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REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING ON THE TRANS-WEST AFRICAN HIGHWAY

DAKAR - LAGOS

Niamey, 14-16 January 1974

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## REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING ON THE TRANS-WEST AFRICAN HIGHWAY

DAKAR - LAGOS

Niamey, 14-16 January 1974

Introduction

1. The first meeting on the Trans-West African Highway from Dakar to Lagos was held at Niamey, Niger, from 14 to 16 January 1974.

Attendance

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of Dahomey, The Gambia, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo.

3. Representatives of the following countries and organizations also attended the meeting as observers.

(a) Countries. Algeria, Belgium, Canada, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Japan, Mali, Niger, the United Kingdom, the United States of America.

(b) Organizations: International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), European Development Fund (EDF), the African, Malagasy and Mauritian Common Organization (OCAM), the Organization for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS) and International Road Federation (IRF).

Opening of the Meeting

4. The first meeting on the Trans-West African Highway from Dakar-Lagos was opened by H.E. Mr. Boukary Sabo, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Niger.

5. The Minister welcomed the participants to the meeting. He said that despite the limited facilities available at Niamey, his Government would do its utmost to facilitate the task of the meeting.

6. He explained that as the meeting held the preceding week had concerned the northern route, most of which traversed the Sahel, the present meeting was dedicated to the task of examining the Dakar-Lagos Highway link passing through Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo and Dahomey.

7. The Minister further stated that because of the progress being made each week and each month in road construction and because new road projects had come into being, participants should bring up-to-date the background documents prepared by the ECA secretariat.

8. He said that it was for the current meeting to find the most rational way of integrating the main highways so that the intra-African Highway networks to which everybody aspired could be developed.

for which a bureau had been established within the ECA secretariat. In the first case, the costs of the secretariat, including the salaries of its staff, were covered by the countries concerned and in the second case, the staff employed in the Bureau belonged to the ECA transport Division and was paid by ECA. The secretariat suggested that the conference might wish to adopt the second type of organization and to accept the draft terms of reference adopted at the first meeting.

21. At the suggestion of a number of delegations, the meeting adopted the draft terms of reference of the co-ordinating committee of the Dakar-Lagos road as presented in the document submitted by the secretariat and annexed to this report, see Annex I.

#### Status of the Trans-West African Highway

22. The secretariat introduced that part of document E/CN.14/TRANS/100 containing a description of the Dakar-Lagos road, which had been proposed as the southern branch of the Trans-West African road network.

23. The representatives of the various countries participating in the meeting agreed as follows;

- (a) Territories of Senegal and the Gambia. The Dakar-Kaolack-Nioro du Rip-Keur Aip-Farafenni-Boukiling-Kolda-Velingara-Medina Gonasse-Dialakoto route was adopted as the itinerary for the road in the territories of Senegal and the Gambia.
- (b) Guinea Bissau. The representatives also expressed the hope that a coastal variant of the Trans-West African road traversing the territory of Guinea Bissau should be taken into consideration with a view to its adoption when the political situation in the country permitted.
- (c) Territory of Guinea. Although Guinea had not sent a representative to the conference, the participants expressed the desire that the Fongolimbi-Mali-Mamou-Conakry-Pamelap route suggested in document E/CN.14/TRANS/100 should be adopted. They instructed the ECA secretariat to enter into consultations with the Guinea authorities with a view to informing them of the recommendations made at the conference with regard to that section of the road which traversed Guinea and to obtaining any additional information which might be available as to conditions on that section.
- (d) Territory of Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone had sent no representatives to the conference; however, the representative of Liberia informed the participants that between Bo and the Liberia-Sierra Leone border, the international road traversed Koribundu and Kenema and said that that fact should be taken into account in deciding on the route in the territory of Sierra Leone. That being the case, the participants recommended the adoption of the Pamelap-Freetown-Bo-Koribundu-Kenema-Joru-Mono River. They then authorized the ECA secretariat to hold consultations with the Government of Sierra Leone with a view to informing it of their recommendations and procuring additional information.

- (e) Territory of Liberia. The Mano River-Monrovia-Ganta-Tapeta-Tobli itinerary was adopted for the road in the territory of Liberia. The representative of Liberia told the participants that the Governments of Sierra Leone and Liberia had recently established an inter-governmental secretariat and that problems of transport and communication would fall within its purview. It would deal with matters concerning the road link between the two countries. He recommended that ECA should get in touch with that secretariat which could act on behalf of the two Governments where the Trans-African Highway project was concerned.
- (f) Territory of the Ivory Coast. In the absence of a representative of the Ivory Coast, the participants recommended that the route suggested in document E/CN.14/TRANS/100, i.e. the Tobli-Daloa-Yamoussoukro-Abidjan-Aboisso route, should be adopted as the itinerary for the highway. They authorized the ECA secretariat to start consultations with the Government of the Ivory Coast and to inform it of the recommendations made by the conference.
- The representative of Liberia informed the conference that the Government of Liberia and the Government of the Ivory Coast planned to hold a meeting at the end of January 1974 for the purpose of selecting the itinerary for the international road between the two countries. Although an alternative route between Liberia and the Ivory Coast existed, he thought that the road recommended by the Conference would have greater economic viability than the other one. He expressed the hope that the ECA secretariat would consult with the Governments of Liberia and the Ivory Coast with a view to learning the conclusions of the meeting to which he had referred.
- (g) Territory of Ghana. Ghana had not sent a representative to the conference. The participants expressed the view that the Aboisso-Axim-Accra-Denu itinerary should be adopted for the Ghanaian section of the road. They authorized the secretariat to inform the Government of Ghana of the recommendations made by the conference and to obtain all the information needed on the condition of the road.
- (h) Territory of Togo. The Aflao-Lomé-Anecho-Hilla Condji route was retained as the itinerary for Togo. The representative of Togo gave participants the most up-to-date information on the status of the various sections of the highway and on improvement work planned.
- (i) Territory of Dahomey. It was recommended that the Hilla Condji-Grand Popo-Anfouin-Ouidha-Cotonou-Porto Novo-Idiroko route should be adopted as the itinerary of road.
- (j) Territory of Nigeria. The Idiroko-Otta-Ikeja-Lagos route was adopted as the itinerary for the road. The representative of Nigeria apprised the participants of improvements currently being made on the road between Idiroko and Lagos.

#### Summary

24. Following the discussion on the status of the Dakar-Lagos road, the meeting authorized the ECA secretariat to:

- (a) Enter into consultation with the Governments of those countries which had not been represented at the conference to inform them of the results obtained, especially as concerned the establishment of the co-ordinating committee whose membership was to comprise all the countries concerned, and with regard to the recommendations concerning the itinerary to be followed by those sections of the road which traversed their respective territories;
- (b) Carry out the studies necessary for the improvement of international traffic conditions on the Dakar-Lagos road, with special attention to the regulation of road traffic, the co-ordination of rules applying to the movement of goods and persons and the standardization of customs regulations;
- (c) Carry out the studies listed in annex II of this report.

#### Other business

##### (1) Feeder links

25. The Deputy Executive Secretary reminded the participants that after the itineraries for both the Dakar-Ndjamena and Dakar-Lagos roads had been adopted, a meeting to be attended by the members of both co-ordinating committees would be held to review the situation with regard to all the feeder-links. In the meantime, the representatives were invited to give the conference any information they might have concerning the feeder-links in their respective territories. The following information was provided.

26. The Gambia. The representative of the Gambia stated that his country would like the totally asphalted 179 km road linking Banjul to the Dakar-Trans-Gambia-Boukiling road, to be considered as a possible feeder link to the Trans-West African Highway.

27. Mali. The representative of Mali provided the following information concerning feeder links planned for the territory of Mali.

- (a) Bamako-Bougouni-Yanfolila in the direction of Guinea. That road was asphalted between Bamako and Bougouni; improvements were planned, and work on them would begin in October 1974. Studies had already been carried out on the section between Bougouni and Badougou, but they needed to be brought up to date.
- (b) Bamako-Bougouni-Manankoro in the direction of the Ivory Coast. From Bougouni there was an earth road which had been modernised in 1965 and 1966. Engineering studies would be needed to correct the alignment in places before the road was asphalted.
- (c) Link to the Trans-Saharan Highway. The itinerary of the Malian section had been altered slightly at the first meeting, and as a result, the Malian network would link with the Trans-Saharan Highway via the Koutiala-Kimparan-Siense (6 km south of San)-Gao road. The Gao-Labezanga-Niger frontier road along the Niger River was an earth road, but many improvements had been made to it.

- (d) The representative of Mali also pointed out that the link between the Trans-Saharan Highway and the Malian road network was one of the priorities of the Liptako-Gourma Authority.

28. Niger. The Niger representative provided information on the feeder links planned to be constructed in Niger.

- (a) to the Trans-Saharan Highway. The terminal of the Trans-Saharan Highway in Niger was Arlit and not Ingall as indicated in the ECA reference document (Arlit is 360 km north of Ingall and 1 200 km from Niamey).
- (b) to Dhomey: the distance by road from Dosso to the Dahomian frontier was 157 km all of which was asphalted (and not 163 km as stated by ECA) of which 57 km was a single carriageway. A study for strengthening and widening these 57 km was to begin presently.

29. Liberia. The representative of Liberia stated that his country had no objection to the adoption of the Kankan-Nzérékoré-Ganta road as the feeder-link provided that the Guinean authorities were in agreement.

30. Togo: The representative of Togo stated that the Lomé-Sokodé-Dapango-Bittou-Koupéla route, which was the one envisaged, was suitable. That road was 706 km long. 426 km were already asphalted. Of the remaining 280 km, 55 were currently under construction, and an engineering study financed by EDF was being carried out on 255 km.

31. Nigeria. The representative of Nigeria informed the meeting that the feeder links suggested by ECA for the Trans-West African Highways within her territory were generally acceptable. He further stated that the links formed part of Nigeria's national road network and that most sections had two bitumenized lanes of 24 ft. width, while the substandard sections were either currently being reconstructed, or, in a few cases, at final engineering stage. He, however, pointed out that the ECA proposed Jos-Bansara road should read Jos-Aliade-Enugu.

(2) Information

32. The Secretariat informed the meeting that ECA, in co-operation with the Governments of France and the United Kingdom, was organizing a symposium on Highway Engineering in Africa, scheduled to be held from 23 to 30 April 1974 at Addis Ababa. The two Governments would provide a team of expert lecturers and publications prepared especially for the symposium. The purpose of the symposium was to provide a forum where experience of highway engineering and the results of research on the subject would be presented and discussed in depth by African highway engineers. The main emphasis therefore would be on the technical aspects of road design and on construction and maintenance. African Governments had already been invited to send two practising highway engineers actively engage in road planning, design and construction.

Statements by the representatives of the industrialised countries and of international organizations

33. Italy. The representative of Italy confirmed his Government's interest in the construction of extensive international roads in Africa.
34. Federal Republic of Germany. The representative of the Federal Republic of Germany stated that even though his Government gave priority to its activities concerning the Dakar-Ndjamena road, it was none the less interested in feeder links between the two roads since they would ensure that the land-locked countries had access to the sea. For example, it was at present considering two projects related to the work of the Conference, the Mopti-Gao road in Mali and the Bobo-Dioulasso (Upper Volta)-Banfara road leading into the Ivory Coast.
35. The United Kingdom. The representative of the United Kingdom said there was no need to remind the participants of the favourable view taken by his Government with regard to the project under consideration. It might be useful to adopt a more realistic approach by incorporating all the road projects into a comprehensive subregional development plan which would take into account the natural complementarity of the economies of the countries concerned. It would also be necessary to set suitable standards for road construction.
36. Perhaps the next most important task for the Bureau was to quantify existing trade and tourism, to prepare forecasts of increases and to assess quantitatively potential new trade between countries of the region. This would provide the essential data base for decisions on route alignment, priority ranking for road improvement, and also for the development of appropriate standards for road construction.
37. Organization for the Development of the Senegal River (OMVS). The representative of OMVS, speaking on behalf of his Secretary General, stressed the importance which his organisation attached to activities aimed at improving transport facilities among the countries in the Senegal River area. Indeed, the purpose of OMVS was the integral development of the Senegal River Basin, and it was now engaged in a series of studies and activities designed to make the Senegal River navigable at all times of the year from Saint Louis (Senegal) to Kayes in Mali with a view to providing an outlet for countries in the interior, and especially for Mali. In addition to the dam envisaged for Manantani and another dam planned for Diama in the Delta, it had been decided to construct a river and sea port at Saint Louis and a river port at Kayes. The accomplishment of such projects would result in the development of agriculture and in increased traffic - especially road traffic - in the region. The construction of the dams referred to would also make it possible to cross the Senegal River, for example, at Diama on the Dakar-Nouakchott road.
38. European Development Fund (EDF). The representative of EDF pointed out that his organization had always given priority to the construction of permanent, asphalted international roads with all the necessary bridges and culverts. For that reason, in most of the African countries concerned, the roads proposed by ECA were the same as those in which EDF had invested. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the conclusions reached at the present meeting would be used by countries as guidelines when they determined their priorities as regarded road construction and when they subsequently submitted their request to EDF.

39. International Road Federation (IRF). The representative of IRF described the facilities which his organisation was prepared to make available to countries in all spheres related to road construction and maintenance including, in particular, a documentation centre for road techniques located at Berne and the results of the programme of road research carried out annually in 97 full member countries.

40. AID. The representative of AID drew attention to those studies and road work financed by his Government in the subregion. The main activities of his Government included the study on the Fada N'Gourma-Niamey road between Upper Volta and Niger, the study carried out between Ndjamena, Maltam and Maiduguri, involving the crossing of the Chari, studies on the Dakar-Zinguincher road in Senegal and the Gambia and on a link between Liberia and Sierra Leone in the form of a bridge over the Mono River to be effected in co-operation with the African Development Bank; the feasibility study concerning the Abidjan-Accra road and the supplementary study connected with the construction of a bridge at Cotonou. Where feeder links were concerned, AID was jointly funding the construction of the Parakou-Malanville road in Dahomey in conjunction with IBRD, and AID was also financing the construction of the Bamako-Bougouni road in Mali.

41. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). The representative of the World Bank stated that a great deal of importance should be attached to feeder links running north-south since most inter-country trade was carried out on such roads. He expressed the hope that studies and work on the two roads and on the feeder-links would be carried out simultaneously.

Place and date of the next meeting

42. The participants decided to hold their next meeting in Dakar, Senegal, in January 1975. They authorised the secretariat to transmit a request to that effect to the Government of Senegal and to co-operate with the Senegalese authorities in setting the exact date of the meeting.

Adoption of the report

43. The Conference adopted its report at its closing meeting held on 16th January 1974.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE  
OF THE DAKAR-LAGOS HIGHWAY

Preamble

The Dakar-Lagos Highway Co-ordinating Committee shall be established as follows

Article I

The Co-ordinating Committee shall be composed of high level representatives from each of the countries concerned in the Highway. The members shall be assisted by one or more alternates at the technical level. The Executive Secretary of ECA shall be a member of the Committee; the World Bank, the ADB and the FED or their representatives shall be invited as ex-officio members of the Committee. The representatives of the co-operating countries interested in the project will be the Associate Members. Representatives of specialized agencies and related institutions and experts may also be invited by the Co-ordinating Committee.

Article 2

The Co-ordinating Committee shall promote and co-ordinate the planning and implementation of the Dakar-Lagos Highway project. It shall, to this end.

- (a) Issue directives to the Bureau for the preparation of a co-ordinated work programme for the implementation of the Highway Project;
- (b) Recommend to Governments of the member countries concerned, measures for the implementation of the Highway Project;
- (c) Explore the possibilities of obtaining external financial and technical assistance for the implementation of the Highway Project;
- (d) Assist the participating Governments in the preparation and submission of requests for technical, financial and other assistance, and co-operate in the administration of such assistance whether provided under the United Nations technical assistance programme or by other organizations and donors;
- (e) Review from time to time the execution of projects and programmes undertaken by participating countries in connexion with the Highway;
- (f) Study and advise on the appropriate agreements between or among the Governments concerned on problems connected with the construction and improvement of the TransWest African Highway Network;

- (g) Recommend measures for improving international traffic on the Highway when completed, and shall for this purpose include:
- (i) A study of existing road and traffic regulations in the countries concerned with a view to determining the gradual harmonization of these regulations;
  - (ii) Regulations and procedures to be applied to goods and passenger traffic including customs, passport, health and visa formalities, wherever possible;
  - (iii) Harmonization of customs rules and procedures governing the international movement of private and commercial vehicles;
  - (iv) The extension of "in bond" facilities for goods in transit between ports and land-locked countries;
  - (v) Vehicle insurance.

#### Article 3

The Executive Secretary shall provide the necessary secretarial help. He shall also try to obtain engineers, transport economists and other competent experts from some of the co-operating countries with a view to establishing a Bureau of Trans-African Highway to be headed by a Co-ordinator. The Bureau shall serve as a secretariat of the Co-ordinating Committee and be responsible for the organization of meetings and the execution of directives given to it by the Co-ordinating Committee.

#### Article 4

The Co-ordinating Committee shall adopt its own rules of procedure, subject to the provisions set out below.

#### Article 5

The Co-ordinating Committee shall meet at least once a year, but extraordinary meetings can be convened if the need arises.

#### Article 6

At ordinary meetings the Co-ordinating Committee shall elect its Chairman and Vice-Chairman from among the representatives of the African countries concerned. The offices of Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be filled respectively by the representatives of the host country and the country which follows in alphabetical order. The persons so elected shall remain in office until the following general meeting.

On the expiration of the current Chairman's term of office, he shall be succeeded by the Vice-Chairman and a new Vice-Chairman, in accordance with the procedure set out in the first paragraph of this Article, shall be elected.

Article 7

The venues of the meetings shall be fixed by the Committee, preferably in the capitals of each one of the countries concerned in alphabetical order.

Article 8

The Executive Secretary of the ECA, in liaison with the Chairman in office, shall circulate the notices convening the meetings of the Co-ordinating Committee, shall establish the provisional agenda, and shall distribute the appropriate documents at least two months before the opening date of the meetings of the Committee.

Article 9

The Co-ordinating Committee may invite any person considered competent to participate in the discussions without the right to vote.

Article 10

The Co-ordinating Committee cannot hold a valid meeting unless at least two-thirds of the member Governments are present. Each member may be assisted by the advisers of his choice.

Article 11

As far as possible all decisions by the Co-ordinating Committee shall be taken on the basis of agreement among all representatives of Governments of member States. Only in exceptional cases shall there be a vote provided that any such vote shall not prejudice the existence of the organization.

Where a vote is taken, a two-thirds majority of the members present is necessary.

Article 12

The Executive Secretary of ECA and the Co-ordinator of the Bureau shall provide the necessary secretariat services for the meetings of the Co-ordinating Committee.

Article 13

The proceedings of the Co-ordinating Committee shall be the subject of a report prepared by the Co-ordinator of the Bureau in both English and French, the two versions being equally authentic.

Decisions shall be in the form of resolutions and shall be recorded in a separate document annexed to this report.

Article 14

The Co-ordinator shall be responsible for preparing periodic reports on the implementation of the decisions of the Co-ordinating Committee.

Article 15

The Co-ordinating Committee shall present its reports to the participating Governments and to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa.

Article 16

All expenses incurred by participants at meetings of the Co-ordinating Committee shall be borne by the Governments and organizations which they represent for the duration of their stay.

STUDIES

(a) Feasibility and/or Engineering Studies

Senegal/Gambia

- (i) Bounkiling-Kolda (engineering study for strengthening the sub-base)
- (ii) Kolda-Velingara (engineering study for strengthening the sub-base)
- (iii) ~~Velingara-Medina Gonasse-Dialakoto-Fongolimbi~~  
(Feasibility study to determine best link and afterwards engineering study)

Guinea

Fongolimbi-Mali-Labé-Mamou <sup>1/</sup>

(b) Studies on the facilitation of international traffic, including.

- (i) A study of existing road and traffic regulations in the countries concerned with a view to determining the gradual harmonization of these regulations;
- (ii) Regulations and procedures to be applied to goods and passenger traffic including customs, passport, health and visa formalities, wherever possible;
- (iii) Harmonization of customs rules and procedures governing the international movement of private and commercial vehicles;
- (v) Vehicle insurance.

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<sup>1/</sup> Subject to confirmation by the Government of Guinea.