

**PROSPECTS FOR THE INTEGRATION
OF TRANSPORT SYSTEMS**

PAPER PRESENTED

BY

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AT

**WORKSHOP ON MULTIMODALISM:
INTEGRATION OF TRANSPORT SYSTEMS FOR
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**WORKSHOP ON MULTIMODAL TRANSPORT: INTEGRATION OF TRANSPORT SYSTEMS FOR THE CARRIAGE OF GOODS
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Presentation by the UASC Secretary-General on the theme:

“ PROSPECTS FOR THE INTEGRATION OF TRANSPORT SYSTEMS”

This theme consists of the following components:

- 1) The need for integration;
- 2) What are West and Central African countries doing in this domain?
- 3) What are the regional plans for the acquisition of transport infrastructure?
- 4) What are their objectives, efforts and achievements?

Introduction

In a modern economy, the role of transport is very strategic for it facilitates trade, enhances and improves the movement of goods, people, ideas, technology and services and furthermore, it permits the knitting of friendship and fraternal relations among people.

Since the colonial masters of Africa conceived transport networks mostly to facilitate the carriage of raw materials towards their strongholds, Africa has largely remained a hinterland continent, without any remarkable evolution, organization or coordination in the structure of transport networks. There is therefore the need for systems of transport that are not only adequate and efficient but varied and properly adapted to the African environment. As globalisation has come with tough competition for every one, greater opening and growth in trade depends on systematic integration of our various transport systems, which should be complementary in a planned and coordinated manner.

In the West and Central African region, there is a clear deficit in road and rail networks both between big metropolitan centres and the hinterlands and amongst the states themselves. Multimodalism is therefore the opportunity to rethink and reorganize or restructure the

route links between production centres and storage depots and those of consumption. The improvement of coordination, opening up as well as the identification of modernization of certain modes which are increasingly being used are amongst the issues that deserve our attention within this context.

Integration of transport systems is concerned inter alia with addressing the problem of serious and pathological imbalance that exist between the supply side and the local, regional and international demand side of transport services, goods and technology.

The different modes of transport are by land (road, animal, rail and pipeline); maritime modes (by sea, cabotage, and by river); and air transport. In Cameroon, Benin and Senegal for example, cargo is carried by sea-road-rail-road. In Congo, cargo goes more frequently by sea-rail and river. In the Central African Republic, it is by sea (through the port of Douala) –air-road and other countries do it by sea and road etc. In most sub-Saharan countries, country capitals are connected by air, yet this mode remains costly and inaccessible to the majority of people. Maritime transport is largely used in foreign trade. This means that integration has to explore other modes of transport that are more modest in cost and accessible to the vast majority and this can only be the traditional modes such as road-rail-river-camel etc., which are becoming the most effective catalysts of integrated development and the moulding of the region.

In the domain of transport systems integration, the West African sub-region [ECOWAS] has made a more remarkable effort than the CEMAC sub-region. Some institutions has equally outlined plans for regional integration and acquisition of the necessary transport infrastructure based on well defined objectives. There have been some major achievements, but a lot still have to be done to reach a reasonable level of effective integration and multilateral liberalization of trade and communication conveyed by a varied, combined or multimodal system of transport that can reach all the corners of our region under conditions that are acceptable to all.

II. Definition

Multimodal transport has been defined by the United Nations Convention on International Multimodal Transport of Goods as “the carriage of goods by at least two different modes of transport, on the basis of multimodal transport contract from a place situated in one country at which the goods have been in charge by the multimodal transport operator to a place of designated for delivery situated indifferent country”

At the level of the sub-region, the Inter-State convention of the Multimodal Transport of Goods defines it as “the carriage of goods by at least two different modes of transport, on the basis of a multimodal transport contract from a place in one state at which the goods are taking in charge by the multimodal transport operator to a place designated for delivery in a different state”.

Multimodal transport, also called combined transport is characterized by the realization of the carriage operation by the “Multimodal Transport Operator” (MTO) as well as one contract materialized by a single transport document, either a bill of lading, a way bill or an airway bill which governs the carriage operation from door to door.

In the West and Central Africa region, because the different modes of transport are fragmented i.e., heterogeneous and not interconnected and of very low density, a lot has not been for their organization, coordination and infrastructural development in order to effectively attain the objective of intermodal integration which will lead to multimodalism and the attendant advantages to both the national and regional economies and the African shippers. However, we must ask the question, why should our transport systems be integrated?

III. Some objectives of transport system integration.

1. In order to carry out the objective of convergence in the most efficient way possible, the priority of ECOWAS and CEMAC is to undertake projects that promotes regional integration and which serve as the main connections in the development of the community. The objectives specifically targeted through this

initiative is the physical integration of the two sub-regions or region as a whole, through the interconnection of transport and communication networks. This is very important because most African economies are too small to carry out certain big projects individually; the idea of shared facilities becomes easily achievable through the institution of inter and multimodal transport.

2. Secondly, the harmonious development of inter-state transport systems linking the two sub-regions up with an efficient infrastructure remains indispensable to the economic integration of the region. In trying to master the high costs of production and the quality of transport and communication services so as to improve on the economic competitiveness of our product and thereby strengthen the region, there has been expert consensus on the importance of integrated systems of transport carry this policy right through.
3. Another objective is to strengthen region cooperation and promote south-south trade (intra-regional trade) through interconnected infrastructure and harmonized transport procedures. Facilitation of the import/export system is included among the priorities of action in favour of the inclusion of countries of the region in the world economic system.
4. Facilitation is almost a separate objective on its own which has inspired many studies, funding and the acquisition of facilities. Though it does not constitute an end in itself, the progress made in this area is still an achievement for the system of trade and transport in our region which is likewise of interest to international partners.
5. Opening and connecting with landlocked countries is also part of the initiative discussed within the framework of integration of transport system. The reduction of operational costs of transport which greatly render the fight against poverty difficult and unnecessarily increase the level of logistics in the system of trade, transport and follow-up of cargo is considerable within the

framework of the **Sub-Saharan African Transport Policy Programme (SSATP)**, governments are determined to support the principles and process of analysis of poverty/transport (PRTSR), while this same government and donors also show their determination to include the result of PRTSR in the national development strategy. This tying of transport strategies to poverty reduction policies is encouraged by the African Union in its action plan.

6. There is the need for facilitation to help in the implementation of inter-state transit procedures of member countries as well as the orderly expansion of inter-community and international trade. Problems of the access to the local, regional and international markets can chiefly be solved through the integration of transport systems. All this requires performance improvement, interconnectivity, quality services, coordination and standardization of transport systems etc.
7. One of the most indispensable objectives in this domain is to encourage a wider participation by the private sectors and international cooperation in the funding, development and maintenance of infrastructure, which goes hand-in-hand with the vital role of public finance; this is already featuring in initiatives such as **ECOMARINE** and **ECOAIR** etc. A new vision of carriage of both passengers and goods in Africa is certainly dawning.
8. The acquisition of know-how and vital technology competence in engineering for the installation, operation and maintenance of heavy infrastructure in the region is clearly one of the coveted aims.

Many have noticed that among the constraints of our transport chain and system of exchange, there is a deficiency in level of integration, continuous and transparent management of the various modes of transport. There have therefore been a long-standing need for integration that needs to be addressed.

At the higher level, United Nations Agencies such as UNCTAD, IMO and UNDP etc., on the firm conviction that the integration of transport systems shall not only serve the population concerned but will equally contribute in rendering the international trade and transport system from door-to-door more efficient, have never ceased to support effort by African countries towards the achievement of this objective.

IV. Infrastructural acquisition planning

The objectives here-above inspires **ECOWAS** and **CEMAC** to draw up development programmes and plans for the acquisition of transport infrastructure.

- a) **ECOWAS** for example has conceived a priority programme of road and rail transport. With regards to road transport, the first phase was underscored in decision n° A/DEC/20/80 relating to the community transport programme: facilitation of road transport through national frontiers and the construction of a Trans-West Africa auto road network which comprises the trans-coastal road from Lagos-Nouakchott and the trans-Sahelian road from Dakar to Ndjamena. The second phase was adopted by decision n°C/DEC.8/12/88 relating to the different legs of the interconnection road for landlocked countries.
- b) The New Partnership for African Development initiative (**NEPAD**), an integrated development framework, has outlined a programme of acquisition besides other transport and communication regional plans for infrastructural development and this programme comprises:
 - a Short Term Action Plan (STAP) drawn up in April and launched in June 2002 during a workshop bringing together Regional Economic Communities (REC).
 - a Medium Term Action Plan (MTAP) (MLTSF) which has ongoing studies.
- c) Other plans and programmes for infrastructural development have been made by SSATP.

d) The **Almaty Action Plan** is centred on the special needs (transport, transit, cost, access, security etc.) of landlocked developing transit countries. Almaty was adopted by the international inter-ministerial conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing countries together with Finance and development institutions on 28-29 August 2003 (Almaty – Kazakhstan). Its priorities are: improvement of the basic policy on transit issues, development, maintenance and improvement of infrastructure: rail, road, river; air and pipeline transport systems, ports, communication, international trade and facilitation, international technical and financial assistance, follow up of agreements.

IV. Advantages of integration of transport systems;

The need for integration has been properly underscored by the studies of several regional institutions following technical analyses which brought out the difficulties of the fragmented system on the one part and outlining the advantages of multimodalism on the other.

In fact, the need for multimodal transport is largely based on the irrefutable advantages which come with this type of transport:

- The use of a single document permits shippers to address their problems to one person in charge of a transaction that runs through the whole transport chain;
- Optimisation of the rotational operation of the various equipment permits improvements in the productivity of transport operations (increase in traffic and customs revenue);
- Mastery and rationalization of the transport chain in terms of facilitation, tasks execution and the strengthening of cooperation ties between transport operators;
- Promotion or acceleration of economic and physical integration or the adoption of the common market notion (dynamic returns, expansion of markets, economies of scale);
- It offers a logistic platform for landlocked and transit countries;
- There is significant reduction of the transport cost of door-to-door services.

- The development and integration of various transport modes permits shippers the freedom to choose between multimodal and fragmented transport services.

In short, this method of carriage of goods can solve the crucial problem of several persons being in charge of fragmented transport services which aggravates the complexity of transport logistics and trade at all levels.

V. Issues to be addressed prior to integration

It is noteworthy that our region has formally acknowledged the necessity of integrating our transport systems following the initiative of UNCTAD, IMO and seminar/workshops organized in many of our countries. The slowness in the implementation of this policy may be due to the imperative of first addressing a number of issues outlined below, in order that the African shippers should have better transport chain:

- Objectives must be clearly defined;
- Legislation on this mode of transport has to be well drafted, revised, harmonized and standardized for the whole region;
- Drawing up a Master Plan of intermodal integration covering the region and or linking the two sub-regions, including planning and the commercialization of new services;
- Drawing up regional plans adapted for the acquisition of reliable infrastructure;
- Examination and taking of all other attendant measure such as port transit, juxtaposed check points, customs, administrative and transshipment procedures;
- Human resource capacity building for the management of this vast organization;
- Establishment of regional multimodal transport enterprises to face the competition of foreign operators dominating the sector;
- Identification and evaluation of the specificities of our region and new modes transport such as the use of camels in Northern Africa, pipelines etc. and the modernization of their operations and how to properly integrate them.

For all the above issues, the West and Central African region under the auspices of MOWCA has made some effort by way of definition of objectives and acquisition plans for infrastructure, but a lot still has to be done if we have to reduce the multiple levels of responsibility that characterize our transport system, consolidate our achievements and maintain the focus on a future with certainty.

VII. Some efforts made so far

These efforts are through the organization of seminars and workshops, studies technical assistance, infrastructural finance etc.

- 1) The UNCTAD/UASC seminar on multimodal transport;
- 2) CNSC/UNCTAD/UNDP workshop on multimodal transport (16-21 February 1987 in Douala; aim: permit participants to be acquainted with the legal and commercial aspects of the system, assess the opportunity to introduce it in Cameroon and to propose appropriate strategies for its introduction;
- 3) UASC thematic workshop on Dry Ports and SGS (Abuja, Nigeria).
- 4) Study: legal aspects and the simplification of administrative procedures in multimodal transport (CNSC, Oct. 1990)
- 5) Achievements:

Apart from international legislation namely the Convention on Multimodal transport of 1965 and that of 1980 which can equally be instructive to African policy in this area despite the non adoption of the later, our region has made some efforts that have resulted in the institution of some instruments:

- i. The Inter-state Convention on the Multimodal Transport of Goods within UDEAC (1996) (TIPAC Convention)
- ii. The Inter-State Road Transit Convention (2004) ECOWAS–TIR Convention.
- iii. With regards to achievements, ECOWAS especially has an edge over CEMAC. Thus, the former has taken great measures of facilitation embodied in her statutes and regulations relating to the technical specifications of

- vehicles, infrastructure, road safety, customs and frontier formalities.
- iv. The construction of road networks in ECOWAS constitutes a big stride, thus 83% (3.777km of 4.560 km) of the trans-coastal road Nouakchott-Lagos has been completed. For the trans-sahelian road, Dakar-Ndjamena, 87% is complete.
 - v. As to other modes, the conference of Heads of States has ratified the proposal by the private sector to establish an airline –ECOAIR) as well as a cabotage company – ECOMARINE. A study has been carried out on the interconnection of railway networks and funding is being worked out.
 - vi. The creation of specialized institutions such as the Union of Railway companies (UAC) based in RD Congo; MOWCA; UASC; PMAWCA; ECA etc., which all work for the ideals of community demonstrate a capacity to contribute effectively to general integration including African transport systems.
 - vii. The progress realized by UAC towards the implementation of the Master Plan for rail transport embodying 18 projects approved by AU is at least an achievement considering also the importance of heavy duty transport necessary for long distances to be covered by goods.
 - viii. Still in ECOWAS, the AFRICARAIL project foresees the interconnection of Benin-Niger-Burkina-Togo and the rehabilitation of existing railway lines.
 - ix. As to CEMAC, the sub-regional Office of ECA held its first forum on transport infrastructure and regional integration from 15 – 18 December, 2003 in Yaounde aimed at adopting a sub-regional Master Plan of infrastructure to serve as the formal framework for fund raising.
 - x. As to CEMAC, achievements are not more advanced as they were after independence. In 1987 (4th Road Conference in Nairobi) Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC) could only count 320 000 km of diverse roads, 9500km of rail way, about fifty aerodromes and 15 ports. Since then, only very modest progress has been realised and which have hardly permitted the

attainment of the objectives of the ten year development plan issued by ECA and this is the same with most regional development programmes; out of 578 transport projects in the programme, only 36 (6%) were completely executed and 106 (18%) were underway.

Road transport being the dominant mode of movement especially in the hinterland, this insufficiency in infrastructure constitutes a major obstacle to sustained growth and lasting development of our sub-region.

VIII. Conclusion

Transport is an indispensable sector in human development. Presently, the transport system in the West and Central African region is varied, but fragmented, costly, underdeveloped, poorly organized and coordinated. Consequently, it does not efficiently play its role as facilitator of trade and thus limits the possibilities of growth, economic, cultural and political dynamism.

The various modes of transport can be integrated within a system called multimodalism or combined transport which offers many advantages. Several studies have drawn out the objectives of this integration, but Master Plans for integration still have to be reviewed, harmonized and implemented.

Our region suffers from serious lack of transport and communication infrastructure. One of our major problems in the region is to close this gap in roads, railway and interconnectivity in order to revitalize intra-African trade.

This seminar shall certainly contribute to the reflections on the analysis of the region's modes of transport, its alternatives and the best way possible to integrate them, manage, organize and coordinate them in order to have the maximum benefit in a context of African balkanization, globalisation and poverty.

Thank you all.