

Building Capacity for Cross-Border and Transit Transport Management in Eastern Africa

Addis Ababa, 5 February 2014 (ECA) - High transport costs remain a challenge for many African countries, particularly those that are landlocked. ECA studies show that landlocked countries have disproportionately high trade-related costs, mainly due to significantly higher costs of inland transport. Indeed, in the case of countries such as Burundi and Rwanda, inland transport costs account for over 70% of the total import/export costs. Landlocked countries depend on transit countries for their international trade and they are linked by transit transport corridors. Efficient corridor management as well as smooth cross-border relations among the stakeholders involved in transit transport are required for landlocked countries to fully benefit from the globalised trading system.

It is in this context that the Economic Commission for Africa, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) are jointly implementing a project aimed at improving the level of performance of corridors, in terms of time, cost, and reliability of the transit transport process. As part of the project, ECA and UNCTAD collaborated with the Central Corridor Transit Transport Facilitation Agency (TTFA) to organise a regional capacity building workshop in Kigali from 22-24 January 2014. The workshop was attended by various stakeholders from Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania involved in transit transport, including government officials from the ministry of transport and infrastructure, ministry of trade, customs, police, as well as transport operators, insurance companies, and freight forwarders, among others.

Participants were introduced to transit transport corridor analysis and trained on two transit transport management methodologies, namely: (i) the *Cluster Development methodology*, developed by UNCTAD, which is a collaborative approach that brings together stakeholders involved in transit transport to share information, identify challenges, and coordinate their facilitation measures; (ii) the *Time/Cost Distance Methodology*, developed by UNESCAP to assess and monitor the performance of transit transport operations.

The regional workshop was followed by national workshops in Rwanda, held in Kigali on 27-28 January 2014, and in Burundi, held in Bujumbura on 30-31 January 2014. The national workshops were used to introduce the two methodologies to a wider range of stakeholders, establish national clusters, and to discuss the results of the initial application of the *Time/Cost Distance Methodology* in the concerned countries. Key recommendations from the regional and national workshops included the need to: harmonise road tolls in all countries of the Central Corridor; improve transportation by rail as well as maritime transport in the countries of the Central Corridor; improve road safety along the corridor; and reduce the number of weigh bridges along the corridor, among others.

