



Addressing Infrastructure Key to Realizing Regional Integration *By Adwoa Asiedu*

Africa's poor infrastructure is impeding its ability to compete in the global market, said one of the speakers at Wednesday's plenary session that focused on the theme, "Effective Infrastructure Policies to Foster Integrated Economic Development." The speaker, Kenneth Button of George Mason University, USA, said the causes for this situation are many.

"The problems are certainly not simply a lack of investment per se, but also often reflect inadequate levels of maintenance of that which is provided and the use that is permitted of it," he said, noting that "within this general framework there are wide variations among countries and regions within them and between rural and urban areas."

Infrastructure, he explained, is commonly discussed in terms of its characteristics: longevity, scale inflexibility and higher investment costs. Button said the crucial issue of infrastructure policies in the transport sector is that of removing cross-border barriers to trade.

"The effort to remove cross-border barriers has led to the isolation of three key ingredients. There should be adequate inter-operability, inter-connectivity, and inter-modality. These are interrelated, multi-dimensional concepts that embody institutional as well as technical considerations". He asked that the focus on infrastructure policy be tempered by these considerations including how they fit with other transportation policies.

Another presenter, G. Giorgis, Director, Country Department of Southern Africa, African Development Bank, spoke of the consequences of lagging infrastructure development as low competitiveness, weak market development and market integration, slow economic growth and increased poverty and inequality.

Giorgis talked about energy resources in Africa, their distribution, the wide disparities and constraints to the development of the energy sector and potential regional energy initiatives. He also spoke about the state of water resources in Africa and gave an overview of the information and communications technology sector.

He observed that for regional integration initiatives in the Information

Communication Technology (ICT) sector, connectivity and interconnectivity are the main impediments to the diffusion of ICTs on the continent. He claimed that rapid development of the sector would enable Africa to catch up with the rest of the world, increase trade through e-commerce, improve training through e-education and improve security and disaster management.

Alhaji B. Mohammed Tukur, a

leading African entrepreneur, emphasized that without adequate infrastructure to facilitate the easy movement of people, goods and services, the private sector would not be able to take advantage of the vast investment opportunities in the respective sub-regions.

Another programme participant, Maryvonne Plessis-Fraissard, Transport Sector Manager for Africa at the

World Bank, underscored the importance of partnership consultations and confirmed that the World Bank will devote attention to Africa's integration. Already, she said, the World Bank has started to coordinate with the African Development Bank and other partners about integration.

The session was chaired by Abdel Aouad, Minister of Planning and Economic Projections, Morocco.

New Ventures Offer Models for Regional Integration *By Bernard Otabil*

Infrastructure development in Africa, though still lagging behind that of many other regions, continues to play an important role in the life of the people of the continent.

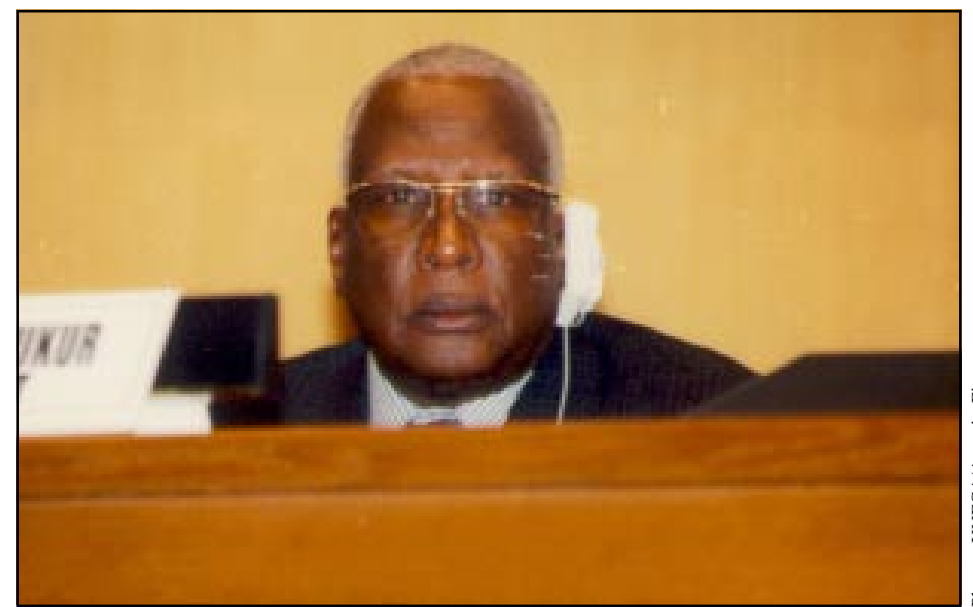
In recent years, improvements in various sectors in many countries have begun opening new avenues for development that will benefit the society. Indeed, the success of some of these ventures may well serve as a model for other African countries in the future.

Nigeria is a case in point, noted Alhaji Bamanga Tukur of African Business Round Table. Nigeria introduced the GSM system for mobile communications about five months ago, he said, and since that time there have been about 40 new companies, vendors and service centres established, creating jobs for more than 1,000 people. Furthermore, with the improved telephone technology, more than 150,000 people immediately gained access to phones.

Another case in point is Ghana. Increase in mobile phone connectivity and more access to landlines have improved the business environment in the country, making it one of the most attractive areas for foreign investors in the continent today. The potential of this continent is enormous.

There are also examples of new efforts towards regional integration, which is the theme of ADF III. These include notably, the launch of COMTEL by COMESA and INTELCOM by ECOWAS.

The ECOWAS Community Project,



Alhaji Bamanga Tukur, African Business Round Table

a network that is intended to offer extensive road networks along the coastal belt of the subregion, has facilitated the movement of goods and services. According to Yao Adzibey of the Secretariat, the only portions that are not yet developed are the links between Guinea Conakry and Guinea Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone and also the link between Sierra Leone and Cote D'Ivoire.

Urban transport provides both direct and indirect employment for a large number of people, in the public transport services and in the informal sector.

According to figures by the Sub-Saharan Africa Transport Program (SSATP), in Abidjan, informal urban transport directly provided some 22,000 jobs in 1999 (drivers, conductors, mechanics and owners) and generated a turnover of CFA 60 billion.

In Dakar and Cotonou, SSATP estimates that more than 30,000 and 42,000 people respectively derive their livelihood from related services of the transport sector.

Despite these improvements, infrastructure development in Africa in general is inadequate and is of poor quality when compared to Europe and North America. There are several reasons given for this. According to Adzibey, the main problems hampering progress are poor maintenance, illegal roadblocks, outright road piracy and restrictive customs and immigration practices that hinder the free movement of goods and people.

Because of such impediments, Adzibey believes the progress is slow, as some lending agencies are reluctant to put up the much-needed funds for investment in the sector.

INTERVIEW with Hon. Paulette Missambo**“Transport is the driving force for regional integration”**

By Doua Gouly

Honourable Paulette Missambo is Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, Republic of Gabon. Mme Missambo is participating in the meeting of Transport Ministers. She believes that regional integration in Africa is essential for combating poverty and that in this fight, transport constitutes the primary element. Transportation Ministers from across the continent met in a daylong session Wednesday to share their views on transport and integration.

ADF Info: Madame, what in your view is the place of transport in the African regional integration that is underway?

Mme: One cannot integrate without transport. It is absolutely essential. This morning's reports established that transport is also key to combating poverty, by allowing people to travel around to sell their goods and really combat this scourge.

Thus, in the framework of African Union, I think that governments must work towards attaining an inter-modal transport system that makes all the connections. I am speaking of transport generally, that is, land, maritime, rail and air transport. Telecommunications is also a part of this sector. I believe that the new information technologies should ease connections between countries.

FDA Info: In most African countries, there are roads, but maintenance is not kept up. What will the Ministers of Transport propose as a solution to this problem?

Mme: The participants in this morning's meeting said that it would be better first to maintain existing networks than to expand them as they have drastically deteriorated. Maintenance is at the heart of the problem. Generally here in Africa, it is forgotten that this is essential. The Ministers will work relentlessly on the issues during this Forum, in order to come up with useful recommendations. We have to wait and compile all the actual experiences and constraints on the ground before making any pronouncements on the situation.

FDA Info: In Central Africa, from where you come, are there groups supporting regional integration?

Mme: Absolutely. If we take only the cases of Cameroon and Gabon, we have completed the part of the Trans-African Highway linking the two countries. Another section under construction will link Gabon to Congo Brazzaville. With African Union, such works will certainly be enhanced.

FDA Info: Harassment from the police and from customs officials is frequently cited on African highways. How can the continent deal with this scourge to have successful integration?

Mme: This is true. We have received a report telling us about the situation in West Africa - a situation like that in Central Africa where tariff barriers and

multiple taxes are reported. Collaboration between the communities to reduce such taxes is what is recommended. I myself urged the establishment of a « single-window » system for reducing user fees on the roads.

FDA Info: And how will this single window function?

Mme: It works very simply. It applies for example to sale goods and other merchandise transported between countries, that should be registered before their departure. The vehicles are locked and cannot be unlocked until their arrival. The same system can

apply to containers. Moreover, this is one way of fighting against customs fraud. This is also one way of fighting against the customs fraud that plagues our roads.

FDA Info: At this time of talking about integration, the only Pan-African company in air transport has gone into voluntary liquidation. Can we expect the birth of another instrument of this type in air or rail transport with establishment of the Union?

Mme: This is very necessary. Africa needs transport integration instruments.



Hon. Paulette Missambo, Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, Republic of Gabon

Photo: UNECA/Antonio Fiorenze

Nevertheless, with large-scale liberalisation in all sectors, transport is no exception. Consequently, the continent should think about creation of such integration tools with private investors. For the moment, we know that small enterprises cannot compete in this area in an isolated fashion. The ideal for them is to regroup and thereby develop transport on the continent.

Economic Policies Key to Accelerating Regional Integration in Africa

By Jeggan Grey-Johnson

Momodou Diop, Special Advisor to the BCEAO said on Wednesday that the adoption of the CFA currency in francophone West African countries could be an example of how a single monetary union can succeed, based on stability, capacity in implementing trade policies, and private sector growth within the zone.

However, Diop, who was one of the main speakers at an afternoon ADF III plenary entitled, “Economic Policies for Accelerating Regional Integration,” cautioned that Africa's approach to economic policies should aim to improve socio-economic structures and collaboration between the private and public sector. Other prerequisites include improved training, increased capacity building, and new partnerships with other nations.

The positive outcomes of subregional integration were also underscored by Dr. Delphin Rwegasira, who implored the nearly 200 people attending the plenary session to “look at Africa's balance sheet.”

“Where are we?” he asked? And in answering his question, he stated his belief that Africans need to have the political will to address the challenges of their national economies first, vis-à-vis services such as electricity and transport, then move to the next level. “We must co-ordinate by analysing our approach seriously, because this is part and parcel of the integration process,” he said.

Gambian Secretary of State Ann Ndong-Jatta offered the opinion that, “the challenges are many, but these are challenges that we need to put into perspective by ourselves,” she said. She noted the impact on the continent of various ex-

ternal international policies. She added that though there was need for dialogue and prioritization of issues, this should be done by Africans, not in a situation where “the G-8 is doing the checklist.”

The newly appointed Minister of Integration from Nigeria, agreed, noting that NEPAD, which most Africans do not know about, was not a Bretton Woods initiative, but rather a plan envisaged and articulated by African leaders, in their vision of economic partnership with each other and the rest of the world.

“I agree with some of you that more sensitization needs to be done, but work has already started for the promotion of the idea,” he said. The work al-

though only in its formative stage, sends a message from Nigeria to the rest of the African States, of total commitment to regional integration.

Plenary Chairperson, Linah K. Mohohlo, who is Governor of the Central Bank of Botswana, noted that what Nigeria has done in creating a special integration ministerial post was exemplary.

“I congratulate Nigeria for the step it has taken in recognizing the importance of regional integration for Africa by the mere fact that it has established a portfolio for this very important cause we all espouse,” she said. She urged other African States to follow suit.

LIVE BROADCAST

The Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in collaboration with *Africa Journal*, will host a live broadcast from the studios of Ethiopian Television on Thursday 7 March from 9pm till 10pm. The host, Maimouna Mills, will be joined live by:

- **Mr. Olara Otunnu**, UN Under Secretary-General and Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict
- **Ambassador Isaac Aluko-Olokun**, Head Nigerian NEPAD Team
- **HE Minister J.J. Sonke**, Minister of Transport & Public Works Republic of Malawi

The programme will also include interviews with prominent personalities including OAU Secretary-General, Amara Essy, and ECA Executive Secretary, K.Y. Amoako.

AFRICA JOURNAL is WORLDNET's weekly one-hour “call in” television program. Broadcast live from Washington to stations in 27 sub-Saharan African countries, the show focuses on political, social, health, gender and cultural issues that are unique and important to Africans.

Those in Addis Ababa can view the programme on SABC Africa, Channel 7.



No Peace, No Security, No Future

The issue of peace took centre stage at Wednesday's ADF III meeting.

In the plenary session on "Peace and Security Architecture" presenters and discussants spoke with a great deal of passion and concern about the continued instability in many parts of the continent - instability stemming directly from the result of on-going conflicts.

The figures tell only part of the story of the devastation wreaked by these conflicts. Standing on their own, they are quite chilling: In the past 30 years, there have been nearly 30 cases of civil strife in sub-Saharan Africa alone, costing billions of dollars in damage and resulting in wrecked economies, heavy loss of life and infrastructure and enormous damage to the environment.

The social costs have been even higher in terms of the damage done in various social sectors such as health, education and employment. The costs soar even higher if we consider that funds which should have been spent on furthering development are instead diverted to fund military efforts.

The human cost of these conflicts is hard to even attempt to calculate - much less contemplate. You've heard the number of deaths, most of them civilians. Millions have been left maimed, orphaned, widowed, displaced, and traumatized.

The African Diaspora has been forcibly expanded as millions have been left homeless or have been forced into exile. Africa accounts for the largest number of the world's refugees. Add to this picture the ravages of diseases such as HIV/AIDS and malaria and the portrait is of an Africa "in conflict," "at war," or simply, "not working."

But there's another side to picture. While it is true that one conflict is one too many, so much of Africa is working and does work - sometimes because of - sometimes despite - the economic, political and social conditions that exist. All too often many people, especially Africans themselves, are unaware of the positive achievements taking place on the continent.

It is clear that that we cannot focus on the positive to the exclusion of the "negative." Nor is it to say that the human, social and economic problems on the continent are not real and do not need addressing. They are and they do.

But what is also needed is a sharing and dissemination of success stories and best practices among Africans, about the instances and the places where people and governments are making life better for their society.

Perhaps in this spirit of "integration" there will be mechanisms established for sharing of these stories and experiences. Many Africans are familiar with African history, but if regional integration and indeed, African unity is to become a reality, it is necessary for Africans to know for themselves the full story of their past and present, in order to find and build the common links that exist, for a future that is peaceful and secure.

The Private Sector on the Podium at ADF III

By Jérémie Sindyirwayna

Africa must create employment and wealth, but our governments have already shown their limitations in this area.

Since the opening of ADF III, everyone has agreed that the private sector is the engine of growth for employment and wealth creation. The 64 participants at the workshop on regional investment came to Addis to advocate for more fuel for this engine, more engine oil, that is, more entrepreneurship financing in Africa, because such « oil » is needed for sustainable development of the business sector.

Among some of the opinions expressed:

Our private sector is made up of many small- and medium-size enterprises (SMEs), with little capital. The current challenge is to work with this critical mass of entrepreneurs, businesswomen, artisans and trained youth. Our governments need tax revenue but too much taxation kills the source of this revenue. »

It was noted that in Africa, we do have dynamic economies, found in South Africa, Mauritius and Tunisia, for example. Unfortunately, they suffer from the number of border barriers to trade, at a time when our consumers have low purchasing power to try to get goods from other continents.

The 53 member States of the OAU/AU, with 800,000,000 inhabitants,

Little political will for higher education

By Francine Nzibarega

African States have shown little commitment to strengthening higher education, participants in the breakout session on higher education said on Wednesday. Governments, they said, provide very little money for higher education even though it produces the human capital that is crucial to African development.

The African diaspora can play an important role in supporting higher education, said Chuku-Emeka Chikezie of AFFORD in his presentation at the session. It is not only a human resource but also a monetary one.. He said Ugandan President Kavuta Museveni had stated that the Ugandan diaspora brought important resources to the country.

The session was chaired by Abdelghaffar M. Ahmed, Executive Secretary of OSSRA in Addis Ababa.

ants, have a GDP equal to that of Spain alone. Yet, the latter did not hesitate to join the European Union. The private sector was inflexible in this regard, despite the complaints from officials about loss of sovereignty.

Poverty in Africa is not a unique case in the world at the same time it is different. When Europe was in crisis, it benefited from the Marshall Plan. Europe negotiated the financing collectively, in bloc, to escape the crisis.

We, however, are negotiating in fragmentation, ad hoc, without interest in promoting regional integration. According to the representative from Mauritius, integration is not an end in itself but is a strategy for organizing to take advantage of business opportunities and to achieve economic growth.

NEPAD outlines well the framework for mobilizing external resources.

No Regional Integration without Food security

By Marie-Noëlle Guichi

ADF III is taking place not just in the plenaries and breakout sessions, but also in the Exhibition Hall where participants can discover most of the structures involved in regional integration in Africa.

They include the Coalition of African Organizations for Food Security and Sustainable Development. The Coalition focuses mainly on rural development

research and policymaking, with an emphasis on food security. It analyses the policies and actions of governments, parliaments and other actors in the areas of nutrition, biodiversity and the environment.

«The role played cannot be denied, » says Mrs Christine Andela, who heads a food and nutrition project in Cameroon. « To talk of regional integration in Africa, you first have to resolve the problem of famine, which affects most of the continent's countries. It's hard to speak successfully to people who are hungry.»

To carry out its mission, the Coalition strives to build the institutional and management capacities of NGOs and other rural organizations so as to make them effective partners. Its secondary beneficiaries are scientific communities, donors and specialized international institutions. It is an implementing agency that works under the supervision of the Observatoire de la Sécurité Alimentaire et de la Nutrition (OSAN - Food Security and Nutrition Observatory).

The end of this project, based in Tanzania with an international representation in Brussels, is set for 2005. Mrs Andela hopes that by then, the eternal problem of famine in certain regions of Africa will have been resolved for good.

African Integration Report 2002: Heads of State Called to Act!

By Norbert N. Ouendji

The presentation of the First "Annual Report on Integration in Africa" (ARIA) was one of the principal items on the agenda of ADF III. The document was officially launched on March 4th.

The report, over fifty pages in all, was produced by ECA. It targets all who are interested in Africa's development, particularly Heads of State who lack political will and therefore constitute an obstacle to regional integration.

The report evaluates the path taken in Africa's regional integration and focuses on two principal issues: how to accelerate the construction of the African Union and what links must be built between said African Union, the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the governments.

The report establishes that in face of the necessity to build a united and strong Africa, the RECs must build their capacities and re-visit their policies and way of working. According to the document, this involves "rationalizing their structures, but also their relationships with governments, which must recognize and live up to their commitments."

"There is need for better co-ordination among the RECs, making it

obligatory for them to harmonise their protocols which are often contradictory" adds the report which cites the West African Monetary Union (WAMU/UMEOA) as "the true champion of integration".

WAMU is far ahead of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and even the Economic Community of Central African States, which are among the RECs reported to have "an irregular rate of integration"

The Secretary-General of ECCAS, Louis Sylvain-GOMA from Gabon, a special guest of the ADF III, explained the slow rate of integration, not only as a result of the hibernation period experienced by the REC between 1992 and 1998, but also as a result of wars, and specifically, "the lack of political will" of Heads of State in the sub-region.

"We are nevertheless engaged on the path of re-launching the REC and are conscious of the role that we must play in the integration process", commented Mr GOMA, insisting that the African Union must build upon the different RECs on the continent.

ARIA 2002 supports this position and suggests that the private sector should be considered as the engine for

integration. The intensification of trade and the strengthening of public support are also mentioned. In addition, the report emphasizes the development of transport and telecommunications infrastructure, amongst others.

"With a lot of energy and good faith,

including the efforts made recently to get results, African integration is generally on course" affirmed the ECA report. Specifically, "Greater political commitment and availing of resources are nevertheless, indispensable to attaining the best results."

ADF III Conference site offering more than food for thought

By Maria Thundu

Did you eat lunch today?

Given the intense meetings and workshops taking place this week at ADF III, the answer to that question is not always "yes."

Well, for those who do take time out for a food break, the ECA Conference Centre offers a variety of menus and places to eat. And it has also set hours that accommodate the varied schedules of participants, said Patrick Chiumya, Director of Conference and General Services Division (CGSD) at ECA.

Information about places to eat at the conference centre was included in the delegates information packet, said Chiumya. "At the beginning of the conference, delegates were given a leaflet in their packages telling them about the types of places to eat and the food that is served," he said. There are also menus posted on various notice boards in the conference centre.

Time is of the essence, however, and some delegates find themselves too short of time to enjoy a leisurely meal, due to timelines and deadlines for pressing work. Most people try to take the coffee breaks scheduled twice a day, Chiumya explains.

For those who just want a quick snack, there is the Press Bar, located on the second floor. It is open daily from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. The ECA "new" Cafeteria is open from 12 to 3 p.m. and offers a wide array of hot lunches, including the traditional Ethiopian meal of "injera be wot." A second "old", "staff" cafeteria is outside the complex, in the building housing the Nigeria Lounge, near the Security and Safety Offices.

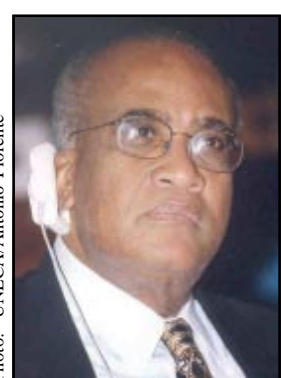
Those looking for a relaxed atmosphere with the ultimate in comfort and service there is the Delegate's Lounge. For a set price of 50 birr one can have a buffet meal that includes soup and either a glass of wine or a soft drink. Food in UNCC eateries is catered by the Sheraton Addis and is cooked on the premises. The courteous staff are also trained by Sheraton, Addis.

Especially for the ADF, an extra place to eat was prepared, that is, the Banquet Room – which offers a similar menu to that of the cafeteria but with fewer selections. "Prices of food items have not changed from everyday," says Chiumya.

Peace and Stability are Prerequisites for African Unity

By Jeggan Grey-Johnson and Olga Manda

The various initiatives and mechanisms on peace, security and conflict resolution in Africa have not been effective, said Salim Ahmed Salim, former Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on Wednesday during the ADF III plenary on "Peace and Security Architecture."



Salim Ahmed Salim, former Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU)

Salim said the existing mechanisms and protocols were not vigorous enough to prevent, manage or resolve conflict. "Various assessments done on continental and regional mechanisms have confirmed that a number of shortfalls hamper the effective functioning of these structures.

Salim said many of the peace and security mechanisms were established to respond to particular situations and added that the changed regional situations posed serious challenges to their legitimacy and effective functioning. However, he said, the inability of these mechanisms to maintain peace and security should not be used as an excuse

for the proliferation of conflicts on the continent.

"The factors which trigger and compound conflicts in our societies lie in the structures of political and economic governance and the social relations that arise from there," said Salim.

He urged African governments to strengthen structures that promote human rights. "Human security and its implications for peace on this continent cannot be realized without consolidating structures for promoting human rights."

Ibrahim Wani, a research analyst in strategic studies, agrees that it is time for Africans to ask some hard questions about the current state of the continent, especially "Why?" Why, really, are conditions not better for the majority of the continent's people?

At the core of peace and security, he said, are the most fundamental issues of freedom and governance. He advised Africans to also ask: "What has the State meant to the People in the last forty years?" "What have the People meant to the State?" "What has the State delivered to the people?"

Wani said that if African governments were serious about establishing an effective African Union they first have to honour the protocol agreements they have signed.

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