



A WEBINAR KEYNOTE on Railway Partnership Models in Africa and Perspectives of Development

Organized by EDR and UIC

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ADDIS ABABA

- Your Excellency Mr. Moussa Ahmed Hassan, Minister of Transport and Equipment of the Republic of Djibouti
- Engineer Tilahun Sarka, General Director of the Ethio-Djibouti Railway Share Company
- Mr. Francois (ፍሮንሳ) Davenne, Union of Railway Organizations, Union Internationale des Chemins de fer (UIC) Director General
- Mr. Mohammed Rabie Khile, President of the UIC African Region
- High level Government Officials, Professionals and Experts
- All invited Guests and Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning/Good Afternoon/Good Evening

First of all, I would like to thank the ETHIO – DJIBOUTI RAILWAY Share Company and the International Union of Railway Organizations (UIC) for their preparation of this great event and inviting me to address by making this opening remark. I thank you both.

Along with this, i would also like to Congratulate to our own EDR for becoming a new member of the International Union of Railway Organizations (UIC).

As the International Union of Railways is a worldwide organization tasked with promoting rail transport and developing the railway systems, working with such kind of organization is very important to bring innovative ideas, adopt technical solutions, formulate better standards, exchange knowledge and expertise, bring state of art railway safety and security features and overall enhancement of railway infrastructure and operation services.

The collaboration of EDR with UIC may not only benefit the railway actors; as UIC, is a worldwide professional association representing the railway sector and promoting rail transport, it rather provides a good working and knowledge exchange platform for

logistics affiliated institutions, Transporter Associations, Financial and Customs institutions, and infrastructure developers and consultants too.

Excellencies, Distinguished Participants,

Ethiopia is among the first countries in Africa that brought railways transport in the early 1900s, in its first and oldest ADDIS-DIREDAWA-DJIBOUTI route. Next to this, the first electric driven 756kms railways operation has begun operations very recently connecting Ethiopia with Djibouti both through passenger and freight transport services. As we have learnt the benefits of railways and as to enhance public transportation services; the 34 kms long LRT railways connecting Addis Ababa in E-W and N-S direction was also built and started operation. Moreover, Ethiopia is now constructing the Awash-Weldya-Haragebeya-Mekele railways infrastructure; which we hope will get completed soon.

Ethiopia has also planned to extend its railways infrastructure and operations in the coming years; and much emphasis will be given to prioritize railways corridor that may bring advanced socio-economic benefits to the country.

The currently operational Ethio-Djibouti railways line is accountable for 8% of the country's total freight operations, which is far below the expected share and still Ethiopia heavily relies on road-based transport modalities. Bearing this into consideration, different initiatives have been designed and implemented to increase the load share of this railways line. We believe, enhancing the service capacity of the railways line would bring cheaper transportation fares, incentivize investment, boost export containerization, and of course, improve the logistics industry of the country.

As Ethiopia needs to strengthen and bring the maximum benefits from the railways operation; the country needs to closely work with regional, continental and international

railways allied organizations. We need this close collaboration, as we seek to improve our railways carriage capacity, improve operational efficiency and to promote our rail transport globally with the objective of responding effectively to current and future challenges relating to mobility and sustainable development.

As railways are good to take the largest bulks through utilizing green and safe energy modes; yet, we all agree that it is an expensive investment too, which needs the close collaboration and support of financiers. And of course, it is preferred to construct railways line and lead its operation through own financial and administrative capabilities. In doing so, we have plans to bring innovative financing mechanisms to infrastructure developments through approaches such as JV, PPP and others. And as to bring these options, we need to strengthen our institutional and regulatory capacities; which we hope this kind of cooperation may be used as a great opportunity for the development and facilitation of such ventures.

And as we are building and administering railways to serve our nationals, yet as part of the continent of Africa, we also have a vision to realize an interconnected Africa; through the 2063 continental integration agenda; we also seek to promote and learn experiences related to interoperability, standardization, and cross boundary infrastructure development and operation management practices.

Proposing ways to improve technical and environmental performance of rail transport and above all increasing the competitiveness of the railways sector to attract investment and trade are also the areas of cooperation that we need to closely work with UIC and its affiliations.

And this kind of knowledge exchange and status update platforms, webinars, conferences are also great opportunities that we would like to actively attend and share

respective experience from the sector actors, which also help facilitate cross sectoral linkages and networking among different stakeholders involving in the industry.

Lastly, I would like to call upon all the involving actors and participants, to remain attentive and use this great opportunity to expand wings; bring all possibilities and network with each other, and bring a profound change that we seek to bring in our logistics sector in general and the railways industry in particular.

Thank you very much for your attention. And I wish you all a successful session.