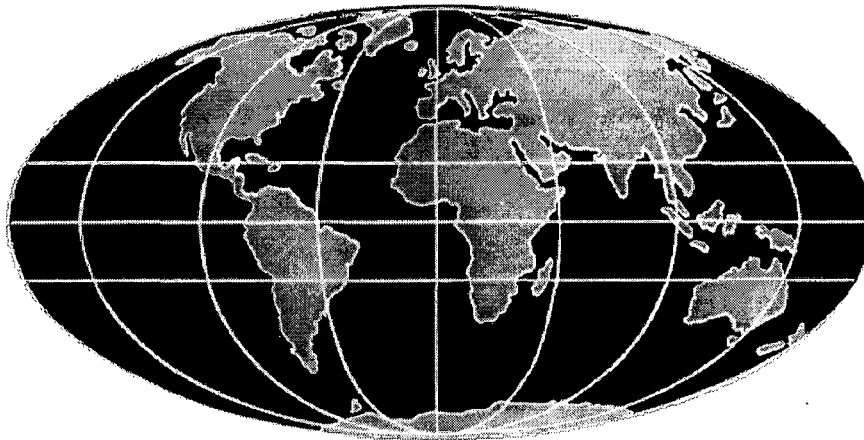


**TITLE: Urban transport policy
reform in Ghana**

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The urban transport policy reform in Ghana
Le reform de politique de déplacements urbains à Ghana

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ABSTRACT: To address Ghana's urban transport problems required policies and strategies which aim to meet broad objectives concerned with enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency and affordability of the urban transport sector, bearing in mind that the overall aim of its development is to contribute to the improvement in the quality of life of the community. A comprehensive package of measures was developed within this general framework, which came to be known as the Urban Transport Project (UTP).

RESUMÉ: Aborder les problèmes de déplacements urbains au Ghana exigeait des politiques et des stratégies qui visaient à atteindre les objectifs principaux concernant l'amélioration de l'efficacité, la compétence et en tenant compte de l'objectif final de son développement doit contribuer à une amélioration de la qualité de vie de la communauté. Un dossier de mesures approfondies a été conçu dans ce cadre de ces travaux qui a pris essor sous le nom de Projet Transport Urbain (UTP).

1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of an Urban Transport Policy is to establish the means by which Government sets out to achieve its urban transport objectives in support of national and urban development aims.

In general, the development of urban transport takes place within the wider context of national and urban development. There are four aspects of this which have an important impact on urban transport in Ghana, namely:-

1. The Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) launched in 1983, and followed by the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). This is putting increasing emphasis on self-sufficiency, private enterprise and Government divestment of state-owned companies. This will leave Government's role to the regulation and taxation of urban transport operators, and control of infrastructure investment and maintenance.

2. The Government's Vision 2020 programme which seeks to build upon the foundations laid by the earlier ERP, has the objective of raising Ghana to the level of a middle-income country by 2020.

3. The Government's decentralisation programme,

under which powers and responsibilities are being devolved from the Central Government to the regional Metropolitan and District Assembly administrative levels. It is anticipated that in the longer term the planning and development of urban transport in the country will be subjected to this process.

4. The high urban growth rate in the country is outpacing the provision of services, and is taking place in a largely unplanned manner, making it difficult to plan and programme transport in harmony with urban development in the cities.

The urban transport system in Ghana is characterised by the congested central areas of the cities, poor quality of service from public transport operators, high exposure to road accidents, and poor environmental standards. This is seen in long commuting times and journey delays, lengthy waiting times for public transport both at and between terminals, high accident rates, and localised poor air quality. These have resulted from the following factors:-

1. Poor terminal or lorry-park organisation and management, which restricts the optimum use of the available public transport capacity.

2. The use of small vehicles for public

transportation, which contributes significantly to congestion on the roads.

3. The low 'affordability' threshold of the majority of the urban poor, who can only meet low public transport tariffs.

4. Lack of funding (local and foreign) available to operators, who are thus unable to replace their existing vehicle stock with more modern, efficient and comfortable buses.

5. The low capacity of the existing road network, and its inefficient use.

6. Poor planning and control procedures for land-use development, resulting in additional traffic congestion and safety hazards.

7. The low standards of road traffic awareness, vehicle maintenance, and driver behaviour, which contribute to the high accident rates, particularly amongst pedestrians and children.

8. The poor upkeep of vehicles which causes excessive vehicular emissions.

To address these urban transport problems requires a strategy which aims to meet broad policy objectives concerned with enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency and affordability of the sector, bearing in mind that the overall aim of urban transport development is to contribute to the improvement in the quality of life of the community.

2. URBAN TRANSPORT POLICY OBJECTIVES

In line with the objectives of Ghana's Vision 2020, the key policy objective for the transport sector is to establish an efficient and modally complementary and integrated transport network for the movement of people and goods at least cost throughout the country. This general policy objective is further focussed in the Gateway Programme, which identifies the important role of transport in Ghana's economic strategy of building its competitive advantage within the West African sub-region to attract industry and trade through utilizing external, as well as domestic resources and inputs, to service external markets. Thus the Gateway Strategy envisages, for example, the development of free trade zones, free ports, and a liberalised skies policy, all of which impact on transport development.

Thus Vision 2020 and the Gateway Programme guide transport development strategy into the 21st

Century. Within this overall framework, national transport policy is aimed at achieving the following:

1. Making transport operations safe, efficient and economically viable.

2. Ensuring that transport services are effective and satisfy the needs of transport users.

3. Ensuring sustained growth in the transport industry through adequate investment.

4. Strengthening the transport linkages with neighbouring countries.

In the urban context, these national transport objectives can be translated into the following specific objectives :

1. Improving the accessibility of the urban community to places of residence, employment, education, leisure, shopping and other important amenities.

2. Enhancing urban travel opportunities at affordable cost for the less mobile, including the urban poor, non-vehicle owners, children, the elderly and the handicapped.

3. Enhancing the quality of travel by ensuring comfort, safety and efficiency in the provision of urban transport services.

4. Minimising the cost of providing services and facilities through most cost-effective methods.

5. Sustaining urban transport development initiatives, and making future development more proactive in respect of urban development, rather than being retro-active.

6. Minimising the environmental impact of transport by avoiding emissions and visual intrusion from vehicles.

To achieve these policy objectives within the wider context of the national development objectives, requires a strategy or package of measures which are outlined below.

3. URBAN TRANSPORT STRATEGY

3.1 *Improving accessibility.*

This is being achieved through the construction, rehabilitation and/or up-grading of roads to meet realistic demand forecasts. Where forecast demand cannot be served by such investments, other investment options such as rail-based systems and busway transit will have to be examined and adopted. Demand management strategies are also being

considered. Demand may be regulated through parking policies in the short to medium term and road pricing as a longer term option.

In addition public transport services will have to be enhanced through priority measures on key routes where the level of demand warrants this intervention. Government will also seek to use its regulatory powers to encourage the use of more efficient large vehicles on high demand routes.

Government is also seeking to promote accessibility through planned land-use development and stricter land-use planning controls which take account of the impact of new developments on traffic and transport demand.

3.2 Enhancing travel opportunities for the less mobile people in the cities.

Government is seeking ways to encourage the development of comprehensive transport facilities which are affordable to everyone. Bicycle ownership and use is being promoted through such measures as the construction of pilot bicycle paths, together with publicity and educational campaigns.

Government does not subsidize public transport operations, but is seeking other ways to encourage operators to service low income areas, through for example the provision of paved surfaces for access roads and terminal facilities for the vehicles as well as adopting such measures as route licensing or rationalisation schemes to attract services to less attractive areas. Government is also seeking to use its regulatory powers to encourage operators to provide these services and to develop public transport services for school children.

3.3 Improving the quality of travel.

Government is striving to enhance efforts to improve road safety. Vehicle examination and driver licensing procedures have been critically examined, and are to be tightened where necessary, making use of private sector participation where this can be shown to improve effectiveness. The protection of pedestrians, and in particular the young, is also being addressed through the provision of walk ways, road crossings and educational and publicity campaigns.

3.4 Minimising cost of providing transport services and infrastructure.

Government is seeking to minimise transport costs by continuing to encourage a free market in public transport provision. Government is also committed to introducing private sector participation in the State-run bus companies, and in the operation of bus terminals, and the adoption and execution of parking policies.

The use of existing infrastructure is being optimised through more effective traffic management techniques. The case for investment in new infrastructure will be on the basis of high economic rates of return. Emphasis is being placed on the maintenance and rehabilitation of the existing urban road network.

3.5 Sustaining development.

Wherever possible schemes are being designed to achieve cost recovery in the provision of transport services. Thus maintenance and management of transport terminals will be self-supporting. Government will also encourage private sector initiatives in viable transport investments through the adoption of BOT, BOO and similar schemes.

Development is also being supported and sustained through appropriate institutional development. Inter-Ministerial and Inter-Agency collaboration is being nurtured through appropriate Inter-Sectoral Committees. In the longer term, the responsibility for urban transport development will be devolved to the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Administration levels. At this stage all urban planning development control, transportation planning, roads construction and maintenance planning, and traffic engineering in each city will come under one organisation, which should be the most efficient mechanism for operating them.

Human Resources Capabilities and Institutional Development is also being developed and enhanced to ensure enforcement of the policies and follow-up action plans and programmes. Integrated urban development and transport planning will be pursued, using local professional staff who have received appropriate external and local training. They will have the task of continual up-dating of traffic and transport programmes in line with urban development plans.

3.6 *Minimising environmental impact.*

At present vehicle emissions are not a serious problem, but in the longer term Government will have to establish emission standards and means for enforcing these through the Environmental Protection Agency.

Government will also seek to develop environmental standards for urban roads and other transport developments to guide future development programmes. New schemes will be required to fully comply with these standards.

4 ACTION PROGRAMME FOR IMPLEMENTING THE POLICY

The Urban Transport Project (UTP) provides the main framework through which this policy is being promoted. The UTP seeks to achieve the following objectives:

1. To increase the quality of urban transport services.
2. To improve the efficiency with which urban transport services are produced, especially by reducing the cost and the time lost.
3. To ensure that the improvements in urban transport services are sustained, especially through institutional reforms, adoption of cost recovery measures and the application of regular maintenance practices.
4. To make access to urban transport services more equitable, by ensuring that the urban poor benefit from such improved services.
5. Improve sector policy development and planning by establishing formal coordination between the various organisations involved.
6. Increase safety, particularly for pedestrians and the users of non-motorised transport, particularly bicycles and trolleys.
7. Reduce fuel consumption and air pollution in the cities through the reduction in traffic congestion and the adoption of proper vehicle maintenance practices.

4.1 *Enhancing Public Transport.*

Selected terminals in the five project cities, namely Accra, Kumasi, Sekondi-Takoradi, Tamale and Tema, are to be rehabilitated in order to improve the facilities and services on offer to the travelling public. As part

of this exercise, a study was undertaken to assist the Ministry to identify and develop a sustainable operating strategy which will promote more efficient usage, better service to passengers, and greater financial, managerial and development control of the terminals by the Metropolitan Assemblies. This strategy will be implemented as terminal rehabilitation is completed.

A pre-feasibility study is being undertaken to examine the potential for developing the Accra-Tema rail link for intensive commuter use. If the project is worthwhile, then funding will be sought for detailed design and implementation. In the longer term the network will be expanded to cover other existing and newly developed suburban areas in the Accra-Tema Metropolis.

Private sector participation in the State Bus Companies (STC, OSA and CES) is also being actively pursued, with a view to improving their performance and accountability.

4.2 *Road Improvements.*

Various road rehabilitation schemes are now in hand, which on completion will provide a high quality primary network, and much improved traffic flow. Traffic management measures are also being implemented in the central areas of the main cities, as part of the rehabilitation programme, with the aim of optimising the use of available road space.

Complementary with this programme, a study of car parking was undertaken as part of UTP. This had as its objective the development of a sustainable national car parking policy and the associated institutions, organisations and legislation required for its successful implementation in the five main cities. Provision has also been made to establish Parking and Traffic Units within the Metropolitan Assemblies. These Units will form the nucleus of the Urban Transport Planning Units in each city to handle all urban transport issues in their respective metropolis.

Special bicycle paths are also being constructed in Accra, as part of UTP, giving greater accessibility for cyclists, particularly from deprived areas into the city centres as much as possible. Some of these areas are also benefiting from the up-grading of access roads within and into the settlements.

4.3 Land-use Development.

As part of the UTP, the recent implementation by Town and Country Planning Department of a pilot Development Records Control System within the Accra-Tema Region should demonstrate the benefits of tighter monitoring and control of land use development. This will help in, for example, the preservation of rights-of-way for roads and other modes of transport such as the rail network being planned for the Accra-Tema Metropolis.

4.4 Enhancing Road Safety.

Implementation of the road safety action programme developed under the UTP should yield sustained improvements in reducing the level and severity of road accidents. Measures include:

1. The restructuring of the Vehicle Examination and Licensing Division as a semi autonomous and self-financing Agency.
2. The introduction of more rigorous vehicle testing and driver examination standards.
3. The up-grading of the National Road Safety Committee to the status of a Commission with enhanced powers to impose road safety standards, and act as a focal point for road safety campaigning .
4. The development of a dedicated Traffic Police Unit within the Ghana Police Service.

Cabinet has already approved the first three of these developments, and action is now being taken to implement these measures. New road traffic legislation is currently being prepared to underpin these institutional changes, as well as to modernise the existing road traffic law in Ghana.

4.5 Institutional Measures.

Apart from the specific institutional measures already noted, the Ministry of Roads and Transport (MRT) has instituted an Inter-Ministerial Transport Committee, which brings together all interested Agencies in the development of urban transport in the country. The purpose of the Committee is to coordinate on urban transport programmes, and to advise their sector Ministries on developments in urban transport. The Secretariat for this Committee is the MRT Urban Transport Unit, which has been set up since 1994 as part of UTP.

Though not conceived as part of UTP, the recent

formation of MRT out of the erstwhile Ministries of Transport and Communications (MOTC) and Roads and Highways (MRH) has contributed to the integration process by placing the transport policy, regulatory and executing arms of Government under one Minister.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The UTP has provided a comprehensive approach to tackling Ghana's urban transport problems. It combines infrastructure development as well as organisational and regulatory changes. It is expected that the outcome will lead to enhanced urban transport performance, which can be sustained by the reorganised legislation and institutions.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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