

SPEECH BY Mrs. RAMATA TANOI, SECOND VICE
PRESIDENT OF ARMFA
(Côte d'Ivoire)

Honourable Minister of Equipment, Mines, Posts and
Telecommunications
The Representative of the World Bank
The Representative of SSATP
Director General, Chief Executives and Chairpersons of
the Board of Directors of the RMF
Distinguished delegates
Invited guests
Ladies and gentlemen

The first meeting of the African Road Maintenance
Funds was held in Libreville, Gabon on 15-17 December
2003 and met the expectations of all participants.

It indeed led to the establishment of an African Road
Maintenance Funds Association (ARMFA), with the
participation of seventeen countries and elected the very
first Board led by Mr. Jean Valentin LEYAMA of
Gabon.

The first vice president was Mr. Rapahael MABENGA
of Zambia, while the second vice president was Mrs
Ramata TANOI of Côte d'Ivoire. On his part, Mr. Gwed
Bi Minyem of Cameroon was elected Auditor.

The spirit, which guided the election of this Board was to
ensure a regional and linguistic balance.

The principle of renewing the Executive Board on a rotational basis between Francophone and Anglophone countries was adopted in order to promote an effective contribution from each member funds to the running of the affairs of ARMFA.

So, it appeared natural to forget about establishing a permanent executive secretariat since we just wanted a skeleton structure.

The Statutes were adopted taking into account the Libreville spirit.

To support the first African conference of Road Maintenance Funds, a technical seminar was also held. The following items were discussed:

- Duties and organisation of RMFs
- Income collection channels
- Management practices and accounting instruments
- Distribution of resources among network managers
- Performance monitoring indicators.

The contributions made by Mr. Kingsford Amoa of Ghana, Gwed bi Minyem of Cameroon, Mory Kanté of Mali, Louis Fernique of SSATP and Jean Valentin Leyama of Gabon were very much appreciated.

The Libreville meeting, which led to promising future, was therefore a successful session.

It was therefore up to the new ARMFA elected Board after the conference to conclude the administrative

arrangements related to the registration of ARMFA, opening of an account and preparing and proposing a programme of activities.

We were about to start this phase when the ARMFA Board, all its members and the SSATP received the letter of resignation of Mr. Jean Valentin Leyama, then President of ARMFA who was removed from office as head of RMF Gabon.

This new development adversely effected the continuation of the operations, which the Board was to undertake. Indeed, it was not possible to formally register the association and the Statutes, the account could not be opened and the short-term programme of activities could not be worked out.

Furthermore this unexpected development created a slight uncertainty with respect to the application of the texts (yet to be registered). Some shortcomings of the statutes were observed through this first incident.

The vice presidency therefore contacted SSATP in order to study the means of managing this unforeseen situation at the very moment when the association was to take off.

An emergency video-conference was considered and organised with the assistance of SSATP to examine the situation and prepare the Lome general assembly with an agenda that was to take account of the major developments that have occurred.

At the end of this first videoconference held on 10 March 2004 in which the first vice president (Zambia) the second vice president (Côte d'Ivoire) the Auditor (Cameroon), Mali and Chad (founding members) and SSATP actively participated, it was agreed that:

- The first vice president assisted by the second vice president manage the transitional period until the general assembly of 22-23 April in Lome;
- New proposals should be made relating to the legal and administrative problems after in-depth reading;
- That a proposed agenda and a budget be drawn by the board;
- The practical organisation of the general assembly be entrusted to Togo (host country)
- Cameroon should think about possible amendments of the texts of the association (domiciliation of accounts, analysis and legal approval of the statutes);
- SSATP and Togo should share the costs of the Lome general assembly, given that the French Ministry for Foreign Affairs may not respond favourably considering the short time frame remaining.

Finally, SSATP expressed its willingness to really assist ARMFA with respect to the legal problems and translation services.

Another videoconference was to take place towards the end of March 2004, in which only SSATP, the Board and the host country were to take part in order to fine-tune the Lome preparation.

This effectively took place on 23 March 2004, chaired by the first vice president, Mr. Raphael Mabenga of Zambia. It ensued from the meeting that:

From the legal point of view, with ARMFA not being registered in Gabon, the association is therefore free to choose the venue of its registration;

The type of statutes of international association is of no interest to ARMFA because of its heavy and para-diplomatic nature;

Member country to be selected for registration should meet the following requirements:

- Possibility to create an association with legal entities;
- Possibility to have foreign members (precisely legal entities governed by foreign laws);
- Possibility for the headquarters of the association to be eventually located abroad or to be transferred abroad;
- Possibility to receive donations or grants from various organisations

He also clearly indicated that the choice of the country of registration is purely technical and had nothing to do with that of the president of ARMFA.

It also came out from this second video-conference that:

SSATP would fund the services of the legal consultant with a view to proposing amendments to the statutes and making recommendations on legal issues. His/her job was to be monitored by Gwed of Cameroon on behalf of ARMFA;

A comprehensive technical document (analysis, recommendations, draft revised statutes, draft by-laws) should be forwarded to all participants before the Lome GA;

Mr. Gwed started working on a programme of activities (institutional and administrative activities, training and capacity building, studies and research, information and communications, establishment and management of a data bank). This work was seen as something, which could provide grounds for dialogue and discussions in Lome.

Finally, it was agreed that facilitation of the Lome GA should be conducted by Mr. Jérôme OBI ETA, former Cameroonian Minister of Public Works whose performance satisfied all participants in Libreville, and it was agreed that SSATP should make partial contribution to the tune of \$ 20,000 out of a total of \$ 46,000 representing the cost of organising the Lome General assembly, with the difference to be borne by Togo.

This transitional period was handled by a jostled but resolute ARMFA.

This Lome assembly should allow for:

1. validating after reading and considering the proposals made to the Statutes, which will be presented following amendments, taking into account shortcomings and omissions observed in the early texts;
2. re-organising the Board following the resignation of the Mr. Leyama and in the light of the new texts;

3. choosing the location for the legal registration of ARMFA
4. making comments on the first drafts of the programme of activities, which will be presented by the Board;
5. deciding on the projected operating budget.

To conclude, I would like to express the appreciations of the ARMFA Board for your mobilisation and all the contributions you made in spite of linguistic barriers and lack of means of communications, regardless of your respective commitments.

The Board is particularly grateful to SSATP for its significant financial contribution to the holding of this General Assembly. Its constructive role in organising all the preparatory video-conferences and finally, but not the least, for its balanced and permanent support for the growth of ARMFA.

The Board particularly expressed its gratitude to Togo “host country” which spared no effort in funding the practical organisation of this General Assembly and more warmly to our friend, brother and colleague Mr. Assiba Amoussou, Director General of Togo RMF who personally involved himself and devoted time in the organisation of this General Assembly.

Thank you.