



Welcoming Speech by Mr. Ali Ipinge, Chief Executive Officer, Road Fund Administration (RFA) and Vice President of ARMFA, at the occasion of the official Opening of the ARMFA Annual General Assembly.

**Date: 11 March 2019**

**Swakopmund**

The Honorable Minister of Finance, Mr Calle Schlettwein

The Honorable Minister of Works and Transport, Mr John Mutorwa

The Governor of Erongo Region, Mr Cleophas Mutjavikua

The President of ARMFA and CEO of Guinee Road Fund, Mr Souleyman Traore

The 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of ARMFA and Director General of Kenyan Road Board, Eng Jacob Ruwa

CEOs and DGs of various Road Maintenance Funds from the continent

RFA Namibia Board of Directors and Board Members of various Road Funds from the continent

Incoming ARMFA Executive Secretary, Dr Abdi Zenebe

Our Distinguished Speakers and Presenters both from Namibia and other parts of Africa

Distinguished invited Guests

Members of the Media

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

1. It gives me a great pleasure to welcome you to our 17<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly for the African Road Maintenance Funds Association (ARMFA in short) being held in our beautiful coastal town of Swakopmund. This is the first time that Namibia is hosting this prestigious meeting of ARMFA and are proud to have been selected as such to be the host.
2. This occasion is a unique one as it brings together key stakeholders, technocrats partners and policy makers in the road financing sector from Africa to deliberate on key issues affecting the roads on the Africa continent, and to find common solutions that will help us build, preserve and maintain our road assets and infrastructure for the benefit of our people.

3. ARMFA has come a long way since its establishment in 2003 in Libreville, Gabon. Since then, ARMFA continues to contribute to continental integration, free movement of goods and people, and increased trade between African countries through better and well maintained roads. The Association has grown from 18 founding members in 2003 to now 34 member countries, who are actively involved in driving and implementing the agenda and objectives of the Association. At this juncture, let me take this opportunity to proudly welcome to the ARMFA family, the soon to be new member, the Liberian Road Fund. You have made the right call to join this good and progressive association.
  
4. The 16<sup>th</sup> ARMFA AGA/AGM, which was held in February 2018 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia adopted 10 key resolutions. Amongst these resolutions and central to continental integration was that ARMFA should pursue and expedite the process joining the African Union (AU) as a specialized agency, and to push for the development of Road Management Policy at AU level. Upon the realisation of this resolution, ARMFA will cement its position as a key partner and arm of AU in the effective management and development of road infrastructure that will lead to economic growth and trade. Today, we are proud to say that good progress has been made in this regard and we look forward to the further consultations with AU's transport team during this week in the margins of our AGA and AGM.

**Hon Ministers, ladies and gentlemen**

5. As per our annual and regular interactions, we have learned that challenges of managing and upkeep of the road assets on the continent as well as accessibility varies greatly among and between member countries, but we remain weaved together by the strength of these uniqueness and common interests of developing road networks and corridors that will improve regional integration and free trade across the continent.

6. As I conclude my statement, let me warmly welcome our Guest of Honor, the Hon Schlettwein for having agreed to officially open this event. Despite his intense schedule (especially that this week he has to present his annual budget in Parliament) he has cordially agreed to be with us this morning. Hon Schlettwein, has been and still a strong advocate of the independence of Road Funds and in the user-pay-principles. For us here in Namibia, this model has helped us in better managing and upkeep of our road infrastructure resulting in a better value creation and return to our road users.

Honorable Ministers, from ARMFA side and as custodians of road users funds, we remain committed to do our part in promoting Africa Free Trade Area through better roads and transport corridors.

Once again, a big welcome to all our guests from various parts of Africa to Namibia and more so to our beautiful and unique coastal town of Swakopmund. Enjoy our Namibia hospitality!

**THANK YOU**

**MERCI BEACUP**

**MUINTO OBRIGADO**