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THE TRANS-AFRICAN HIGHWAYS  
(Information paper)

A. The Trans-African Highway (Mombasa-Lagos)

1. The Trans-African Highway project originated at the first meeting of the Conference of Ministers, held in Tunis in February 1971, when the Commission, by its resolution 226(X), requested the Executive Secretary to: (a) assist in the formation of a Trans-African Highway Committee, and (b) take appropriate steps to invite prospective supporters to consider ways and means of mobilizing financial and technical resources and of securing the necessary international assistance for this purpose.
2. In June 1971, the first meeting of the Trans-African Highway Co-ordinating Committee was held in Addis Ababa. The Committee has been formed as a permanent body to promote the execution of this important project and, on 1 July 1971, a Trans-African Highway Bureau was set up in Addis Ababa to act as secretariat to the Committee.
3. In September/October 1971, the TAH Bureau organized a meeting to determine assistance of the industrialized countries in the implementation of the highway project. In accordance with the offer made at this meeting, the Government of the United Kingdom subsequently financed the pre-feasibility study of the whole project from Mombasa to Lagos.
4. At the second meeting of the TAH Co-ordination Committee, held at Bangui in April 1972, the routing of the Trans-African Highway and the study programme to be undertaken were adopted.
5. The Trans-African Highway, which is about 6400 km in length, will link Mombasa (Kenya) with Lagos (Nigeria) by passing through Uganda, Zaire, the Central African Republic and the United Republic of Cameroon. However, in addition to these six countries, the highway project is also of interest to the following eleven neighbouring States: Burundi, Chad, Congo (PR), Ethiopia, Gabon, Niger, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania and Zambia.

6. With this in mind, therefore, in September 1972, the TAH Bureau organized a meeting on feeder links from the neighbouring States to the Trans-African Highway. The Bureau is further studying in depth the problem of linking the road networks of the neighbouring States to the TAH project. Already studies of Chad, Rwanda and Burundi have been completed and the relevant reports have been despatched to the countries concerned, as well as to various international organizations considered as prospective supporters in the ensuing phases of the projects. The same will be done for the remaining neighbouring States.

7. In October 1972, the TAH Bureau organized a second meeting of the industrialized countries and financing institutions to determine their assistance for the feasibility studies of the Trans-African Highway. As a result of this meeting, the Governments of Belgium, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Italy and Japan and the African Development Bank have offered to finance the feasibility studies of some selected sections of the Highway. These offers of assistance, which represent a total amount of about US\$ 8.61 million, cover 2680 km (42 per cent) of the Highway, and finance has to be obtained for only 800 km (13 per cent), estimated to cost US\$ 1.95 million. The Bureau is in contact with some developed countries and international financing institutions with a view to obtaining assistance for the completion of the remaining 800 km.

8. The TAH Bureau is of the opinion that measures for the regulation of passenger and goods traffic should be studied now with a view to having uniformity over the whole Trans-African Highway, once its construction and improvement is completed. In line with this, the Governments of the United Kingdom and France have kindly offered to finance a study of the administrative and legal factors impeding the international movement of persons and goods on the Trans-African Highway. Consultants to undertake this study have already been selected and an interim report is expected to be submitted to the third meeting of the TAH Co-ordinating Committee, scheduled to be held at Mombasa from 10 to 14 April 1973.

9. The TAH Bureau is currently in contact with the donor countries, the African Development Bank and the African countries concerned, with a view to finalizing the terms of reference for the various studies to be undertaken and also to prepare a realistic quinquennial programme for the implementation of the project.

#### B. Trans-West African Highway

10. The West-African Sub-regional Conference on Economic Co-operation, held at Accra from 27 April to 4 May 1967, recommended that priority be given to "the need for an all-weather road link spanning the entire sub-region, including standardization of road practices and regulations and the simplification of frontier formalities."

11. There are two alternative routes for an all-weather road spanning West Africa from West to East:

- (a) either a route near the coast which would traverse Mauritania, Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Dahomey and Nigeria, or

- (b) a route which would cross Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Upper Volta, Niger and Nigeria. This route would be at no great distance from the northern boundaries of Guinea, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo and Dahomey.

12. It may be that the completion of a road spanning the entire sub-region is not strictly capable of realization immediately and that what is required is either two roads, one near the coast and one in the hinterland roughly following the 12th parallel, or, the selection of one of these routes with feeder links to the countries not actually traversed by it.

13. The secretariat prepared a map and route diagrams showing the possible alternative routes between Nouakchott and Fort Lamy and sent them (in December 1967) to the 14 countries of the West African Sub-region and also to Cameroon and Chad.

14. At the Meeting of Economic Co-operation between Ghana and the Entente States, which was held in Abidjan in October 1970, it was recommended that priority be given to the construction or improvement of the following road links:

- (i) Upper Volta/Niger: Ouagadougou-Kantchari-Niamey;
- (ii) Upper Volta/Ghana: Bobo Dioulasso-Lawra-Wa;
- (iii) Upper Volta/Togo: Ouagadougou-Koupela-Dapango-Lome;
- (iv) Upper Volta/Dahomey: Ouagadougou-Porga-Savalou-Dassa Zoume;
- (v) Ghana/Ivory Coast: Accra-Abidjan coastal road;
- (vi) Niger/Dahomey: Niamey-Dosso-Malanville-Parakou.

15. The secretariat is planning to organize a meeting towards the end of the year to discuss ways and means of developing the road network of the West African Sub-region in general and the realization of the Dakar-Fort Lamy Highway in particular.

### C. The Trans-Saharan Road

16. The Trans-Saharan Road, which was initiated in 1962 by the Commission, is the responsibility of the Trans-Sahara Road Committee, established in 1964 and consisting of Algeria, Mali, Niger and Tunisia. The Committee is responsible for studying and building a Trans-Sahara Road and for seeking and obtaining appropriate means of financing.

17. The total length of the Trans-Sahara Road is 2900 km and is composed of the following:

- 1858 km in Algeria: -- (El Golea-Tamanrasset-Point "Y" - 1151 km)
- (Point "Y" - Tin Zaouaten - 376 km)
- (Point "Y" - In Guezzam - 331 km)
- 685 km in Mali -- (Tin Zaouaten -- Gao)
- 357 km in Niger -- (In Guezzam -- In Gall)

18. The preliminary feasibility study of the Trans-Saharan Road (North-South) has been completed under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

19. An international consortium of firms has signed a US\$ 2.3 million contract with the UNDP to carry out engineering design studies of the Trans-Saharan Road.

20. The construction cost is estimated at US\$ 86 million. The time required for engineering design and implementation of the highway would be about 8 years, 5 years of which would be for the actual construction. Already the construction of the section from El Golea to In Salah in Algeria was started in September 1971 and is expected to be completed in about two years.

21. In addition to the aforementioned three major highways, the secretariat is studying the development of a road running from Botswana to Cairo. The secretariat believes that as an initial stage, effort should be concentrated on the improvement of the following four highways:

- (i) Trans-African Highway (Mombasa-Lagos);
- (ii) Trans-West African Highway (Dakar-Fort Lamy);
- (iii) Trans-Saharan Road;
- (iv) Trans-East African Highway (Gaberones-Cairo).

22. These four highways would serve as backbones of the pan-African road system and either concurrently or subsequently, as the need may be, they would be connected by feeder roads to complete, stage by stage, the arterial highway system in the continent.