

REPORT

ON THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE

ARMFA SADC FOCAL GROUP MEETING

HELD IN MASERU, LESOTHO FROM 22 – 23 JULY, 2010



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**ARMFA SADC FOCAL GROUP MEETING
HELD AT MASERU SUN CABANAS
MASERU, LESOTHO 22 – 23 JULY, 2010**

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2010 ARMFA SADC FOCAL GROUP MEETING REPORT

SUMMARY

The ARMFA SADC Focal Group meeting hosted by Lesotho Road Fund was held from the 23rd to the 24th July 2010 in Maseru, Lesotho.

Delegates from 4 countries participated in the meeting, namely, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia.

Other members of the Focal Group who did not attend are: Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar and Zimbabwe.

The Principal Secretary, Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Mr. Lebohang Phooko officially opened the meeting. In attendance were the Road Fund Board Members, management of Lesotho Road Fund and the local media houses.

The main purpose of the meeting was to review the 8th ARMFA General Assembly documents namely:

1. ARMFA Report of the 8th General Assembly and Workshop 12 – 16th October 2009,
2. ARMFA Statutes and By Laws,
3. Themes for the ARMFA Technical Workshop 2010, to be held in Ethiopia;
4. Other Pertinent Issues;
5. Guidelines on Hosting ARMFA Workshop; and
6. The ARMFA 2009/2010 Budget.

To be submitted to the 9th General Assembly of ARMFA for consideration and adoption.

Member country presentations were made by members attending the meeting and covered the following areas amongst others:

- Backgrounds;
- Funds allocated;
- Expenditure analysis;
- Roads Fund Revenues;
- Strategies for maintenance and road safety; and
- Challenges.

Acronyms

ARMFA	:	African Road Maintenance Funds Association
PS	:	Principal Secretary
SADC	:	Southern African Development Community
RUC	:	Road User Charges
RF	:	Roads Fund
RFA	:	Roads Funds Administration

I - INTRODUCTION

Welcome Remarks by Executive Secretary

Mr. Refiloe Pule, the Executive Secretary of Lesotho Road Fund welcomed everyone attending and introduced the Principal Secretary (PS) Ministry of Public Works and Transport, he went on to expressed his appreciation for all attending having left their busy schedules to come to Lesotho and make the meeting a success. He further acknowledged the presence of Lesotho Road Fund Board members, who also availed time to glorify the takeoff of the meeting as they have other pressing business to attend to. He concluded by inviting the Principal Secretary to open the meeting, and thereafter called upon the SADC Focal Group President, Mr. Raphael Mabenga from Zambia to chair the meeting.

II – OPENING CEREMONY

1. Official Opening by Principal Secretary, Ministry of Public Works and Transport

In his opening speech the Principal Secretary Mr. Lebohang Phooko paid his respect to His Majesty the King Letsie III, the Right Hon. Prime Minister Pakalitha Bethuel Mosisili, Hon Minister of Finance Timothy Thahane, The President of ARMFA and distinguished delegates.

He said he is humbled to have the privilege of opening the meeting and welcomed delegates to Lesotho; he acknowledged that he comes from the sub-sector which is on the receiving end of funds from the Road Fund for road maintenance.

The PS highlighted the challenges in the sector as, inadequate funding, landscape (Lesotho's topography), and soil erosion that affects gravel roads, high cost of road construction and rehabilitation, and cold weather, especially snow that when thawing washes away the road surface. He said he trusted that delegates will share experiences on how they are dealing with the issues of road safety and maintenance.

Finally, he invited delegates to include in the two days of important deliberations, an extra item during site seeing of using the opportunity of

being nearer to God, high up in the mountains and pray, as their prayers will easily reach the Heavens.

2. Remarks by the President

Mr. Raphael Mabenga, ARMFA SADC FOCAL President, in his remarks said they have been requested to hold this meeting for the purpose of preparing for the on-coming General Assembly and to look into the statutes and other working documents, as well as resolutions to be presented to the General Assembly and said hopefully Mr. Pule the 2nd Vice President, and two other members of the Executive Committee will be in Ethiopia at the Annual General Meeting, and hopefully next year SADC will hold the ARMFA Presidency. He expressed his appreciation for the presence of the Principal Secretary who came to open the meeting, as the presence of the political will is very important in these meetings.

He noted that some member countries had not attended, and invited everyone present to introduce themselves.

Member Countries attending were:

- Lesotho
- Malawi
- Mozambique and
- Lesotho

Member Countries absent were:

- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Madagascar
- Zimbabwe

3. AGENDA

A proposal for the adoption was made and seconded. Adoption was made.

4. **Group Photo**

All present were invited for a group photo. See Cover sheet.

III - COUNTRY REPORTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Lesotho

Presentation by Mr. Refiloe Pule – Executive Secretary, Road Fund - Lesotho

1.1 Outline:

- Background
- Lesotho road networks
- Allocation of funds
- Expenditure
- Analysis of expenditure (a power point presentation)
- Challenges
- Submitted recommendations and Audits

1.2 Background

1.2.1 Legal Framework

The Road Fund was established by Legal Notice No. 179 of 1995, Regulations published by Legal Notice 1996 and repealed by Legal Notice 72 of 2005, are regulating management and operations of the Fund.

1.2.2 Objectives

The main objectives are:

- a. Road Fund Lesotho is to collect revenue from road user charges;
- b. Disbursing collected funds to Implementing Agencies which include Roads Directorate, Maseru City Council, Ministry of Local Government and Road Safety Department, for:
 - (i) Financing routine and periodic maintenance of roads;
 - (ii) Administrative costs; and
 - (iii) Financing road rehabilitation, road upgrading, new roads works and road safety projects.

1.2.3 Implementing Agencies

There are five Implementing Agencies, namely:

- a. Roads Directorate (formerly Roads Branch and Department of Rural Roads); Roads Branch was responsible for arterial roads design, maintenance, construction and works supervision. And Department of Rural Roads was responsible for, construction, rehabilitation, maintenance and upgrading of rural roads. Roads Branch and Department of Rural Roads have been amalgamated into the Roads Directorate;
- b. Maseru City Council, being responsible for construction, rehabilitation, maintenance and upgrading of Maseru Urban roads;
- c. Ministry of Local Government and Chieftainship (MoLG&C) is responsible for the District Councils roads more especially all urban networks, except for Maseru. The Ministry is responsible for their construction, rehabilitation, maintenance and upgrading;
- d. Department of Road Safety for road safety; and
- e. Department of Transport and Traffic also undertakes road safety activities.

1.3 Lesotho Road Network (km)

The overall Lesotho Road Network is estimated at 7,300 km, distributed among five Implementing Agencies mentioned hereinabove.

1.4 Allocation Of Funds 2009/2010

Funds allocated to Implementing Agencies in the previous financial year (2009/2010) for road safety and maintenance were M121,883,263.15 (\$16,251,101.75).

1.5 Expenditure

Total expenditure in the year 2009/2010 was M78,462,613.06 (\$10,461,681.74) whereas allocated funds in the same year was M121,883,263.15 (\$16,251,101.75), resulting in low absorptive capacity by Implementing Agencies.

1.6 Challenges

- Backlog of road maintenance;
- Funds were not fully absorbed;
- Submissions indicate that implementing agencies are unable to use all allocated funds. Indication is that they submit maintenance requirements which are more than their capacity. The Challenge is how to enforce the spending of the funds allocated. The roads are

- getting worse year by year because of inefficiency in implementing roads maintenance projects;
- There is tremendous increase in the rural networks due to utilization of plant purchased by MoLG&C for the improvement of rural roads (maintenance and expansion). Increased funding for maintenance will be required as the roads network is being expanded in the rural areas;
 - Lack of compliance from the implementing agencies in reporting, which if reports were submitted in good time it would enable the Road Fund to identify problems encountered in implementation, so that the Fund could assist where necessary;
 - Lack of capacity in Design and Supervision by the Road Agencies; and
 - Brain drain to Republic of South Africa, mainly of experienced engineers who left for greener pastures which were brought about by preparation for the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

1.7 Submitted Recommendations and Audits

- a. The Road fund is currently faced with a problem of inadequate funding to meet the needs of maintenance as submitted by the Implementing Agencies therefore a proposal has been submitted to the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning for an increase on the fuel levy and other Road User Charges and thereafter have a consistent increase thereof annually.
- b. Findings of a study that was conducted to determine the maintenance needs and generation of Road Fund revenue has been submitted to the Minister of Finance and Development Planning for requisite recommendations, to be tabled to Cabinet for approval.
- c. An Engineer is now carrying out technical audits, to enable effective and efficient consumption of the funds allocated towards roads works, as well as auditing of the procurement processes.

Agencies that are unable to absorb all monies allocated will have allocated funds reallocated to Agencies that are able to efficiently implement the projects.

2. MALAWI

Presentation by Mr.Hennox Mazengera – Chief Executive Officer, Roads Fund Administration – Malawi.

2.1 Mandate

- a. The mandate of the Roads Fund Administration is to raise, administer and account for funds for construction, maintenance and rehabilitation of public roads;
- b. Recommend to the Minister revisions in the rates of fuel levy and other road user charges and tariffs as required;
- c. Allocate financial resources for road works and road traffic and road safety management;
- d. Arrange for the collection of monies assigned to the Roads Fund;
- e. Identify other sources of funding;
- f. Ensure accountability of the Roads Fund; and
- g. Monitor the use of funds given to implementing agencies.

2.2 The Roads Fund Administration (RFA) Board

The RFA Board is independent and has 7 members made up as follows:

- 1 member: Financial Institutions
- 1 member: Chambers of Commerce
- 1 member: Petroleum Pricing Authority
- 1 member: National Local Government –Finance Committee
- 1 member: Public Society
- 2 ex-officio members from Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Development Planning and Cooperation.
- The Chairman and Vice Chairman are elected among the members of the Board by the Board.

The tenure of four members of the Board came to an end on the 4th June 2010 and is yet to be reappointed or replaced. Hence there has been no progress and Board meeting in RFA since 4th June 2010.

2.3 RFA'S Strategic Plan

A 5 Year Strategic Plan which wets out RFA's Vision and Mission as follows:

2.3.1 Vision

“A leader in public funds management for improved public roads network”.

2.3.2 Mission

“To mobilize, administer and account for funds for the construction, maintenance and rehabilitation of public roads in an efficient, effective, transparent and sustainable manner for the benefit of road users in Malawi”.

2.4 **RFA’S Strategic Goals**

- a. To raise stable and adequate funds;
- b. To promote accountability and transparency in public roads financing and management;
- c. To align RFA’s operations with the expectations of stakeholders and implementing agencies;
- d. To help implementing agencies clear their programme backlog;
- e. To enforce excellence and professionalism in service delivery; and
- f. To enhance the corporate identity of RFA.

2.5 **The Roads Fund Revenues**

RFA collected revenues from the following:

- a. Monies appropriated by Parliament for the Roads Fund;
- b. Roads Fund fuel levy;
- c. International Transit fees;
- d. A percentage of road user charges including taxes, tariffs and tolls; and
- e. Loans, grants and donations.

2.6 **Major Sources of Revenue**

- a. Over the last 11 years fuel levy has contributed on average 86% of total revenue and over 92% over the last 4 years; and
- b. Transit fees 10% over the last 11 years and 6% over the last 4 years.

2.7 **Projected Roads Fund Revenues for 2010/2011**

Total projected Roads Fund Revenues for 2010/2011 are at MK9,226.18m (\$60.70m) in the following categories:

- a. Fuel levy is at MK8,346.18m (\$54.91m) compared to the previous year (2009/2010) which was MK7,989.00m (\$52.56m);
- b. International Transit Fees are projected at MK450.00m (\$2.96m) in 2010/2011 and in 2009/2010 at MK365.00m (\$2.40m);
- c. Other (Interest, liquidated damages) MK430.00m (\$2.83m) in 2010/2011 and MK40.00m (\$0.26m);
- d. Fuel levy revision is annually increasing by 5%.

2.8 Strategies for Maintaining the Real Value of Fuel Levy

- a. The last adjustment was in February 2009, and at the time it was over 100% increase. At the time the levy became 16.9c/ltr of Diesel and 20.5c/ltr of Petrol. This has since fallen in real terms to 15.5c/ltr for diesel and 18.8c/ltr for petrol; and
- b. Therefore, RFA has suggested 4 options to maintain the real value of fuel levy, as follows:
 - i. Determine the maintenance needs and revise the fuel levy;
 - ii. Revise the levy annually in line with inflation;
 - iii. Revise the levy annually to maintain its current dollar value from year to year;
 - iv. Calculate the levy as a percentage to the pump price of fuel; and
 - v. Have the levy revised each time the price of fuel changes to maintain that percentage.

2.9. Strategies For Expanding Revenue Base

The RFA has developed the following strategies to expand revenue base:

- a. Lobby the Government for RFA to start getting vehicle licensing fees, operator permit fees, abnormal loading fees and overloading charges;
- b. Introduce administrative penalties for transit fee defaulters; and
- c. Lobby for Parliamentary appropriations.

2.10 Share of Road Maintenance Expenditures

Shared Road Maintenance Expenditures for the past 11 years and 4 years stands as follows:

- a. **Routine maintenance** 70% on average over the last 11 years and 53% over the last 4 years;

- b. **Periodic maintenance** 14% over the last 11 years but 32% over the last 4 years; and
- c. **Supervision and design** 16% over the last 11 years.

2.11 2010/2011 Budget

Total budget for the year 2010/2011 is estimated at MK36,607.63m (USD228.80m); upgrading and new construction – local contribution MK9,540.00m (USD59.63) and donor contribution is estimated at MK17,841.46m (MK111.59m). The balance is for road maintenance and rehabilitation funded from the Roads fund.

2.12 Future Coverage of Maintenance Needs

The projection for future maintenance needs for the next five years is estimated as follows:

- a. Recurrent needs at 6% increase (K'mlns) from 8,964 in the year 2010/2011 to 15,049 in 2014/2015;
- b. RF Income with fixed fuel levy (K'mlns) from 9,676 in 2010/2011 to 11,768 in 2014/2015;
- c. % cover by RF at fixed fuel levy 107.9% in 2010/2011 to 78.2% in 2014/2015;
- d. Proposed RUC % increase at 0.0% in 2010/2011 to 5.0% in 2011/12, 25.0% in 2012/13 and reducing to 5.0% in 2013/14;
- e. RF income after increase RUCs (K'mlns) at 9,676 in 2010/11 to 16,208 in 2014/2015.
- f. % cover with RF increase at 107.9% in 2010/11 to 107.7% in 2014/15.

2.13 Challenges

RFA experienced some challenges in carrying out its mandate, they are:

- a. Resource constraints: existing Roads Fund revenue sources do not meet the routine and periodic maintenance requirements;
- b. Ineffective utilization of funds: the limited available resources are sometimes not efficiently and effectively used;
- c. Inadequate supervision capacity of the local consulting industry, resulting in inadequate maintenance interventions;
- d. Need for more focused interventions – to avoid more serious deterioration;

- e. **Low absorption capacity** – in 2008/2009, inability to absorb available roads funds resulted in the Roads Fund reporting surplus of K1,703 billion making the fund prone to raiding by the Government.
- f. **Inadequacies** in planning, procurement, supervision and monitoring and low capacities of contractors and consultants;
- g. **Inability to control** the implementation of development projects in line with the available budget, implementation agencies unable to absorb allocated funds; and
- h. No consultations at reallocation of funding.

2.14 Current Initiatives

- a. Introducing balanced Score Card as a Performance Management tool;
- b. Soon to conduct a Service Delivery Survey to be used as a basis for the preparation of Client Service Charter;
- c. Soon to connect the border with the Head Office for the collection of transit fees;
- d. Subscribed to Tip-offs Anonymous to expose corruption in the road sector and adopted a Fraud and Corruption Prevention Policy and a Code of the Ethics to guide behaviour within RFA;
- e. To start funding hand reshaping (labour based) road maintenance programmes for earth roads; and
- f. To start working more closely with local authorities.

3. MOZAMBIQUE

Presentation by Mr. Joao Mutombene – Finance Manager (Director General) Admin. Nationale Des Routes – Mozambique.

3.1 Introduction

Mozambique Road Fund was established by the decree 22/2003 of 20 May 2003. The Road Fund Board is chaired by an executive Chairman and has four (4) non-executive board members.

The Road Fund is structured of five Departments, namely:

- a. Finance;
- b. Planning;
- c. Administration;
- d. External relations and;
- e. Internal Audit.

RF has ten (10) delegations at Provincial level.

3.2 Functions

The main functions of the Road Fund are:

- a. Collection of internal and external funds;
- b. Funding the road execution agencies for maintenance; rehabilitation, urban roads and unclassified roads;
- c. Monitoring and evaluation of the road sector program; and
- d. Auditing the performance of the different execution agencies funded by the Road Fund.

3.3 Budget

From 2008 to 2009 a small decrease of 1% was noted and from 2009 to 2010 an increase of 58% was noted as indicated in the table below.

Description	Amount USD million			Share in %		
	2008	2009	2010	2008	2009	2010
Internal funds	120	132	198	36	41	39
External funds	209	193	315	64	59	61
Total	329	325	513	100	100	100

In general in 2009 a low execution of 74% compared to the budgeted amount, mainly due to the procurement processes was noted.

Internal funds and external funds total being:

- a. Budgeted internal funds at USD132.15 and actual at USD148.53 resulted in a positive variance of USD16.38 resulting in actual collections being 112.% of the budget; and
- b. Budgeted external funds at USD192.82 and actual at USD91.28 resulted in the adverse variance of USD101.55 resulting in actual collections being 47% of the budget.

3.4 Expenditures by Activities

Total of expenditure on activities was budgeted at 324,982 USD and actual at 253,036 USD and variance was 78%.

3.5 Achievements

The Ministry of Finance allowed the RF to get loan from domestic commercial bank to cover the deficit on certain projects and to avoid delays of the conclusion of civil works as well as penalties' interests.

An increase of 12% on internal funds as a result of Government investment activities was achieved.

Donors have committed to channel funds for maintenance activities.

3.6 Constraints

Ministry of Finance delays to allocate fuel levy funds;

Non adjustment of the current fuel levy tax at USD 13c per liter significantly affected planned revenue (based on USD 14c per liter);

- a. Scope limitation on the validity, accuracy and completeness for the amount collected by the fuel companies;
- b. Significant increase on the maintenance costs which created a backlog on maintenance;
- c. Long procurement processes on the projects funded by donors affected the annual plan, therefore low absorption on external funds was realized at 47%;
- d. Delay on implementation of maintenance and rehabilitation projects as a result of lack of funds due to a significant increase on construction costs; and
- e. Delay on allocation of funds by some donors.

4. ZAMBIA

Presentation by Mr Raphael Mabenga – Director and Chief Executive Officer of National Road Fund Agency – Zambia.

4.1 NRFA Establishment

The National Road Fund Agency is an establishment made up of Committee of Ministers, Board of Directors, and the Director who is the Chief Executive Officer and responsible for the day to day running of the Agency, working together with technical committees and NRFA staff.

4.2 Introduction to ROADSIP

The Road Sector Investment Programme (ROADSIP) is a 15 year programme and is split as shown below:

- a. Phase I 1998 – 2003
- b. Phase II 2004 – 2013

The aim was to dovetail Phases I and II.

4.2.1 ROADSIP I 1998 – 2003

ROADSIP I started in 1998 – 2003 at a cost of US\$520m, for a 35,000 km trunk, main and district roads.

The project suffered as a result of lack of implementation capacity especially in the rural district councils.

4.2.2 ROADSIP II 2004 – 2013

ROADSIP II was allocated US\$1.66bn for:

- a. Core road network of 40,113 km for maintenance, estimated at 50% good and 10% poor condition;
- b. Road safety improvement and reduction of road accidents by at least 20%;
- c. Job creation resulting in poverty reduction (estimated 30,00 new jobs);
- d. Develop a framework for the sustainable management of roads;
- e. Improve environmental management; and
- f. Fight against HIV and AIDS.

4.3 Sources of Funds for ROADSIP II

ROADSIP II is funded the following donors:

- a. GRZ Treasury;
- b. Road Fund (Fuel levy);

- c. European Union;
- d. World Bank;
- e. DANIDA;
- f. Nordic Development Fund;
- g. OPEC Fund;
- h. NORAD; and
- i. BADEA/Kuwait Fund.

Cooperating partners are financing periodic and rehabilitation projects, Road Fund funds routine and periodic maintenance and Government is funding upgrading, new projects, rehabilitation and political projects.

4.4 Flow of Funds – Ten (10) Year Cash Flow

- a. Internal funding, collected from Government funding, fuel levy, donation of Excise duty at 5%, license fees, road hauler tariff and international transit charge totalled 987,682.141 USD;
- b. Donor funding totalled at 646,260.000 USD.
- c.

4.5 Payments to Contractors and Consultants

Consultants and clients certify works done by contractors and certificates are sent to paying Agency (NRFA).

Payments are done by electronic transfer, where funds are available payments are made within a week.

Projects are not commissioned until funds are guaranteed.

4.6 ROADSIP II – Mid Term Review

- i. Mid Term Review was held in 2009 to give direction beyond 2013;
- ii. Bankable documents need to be revised so as to prioritize projects with proper costs; and
- iii. Financial Strategy needs to be accurately prepared.

4.7 ROADSIP II Challenges

- a. Backlog of maintenance;
- b. Inadequate funding, compounded by high Unit costs;
- c. Inadequate Annual Budget;
- d. Long Tendering Procedures;

- e. Lack of implementing capacity for contractors and councils; and
- f. Budget – Common Basket Funding.

4.8 Way Forward

Broaden revenue base by implementing the PPP by the Ministry of Finance and National Planning (MoFNP).

4.9 Conclusion

- a. ROADSIP II is anchored on Vision 3030;
- b. Political will is high;
- c. Starting 2010, funds are made available before projects are commissioned;
- d. More partners in the road sector are still required;
- e. Zambia is one of the most stable countries in the World; and
- f. Business opportunities are in abundance.

5. DISCUSSIONS:

Member countries present and media personnel present at the meeting noted that the common issues were:

- 5.1 Lack of funding, that results in inadequate maintenance activities;
- 5.2 Low capacity of the Implementing Agencies, as a result of lack of technical personnel for design and supervision of road maintenance and construction of new projects;
- 5.3 Low Absorption of Funding allocated to Implementing Agencies which causes backlog on maintenance;
- 5.4 Fuel Levy and RUC's revisions and disbursements from Governments take too long;
- 5.5 Long procurement procedures affect projects negatively and cause backlog;
- 5.6 Recommendations by Lesotho Road Fund for annual revision of fuel levy and other RUC's have since been submitted for approval; and
- 5.7 Decentralization is recommended in some countries while in other countries it is already operational but not yet well established.

IV - 8TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY ARMFA REPORT

The report was reviewed and proposed corrections were made as per attached report (Annex I).

It was resolved that members shall submit their comments and up-dates to the 2nd Vice President, the Executive Secretary of Lesotho Road Fund.

V - REVIEW ARMFA STATUTES

A review of ARMFA Statutes was made and proposed amendments are as contained in Annex II.

VI - BY LAWS OF THE AFRICAN ROAD MAINTENANCE FUND ASSOCIATION

Proposed amendments to the By-Laws for submission to the General Assembly are appended to the ARMFA Statutes (Annex II).

VII - THEMES FOR THE ARMFA TECHNICAL WORKSHOP 2010

The meeting corrected the typographic errors and chose topics to be presented by the SADC Focal Group members for consideration and adoption by the Executive Committee as contained in Annex III.

VIII - BUDGET

The budget was reviewed and recommendations were noted for submission to the General Assembly in Ethiopia later this year for consideration and approval; full details of edits are in Annex V.

Lesotho as the host member country for the SADC Focal Group Meeting was advised to submit a statement of expenses for this meeting with supporting documents for reimbursement to ARMFA.

IX - OTHER PERTINENT ISSUES

Proposed amendments and recommendations for consideration and approval by the General Assembly are highlighted in Annex IV.

It was recommended that country reports be standardized to contain similar content and to appear in the same format.

X - GUIDELINES ON HOSTING ARMFA WORKSHOP

Proposed amendments and recommendations for consideration and approval by the General Assembly are attached Annex VI.

XI - VENUE FOR THE NEXT FOCAL GROUP MEETING

Mozambique was proposed as the host for the next Focal Group Meeting, to be confirmed after approval by the principals of Mozambique Road Fund or the Road Fund Board, to be communicated with the President of ARMFA SADC Focal Group.

CLOSING REMARKS – PRINCIPAL SECRETARY MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORT(PS)

In his closing remarks the PS firstly paid respect to His Majesty, King Letsie III, The Right Honourable Prime Minister, the Chairman of the Lesotho Road Fund Board, members of the Board and distinguished delegates. He apologized for the absence of his colleague, the Principal Secretary for the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning who has had to travel out of the country.

The PS said he has been reliably informed that the delegates worked hard during the two days and really commends every member of the ARMFA SADC Focal Group to have thoroughly deliberated on pertinent ARMFA issues during the meeting, and said every country report that each of the members presented at the meeting are very important, as they highlight achievements and setbacks that each member country prides itself of or is looking for solutions, respectively, the sustainability of ARMFA and that it is from the reports and questions asked by some of the delegates and the media that members have learnt from the colleagues' experiences, which is the main objective of ARMFA. He acknowledged that the scrutiny of ARMFA Statutes and By Laws and the budget for 2009/2010 financial year was a very crucial part for of the meeting for the sustainability of ARMFA, and hopes that everyone has gained from the deliberations and will be well prepared to contribute fruitfully at the oncoming ARMFA Technical Workshop and AGM to be held in Ethiopia later this year.

He said he further hopes that the delegates enjoyed the Basotho hospitality and their stay in Lesotho, and wished everyone a pleasant site seeing trip where they will view some of Lesotho's roads projects, and travel to the higher ground and view the glorious and beautiful mountains and the roads that meander through the mountainous topography, and wished everyone a comfortable and pleasant shopping for souvenirs for themselves and their families.

Lastly he declared the 2010 ARMFA SADC Focal Group meeting closed, and wished all a safe journey back to their home countries.

VOTE OF THANKS – President ARMFA SADC FOCAL GROUP

The President Mr. Raphael Mabenga in his vote of thanks, thanked the Principal Secretary for availing himself for both the official opening and the official closing of the meeting, he expressed his appreciation for the political will displayed by the Principal Secretary's unwavering support that indicates a firm commitment from the Government of Lesotho.

He said the meeting rotates from country to country, and that ARMFA is divided into four zones, and said the main purpose of this meeting was to review the statutes, the budget, the theme and pertinent issues that are due for consideration and adoption at the General Assembly in Ethiopia. He said the Association is officially bilingual being: Francophone and Anglophone. Lastly, he thanked the Government of Lesotho for hosting the Focal Group meeting, during which, warm hospitality was experienced and looked forward to enjoy the site seeing activity and cocktail later, to which everyone was invited.