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REPORT OF THE INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE
INTER-STATE FACILITATION COMMISSION OF
THE CAIRO-GABORONE TRANS-EAST AFRICAN
HIGHWAY AUTHORITY

CAIRO, EGYPT, 24 TO 26 OCTOBER 1983

A. ORGANIZATION AND ATTENDANCE

1. The inaugural meeting of the Inter-State Facilitation Commission of the Cairo-Gaborone Trans-East African Highway Authority was held at Cairo, Egypt, from 24 to 26 October 1983.
2. The meeting was attended by representatives of Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, the Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe (members) and Rwanda (associate member). The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Road Federation (IRF) attended as observers.

B. OPENING OF THE MEETING

3. In his opening address to the meeting, Mr. Moheiddine Abdel Latif, current Chairman of the Governing Council of the Cairo-Gaborone Trans-East African Highway Authority (TEAHA) welcomed participants to Cairo, and expressed his appreciation of the efforts made by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in organizing the meeting and doing the background work for the proper establishment of the Inter-State Facilitation Commission.
4. Travel along the Cairo-Gaborone Highway was hampered by a lack of adequate infrastructure as well as legal and administrative barriers which slowed down socio-economic development. The main purpose of establishing the Inter-State Facilitation Commission was to eliminate such non-physical barriers. The concerted efforts of all member countries was required to effectively implement the work of the Commission. Reliable statistical data on existing constraints to travel and international trade, and information on existing international agreements and treaties were required before the Facilitation Commission could attempt to eliminate or at least reduce the barriers along the Cairo-Gaborone Highway. He concluded by paying special tribute to the Executive Secretary of ECA for his dedication to the cause of African development and prosperity.
5. In his statement, Mr. Tchouta Moussa, Director of Transport, Communications and Tourism Division of ECA apologized for the absence of Professor Adebayo Adedeji, who was attending a meeting of Heads of State of Central African States in Gabon and thanked the Egyptian Government for hosting the meeting, and for its traditional hospitality. Travel in Africa continued to suffer from physical and non-physical barriers, and the Cairo-Gaborone Highway was no exception. The work of the Facilitation Commission should therefore focus on identifying such barriers through actual observation of prevailing conditions. The work programme prepared for the benefit of participants provided a programme of action to determine the extent of non-physical barriers hindering travel and trade along the Highway.
6. He reviewed in some detail the various activities proposed, and the terms of reference of the subsidiary bodies to be established. The Facilitation Commission should spare no effort in pursuing the Authority's major objective of removing non-physical trade barriers. ECA was fully committed to supporting the Commission's efforts within the limits of its available resources. The programme under review foresaw an initial meeting of the Commission at Addis Ababa, unless another venue was agreed upon. ECA would do its utmost to make that initial meeting and any subsequent meetings as successful as possible.

Election of officers (agenda item 2)

7. The meeting unanimously elected representatives of the following member countries as the bureau of the meeting:

Chairman:	Egypt
Vice-Chairman:	Zimbabwe
Rapporteur:	Kenya

Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 3)

8. The following agenda was adopted:

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Election of officers
3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
4. Consideration of the programme of the Inter-State Facilitation Commission
5. Establishment of subsidiary bodies of the Commission:
 - (a) Working Group on Customs
 - (b) Working Group on Immigration
 - (c) Working Group on Traffic Regulations
6. Other matters
7. Date and place of the next meeting
8. Adoption of the report

C. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Consideration of the programme of work of the Inter-State Facilitation Commission (agenda item 4)

9. The Chairman briefly outlined the programme of work of the Commission as contained in document TRANS/TEAHA/ISFC/1 and invited comments from the floor.

10. The representative of Egypt suggested that the period of preliminary studies needed to be extended to six months. In the meantime ECA should prepare a detailed plan of work to assist the Commission to establish a data base on existing rules and procedures on international travel and trade. A preliminary study conducted on the extent of constraints might be useful to the work of the Commission.

11. The representative of Zimbabwe said that it would be important to examine the structure of the Facilitation Commission before considering the time frame proposed for its preliminary programme of studies. The work of the Commission and ECA could be simplified if all member countries sent to ECA, ahead of the preliminary meeting of the Commission at Addis Ababa (or another venue that may be agreed upon), their respective rules and procedures governing international travel.

12. After further discussions, the Facilitation Commission agreed to make the following recommendations:

(a) The actual study of the Commission would commence after the forthcoming Addis Ababa meeting of the Inter-State Facilitation Commission;

(b) The ECA Secretariat would prepare a plan of action for the Inter-State Facilitation Commission prior to its initial meeting, based on country submissions of the rules and procedures governing international travel and trade in each member country.

13. The Inter-State Facilitation Commission then adopted its programme of work with the above-mentioned remarks.

Establishment of subsidiary bodies of the Commission (agenda item 5)

14. The Chairman of the Commission introduced the item as contained in working document TRANS/TEAHA/ISFC/2 and underscored the importance of facilitating travel and trade in the region. The document contained adequate information to serve as a pringboard for the planned activities of the three Working Groups.

15. In the ensuing discussions, the representative of Egypt said that it might be desirable to expand the working groups to emphasize the traffic police aspect of the problem.

16. The representative of Zimbabwe thought that the traffic aspect and other similar refinements could be taken care of by co-opting, at a later date, experts to work in the various fields; and therefore the three working Groups proposed should be considered adequate for the time being. The representatives of the Sudan and Ethiopia supported Zimbabwe's proposal.

17. The representative of Kenya proposed that consideration be given to the use of African and international consultants to assess existing constraints to travel and trade along TEAHA.

18. The representative of ECA stated that the participation of the Africans themselves in the assessment of the existing problems to travel and trade, and in the formulation of remedial measures would be indispensable to any effective programme of removing travel and trade obstacles. If consultants needed to be employed, then preference should be given to African consultants.

19. After further discussions on the establishment of the working groups, the representative of Egypt proposed that various countries should be assigned to chair the three Working Groups.

20. The representative of Kenya enquired what the role of ECA was in the work of TEAHA, the Inter-State Facilitation Commission and the Working Groups.

21. The representative of ECA said that in the absence of a TEAHA secretariat, ECA would act as the secretariat for both the Authority and the Commission, as well as a co-ordinating body for the Working Groups. ECA was committed to providing all the necessary support to the Inter-State Facilitation Commission and the Working Groups. If it was decided after the forthcoming extraordinary meeting to revive and provide sufficient financial support to the full-fledged secretariat of TEAHA, and to assign a Director-General and his Deputy, then that secretariat would assume full responsibility for all administrative matters, and ECA would continue to support it to the best of its ability. If, on the other hand, the Governing Council of TEAHA should opt for an alternative arrangement, and request ECA to revive the Trans-African Highway Bureau to act as the secretariat of the Council, then ECA would provide whatever secretarial services the Inter-State Facilitation Commission and its organs might require, including co-ordination of the activities of the Working Groups.

22. The representative of Kenya asked what the role of a Chairman of the Working Groups would be.

23. The representative of ECA said that it would primarily amount to co-ordination of the work of the various aspects of facilitation of travel and trade. But the burden of responsibility needed to be shared by each and every member State which needed to make human and material resources available if the venture was to be useful and effective.

24. Based on the ECA proposals and the discussion that ensued, the Inter-State Facilitation Commission decided that:

(a) The terms of reference of the three Working Groups should be accepted as proposed. The last provision of the indicative terms of reference on immigration would be reworded to clarify that countries would ensure that transit passengers would be required to show proof that they had sufficient means of support throughout their stay;

(b) The following member countries should chair the three Working Groups, as shown:

The Sudan:	Working Group on Customs
Ethiopia:	Working Group on Traffic
Kenya:	Working Group on Immigration

(c) The Chairman of the Inter-State Facilitation Commission and the Chairmen of the three Working Groups should hold their initial preparatory meeting at ECA headquarters in Addis Ababa in March 1984. The Chairmen might, if they so desired, be accompanied by relevant experts. ECA would correspond with member countries in the meantime, to obtain data and information on existing regulations and procedures governing international travel and trade;

(d) Based on information obtained ECA should prepare a plan of action for the Inter-State Facilitation Commission and its Working Groups;

(e) ECA should continue to act as the secretariat of the Commission and should co-ordinate the Working Groups, unless and until an alternative arrangement has been made by the Governing Council.

Other matters (agenda item 5)

25. The representative of UNCTAD said that much relevant treaty and documentation material had already been collected under the auspices of UNDP-financed UNCTAD-executed projects in Eastern and Southern African subregions, and at national levels in the Sudan, Ethiopia and Egypt (on custom regulation and procedures); and that a model treaty had been drafted for Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda, which could form the basis for a future agreement in the Cairo-Gaborone axis. Further, maximum use should be made of ongoing Preferential Trade Area activities in the simplification and harmonization of trade documents. He urged that maximum use should be made of accumulated expertise in facilitation. His agency would participate in the preliminary meeting of the Chairmen of the Working Groups in Addis Ababa in March 1984, to assist in every respect possible and to avoid duplication of efforts.

Date and place of the next meeting (agenda item 7)

26. The Inter-State Facilitation Commission decided to hold its next meeting at ECA Headquarters, Addis Ababa, in July 1984.

Adoption of the report (agenda item 8)

27. During the final session, the representative of Zambia apologized for the late arrival of his delegation and the absence of the Minister designated to lead his delegation, who had been kept away by the ongoing national elections at home, and affirmed his country's strong support for the ideals of the trans-African highway project.

28. The rapporteur then presented the report of the meeting and, after some discussions, the Inter-State Facilitation Commission adopted its report.

29. In his closing statement, the Chairman thanked participants for their valuable contributions and dedication; and said that the inaugural meeting should serve as a springboard for the very vital undertaking ahead. He then declared the meeting closed.