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REPORT OF THE FOURTH MEETING BETWEEN THE TRANS-AFRICAN  
HIGHWAYS BUREAU AND INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES  
Addis Ababa, 5-6 November 1975

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REPORT ON THE FOURTH MEETING BETWEEN  
THE TRANS-AFRICAN HIGHWAYS BUREAU  
AND INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES

Addis Ababa, 5-6 November 1975

Introduction

1. The fourth meeting between the Trans-African Highways Bureau and industrialized countries was held at Addis Ababa on 5 and 6 November 1975.

Attendance

2. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following industrialized countries:

Canada, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom.

The following organizations also took part:

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), World Food Programme (WFP), World Bank (IBRD), European Development Fund (EDF) and International Road Federation (IRF).

Opening of the meeting

3. The fourth meeting of the Trans-African Highways Bureau and industrialized countries was opened by Mr. Adebayo Adedeji, Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, who welcomed participants to the meeting.

4. He said that the meeting of industrialized countries and financing agencies was called upon to deal with the assistance required to implement the later phases of the Mombasa-Lagos, Dakar-Ndjamena and Nouakchott-Lagos Highways and in particular the engineering studies of selected sections of those Highways.

5. With regard to the Mombasa-Lagos Trans-African Highway, he said that in Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria construction and improvement works were proceeding satisfactorily; in the United Republic of Cameroon and the Central African Republic, the necessary feasibility studies were more or less completed and what were now required were engineering studies; and in Zaire, where most remained to be done, of the two feasibility studies required one was in progress and the other one had just commenced.

6. He stressed the importance of the Dakar-Ndjamena Trans-Sahelian Highway to the six countries severely hit by the drought and expressed the hope that it would be possible to secure assistance to draw up a realistic plan of action for the improvement of the route to an all-weather standard within a reasonable length of time.

7. He concluded by stating that the Trans-African Highway projects could live up to their expectations only as long as they were kept to all-weather standard over their entire lengths. He hoped that the industrialized countries which had financed the various feasibility studies and other co-operating countries and financing agencies would agree to undertake the required engineering studies so that the implementation of such important trans-African highway projects could be speeded up in line with the wishes of African Governments.

Adoption of the agenda

8. The following agenda was adopted:

- (1) Opening of meeting
- (2) Adoption of the agenda
- (3) Organization of the meeting
- (4) Papers presented by the Trans-African Highways Bureau
  - (a) Report on the Mombasa-Lagos Highway and its feeder links;
  - (b) Report on the Trans-Sahelian Highway: Dakar-Ndjamena;
  - (c) Report on the Trans-West African Highway: Nouakchott-Lagos
- (5) Discussion
- (6) Other business
- (7) Adoption of the report

Papers presented by the Trans-African Highways Bureau

9. A representative of the secretariat introduced three documents: (i) Current status of the Trans-African Highway and its feeder roads (E/CN.14/TRANS/123); (ii) Present status of the Trans-West African Highway Network (E/CN.14/TRANS/121); (iii) Report of the fifth meeting of the Trans-African Highway Co-ordinating committee (E/CN.14/TRANS/125) and drew attention in particular to the engineering studies required on the sections listed below:

(a) Mombasa-Lagos Highway

- (i) Zaire: Kasindi-Kisangani (813 km). The feasibility study of the section, financed by the Government of Belgium, had been started in August 1975.
- (ii) Zaire: Kisangani-Bangassou (720 km). The feasibility study, financed by the Government of Japan, was nearing completion and the final draft report was expected before the end of the year.
- (iii) Central African Republic: Bossembélé-Garoua Boulai (445 km). The feasibility study of the section, financed by the Government of France, had been completed and the final report was awaited.
- (iv) Cameroon: Garoua Boulai-Meidougou (98 km). Finance for engineering study of this section was being sought.
- (v) Cameroon: Tibati-Foumban (326 km). The feasibility study of this section, financed by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, was under way and the draft report which had been expected in May 1975 was still awaited.

(b) Dakar-Ndjamena Highway

- (vi) Mali: Naye-Nioro du Sahel-Kolokani (664 km). In November 1974, at the third meeting of the industrialized countries and the TAH Bureau, the representatives of the United Kingdom, France, the Federal Republic of Germany and Italy had indicated their Governments' willingness

to co-operate in financing the feasibility study of the section. Since then, however, the Government of Mali had confirmed that what was now required on the section was not a feasibility study but rather an engineering study. Accordingly, ECA had requested the four Governments to assist in financing the required engineering study. The United Kingdom was planning to send one expert to Mali at the end of November 1975 for about seven to ten days with a view to drawing up the necessary terms of reference.

10. The representative of the secretariat emphasized the importance of transport to the land-locked States of the Central African Republic, which was in need of an access road to the sea, and Mali, where the section of the Dakar-Ndjamena Highway was a vital element in the linkage of the Sahel countries, and hoped that multilateral assistance would be available for the required engineering studies.

#### Discussion

11. The points made by the representatives of the industrialized countries and organizations during the discussion are summarized below.

#### Japan

12. The representative of Japan said that the feasibility study of the Kisangani-Bangassou (720 km) section in Zaire was nearing completion and the final draft report was expected before the end of the year and the final report in April 1976. The study divided the 720 km route into three sections on the basis of geography and economy and for each section future traffic volume, design standards, construction costs and the economic impact were indicated. The Government of Japan would give consideration after reviewing the final report by sections, to the further assistance required for the engineering studies.

#### France

13. The representative of France said that the final report on the feasibility studies relating to the Bossembélé-Garoua Boulai section had been completed. Recent strikes had delayed the dispatch of copies to ECA, but he hoped to receive them at any moment.

14. The French Government was aware that, as had already been pointed out by the ECA representative, there was a need for continuity between the feasibility study which had just been carried out and the implementation of the project in question. The time had therefore come for the Central African Republic or ECA to request organs to finance the construction of the road concerned, incorporating the cost of the final studies in the total cost of the project.

15. The French authorities considered that in general engineering studies should not be undertaken unless financing had been obtained for the work. For that reason, the feasibility studies should be extensive enough to allow the financing organs to take a decision, which, in point of fact, was true of the study carried out in the Central African Republic by FAC.

Federal Republic of Germany

16. The representative of the Federal Republic of Germany stated that he would contact the secretariat as soon as he had the information he was requesting on the status of the feasibility study carried out by his Government on the Tibati-Foumban (326 km) section of the Trans-African Highway in the United Republic of Cameroon, but he was not in a position to commit his Government as to what further assistance it was prepared to give for the engineering study of the section.

Italy

17. The representative of Italy said that his Government had helped to finance the studies of the Meidougou-Tibati section because it was willing to help to finance the road work and had in fact actually done so in the amount of over 20 million United States dollars. The work was in progress.

18. Engineering studies of the Meidougou-Garoua Boulai section could not be considered because so far no organ had expressed a desire to finance the work.

19. His Government felt that in general engineering studies should not be carried out until the financing of the work was ensured and that both the studies and the work should be financed from the same source. Generally speaking, his Government preferred to help to finance feasibility studies, which were indispensable in getting specialized organs to finance the actual work.

20. The situation was the same where the financing of the work on the Nayé-Nioro du Sahel-Bamako road was concerned. At the last meeting his Government's representatives had expressed its willingness to join the Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany in financing the feasibility studies, for which there now seemed to be no need. He felt it would be possible to reconsider the matter when the intentions of the Governments concerned were clearer.

World Bank

21. The representative of the World Bank said that in accordance with the wish of the meeting he would inform his organization that since it was the consensus of the co-operating industrialized countries to assist in financing engineering studies only where there were assurances of financing for the construction works, it was desirable that the World Bank/IDA should assist in financing projects whose improvements were supported by feasibility studies.

United Kingdom

22. The representative of the United Kingdom stated that his Government was making arrangements to send one expert to Mali towards the end of November 1975 for about seven to ten days to draw up precise terms of reference for a UNDP-financed feasibility study, but this was subject to the Government of Mali submitting a formal request and also confirming that the necessary local arrangements would be made to facilitate the task of the expert. However, that did not preclude any multinational co-operation for the study required on the Nayé-Nioro du Sahel-Kolokani (664 km) section of the Dakar-Ndjamena Highway.

United Nations Development Programme

23. The representative of UNDP confirmed that UNDP had agreed in September 1975 to assist Mali in making a feasibility study of the Kayes-Bamako link. However, full details were not yet available to the UNDP Addis Ababa office.

European Development Fund

24. The position of the branches of the European Economic Commission where Community financing was concerned had not changed since the meeting held at Kampala in April 1975. The Lomé Convention was still in the process of ratification, and no decision related to financing could be considered before it came into force. However, the organs within the Community were taking advantage of this transition period by working with the 46 African, Caribbean and Pacific recipient States to finalize the indicative aid programme, which would reflect the objectives and priorities set by each partner Government.

25. With regard to Mali, he said that it was to that country to specify, in the course of the discussions with the programming mission, what programme it would like to see EDF have. Actually, although EDF supported the Trans-African Highways project, which would help to consolidate African unity, it could commit itself only in respect of projects prepared by the countries concerned and could not state in advance where it would be involved. As to whether the road could not be financed from extra-programme resources, as far as the third EDF was concerned there were no more funds available for Mali.

ECA secretariat

26. In view of the urgent need for the improvement of important trans-African highway projects to an all-weather standard, the secretariat proposed to approach international financing institutions and UNDP with a view to securing their assistance for the required engineering studies and also possibly for the construction and/or improvement works needed on various sections of the Highways. However, in cases where international financing institutions would not finance engineering studies, ECA proposed to reopen negotiations with industrialized countries for the required studies.

Adoption of the report

27. The present report was adopted at the closing meeting on 6 November 1975.