4th EDITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS IN AFRICA (TRANSLOG AFRICA 2024)

Central theme

"Global Supply Chain Development: Challenges and Opportunities for Shippers in the AfCFTA Era"

27 to 29 February 2024 - Ouaga 2000 Conference Hall
Ouagadougou – Burkina Faso

GENERAL REPORT

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INTRODUCTION

From 27 to 29 February 2024, the 4th edition of the International Symposium on Transport and Logistics in Africa (Translog Africa) was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on the following central theme: **"Global Supply Chain Development: Challenges and Opportunities for Shippers in the AfCFTA Era".**

Organised by the Burkina Shippers' Council (CBC), Translog Africa 2024 was placed under the very high patronage of His Excellency the President of the Transition, Head of State, under the chairmanship of the Minister of Transport, Urban Mobility and Road Safety and under the co-sponsorship of the Presidents of the Employers' Associations of Burkina Faso, the Republic of Mali and the Republic of Niger.

Participants from the following 18 countries were in attendance:

1. Belgium;
2. Benin;
3. Burkina Faso;
4. Cameroon;
5. Cote d'Ivoire;
6. United Arab Emirates;
7. France;
8. Ghana;
9. Guinea Conakry;
10. Italy;
11. Kenya;
12. Mali;
13. Morocco;
14. Democratic Republic of Congo;
15. Rwanda;
16. Senegal;
17. Switzerland and
18. Togo.

The list of participants is attached.

This report, which summarises the work of the 4th edition of the International Symposium on Transport and Logistics in Africa, is structured around the following points:

- the official opening ceremony;
- the conduct of deliberations and
- the official closing ceremony.

I. THE OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY

The official opening ceremony took place under the very high patronage of His Excellency the President of the Transition, Head of State, represented by his Chief of staff. Four (04) presentations were made:

- welcome remarks from the President of the Special Delegation of the Municipality of Ouagadougou;
- welcome remarks from the Director General of the Burkina Shippers' Council, the Translog Africa 2024 Organising Committee Chairman (OCC);
- the speech by the President of the National Employers' Council of Burkina Faso, representing the sponsors of Translog Africa 2024;
- the official opening speech by His Excellency the President of the Transition, Head of State, delivered by the Minister of Transport, Urban Mobility and Road Safety.

I. 1 Welcome remarks from the President of the Special Delegation of the Municipality of Ouagadougou

In his speech, the President of the Special Delegation expressed his delight at the symposium being held in his municipality, and emphasised its importance for urban centres in general, and for the city of Ouagadougou in particular.

He emphasized the role of transport and logistics in the vitality of trade and industry, which enable people to have access to essential commodities. He also called for current processes to be adapted to the requirements of sustainable development.

He expressed his willingness to support the players in meeting the challenges and seizing the opportunities that arise.

He concluded by wishing all the participants who had travelled to Ouagadougou fruitful exchanges and a pleasant stay.

I. 2 Welcome remarks from CBC's Director General, the Translog Africa 2024 Organising Committee Chairperson (OCC);

In his speech, Dr Kassoum TRAORE, Director General of CBC, OCC for Translog Africa 2024, first welcomed the participants to the symposium and expressed his deep gratitude to the authorities who had authorised and supported the organisation of such a large-scale event despite the security challenges.

He also stressed the importance of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in strengthening trade links and economic development on the continent. He noted that, while the AfCFTA undeniably offers new opportunities, there are also challenges that remain.

Recalling the opportunities offered by efficient logistics to reduce costs and boost trade, he encouraged participants to engage in constructive discussions and formulate recommendations to forge a future where logistics will be a lever for economic development in Africa.

He ended his speech by wishing the fourth edition of the symposium every success.

I. 3 Speech by the President of the National Employers' Council of Burkina Faso, representing the sponsors of Translog Africa 2024

Speaking on behalf of the sponsors, Mr Idrissa NASSA, the President of the National Employers' Council of Burkina Faso (CNPB) and also Chairman and CEO of Coris Holding, first paid a warm tribute to the Defence and Security Forces (FDS) and the Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland (VDP), and wished the Internally Displaced

Populations (IDPs) a quick return to their respective homes and a speedy recovery for the injured.

In his speech, the Sponsors' Representative briefly introduced the CNPB, which he has headed since October 2023, praised the relevance of the central theme of Translog Africa 2024 and also recalled some of the objectives of the implementation of the AfCFTA.

The Sponsor urged participants to seize the opportunities offered by this symposium by sharing their experiences in trade and transport facilitation.

He concluded his address by assuring the CBC of the commitment of the Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger employers' associations to support the initiatives to be taken at the end of the conference.

I. 4 Opening speech by His Excellency the President of the Transition, Head of State, President of the ceremony

In reading out the opening speech of His Excellency the President of the Transition, Head of State, the Minister of Transport, Urban Mobility and Road Safety, Mr Roland SOMDA, first of all extended a warm and cordial welcome to all the participants and wished the foreign delegations a pleasant stay in Burkina Faso.

He explained that after three (03) editions, Translog Africa had been suspended and is rising from the ashes at a time when the transport and logistics industry is going through a transition due to various economic, political and social factors.

He pointed out that the central theme of Translog Africa 2024 is relevant in view of the benefits of the AfCFTA agreement, whose Protocol on Trade in Services provides for the progressive liberalisation of trade in services, particularly transport and logistics services.

He went on to say that this year's Translog Africa will enable participants to examine the issues involved in implementing the AfCFTA, while inviting them to reflect on the challenges and opportunities linked to the development of the global supply chain envisaged under the agreement.

He also urged participants in the symposium to put forward credible proposals and realistic recommendations for a more efficient and competitive transport sector.

Before declaring Translog Africa 2024 open, the Minister reiterated his sincere thanks to all the participants.

II. CONDUCT OF DELIBERATIONS

The proceedings of the 4th edition of the International Symposium on Transport and Logistics were conducted in plenary session and involved 11 presentations on the central theme and ten (10) sub-themes with four (04) panel discussions. The deliberations were moderated by Mr YEDAN Yaya and Mr CISSE Mamadou.

II.1. Summary of papers

- **Introductory paper: "Global Supply Chain Development: Challenges and Opportunities for Shippers in the AfCFTA Era"**

The introductory presentation focused on the central theme of this 4th edition of Translog Africa and was delivered by Mr Abdoulaye THIAM, Technical Director of the Senegalese Shippers' Council (COSEC). After defining the concept of "global supply chain", he presented the evolutionary process of the AfCFTA, its objectives, challenges, and the opportunities that this instrument can offer shippers in terms of market potential and trade facilitation. His presentation showed that the AfCFTA would enable the continent's 55 countries, with a population of over one billion, to achieve a GDP of over 2,500 billion US dollars.

He then highlighted the actions taken by the shippers' councils, in particular their participation in the negotiations for the implementation of the AfCFTA through national committees, their actions to promote and assist shippers, and the construction of logistics infrastructures. In the specific case of COSEC, he noted the acquisition of 51% of the Senegalese shipping company's shares.

The expert concluded his presentation with a series of recommendations for the States and authorities involved in implementing the Agreement.

- **Sub-theme 1: Securing Transport Operations: Issues and challenges**

It was presented by Lieutenant-Colonel Alain SARA who, after mapping the threats, enlightened the audience on certain key security-related concepts, including VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity), foresight, monitoring and proactivity.

The audience was also informed about a risk analysis method and resilience tools such as insurance contracts, as well as the strategies and mechanisms put in place by the authorities to provide an appropriate response to the security crisis.

- **Sub-theme 2: Place and Role of the Container in the Smooth flow of Logistics Operations**

Sub-theme 2 was developed by Mr Emmanuel YODA, Deputy Director General of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Burkina Faso (CCI-BF), in charge of infrastructure and sustainable development (DGA-IDD*).*

In his presentation, he first provided the current context of containerised transport which indicates that the volume of maritime traffic will fall slightly in 2022 and rise in 2023 according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). He went on to note a slow growth and an ageing of the vessel fleet in 2023, while emphasising that containers remains a mode of transport without intermediate reloading, despite an imbalance between supply and demand that has resulted in global port congestion and a jump in freight rates. In Burkina Faso, there has been an increase in container traffic in 2023.

The Deputy Director General of CCI-BF dwelt on the advantages of containers, including the reduction in port turnaround times for ships, the safety of cargo and the preservation of infrastructure. These advantages are undermined by several factors in developing countries, with longer turnaround times and unloadings recorded in transit ports in developing countries.

He concluded by proposing measures to improve the use of containers in West Africa and prospects for the future.

- **Sub-theme 3: Customs Regulations and Procedures: Major developments related to the implementation of the AfCFTA**

Sub-theme 3, developed by Jules Bertrand Damiba, Head of the Nomenclature, Origin and Taxation Department at Burkina Faso's Directorate-General of Customs, was an opportunity for sharing best practices and experiences from the customs administrations of Burkina Faso, Guinea Conakry and Togo with the participants.

The Presenter set the scene with a historical review of the signing of the AfCFTA Agreement, base tariff and the start of the dismantling. The current base tariff is that of the fourth band (T4).

He went on to explain the legal structure of the agreement, which is made up of protocols, annexes and appendices.

He also presented the e-tariff Portal platform, before outlining the three (03) steps to follow to benefit from reduced customs duties within the AfCFTA.

He also mentioned the creation of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), the Guided Trade Initiative (GTI), the AfCFTA and the groups of rules of origin.

Customs Colonel DAMIBA concluded by saying that the scope of the GTI had been extended both in terms of products and the number of countries covered.

- **Sub-theme 4: Liberalization of Transport: What methods for participating in value chains?**

This presentation was given by two UNCTAD experts, Ms Ludovica POPONCINI and Mr Jean ACRI, respectively Associate Programme Management Officer and Expert Consultant in Transport and Trade Facilitation. They first explained the context, before outlining the objectives of the project to facilitate transit, transport and trade in West Africa (Cotonou-Niamey and Lomé-Ouagadougou) to enhance participation in value chains. The presenters also shared with participants the content of the AfCFTA agreement in relation to transport, emphasising the challenges of supply chain development as part of the implementation of the Agreement. This was followed by a presentation of the ways and means of liberalising the transport sector to ensure greater participation in value chains. Finally, the experts gave an overview the next steps, in particular the implementation of the Quadrilateral Declaration and its roadmap.

- **Sub-theme 5: African Logistics Connectivity 4.0: How to revolutionise transport and logistics in the AfCFTA Era?**

The fifth Translog Africa 2024 presentation was given by Mr Youssef IMGUI, Consultant and CEO of Portus Advisory International.

He started with a brief presentation of his organisation, which specialises in strategic and technical consultancy in the field of transport and logistics. Getting to the heart of the matter, the speaker informed the audience about the concept of "logistics 4.0", which is an evolution towards automated and digitised logistics management incorporating advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), the internet of things (IoT), blockchain, big data, etc. This innovation will undoubtedly help to maximise the benefits of the AfCFTA by improving logistics efficiency, reducing costs and boosting competitiveness.

The conference also looked at the current state of logistics in Africa, as well as the impacts, challenges and opportunities of implementing Logistics 4.0.

Finally, the concept of smart port, which appears to be a solution for improving port performance, was highlighted.

- **Sub-theme 6: Financing Solutions for the Development of Trade, Industry and the Supply Chain in the Context of the AfCFTA**

This presentation was made by Mr Achil YAMEN, transport and international trade expert. He introduced his paper by defining some basic concepts such as financing, payment instruments and techniques, and the "value chain". The expert then presented a geographical and economic map of the AfCFTA and the connectivity of ports. It has been estimated that 100 ships, 250 aircraft, 100,000 railcars, 2 million lorries and 400 billion US dollars are needed in road infrastructure and means of transport if the AfCFTA is to be successfully implemented. Finally, the main sources of financing were identified, in particular the African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Guarantee Fund and AFREXIMBANK.

- **Sub-theme 7: The contribution of the Electronic Cargo Tracking Note (ECTN) to achieving the objectives of the AfCFTA**

Sub-theme 7, presented by Mr CHAM Etienne BAMA, dealt with the importance of the Electronic Cargo Tracking Note (ECTN) for African economies.

The speaker first explained the context of the introduction of the ECTN, which is used as an instrument to assist in the development of public policy and as a tool for gathering information and facilitating trade.

He then made the connection between the ECTN and national security, and dwelt on the challenges and prospects for the instrument, emphasising the opportunities offered to the Shippers' Councils by the ECTN under the AfCFTA. He concluded by inviting them to harmonise the content of the ECTN and to include the certificate of origin in the documents to be provided for issuing the Note.

- **Sub-theme 8: Green Transport: Endogenous measures to combat transport pollution**

This presentation was given by Dr Abias MANIRAGABA, Research Director of the Rwanda Climate Change and Development Network. He first of all emphasised the importance of transport to economic development, while noting that transport systems are costly and time-consuming to implement. In his view, road vehicles, which dominate motorised transport, are an ecologically unhealthy resource. For this mode of transport, pollutants are classified into two (02) categories: primary pollutants and secondary pollutants.

Outlining the current state of transport's contribution to global CO2 emissions, the presenter said that transport, which accounts for more than a third of CO2 emissions, already contributes 20% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and that if nothing is done, this figure could rise to 60% by 2050.

He advocated green transport as a solution to air pollution, and dwelt on the case of Rwanda.

Finally, he proposed endogenous measures to promote green transport, namely bus rapid transit, the use of electric vehicles, the introduction of a carbon tax, the application of existing emission standards, awareness-raising and the use of transport using renewable energies.

❖ **Sub-theme 9: Presentation on electric vehicles**

Presented by Mr Roger BAMBARA, Director of Identification, Expertise and Evaluation at the vehicle inspection facility Centre de Contrôle des Véhicules Automobiles (CCVA), the presentation focused on the evolution from the steam-powered automobile of the 18th century to the electric vehicle of the 21st century. The presenter focused on the types of electric vehicles and their architectures. He also discussed the economic, technical and safety aspects of the advent of electric vehicles. He concluded his presentation with the advantages and disadvantages of electric vehicles.

❖ **Sub-theme 10: The importance of Ports in the Supply Chain of Hinterland Countries**

This presentation was delivered by representatives of the ports of Conakry, Cotonou, Lomé and Tema, and of the West and Central Africa Professional Training and Digitisation Centre of the Port Management Association of West and Central Africa (PMAWCA). In turn, each manager presented their institution, highlighting its advantages and the various projects underway.

II.2. Summary of discussions

❖ **Concerns**

The following main concerns were raised during the discussions:

- The participants expressed their keen interest in the relaunch of Translog Africa and their desire to see it continue;
- the need to build the capacities of all players;
- the need to disclose information relating to customs innovations as part of the implementation of the AfCFTA;
- double charging of ECTN by certain ports of transit;

- the additional costs and delays caused by the formalities connected with passing through dry ports, which are supposed to be instruments of facilitation;
- the under-exploitation of solar energy, which could be a catalyst for greener transport;
- poor coverage of vehicle inspections;
- the absence of a common African strategy to encourage imports of electric vehicles;
- the lack of thematic panels at the symposium, allowing participants to be organised according to their areas of interest.

❖ **Main recommendations**

At the end of the presentations and the four (04) panel discussions, the participants recommended that:

- Sub-regional organisations and States develop pipelines for the transport of hydrocarbons;
- Sub-regional organisations and States show greater political will in mobilising the resources needed to promote rail transport in Africa;
- Sub-regional organisations, States and economic operators create container production units in Africa;
- MOWCA, UASC, PMAWCA and the Association of African Shipping Lines (ANSL) take action towards the Shipping Companies and the competent Authorities of the sub-region so that only working days are taken into account in counting free time for the calculation of demurrage;
- UASC, ports and PMAWCA carry out investigations to list the various charges, taxes and fees applied to goods in transit in coastal countries and identify actions to be taken with the competent authorities of the said countries with a view to putting an end to undue payments;

- ports and PMAWCA undertake reforms aimed at improving the costs and times of port passage, pre- and post-inland haulage operations and container transfer times from quays to collection platforms;
- Customs administrations and shippers' councils invest in training players in the transport chain and raising awareness of customs innovations in the context of the AfCFTA, and eventually consider a AfCFTA training certificate;
- the Burkina Shippers' Council sets up a committee to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of Translog Africa 2024 and plans thematic workshops for future editions, including those on infrastructure and air transport;
- shippers and carriers comply with international transport regulations, in particular those relating to the introduction of the ECTN for all cargo, regulations on dimensions and axle loads, and take out of door-to-door insurance policies;
- shippers' councils revitalise and run transport observatories with a view to making information on transport and international trade available to all players in the transport chain.

III. CLOSING CEREMONY

The official closing ceremony of the 4th edition of the International Symposium on Transport and Logistics in Africa was presided over by the Minister of Transport, Urban Mobility and Road Safety. It was punctuated by the reading of motions, the reading of the final report and the Minister's closing speech.

The motions were read out by the participants and the final report by the Chairman of the Theme, Speech and Report Committee.

Following the reading of motions and the final report, the Minister firstly thanked the participants and congratulated them on the quality of the presentations and discussions.

He went on to share his conviction that the objectives of this meeting had been achieved, given the valuable discussions and the relevant recommendations arising from the three

(03) days of work, which will enable States to refocus and readjust their strategies and action plans for more effective implementation of the AfCFTA.

He also stressed the importance of Translog Africa for all supply chain players, and invited them to attend the 5th edition to be held in 2026.

At the end of his speech, the Minister declared the fourth edition of the International Symposium on Transport and Logistics in Africa, Translog Africa, closed.

Done in Ouagadougou, this 29th day of February 2024

The participants