

"THE IMPORTANCE OF INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS IN THE URBAN AGGLOMERATIONS CITIES OF AFRICA"

INTRODUCTION

Infrastructure programs in Africa focus often on interurban connections. Technically these projects are relatively straight forward and the results are very visible and rewarding for governments and especially for donors.

Though, Africa is faced to a galloping urbanization. Large cities and even so called Mega cities are developing in all African countries. Unfortunately the transport infrastructure is not developing at the same pace in these urban agglomerations. The consequence is that the important economical centers are experiencing huge transport problems especially on the level of congestion but also and not in the least on the level of road safety. Needless to say that this has huge social-economic price. The solutions exist. For example in Latin America most large cities designed this last decade transport master plans considering the urban planning and all different transport modes. In order to implement these master plans successfully, huge infrastructure works and investments had to be performed to make dedicated walking paths, cycling paths, bus lanes and in some cases even rail infrastructure.

CONTEXT

Though, transport is not mentioned explicitly in text of the Millennium Development Goals signed by most of the developing countries which attended the Millennium Summit in September 2000, and some other sub-meetings later, nevertheless these goals can not be reached for Africa without integrate this sector which has a direct influence on the states economical activity.

Therefore, this field disregarded in the past, is drawing more and more attention from the African authorities, economical analysts and the international backers and gradually the awareness of the importance of transports as a mean to struggle against poverty begins to be recognised unanimously.

However, transports in our continent don't get undamaged away from that period of low interest. Indeed the general state of transports in Africa is characterised by an import default of infrastructures which did not benefit these past years of real policies of expansion or even maintaining of the post-colonialism legacy.

PROBLEM

But, though this present gradual consciousness, a large number of reflections and actions focused exclusively on interregional, interurban and rural transports activities, found more profitable for economies than urban transport almost non-existent regarding these development policies for Africa.

Unfortunately, even if in the short term the economical effects of the urban public transport are less perceptible than the other sectors of road transport or other transport modes, but neglect it will bring some huge dangerous consequences. Then, it's particularly important that the urban centres Africa should be taken into account concerning the financing of transport infrastructures in Africa.

We all effectively know now that Africa is facing a huge galloping urbanisation. Thus, for example, according to some demographic projections, sub-Saharan Africa population could be multiplied by two or even three reaching around 1,3 billions of inhabitants in 2025 with an urbanisation rate at around 60%, doubling in just thirty years. Therefore, in 2025, it's predictable a majority of African in urban areas comparing to rural areas and this phenomenon could get worse.

As urban mobility is a factor of sustainable development, a consistent urban transport policy is a necessary tool for development, economical competitiveness, and social cohesion. Consequently, if this great mobility demand generated by this demographic increase is not fulfilled, it will create some problems of accessibility of basic services for the poorest and of congestion due to a lack of sufficient urban road infrastructures with as consequences pollution and road insecurity.

Africa Population (in thousands of inhabitants)

Africa areas	Period		EAST	CENTER	SOUTH	WEST	SUB-SAHARA	Percentage
Zones								%
	1990	154013	43596	17761	130740	345970	69,91	
RURAL	2025	288398	70014	21010	213290	592712	40,82	
	1990	42860	26458	22465	62465	154745	30,09	
URBAN	2025	254138	122328	59123	294165	729754	59,18	
	1990	196873	70054	40086	193072	500713		
TOTAL	2025	542536	192342	80133	507455	1322466		
Percentage	1990	39,32	14	8,12	38,56			
%	2025	41	14,6	6	38,4			

Sources :United Nations, World urbanization, *Prospects 1990*, New York,1991.

Then, it's crucial to analyse the defaults of transport systems in Africa according to the infrastructures view, to try to reconfigure the current planning and management of the space and land settlement taking into account transports dimension, which is still a failure in Africa.

GLOBAL ANALYSIS OF URBAN TRANSPORTS IN AFRICA REGARDING INFRASTRUCTURES

The main role of a transport system is to fulfil the population needs of access and mobility.

1. Facing the constant growth of the urban population, there is an absence of coordination and integration between urban planning and public transport; Thus the solution is to settle a global approach of urban development. Transport is not an end but cities can not work without an efficient transport. So we need a global approach of urban planning in which transport can have its full place.
2. The economical crisis of 80's and 90's brought to the African states a financial crisis which have affected the implementation of infrastructures and the operation of transport services. It resulted an unevenness between infrastructures demand and offer and a financial weakness of public and private operators as well.
3. A need of access and mobility is still expressed by the urban residents, without fully and in the best conditions being fulfilled;
4. the great demographic evolution accompanied by some governments measures as the free importation of second-hand vehicles in Abidjan at the beginning of the 90's, brought an increase of motorized vehicles in the great cities , leading to a reinforcement of the congestion and the deterioration of road networks.
5. Roads are often not very sufficiently dimensioned for the real traffic creating a deterioration of the road safety with some costs expressed in terms of high level of human losses and injuries with medical expenses;
6. Roads don't integrate the separation between motorised and non-motorised transport. For example, a lot of road in Africa do not include some sidewalks for pedestrian or some cycling paths for non-motorised two-wheels; We can add a very few number of infrastructures for intermodal coordination. Sidewalks when they exist become bit by bit public markets, increasing then the congestion problems.
7. We can also notice an growing pollution caused by the increase of motorized vehicles and their utilisation and a lack of infrastructures and measures for traffic regulation;
8. The bad quality of roads and their tautness reduce the speed of the vehicles, increase the maintaining costs ant limit the urban transport productivity;

9. Even in countryside, there are not some places to rest for the road professionals, neither than some siding places. therefore, they are forced to reach the next town. No more than some telecommunication means disposed on the sidewalks in case of engine failure.

10. The establishment of roads funds is usually used to finance the interurban and rural roads while great part of this financing comes from taxes on petrol consumed by the city dwellers.

SOLUTIONS

1. Improvement of road infrastructures by new implementation and maintenance.
We need to improve the quality of road infrastructures in Africa with a better control of these infrastructures implementation. It's also economically proved that neglect the maintenance of infrastructures by using the funds for other emergencies is later more costly for the community and the state.

2. Urban planning including transport infrastructures
The Latin America cities also facing some huge urbanisation rates, solved this problem by an integration on the middle and long term of the urban master plans and the transports planning.

3. public-private partnership
The private sector investments are currently more appreciable in the transport sectors found more profitable as air, maritime and rail transports. The financing of the implementation and maintenance of urban roads should be increased since the present repartition does not show the importance of urban transport in the national roads systems and in the transport global system either. Though, all the other modes are on a certain way dependent on the urban transport.
Generally, we need a stable financing system to ensure the improvement of the public transport roads network, its maintenance and its expansion.

The role of UATP consists of helping for a better adequacy between public roads and their utilisation in term of financing, quality and maintaining.