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COLUMN/FEATURE

Tanga road eases Tanzania - Kenya travel

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WITH the Tanga-Horohoro trunk road near completion, traffic volume across the border to Kenya, is anticipated to double in view of the fact that the inhibitors to smooth travel have been removed.

The road, built at international standard, is one of several trunk roads that are being rehabilitated and upgraded under the Main Trunk Roads Project as part of the Millennium Challenge Compact, signed by former US President George Bush and President Jakaya Kikwete in 2008.

Others underway, operating simultaneously with the Tanga-Horohoro highway, are in Sumbawanga, Mbinga, Tunduma, Songea and Namtumbo.

Through the MCC Compact, the American people provide financial support for several other projects in the transport sector and provision of technical assistance to Tanzania Roads Agency (TANROADS) to enhance their capacity for operating and maintenance of roads throughout Tanzania.

In essence, most Tanzanian businessmen have hitherto been selling raw materials to Kenya instead of finished goods.

Generally, Tanzania imports more goods through the Horohoro border than it exports - creating an imbalance of traffic, leaving the country behind in terms of trade transactions.

The Tanga-Horohoro trunk road has been a traditional link between Tanzania and Kenya - a 65km stretch for centuries.

The contract agreement for construction of the road - built at tarmac level, was signed on December 22, 2009 between MCC's Chief Executive and Sinohydro Corporation Ltd. contractor of China.

The project, costing \$69,894,175,181/- is financed

by MCC. It was officially handed over to the contractor on January 4, 2010 and was expected to be completed in 27 months.

Presenting a report on the status of the regional roads, Tanga Regional TANROADS Manager, Eng. Alfred Ndumbaro, told a recent TANROADS board meeting that the entire road infrastructure in the region comprises 269.85 kilometres of tarmac while gravel portion covers a distance of 57.91kms.

He said a total of 9,458bn/-, representing a 15 percent of the total cost, had already been paid to the contractor - M/s Intercontinental Consultant and Technocrats Pvt. Ltd (India).

Until February 2012, this year, Eng. Ndumbaro said the progress of the project had reached 83.45 percent - against the projected 98.88 percent, 113 days behind schedule. A distance of 54.09 kms has so far been covered. Presently, the distance has been fully covered.

"Though the project is fully financed by MCC, the Tanzania government was obliged to disburse a total of 2.745 billion in terms of compensation to villagers whose houses were demolished to pave way for the project," Ndumbaro said.

He said the road's width is 6.5 metres, while the walkway for pedestrians is 1.5 metres on both sides, adding that a total of 56 bus bays - specifically built to allow vehicle parking has been built.

Eng. Ndumbaro further said the government has built 21 mosques which were involved in the demolition exercise, along with 5 madrasas - all totalling 1,603bn/-.

According to Ndumbaro, the agency has recorded remarkable strides in controlling overloading on vehicles passing on weighbridges at both Horohoro and Kange during the third part of 2011/12 financial year.

"Statistics reveal that until

February 2011/12, the number of vehicles which were detected to have overloaded went down by 9.9 per cent during the third quarter compared to 14.5 per cent of the second quarter," he said.

TANROADS, however, face various challenges, including encroachment of road reserve by some villagers.

"The Highway Ordinance cap 167 of 1932 which was amended in 1967 and 2007, stipulate that the road reserve is 45 metres or 22.5 metres on both sides from the centre line of the road," Ndumbaro explained.

He added: "The regulation was later revised in 2009, caption 29(i) which provides that the width is now 60 metres - 30 metres on both sides."

Another serious challenge, said Eng. Ndumbaro is haphazard cultivation of land near the road reserve, resulting in soil erosion during rain season which result in soil and rubbish accumulating on roads.

Others are theft of road signs which vandals use as metal scrap business.

"We have constantly been visiting areas prone to theft of metal scraps to educate villagers on the hazards of wanton removal of road signs", retorted the regional boss, adding that involvement of district councils in the sensitisation of the public in their respective areas can go a long way towards elimination of the vice.

On his part, the Member of Parliament for Muheza, Herbert Mtangi raised concern over destruction of feeder roads in his area.

"Roads are in bad state. They have been seriously destroyed by trucks carrying logs from Morogoro destined for six timber manufacturing factories between Muheza and Bombani," said Mtangi.

"The road is further damaged by trucks ferrying logs from Longuza - a government owned forest plantation which also sends consignments to the factories," he added.



Tanga TANROADS Regional Manager Alfred Ndumbaro submits progress report on the Tanga-Horohoro road project to Deputy Minister for Works Dr Harrison Mwakemba (left).

“POWER OF INNOVATION”