

Improving Rural and Urban Mobility

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Maseru, Lesotho

Situation in Sub-Saharan Africa

- About 40% of the rural population in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) or about 220 million do not have access to reliable transport services
- Freight transport costs in SSA are 3 to 5 times higher as compared to Asia and Latin America rendering agricultural production uncompetitive
- Density of IMT ownership is low and due to the high cost and unavailability of motorized transport have to be used often beyond their economic radius
- With rapid urbanization and motorization traffic congestion in large African cities is rapidly getting worse and is now threatening further economic growth
- SSA cities are lacking pedestrian and NMT facilities. As a result most of the traffic accident victims in urban areas are pedestrians and users of NMT
- Regulatory capacity for urban transport is weak and virtually absent in rural areas

Key Issues

- In the next 20 yrs 50% of SSA population will be living in cities
- Growing motorization (8-10%)
- Declining public transport services
- Inadequate attention to mobility needs of poor/women etc
- Weak institutions and regulatory capacity
- Weak implementation
- Weak financial base
- Lack of land use/transport integration
- Affordability (transport a high share of HH expenditures)
- Lack of capacity in urban transport planning

Premises

- Transport services include both non-motorized and motorized means of transport for passengers and freight
- Transport services in Sub-Saharan Africa are provided almost exclusively by the private sector
- The role of the public sector is to provide a conducive environment for the private sector to provide transport services and a good transport infrastructure

Proposed Actions

- Understand the situation
 - Conduct low cost, rapid rural and urban transport services assessments
- Establish rural and urban transport policies and strategies
 - Link to poverty reduction objectives
 - Ensure participation of all stakeholders
 - Take into account trade offs and a realistic resource base

Implement Strategies

- Clearly allocate responsibilities
- Strengthen existing or set up new executive and regulatory bodies (with gender balanced Boards of Directors) including Urban Transport Authorities
- Define appropriate rural and urban infrastructure investment programs considering transport services needs, such as
 - In rural areas: IMT bridges, foot and bicycle paths, appropriate bus stops, all-season low volume roads
 - In urban areas: pedestrian and bicycle path networks, privately operated bicycle parking, properly marked and raised pedestrian crossings, bus-ways, appropriate bus terminals
- Provide public transit through PPP arrangements in large cities (>1million) in particular bus rapid transit (BRT)

Policy Recommendations

- Apply indirect subsidies (e.g. tax free importation of buses and bicycles) but avoid direct subsidies
- Encourage competition, avoid monopolies
- Set up regulations in collaboration with transport users (including women), suppliers
- Attempt to regulate “informal” transport services providers in collaboration with operators
- Be aware of trade offs between safety, concerns for vulnerable groups, and affordability
- Be responsive to the needs of other sectors, transport being a derived demand.