

**Statement by Monsieur Bruce Thompson,  
European Commission,  
SSATP Board member representing bilateral donors**

.....

Your Excellencies, Honorable Ministers, distinguished guests, friends and colleagues,

In my opening statement this year I want to focus on what I see as major changes in African ownership and African management in SSATP. These changes are significant and are fundamental to increasing the sustainability of SSATP’s mission – the anchoring of sound transport policies and strategies in Africa.

Let me start by highlighting two major changes in the Annual Meeting and what this means for SSATP:

**The first change** is the process leading up to today. It has been led by you, the country and regional stakeholders. It started with a questionnaire seeking your views on how the Annual Meetings should evolve. Your responses triggered a planning retreat which was held in Belgium in September. (Your meeting bags contain the questionnaire results and the report of the retreat). At this retreat, key stakeholders defined the goal of this meeting as “Strengthening Implementation of the Long-Term Development Plan (LTDP).” This may sound an obvious objective, as we approach the mid-term milestone of LTDP but it underlines a profound satisfaction of stakeholders that confirms:

- SSATP has the right strategy to tackle the difficult issues of implementing transport policies and strategies in Africa,
- SSATP has designed the right methods at a country and regional levels for enabling stakeholders to take the lead.

What does this mean for this meeting? We have (i) an Annual Meeting designed by its stakeholders, an enriched agenda that this year is introducing discussions on strategic issues through panel discussions; (ii) stakeholders are much more involved in defining their annual plans rather than being steered by external players. I hope you share my view that SSATP’s management approach is increasing African ownership. And if not, I am sure you will let us know your views.

**The second change** is the dramatic increase in the participation of high-level decision-makers from Africa. Seventeen Ministers of Transport/Infrastructure will join this meeting to participate in a Ministerial Forum.

This Forum builds upon the Ministerial Advisory Group that SSATP brought together in Addis Abba last year. This Advisory Group then went on to initiate a meeting of African Ministers of Transport, which under the auspices of the African Union adopted transport targets and indicators,

which will facilitate transport to contribute more effectively to the MDGs. This helps put transport higher on the political and international agenda.

What does this Ministerial participation mean for this and future SSATP meetings? I suggest that (i) SSATP's Annual Meetings are becoming an African Transport Event with increasing "convening" power. Also participation of high-level decision makers demonstrates a stronger functioning of SSATP's governance framework, and (ii) it strengthens links with the African Union. Moreover it enables SSATP to put strategic transport issues at the centre of African governments and regional organizations, which is so important for the long-term sustainability of sound transport policies and strategies – the mission of SSATP.

I would now like to highlight two major changes – firstly, within SSATP management and secondly how SSATP is sourcing its human resources, as well as what this means for SSATP.

**The first management change** is extremely positive. I am very happy to extend a warm welcome to Charles Kunaka and Yao Adzigbey who will join the Program Management Team and shortly take up their posts as Regional Coordinators for East and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa respectively. Charles and Yao are "big" African personalities, both in the transport sector and within Africa. They bring a wealth of country and regional experience to the Program.

**The second management change** is SSATP's increased and increasing use of African consultants and expertise. This is particularly evident in the ground-breaking work under the theme of "Appropriate Transport Strategies," the work under the road safety baseline survey and the data and indicator surveys and analyses. And this year, these meetings are facilitated by a dedicated group of African facilitators.

Adopting such an approach is not without its difficulties. Throughout the year and the past two days I have heard of the difficulties of procurement and its procedures that a multitude of small contracts has encountered. But look at the capacity that SSATP is building in Africa – it is part of SSATP's mission statement.

So, do not change the approach of using African resources engaged through small service contracts. Let's simplify the procedures to facilitate country ownership and leadership to continue building capacity in Africa.

What do these two examples of change in Program management and implementation mean for SSATP? They show how SSATP is increasingly an African-led program and an African resourced program. These are key factors for sustaining sound transport policies and strategies.

Lastly, I would like to touch briefly upon SSATP's dissemination.

Many of you may have had the opportunity to visit the new SSATP website launched last week. When fully constructed and with a little fine tuning it will significantly improve access to how

SSATP functions, to country coordinators, SSATP activities and most importantly SSATP results. Dissemination remains a challenge for SSATP but this is a step in the right direction.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, I'd like to emphasize the changes in SSATP and how it does business with its country and regional stakeholders. It is taking steps to build sustainability – increased African ownership, increased African management and the increased use of African resources. Let's build on these positive changes in our discussions this week as there are still many challenges to solve for transport to contribute effectively to pro-poor growth and poverty reduction.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.