

Welcome address by Dr. Dayo Mobereola, Managing Director, Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA) at the maiden Annual National Conference on Public Transportation by LAMATA on May 6 – 8, 2008 held at the Banquet Hall, Sheraton Lagos Hotel & Towers, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria

Protocol

On behalf of the Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA) and Lagos State Government, I most heartily welcome our distinguished guests and delegates to this maiden Annual National Conference on Public Transportation.

For us in Lagos State and LAMATA, this is one of our modest contributions towards articulating our thoughts as transport planners, operators, regulators, financiers and stakeholders with view to consensually charting the way forward for entrenching effective public transport systems in our respective States and indeed across our nation.

Please permit me to share with you briefly about our institution LAMATA, the organisers of this Conference. LAMATA was established by an Act of the Lagos State House of Assembly in 2002 (amended in 2007), and empowered with the institutional framework for coordinating sector wide management; and addressing the major transport sector issues affecting Lagos.

The authority, upon its commencement was charged with the mandate of implementing the Lagos Urban Transport Project (LUTP) by the Lagos State Government, financed by World Bank credit and government counterpart funding. The Project, LUTP, was designed to support the transport sector policy and strategy of the Lagos State Government (LASG) by improving the State's capacity to manage the transport sector in the Lagos Metropolitan Area and enhance the

efficiency of the public transport network, such that it measurably contributes to poverty reduction.

It is gratifying to note that as an expression of its satisfaction with the Authority in delivering on this mandate, LAMATA has been given wider responsibilities as the planning, regulatory and infrastructure providing authority for effective public transport system delivery in the State.

Nationwide, as in other parts of the world, effective Public Transportation system is central to economic growth and development. However, this very important sector has faced a lot of challenges in most cities in Nigeria.

Many of the observed shortcomings in the transportation system stem from sector management weaknesses. These include:

- (i) the absence of an articulated and adopted policy and strategic framework for the transport sector;
- (ii) fragmentation of institutional responsibilities between various agencies at the three levels of government with no coordinating framework.
- (iii) absence of standard procedures for the technical and economic evaluation of programs and projects resulting in a strong bias toward capital expenditure rather than making better use of existing investments through better management and maintenance practices and
- (iv) abysmally low level of Cost recovery in the transport sector.

In practical terms, urban transportation problems occupy the centre stage in Nigerian mega- cities like Port Harcourt, Kano, Lagos, Kaduna etc. Some of the common fundamental transportation problems in Nigerian mega-cities include:

Inadequate means of mass transportation: In Nigeria mega-cities, the movement of the urban residents is strongly dependent on

private cars, minibuses, taxis, motor-cycles, 'molues' etc. as opposed to effective mass transit systems. For example, in Port Harcourt, Kano, Kaduna, taxis and minibuses do not access residential houses. The urban residents will have to walk a distance or use motorcycles to connect the distribution road before accessing a bus.

Route duplication: In Nigeria mega-cities, taxis and buses are made to concentrate on some routes that have seemingly higher volume of shuttling commuters at the expense of other routes. This has resulted in over-concentration, route duplication and redundancy. For example, in Port Harcourt, buses and taxis concentrate on Aba- Port Harcourt road, in Kano, bus and taxis are made to concentrate on Kastina road, Bata in Port Harcourt etc.

Concentration of land-use: In Port Harcourt, land use activities are concentrated on Aba - Port Harcourt road, Ikwere road, Trans-Amadi etc; in Kano, land-use activities are concentrated in Sharada, Bata, while in Lagos activities are concentrated on the Island. This has the effects of moving traffic to a particular direction in the morning and reverses it in the evening.

Lack of regulation: In the Nigerian mega-cities, there is inadequate, poor and non- implementation of regulation guiding the quality, quantity and changing system of the urban transport operations.

Very importantly is the absence of planned and effective integrated multi-modal transport system which incorporates rail and water transport, where applicable, to complement road transport on which there has been over-dependence. Additionally, emerging Megacities such as Lagos, Kano, Port Harcourt, Kaduna, etc, tend to be characterized by high growth rates driven by migration and natural growth, much of which occur in informal settlements not served by the informed base of infrastructure and services. Annual growth rates are on the order of between 3% and 6%.

It is in realisation of the urgent need to address these multi-faceted issues and challenges in our respective States and the nation as a whole that LAMATA has put together this annual national conference on public transportation.

It is our belief that this forum provides a unique opportunity to brainstorm, compare notes and initiate enduring reforms in the Transportation Sector for the benefit of our nation.

To this end an array of time tested experts have been assembled to do justice to identified issues and sub-themes.

At this conference, we from Lagos will be sharing with you about the vision and action of our state towards the implementation of an urban light rail and inland waterways network to complement road transportation. We equally wish to learn about your experiences in other urban cities and how best we can together remain relevant and competitive in the global economy, while meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

We must appreciate you all for the confidence reposed in us, underscored by your attendance of this Conference.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, once again, I welcome you to this Conference and wish us all fruitful deliberations.

Thank you for your attention.

Dr. Dayo Mobereola

Managing Director/CEO

Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority (LAMATA)

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