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REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING ON THE TRANS-WEST AFRICAN HIGHWAY
DAKAR - NDJAMENA
Niamey, 9-11 January 1974

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REPORT ON THE FIRST MEETING ON THE TRANS-WEST AFRICAN HIGHWAY
DAKAR-NDJAMENA

Niamey, 9-11 January 1974

Introduction

1. The first meeting on the Trans-West African Highway between Dakar and Ndjamena was held at Niamey, Niger, from 9 to 11 January 1974.

Attendance

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following African countries: Cameroon, The Gambia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Upper Volta.

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

(a) Countries: Algeria, Belgium, Canada, France, The Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom;

(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 concerning the establishment of a Trans-West African Network was opened by Mr. Harou Kouka, the Minister of Public Works of the Republic of Niger, who welcomed the participants to the meeting on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Niger and on his own behalf.

5. After briefly recounting the results of the drought, which had been particularly severe in his country during the past year, Mr. Harou Kouka apologized for the limited resources which Niger had made available to the conference. He stressed that transport had both a social and an economic importance in cementing relations between the various African communities. He also pointed out that whereas links were readily available between the various African capitals and the larger European cities, there were few links between the countries of East and West Africa.

6. Mr. Kouka said he hoped that the conference would attain the objective set for it and produce concrete results.

7. The next speaker was Mr. Mamadou Aw, Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA, who, speaking on behalf of Mr. Robert Gardiner, Executive Secretary of ECA, and on his own behalf, thanked the President and Government of Niger for the warm welcome accorded in Niamey to the participants in the conference. He also thanked them for their kindness in agreeing to host the conference and for helping to organize it despite the difficulties experienced in Niger over the past year on account of the drought.

8. Mr. Aw then reviewed the progress made on the Trans-West African road network project since the subregional conference on economic co-operation held in Accra in April 1967. That conference had been attended by representatives of the fourteen countries in the West African subregion, who had recommended the construction of an all-weather road link between the countries in the subregion, the simplification of custom formalities and the application of other measures designed to promote subregional co-operation, especially where transport was concerned.

9. Mr. Aw then outlined the principle adopted for the implementation of the Trans-West African road project which consisted of linking national roads up with each other in such a way that it would be possible to construct a road uniting a number of countries in an early stage of the project. The road was to be an all-weather road open to normal motor vehicles. Its design standards would vary depending on the amount of traffic carried on the various sections. Starting from that principle, the conference should be able to choose from among the possible itineraries, selecting those which would require the least amount of work with a view to constructing the permanent link desired, in good time and at the lowest possible cost.

10. The Deputy Executive Secretary of ECA then described the transport policy designed by ECA to accord with its continental role. That policy was to devise a programme whereby subregional road networks would be interconnected, and in formulating the following projects as part of a comprehensive plan at the continental level

- The Trans-Saharan Highway running from the Mediterranean to the banks of the Niger River;
- An extension of the Dakar-Ouagadougou-Ndjamena road to the banks of the Red Sea;
- A second East-West road from Dakar to the Indian Ocean traversing Conakry, Abidjan, Lagos, Bangui and Kampala; and
- Another North-South highway running parallel to the Nile Valley on much the same path as the 25th Meridian between the Mediterranean and Lake Karibia.

11. Mr. Aw then pointed out that although the absence of such links had never concerned the former metropolitan countries, it none the less constituted an obstacle to attempts to unify African economies and people. There were as yet no rational arrangements for air, road, or rail transportation in Africa, especially between East and West. Thus, even though the development of transport and communications depended on the objective needs of trade, in the widest sense of the word, the argument that the road infrastructure must be justified by traffic needs should be given second thoughts at this point in time when an entire continent is still to be developed. In such a case, it was the road infrastructure which would create the traffic. Therefore, prime consideration should in most cases be given to infrastructure rather than the amount of traffic carried.

12. Mr. Aw then stated that African Governments should make a collective effort to provide the initial financing for the larger road transport projects and, for this purpose, should establish an African road fund. The fund could be made up not only of voluntary contributions by individuals, Governments and intergovernmental organizations, but also of the proceeds of taxes collected in the countries traversed by the highways, which would be paid by African countries themselves. In addition to the accounting and financial side of the question, the establishment of such a fund would also have a far-reaching psychological impact. In seeking unification, African States were beset by vicissitudes which could probably be more effectively overcome by the people of Africa.

13. Mr. Aw concluded his address by thanking all the delegations for their participation in the meeting. In particular he expressed his gratitude to those representing African intergovernmental organizations, institutions for financing and development aid and Governments of developing countries, whose participation reflected their willingness to co-operate in the project.

Election of Officers

14. The participants elected the following officers

Mr. Jacques Tollié (Niger), Chairman
Mr. S.O. Okin (Nigeria), Vice-Chairman
Mr. Hamadi Diallo (Mali), Rapporteur.

Adoption of the Agenda

15. The following agenda was adopted.

- (1) Opening of the meeting
- (2) Election of Officers
- (3) Adoption of the Agenda
- (4) Organization of the meeting
- (5) Examination of documents submitted by the ECA secretariat
 - (a) Institutional structures for implementation of the Trans-West African Highway project;
 - (b) Current Status of the Trans-West African Highway Network.
- (6) Discussion
- (7) Other business
- (8) Place and date of next meeting
- (9) Adoption of the report

Organization of the meeting

16. The following schedule of work was adopted for the meeting

Morning 9.00 a.m. - 1.00 p.m.
Afternoon 4.00 p.m. - 6.00 p.m.

Consideration of institutional structures for the implementation of the Trans-West African road between Dakar and Ndjamena

17. The secretariat described two possible formulas, drawing attention to those structures on which the meeting could base its considerations. One was the structure of the Trans-Saharan road project, in which a secretariat was assigned to carry out the decisions made by a liaison committee. The other was the structure of the Trans-African road project (Mombasa-Lagos) for which a Bureau had been established within the ECA secretariat. In the first case, the cost of the secretariat, including the salaries paid to its personnel, was financed by the countries concerned; and in the second case, the personnel employed in the Bureau belonged to the ECA Transport Division and were paid by ECA. The secretariat had suggested the adoption of a type of organization modelled on that of the Trans-African Highway project (Mombasa-Lagos). After a number of views had been exchanged, the participants to the meeting agreed to establish a co-ordinating committee for each road and a Bureau of Trans-African Highways to function as a secretariat within the Economic Commission for Africa.

18. After making some amendments, the meeting adopted the draft terms of reference of the co-ordinating committee of the Dakar-Ndjamena road, which was submitted by the secretariat, see Annex I.

Status of the Trans-West African Highway

19. The secretariat introduced that part of document E/CN.14/TRANS/100 which contained a description of the Dakar-Ndjamena road, which was being proposed as the northern branch of the Trans-West African road network.

20. The representatives of various member States then described conditions along the road in their respective countries and outlined the progress which had been made in the various studies or improvement projects currently underway.

21. The participants agreed to the itinerary outlined below for those sections of the road which traversed the territories of the following countries.

- (a) Territory of Senegal The itinerary Dakar-Tambacounda-Nayé was adopted for the road. It was felt that the Dakar-Nouakchott road might be incorporated in the Lagos-Dakar coastal road as a northern extension to it.
- (b) Territory of Mauritania Since Mauritania had not sent a delegation to the meeting, the ECA secretariat was asked to approach the Mauritanian authorities on behalf of the member States to determine the Mauritanian priorities and reconcile them with the decisions taken at the Conference.
- (c) Territory of Mali The route to be followed by the road would be Nayé-Kayes-Nioro du Sahel-Kolokani-Bamako-Ségou-Bla-Koutiala-Koury-Faramana. Between Bla and Koury that itinerary differed from the one proposed in document E/CN.14/TRANS/100, in that it by-passed the San loop thereby shortening the Malian section of the road by 157 kilometres. The road was asphalted from Bamako to the border with Upper Volta.

- (d) Territory of Upper Volta. The Faramana-Bobo Dioulasso-Ouagadougou-Fada N'Gourma-Gouina itinerary was adopted.
- (e) Territory of Niger The Gouina-Niamey-Birni N'Konni-Guidam Rondji-Jibiya itinerary was adopted for the road. However, the delegation of Niger said it would like the ECA secretariat to consider an alternative route from Guidam Rondji to Zinder. In view of the possibility that in the near future Niger might have an asphalted road through Zinder and Gouré to Nguigmi in the extreme east of the country, the delegation of Niger felt that it would be preferable to include that section in the international network of the subregion. It therefore requested that various possibilities for integrating it into the network should be taken into consideration and that an order of priority for the investments necessary should be established.

(f) Territory of Nigeria

Nigeria favoured the itinerary proposed in document E/CN.14/TRANS/100, namely, Jibiya-Kano-Maiduguri-Gambaru, because most of the sections of this stretch were fully completed, and some of the remaining sections were either under construction or about to be put out for tender (as per information submitted). Moreover, the road traversed some of the most densely populated industrial and commercial cities of Northern Nigeria and best served the stated objectives of the Trans-West African Highway.

- (g) Territory of Cameroon: Cameroon would prefer an itinerary traversing Bama to Mora and thence to Waza ending at Fort Foureau.

22. The participants in the meeting then authorized the ECA secretariat to

- find an appropriate solution to the problem of establishing an itinerary between Maiduguri (in Nigeria) and Fort-Foureau (in Cameroon) which would best satisfy the objectives set for the Trans-West African Highway, and to study ways in which such an itinerary could be accepted by Nigeria and Cameroon;
- take all the necessary steps to carry out the studies referred to in Annex II of the report.

23. The Deputy Executive Secretary reiterated his satisfaction that so many non-African countries and international organizations were participating in the meeting and said that it was the intention of the secretariat to bring them into closest association with the implementation of the new project. He then asked them to tell the participants in the Conference their views as to the results of the work accomplished.

Statements made by representatives of industrialized countries and international organizations

24. International Road Federation (IRF). The representative of the International Road Federation said he had been interested in the discussions which the meeting had held on the Trans-West African Road Network project, which was unreservedly supported by IRF. He also said that the Trans-West African road under discussion

should be included in a comprehensive Trans-African road network and that the Governments of African countries should formulate a declaration stating their desire to follow an integral policy in the field of road transport. Among other things such a declaration would mean that international organizations would not have to make a choice as to the assistance to be granted since all the roads would be part of a single network.

25. European Development Fund (EDF). The EDF representative said that the attitude adopted by EDF with regard to road construction in Africa, and especially roads linking the various African countries, was a positive one. EDF was prepared to participate in the implementation of the decisions taken in the Conference at the request of the Governments of the States associated in the project. However, EDF would not finance feasibility studies and would confine its activities to the financing of engineering studies and of construction work.

26. France. The representative of France said he had been keenly interested in listening to the discussions held in the meeting and that he had studied the documents submitted to it. He added that his country, whose co-operation with most of the countries concerned in the project was now on a better footing, supported the construction of the Trans-West African roads in question. Not only would those roads help to develop the various countries but they would make it easier to regroup them and would have a favourable effect on intra-African trade, social and cultural relations. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that the decisions taken by the Conference would make it possible to begin construction in the near future.

27. Federal Republic of Germany. The representative of the Federal Republic of Germany said that his country firmly supported the project to establish an extensive African road network. He reminded the participants that his country was already furnishing assistance in the construction of roads in the subregion, which were part of the network under consideration, and said that it was prepared to consider files relating to sections of the road.

28. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The representative of the United Kingdom said that he had been interested in the discussions held in the Conference and that his country was prepared to consider any request for assistance in constructing the road. At the present time, he, himself as Head of the Overseas Unit of the "Road Research Laboratory" offered all the facilities available to his organization to the Trans-African Highway Bureau.

29. Belgium. The representative of Belgium apologised for his late arrival and said that he had been unable to attend the Meeting at the early stages of its discussions for reasons beyond his control. He stated that his country viewed the implementation of the project with interest and would continue to do so.

30. IBRD. The representative of IBRD also excused himself for arriving late and recalled the support IBRD extended to major African transport projects and, in particular, to projects which promoted the economic integration of African countries.

31. Algeria. The representative of Algeria thanked the secretariat of ECA for having invited him to attend the meeting as an observer. Algeria attached great importance to the project because Africa suffered from its poor system of communications. That was why Algeria had joined in the Trans-Saharan Road project linking North Africa with Sahelian Africa, 1,400 km of which had already been completed in Algeria.

32. The African, Malagasy and Mauritian Common Organization. The representative of OCAM said that he was sorry that he had arrived in Niamey late and had thus not been able to take part in the debates of the first Meeting on the Trans-West African Highway Network. On behalf of the Secretary General of OCAM, he thanked the ECA secretariat for the invitation extended to him. After recalling the economic and political importance of the project, he said that OCAM would give its full support for its implementation.

33. Japan. The representative of Japan thanked ECA for having invited his country to participate in the first Meeting on the Trans-West African Highway Network as an observer. Having noted the importance of the project in terms of co-operation and of the economic and social development of the African countries, he stressed that his country had extended its assistance for the Mombasa-Lagos Trans-African Highway and would continue to take part in meetings dealing with similar projects whenever possible.

Other business

34. 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 engaged in road planning, design and construction.

Date and place of the next meeting

35. The participants requested that ECA enter into consultations with the Governments of member countries in order to decide on the place of the next meeting of the Co-ordinating Committee which was to be held in January or February 1975.

Adoption of the report

36. The report was adopted at the closing meeting on 11 January 1974.

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

Preamble

The Dakar-Ndjamena 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-Ndjamena 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 Trans-West 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 Tambacounda-Nayé (180 km)

Mali. Nayé-Kolokani (665 km)

Niger. Zinder-Gouré (160 km), on the alternative route Zinder-Gouré-Maine Soroa and thence to Maiduguri.

Upper Volta. Hounde-Sakoince. 200 km.

(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;
- (iv) The extension of 'in bond' facilities for goods in transit between ports and land-locked countries;
- (v) Vehicles insurance.