

**SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT OF ARMFA TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF AGEPAR HOLDING
IN NIAMEY, 24 – 27 MAY 2005.**

Your Excellency the Minister,
Honourable Members of the National Assembly,
The President of AGEPAR (**A**ssociation des **G**estionnaires et **P**artennaires **A**fricain de la Route),
Ladies and Gentlemen, the Organisers,
Distinguished Invitees,
Dear Participants.

It is a privilege for me to take the floor from the top of this tribune to express to you, Mr. President and dear Organisers, my real satisfaction for the invitation which you so graciously sent to the Executive Committee of ARMFA to take part at your meeting. This is a sign of the good relations which exist between our two associations for which I am immensely happy. There is no doubt that the good partnership between our institutions, AGEPAR and ARMFA, not only facilitates concertation on our common objective which is the sound business management of the road, but also helps capacity building within our associations.

The general theme of the seminar for which we are gathered here today, is also one the preoccupations of ARMFA considering the important resources which African Road Maintenance Funds must consecrate to the maintenance of the road infrastructures of the continent. This why we consider the meeting of Niamey as an important moment to take stock of the advances we have made and to decide on the orientations and actions which we should undertake as concerns the technical as well as the financial management of roads.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The role of the road in economic and social development can not be overstated. It is widely known that efficient Transport infrastructures and services are a vital prerequisite for the development and integration of the states of Africa. They play an important role in the trade between states by facilitating the movements of persons and goods across borders hence contributing to the alleviation of poverty. It should also be noted that the road carries more than 90% of all transport in Africa. Unfortunately, Africa's roads have been generally poorly maintained and are inefficient imposing a high cost on trade, travel and business. To intensify the reduction of poverty and reverse the economic marginalization of Africa, we need to address the infrastructure and operational deficiencies in the road sector. In this regard, I am convinced that our two Associations can play an efficient role by ensuring that the maintenance programmes on our existing road networks are executed under sound business practices. In effect, sound and rigorous management of the resources allocated to road maintenance in our various countries should constitute the driving force of our two Associations.

It is on this engagement that I would like to renew my sincere complements for the perfect organisation of this meeting and for all the conveniences placed at our disposal to make our stay in Niamey very pleasant.

I thank you for your king attention.

Assiba AMOUSSOU-GUENOU
President of ARMFA