

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY HIS EXCELLENCY, MR. BABATUNDE RAJI FASHOLA (SAN), GOVERNOR OF LAGOS STATE AT THE MAIDEN ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BY THE LAGOS METROPOLITAN AREA TRANSPORT AUTHORITY (LAMATA), HELD AT THE BANQUET HALL, SHERATON LAGOS HOTEL & TOWERS, IKEJA, FROM TUESDAY 6 – THURSDAY 8, MAY, 2008

PROTOCOLS

I am highly delighted to be among this distinguished gathering of some of the best transport planners, financiers and administrators produced by our great country, for this maiden edition of the Annual National Conference on Public Transportation, organised by the Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA). The theme of this important conference, “Integrated transport system in Nigeria’s Emerging Mega-cities: Issues, Challenges and Options” is quite timely and instructive. This conference could not have come at a better time than now when we as a nation, especially the technocrats, financiers and indeed all stakeholders

need to put on our thinking caps and determine ways of alleviating the sufferings of our people and improve the quality of social life and economic development which have been greatly hampered by ineffective transportation system, congestions in our cities nationwide through infrastructure renewal and implementation of efficient transportation system.

We, in Lagos, have been very proactive in this regard. This was what informed some of the several stakeholders forums, town hall meetings, seminars and conferences we have held especially with the aim of adopting and adapting some of the best practices in the advanced nation.

Recently, the 4th Lagos Economic Summit (Ehingbeti 2008) held in Lagos explored the theme of *“Transforming Lagos into Africa’s Model Mega-City.”* One of the areas critically examined by professionals and experts drawn from across the world was the way

to achieve our plan for an effective multimodal transport system for Lagos.

Worldwide, effective public transportation has been identified as a significant engine room driving national economic development. It is however regrettable that almost fifty (50) years after independence, our country is yet to have and implement effective and reliable National Urban Transport Policies or Strategies comparable to those of developed countries of the world. But I am sure, that with all our efforts and a conference of this nature, we will surely get it right.

I am told that the major objective of this Annual Conference is to provide a steady forum for local and international experts and stakeholders in public transportation, drawn from the private, public and non-governmental sectors, to brainstorm annually, and provide solutions on key contemporary and emergent issues confronting the sector. This would also help to

standardize public transport administration and services in our country.

It is obvious that lack of strategic planning and delivery of effective, efficient and affordable integrated transport system in most of our urban and emerging megacities underscores the indispensability of a Conference of this nature at this particular point in time. I commend the organisers of this unique conference for putting together this laudable initiative.

I urge you to make a statement with this maiden edition of this annual conference by addressing all the major areas listed for consideration, which include:

- i) Evaluating integrated mass rapid transit options for addressing the perennial problems of congestion and environmental degradation in Lagos and other major cities in Nigeria;**
- ii) Examining the different challenges and issues confronting public transportation in Nigeria, and prioritise key areas where action is needed that would**

enable cities to balance competitiveness with quality of life and environmental sustainability;

iii) Reviewing and analysing experiences of Mature, Transitional and Emerging Mega-cities in the developed and developing countries of the world, and map out an effective road map for Nigeria;

iv) Examining and evaluating the existing weak revenue base and low cost recovery in Nigeria's public transport sector and proffer practical solutions towards ensuring financial sustainability;

v) Analysing the financial complexities involved in building, operating and maintaining public transport infrastructure, capable of meeting the needs of a rapidly expanding urban population; and examining the pivotal role of the private sector in contributing to enhanced efficiency of public transport service delivery; and to ultimately;

vi) Finding ways and means of harmonizing responsibilities at the Federal, State and Local Government levels regarding the multiplicity of agencies with overlapping transport-related functions,

particularly as it relates to policies, regulations, revenue generation, planning, and maintenance of public transport infrastructure; and

vii) Cross fertilizing ideas on initiatives by some states, which are time tested solutions to challenges posed to effective public transportation, with a view to reviewing and adopting same by others.

Distinguished participants, for us in Lagos, as it applies to major cities of the country, lack of effective transportation has resulted in huge economic loss in valuable man-hours and quality life occasioned by perennial traffic congestion and environmental degradation.

We are indeed blessed by the position of our State as Nigeria's financial, commercial and industrial nerve centre with over 2,000 manufacturing industries and over 200 financial institutions.

The State alone harbours about 60 per cent of the Federation's total industrial investments and foreign trade while also attracting 65 per cent of Nigeria's commercial activities. Our great State accounts for more than 40 per cent of all labour emoluments paid in the country.

Unarguably, Lagos today occupies an important place in the socio-economic equation of Nigeria and indeed the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

With such high profile, Lagos should normally rank among the most sought after cities for investors around the world. But the huge level of challenges faced in its transportation sector has robbed us of some of the investment-attracting potentials. Surveys show that there are about 75,000 mini and midi buses in the State, most of which are owned by individual operators and are operated in an unorganised fashion. Furthermore, statistics reveals that while we have about 224 vehicles

per kilometre in Lagos, it is an average of 11 vehicles per kilometre nationally. These, among other factors make our situation more complex than others.

Statistics puts the number of people per square kilometre in the city of Lagos 18,150. According to City Mayor Statistics, the city of Lagos has a land area of 738 square kilometres with a population of well over 18 million. When this is compared with Mexico City's land area of 2,072 square kilometres with 8,400 people per square kilometre and New York's population of 17,800,000 and its land area of 8,683 square kilometre and 2050 people per square kilometres, you will come to the conclusion that efforts must be geared towards sustainable management of the environment, land use and resource allocation.

Over the years, public transport management in the State has gone through various phases, initiatives and innovations, all targeted at addressing the intractable problem of ineffective transportation system. Some of

these include the establishment of the Lagos State Transport Corporation (LSTC), Lagos Municipal Transport Service (LMTS), and traffic management schemes such as Park & Ride, Jubilee Bus Line, Jubilee Rail System, etc.

That these initiatives failed to effectively resolve the transportation challenges in a state like Lagos accounts for why we, across the nation, as managers must continue to devise ingenious means seeking for long-lasting solutions, while also investing in infrastructure that enhances the living standard of our people anywhere in our respective States and indeed the nation.

The bitter truth however, is that for most of our urban cities and emerging mega-cities such as Kano, Enugu, Kaduna, Ibadan, Port Harcourt, Jos, among others, the above challenges, even if at a lesser degree, are prevalent. These have equally limited the economic

development potentials and dignity of human lives in these cities.

Lagos has already achieved Mega-City status and has been classified by the United Nations Habitat as the third largest in the world by 2015, projected to be populated by 28million persons. Statistics has shown that an average of six million people who move around the State on a daily basis, rely on road transportation which to all intents and purposes is very inadequate.

When we assumed office last year, one of the core focuses of my agenda for the development of this State is the implementation of a multi-modal integrated transportation system where the road, water and rail infrastructure would be generously deployed for the movement of people and goods.

Permit me to comment on environmental issues, which play a central role in urban and transport planning. In emerging mega-cities, infrastructure growths often

pose challenges for the environment. We however know that the environment requires a great deal of attention in solving the traffic problem. According to estimates from the World Health Organisation (WHO), air pollution kills approximately 130,000 urbanites a year in industrialising countries. This is why a greater number of traffic experts believe that cities will focus on implementing mass transportation system in the coming years. I need to stress that a well functioning transportation system determines a city's economic attractiveness. So, if we get it right in the transport sector, this will rub off on our environment by reducing our pollution.

In cities worldwide, solving the transportation problem is one of the foremost challenges for decision makers. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, since one of the objectives of this Conference is to allow for information sharing, permit me to avail you with a few of the initiatives that our State and this administration is putting

in place to confront the challenges caused by public transportation system in the State.

First, based on studies conducted in collaboration with the World Bank, the Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA), organisers of this Conference, was established. The authority was set up as a semi-autonomous institution, dedicated to planning and regulating public transportation as well as providing transport infrastructure in the State. It has the mandate to put in place effective, reliable and affordable integrated multi-modal public transport system.

Our government has also been committed to a series of rehabilitation programmes to make our road infrastructure strong enough to withstand the pressure that is daily piled on it until we complete our water and rail transportation transformation programme. In order to complement our road rehabilitation programme and construction programme, we are investing resources in the development of water transportation. We have

devoted huge resources to this sector and I want to assure you that we will not rest on our oars in funding jetties rehabilitation, provision of terminals, interchanges, car parks, etc. In order to improve modal diversity within an integrated transport system, we are committed to developing seven (7) water commuter routes, four (4) of which have been identified for immediate development. These are Ojo-Marina, Ijede/Badore-Osborne, Ikorodu-Osborne and Lekki 1-Osborne.

The State Government is also working assiduously to develop a Lagos Urban Rail Network, comprising seven (7) Light Rail Mass Transit (LRMT) routes, two (2) of which have been identified for immediate development. These are Okokomaiko-Marina via Mile 2, with projections of annual passenger capacity of 200 million people, and the Alagbado-Marina rail corridors.

Recently, LAMATA introduced the BRT “Lite” scheme on the Mile 12 – Ikorodu Road – CMS bus public transport

corridor, which is a major route that links Lagos Mainland with Lagos Island. The BRT is a high capacity mass transit bus system operating on segregated lanes, supported by high quality infrastructure and effective management. It is operated as a Public\Private Partnership (PPP) with National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) Cooperatives, running throughout the week from 6am-10pm, with adequate incentives to offer affordable mobility and better quality of life to the urban population, especially the masses. Average passenger on the scheme is currently 130,000 per day.

In spite of all these efforts, we believe that we still need to invest in traffic management. We are committed to signalling our junction with modern traffic control mechanisms. We would strengthen the Lagos State Traffic Management Authority (LASTMA) to vigorously ensure efficient traffic management in Lagos. We will ensure that drivers are retrained and re-certified because we cannot continue to allow lawlessness on

our roads. Private vehicle drivers also need to imbibe a new orientation to driving across the nation.

Given the current thinking in the State, we strongly believe that the private sector should play a major role in financing, by way of investments in the energy, public transportation and health care sectors of the economy. To meet the growing demand for infrastructure requirements in the long term, there must be constructive engagement and collaboration between the public and private sector institutions.

As we go into the technical sessions of this conference, I call on all participants to look critically at the theme: “Integrated transport system in Nigeria’s Emerging Mega-cities: Issues, Challenges and Options” and come up with workable recommendations that could be applicable to any of the current urban cities and emerging mega-cities in the country.

It is my sincere hope that this maiden edition of the LAMATA Annual Conference will equally deliberate and agree consensually on the need for state and national policy initiatives, thereby providing a framework for a national urban transport strategy aimed at integrated mass transit options for Nigeria's emerging mega-cities, that enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of public transport service delivery across the States and our dear nation.

With these few comments, I want to believe I have challenged your imaginations towards having fruitful deliberations that will enable you to achieve the objectives of the Conference.

It is therefore my pleasure to formally declare this first edition of the annual national conference on Public Transportation open.

I thank you all for your attention.

**Babatunde Raji Fashola (SAN)
Governor of Lagos State, Nigeria**

May 6, 2008