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Nigeria's Role in Improving Regional Transportation in the West African Sub - Region

by

Alfred A. Abah

Deputy Director (Road Transport Admin.)

(Federal Ministry of Transportation, Abuja, Nigeria)

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CONCEPT OF REGIONAL TRANSPORT CORRIDOR

- Regional Transport Corridors are developed to create corridors of excellence, strategically providing conducive environment for long distance international freights.
- They are expected to facilitate trade and transit in a smooth and seamless manner across the international Corridors.
- It is instructive to state that these Corridors must be attractive to business stakeholders by offering reliable service, reduced congestion and low operational cost.



NIGERIA: A SYNOPSIS

- **Nigeria**, is a Federal Republic in the West African sub-region, bordering Benin in the west, Chad and Cameroon in the east, and Niger in the north. The southern Coastline lies on the Atlantic Ocean.
- With approximately 184 million inhabitants, Nigeria accounts for 47% of West Africa's population.
- Nigeria is often referred to as the "Giant of Africa", due to its large population and economy.



MAP OF NIGERIA SHOWING ITS BORDERS





NIGERIA: A SYNOPSIS CONTD.

- The World Bank classifies Nigeria as an emerging market; the Country is also identified as a regional power on the African Continent.
- The regional trade policy is developed along the lines of boosting exports to Member States as well as to the rest of the World. Imports into the region are therefore seen as complementary to the exports of goods and services.
- Arising from above, the activities of ECOWAS Regional Transportation is largely influenced by the Nigerian Economy within the sub – region.



INTERVENTION FROM ECOWAS

- In order to achieve greater integration in line with its development policy, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has put in place a robust transport programme focused at facilitating the movement of persons, goods, and services within the sub region. Some of these programmes include:
 - i. Axle Load Harmonization Policy,
 - ii. Trans-Africa Highway programme (harmonization of norms, standards, vehicle size, axle load limit) is being studied for implementation,
 - iii. Lagos-Abidjan Corridor Development,
 - iv. Trans-Gambia Transport Corridor,
and
 - v. Inter-State Road Transit of Goods.



INTERVENTION FROM ECOWAS Contd.

- ❖ It is common knowledge in the sub region that Air and Rail transports had been poorly utilised, hence, ECOWAS is engaged in their rapid development.
- ❖ Also, the ECOWAS Commission initiated a Study to design a regional strategy for managing Corridors to improve transport performance and trade facilitation as well as use Corridors as a driver of economic development and regional integration in West Africa.





INTERVENTION FROM ECOWAS Contd.



- ❖ As part of its plan to develop the road transport corridors, ECOWAS is striving to finalize the Joint Border Posts Projects to facilitate trade and transit in the sub-region. Some Joint Border Posts have already been constructed, but are yet to be put into use in the sub-region. They include:
 - i. Seme/Krake (Nigeria/Benin)
 - ii. Noepe (Ghana/Togo)



NIGERIA'S ROLE IN TRANSPORTATION IN THE SUB - REGION

- Nigeria is committed to executing the various Treaties, Conventions and Protocols it entered with ECOWAS with a view to improving transportation within its international Corridors.
- To this end, the country is focused on implementing the following programmes which are designed to facilitate trade and transit along the Corridors of Nigeria and the neighbouring countries. These projects and programmes include:



NIGERIA'S ROLE IN TRANSPORTATION IN THE SUB-REGION CONTD.

- Inter – State Road Transit (IRST) Scheme,
- National Freight Offices (NFOs),
- National Road Transport and Transit Facilitation Committee (NRTTFC),
- Truck Transit Parks (TTPs),
- Inland Container Depots,
- Kano – Katsina – Jibiya – Maradi (Niger Republic) Railway, and
- Improved Air line service from Nigeria to other countries in the sub – region.



ECONOMIC POTENTIALS FOR REGIONAL TRADE & TRANSIT

- Regional corridors are developed to stimulate commerce and transit between neighbouring countries.
- The imperative of a well - developed transport corridor between two countries is the presence of thriving trading activities.
- As part of its effort to make the Nigeria – Benin end of the Abidjan Lagos Corridor viable, the Government of Nigeria is in the process of commencing the Inter-State Road Transit (ISRT) Scheme.
- ISRT Scheme is an ECOWAS Protocol endorsed by Member nations of the community to provide unhindered access to landlocked countries usually to import and export goods through the littoral countries. The economic potentials of the ISRT Scheme include:
 - a. Increased commerce (petty trading amongst others) at the corridor arising from the need to provide for Truckers and other travelers plying the corridor.
 - b. Employment generation.
 - c. Increased revenue to the country.



ECONOMIC POTENTIALS FOR REGIONAL TRADE & TRANSIT CONTD

- Similarly, the Federal Government of Nigeria in its determination to enhance trade and transit between her neighbouring countries is developing National Freight Offices (NFOs) at strategic border posts of the nation.
- These Freight Offices, amongst other things will:
 - a. provide employment opportunities.
 - b. encourage trade and transit as a result of the seamless service it will provide.
 - c. create enabling business environment.
 - d. encourage formal trading along the corridors where these NFOs would be located.



CHALLENGES

Despite the efforts of ECOWAS in providing an enabling environment for seamless transnational transportation, some challenges including those highlighted here abound.

- Absence of political Will by Member States.
- Limited cooperation and collaboration among border agencies resulting in multiple checks and delays related to non-tariff barrier.
- Lack of common e-platform for coordinating compliance of regional programmes (ie trade facilitation).



CHALLENGES CONTD.

- Absence of Coordinated Border Management (CBM) System.
- Inadequate capacity of Operators in the sector in the sub region.
- Limited automation by agencies resulting in delays from physical inspection of cargo.
- Lack of compliance and adherence to agreed Protocols and Conventions.



CHALLENGES CONTD.

- The use of old and sometimes unserviceable trucks which delay transit of goods.
- Lack of funding opportunities for the Truckers to replace old trucks.



WAY FORWARD

- On the part of Nigeria, Government set up a Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) with a mandate to “remove critical bottlenecks and bureaucratic constraints to doing business.”
- Nigeria is taking the lead to get the countries in the sub - region to adopt a regional guarantee scheme for the operation of the Inter-State Road Transit (ISRT) Scheme.



WAY FORWARD CONTD.

- Funding support to:
 - i. Equip the Joint Border Post at the Benin-Nigeria border post.
 - ii. Equip the National Freight Office in Ilela, Sokoto State.
- Technical support is required to establish Coordinated Border Management (CBM) System in the sub - region.



CONCLUSION

The demand for infrastructural facilities on the corridors of Nigeria and her neighbouring countries is enormous, hence the Government encourages the private sector participation through the Public Private Partnership (PPP) arrangement.

Consequent upon this situation, we seek your partnership and support to develop these corridors.

