



The Role of Transport and Transit Corridors in Fostering International Cooperation for Sustainable Development: Issues and Recommendations

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Introduction to Transport and Transit Corridors: Definition and Typology	4
Factors influencing Transport and Transit Corridor Development	6
a) Corridor planning and development	6
b) Financing investment	7
c) Corridor management, coordination and maintenance	8
Role of UN Habitat in Sustainable Transport and Transit Corridor Development	8
a) Africa	10
b) Asia	12
c) Middle East and North Africa (MENA)	13
Role of Transit and Transport Corridors in International Cooperation	13
a) Acceleration of Economic Development	13
b) Improved Mobility.....	14
c) Social Development	15
International Cooperation and Sustainable Development.....	16
Enhancing Sustainability through Sustainable Corridor Operations.....	17
Ten Recommendations from UN-HABITAT.....	18
Conclusion	20
Summary of observations	21
Key References from UN Habitat.....	22

Introduction

This paper aims at defining transit and transport corridors, outline factors influencing development of the corridors, highlight the role done by UN Habitat in promoting the development of transport and transit corridors, and ultimately explore the role played by transit and transport corridors in promoting international cooperation for sustainable development. This review will be based on cases undertaken at national and regional scales from different areas around the world.

Normatively in development practice, transport and transit corridors are meant to boost economic growth at the local, regional and international scale, promote connectivity between cities, peoples and resources, facilitate intra and inter regional trade and provide access to landlocked countries to international gateways such as ports. On the other hand, the role of the corridors on international cooperation and sustainable development has sparsely been explored. Corridor development is a key instrument used to promote sustainable development at the local and regional scale of countries, and promote intra and inter regional cooperation in addition to other benefits. UN Habitat has worked with national and international agencies engaged in development of transport corridors to enhanced sustainability and international cooperation using objective planning frameworks and facilitating informed decision making based on international experiences and best practices.

Contemporary transport corridors are not entirely new inventions but are mostly a re-establishment of old trade routes and major movement patters such as following existing energy infrastructure, water ways, settlement patterns, transport modes or other geographical dispositions that favour or inform the development of such corridors along a given route.

This is true of the Gao-Kano pre-colonial trade route between Mali and Nigeria that was operational from the 14th century¹. Despite the location on already existing corridor activity such routes trigger new dynamics like urban growth, concentration and expansion of centres along the route, up scaling of infrastructure and other investments along the route. Although, it must be noted that in some exceptional cases, development corridors chart out an entirely new routes and territories without initial activity associated with the route. This is true of LAPSSET (The Lamu Port Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport) corridor in Eastern Africa that includes the creation of a modern port at Lamu in the South East coast of Kenya, and the creation of a new railway network of more than 6,000 km to connect Lamu to South Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia, Uganda, DRC, Cameroon, Chad and Central African Republic. The corridor incorporates energy links and an extensive road network within the region². The network is in response to new political and economic opportunities in Central and Eastern Africa and a bid to reduce the cost of doing business through transport connectivity costs.

1 UN-Habitat, *The State of African Cities 2010 : Governance, Inequalities and Urban Land Markets*, UN-Habitat, 2010

2 Information available at <http://www.lapsset.go.ke/>



Introduction to Transport and Transit Corridors: Definition and Typology

Corridors do not have a specific definition but rather derive their meaning when addressed from a physical perspective; where there are transport corridors, energy corridors, infrastructure corridors and other functional dimensions. Healey (2004) defines corridors as *linear agglomeration of economic activities and people along the physical backbone of transport infrastructure*³. They can further be defined as routes connecting different centres of economic significance, joining places to interest areas; such as inland regions/countries to ports, resources to industries and products to markets⁴. *The State of African Cities Report 2010* refers to urban corridors as urban or semi-urban systems structured along major arteries of agglomeration and usually take a liner or ribbon shape; extending over long distances, with logistics hubs such as intercity highways, waterways or railways. These incorporate the urban fabric, industrial establishments and rural lands under the influence of one or more urban cores.

Transit and transport corridors comprise of a collection of routes constructed from the transport

pre-existing natural resources, physical features or other anthropogenic interests in national or regional development needs. They have nodes, links and end points along the system and are usually developed along pre-existing multimodal transport networks, or are designed to accommodate multimodal transport networks.

Transport and transit corridors comprise of the following;

- a) Road networks
- b) Rail connections
- c) Telephony infrastructure
- d) Fibre connections
- e) Electric lines
- f) Water ways
- g) Airports

Even though the primary aim of development corridors is to spur economic growth along its route and improve connectivity of various places to access infrastructural services, it is possible to point out subtle differences between them to derive different typologies of transit and transport corridors. At the

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