Delhi.

5. In collaboration with the Office of Technical Co-operation (OTC) and the Indian Government, ECA arranged a small team of African road engineers to visit India from 29 October to 21 November 1968.

6. The secretariat had hoped to send a total of 9 road engineers, 2 from each of the 4 sub-regions and one as conducting officer from ECA. The response from the countries invited was, however, disappointing and only 5 engineers, one from ECA and 4 from the following countries, actually took part: Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Ethiopia and Sierra Leone.

Programme of Tour

7. The African participants first attended the National Seminar on the Design and Construction of Roads and Bridges, organized by the Indian Union Ministry of Transport and Shipping (Roads Wing), which was held at Bombay from 29 October to 2 November 1968.

8. The Seminar, the first of its kind in India, was attended by about 600 engineers and other experts; it surveyed the progress achieved in the design and construction of roads and bridges throughout India during the last 20 years and also discussed the problems of future development in these fields.

9. Following the Seminar, the 31st session of the Indian Roads Congress was held at Bombay from 2 to 9 November 1968. The Congress, which is the premier institution of highway engineers, was attended by about 600 engineers from all over India and a few from abroad and discussed a number of interesting papers relating to highways, bridges and traffic engineering.

10. The African road engineers then went on a Road Development Study Tour and their first stop was at Madras State where they visited the Indian Institute of Technology and the Highways Research Station and also inspected selected roads of particular interest.

11. Also in Madras they visited Chitram and Company, manufacturers of a wide range of cranes, and the Ashok Leyland Ltd., manufacturers of trucks.

12. In New Delhi the team visited the Central Road Research Institute, the secretariat of the Indian Roads Congress and the Union Ministry of Transport and Shipping (Roads Wing).

13. At the secretariat of the Planning Commission, New Delhi, the Deputy Head of the Transport and Communications Division explained to the team how the planning of transport in general and roads in particular is co-ordinated.

Evaluation and Follow-up Activity

14. The object of the study tour was to familiarize the participants with the experience of a semi-developed country in planning road transport as part of a development programme, particularly where the intention is to integrate the rural and urban economies; in the organization and application of road research in transport development; and in the development of human resources for road transport.

15. It is intended to use the experience gained by the participants to work out proposals: for promoting road research in the Region; for human resources development in the transport field; and for improving planning objectives and methods. It is also expected that the Report of the participants will include suggestions for more concrete and limited arrangements such as study tours by small groups of specialists in relation to specific proposed projects, refresher courses of a theoretical as well as practical nature, attachment of African planners and engineers to departments dealing with the planning, construction and maintenance of roads, and so on.

ANNEX / ANNEXE

Study Tour to India

29 October - 21 November 1968

Country / Pays

Chad / Tchad

Congo (Brazzaville)

Ethiopia / Ethiopie

Sierra Leone

Voyage d'études aux Indes

29 Octobre - 21 Novembre 1968

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