



POLICY STATEMENT DELIVERED BY JOHN MUTORWA, MP AND MINISTER OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT (MWT) AT THE AFRICA ROAD MAINTANANCE FUND ASSOCIATION (ARMFA) ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY; AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, ON MONDAY, 11 MARCH 2019, IN SWAKOPMUND, NAMIBIA.

1. I Thank Mr Ali IPINGE, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Namibia's Road Fund Administration (RFA) and the entire Leadership and Membership of ARMFA, for the very kind invitation that you extended to the Ministry of Works and Transport (MWT), through my person, to attend and speak at the Official Opening Ceremony of the Seventeenth (17th) ARMFA'S Annual General Assembly (AGA) and Annual General Meeting (AGM), here, in the touristic town of Swakopmund.
2. The chosen theme: "**SUSTAINABLE ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE: IMPACT ON REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND FREE TRADE IN AFRICA;**" is not only eye-catching, but, well chosen and befitting. From history, we learn that: the very first roads were merely or simply tracks made on the ground, by wild animals. People used these animal trails, because they provided an easy and quick way, to get through the forests of Africa and elsewhere, too.

3. In time, people began to improve these trails by filling the ruts with earth and laying logs across the wet spots. These attempts were crude, but they were the beginning of road construction. As people began to carry goods over longer distances, they developed new ways of travelling. First, goods were carried by animals. When the wheel was invented, wagons were built. Clearly, each advancement brought a need for better travelling routes. With the passing of time, well travelled routes were made sturdier and stronger with rocks and stones and paths were raised above surrounding land to become so to say highways.

4. Ladies and Gentlemen!

As Member States, each one of you, both in your individual capacity, representing your specific Sovereign State or Country; it is absolutely important to remind you, that: as Member States, in your collective capacity as ARMFA, you are bonded and united by the common objective: to build, maintain and regularly improve road transport infrastructures, in your Country, in your Sub-Region and in the whole continent of Africa.

5. Let us remind ourselves here, that: at least by the beginning of the Year 2019, that is in January, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA), was signed by Forty Nine (49) African Countries. Let it also be clearly stated that: the reason why intra –African trade is still so small and insignificant, is fundamentally because Colonialism forced Africans to export their raw materials outside of the Continent to Europe and to the United States of America. The road, rail and maritime (harbours) infrastructures –the trading

infrastructures were built to facilitate the export of Africa's goods, as raw materials, to those Countries that colonized Africa. Sadly, today, even though all Countries on our Continent of Africa, have attained their Political Freedom and Independence; we have not, as yet, succeeded to build or upgrade our roads to unify Africa and to connect our Countries, through roads, to achieve the integration and unification policy agenda of the African Union (AU) as well as of our Regional bodies, e.g. the Southern African Development Community (SADC) for Southern Africa.

6. Truth be told: economic development and social transformation: cannot, may not and will not be fostered efficiently, in the absence of well developed and well maintained roads! Road infrastructures are: a growth enabler, practically enabling trade, integration and movement of people and goods. Functioning infrastructure: the roads, railways, ports, electricity and water networks, and other basic systems that make a country run, is an absolute condition and pre-condition for development and economic growth to take place.
7. It is encouraging and gratifying to note that: the issue of infrastructure development is getting serious attention, both at the Levels of the continent (AU), the Sub – Regional economic groupings; as well as at the Country Level. We commend and thank our Leaders, for their foresight and visionary leadership, in that respect.
8. Finally, esteemed President of ARMFA, all the ARMFA Leaders and all ARMFA Members, Distinguished invited Guests, Members

of the Media, Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you so much for the invitation. Thank you, too, for having chosen Namibia as the host. I wish you focussed, critical, practical, constructive and successful deliberations.

9. I thank you all!