

Sudan, Khartoum, vis-à-vis the Nile, to the Cape of Good Hope. This gives us hope for the future.

## Egypt at the Cross-Roads

Egypt is now a part of Comesa [the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa], which consists of 21 states, which covers the whole area from the north to the south. Sudan is part of Comesa; Egypt, and you have the eastern and southern part of Africa. So, this is the first proposal. This link can have other links, North Africa, and you can link North Africa with Europe via the tunnel of Gibraltar, and then you can have a connection between North Africa and Europe. If the Egyptian plan to build the railway, the Orient Express, connected with the Eurasian Land-Bridge, is carried out, you have already a connection between Asia, Africa, and Europe.

The second axis will be a west-east axis, from Dakar to Djibouti. This is also a colonial idea; it was built during the competition between the French and the British in the 19th Century. The British tried to connect their colonies from the north to the south, from Cairo to the Cape, and then the French thought to break up this connection by going through West Africa, Dakar via the Sahel countries, Chad, then to Djibouti. But, after the Entente Cordiale, after the events of Fashoda, both plans were suspended. Now we have to think rationally to achieve such plans. Now, I have a dream to ride a train from Cairo to Durban, instead of riding a plane from Cairo to Durban. Will this dream come true? Yes, by the will of Africa and Africans, it can be realized.

This is the proposal. I have to confess there are problems, of course, facing the realization of such a plan. One familiar and famous problem, is the problem of gauge. It is a colonial problem, because they built a narrow gauge for economic reasons, because it is cheaper, and not effective. Besides this, for example, on the Egyptian side, they built a gauge different from the gauge on the Sudanese side. So, if you try to make a connection between the Egyptian train and the Sudanese train, you have to make a shift to a different system. I don't know how to overcome this problem. It needs technology, maybe, I'm not able to deal with this issue, but I think we can overcome such a problem.

The second problem which has to be tackled, is, we consider railways not as a means of communication per se, but as a highway for development. So, you need to provide organic communities around these railways. In Africa, you need water. When I travelled from Cairo to Aswan by plane, it was amazing: All I found was desert—sand, yellow color—and only a narrow, tiny part of the country around the Nile is green. So we need water, to make this plan real, and to implement it, we have to provide water. This is a real issue; we have to discuss it, and to make a consensus, and instead of following the Western paradigm—the “war over water,” the “conflict over water”—let us make water a source of peace, not conflict. This is a real issue that we have to put at the heart of our debate here.

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Omer Mohammed Nour

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## The Significance of Rail Links in Africa

*He is the General Manager of Sudan Railways Corp. He addressed the conference on Jan. 16, on “The Significance of Interconnection of Neighboring Countries by Railroad.”*

The main reason for early construction of the means of transport in Africa, especially railways, was to serve colonial policy objectives of domination upon the continent. This situation affected most African countries after their independence. There have been no interconnections between these countries, resulting in many difficulties in the conveyance of both commodities and people between them.



The railways in Africa after independence were characterized by the following:

- Limited railway network compared with other world countries;
- Some African countries have no railways at all;
- Characteristics of different technical specification for the railways in the region;
- They serve only colonial needs, and the continent has no corridors that can serve more than one African state;
- The infrastructure specifications were of a very low standard, thus enabling no room for high-speed and heavy-axle loads;
- Low share in transport market compared with other modes.

Years later, national independent governments exerted hard efforts to maintain railway infrastructure and to develop and upgrade operational efficiency. But, scarce financing handicapped attempts to extend the internal and continental African network.

Promotion of African railways is a prominent economic and geographic endeavor because:

1. Vast African geographic areas necessitate efficient rail transport.
2. High-density population centers are located apart from rural productive areas.
3. There is a need to explore rich natural resources and

mineral potentials.

4. The fertile agricultural land of Africa can secure food for the entire world.

5. Railway networks are a prerequisite for economic development.

Construction of rail track has been given great importance, especially in the pattern of infrastructure that strengthens the national economy of African countries. At first, it is taken for maximization of benefits in the pattern of one state; during the last decades, it has become very important when deep, considerable thought has taken place, obviously to find a means of collaboration, integration for the existing track routes that can serve more than one African country for benefit—exchanging, such as passengers, commodities, and transport insurance.

This actual endeavor arises as the result of:

1. Recommendation of African Ministers of Transport;
2. To apply the policy of the OAU [Organization of African Unity];
3. To execute UAR [Union of African Railways] resolutions;
4. Directives of the ECA [African Economic Community];
5. To follow the advice of regional African organizations (IGAD, Comesa) [Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa];
6. To activate African countries by bilateral convention.

The Sudan government's strategic policy related to the African connection issue involves the following steps:

1. Ensure political and regional commitment of African transport integration;
2. Stress Africa-Sudanese linkage in all fields of economic integration, security coordination, and African culture encouragement.

Sudan railways is one of the largest networks in Africa. It operates a 5,898 kilometer-long single line of 1,067 millimeter gauge, hence facilitating its connection with neighboring countries, through six main corridors as follows:

### 1. Sudan-Egypt

A stretch of 450 km is needed to connect Wadi Halfa with the high dam (Aswan), but the difference of Sudanese (1,067 mm) and Egyptian standard gauge (1,435 mm) hinders this.

The solution would be to start container transport, then in the future, change the Sudan track to 1,435 mm to match the Egyptian track; thus the cost will about \$89.6 million.

### 2. Sudan-Central Africa

Interconnection feasibility study sequence shows three directions as follows:

A) Track extension from Duain station to Purram, then Copper Valley up to Central Africa's borders at Ounda Djalle city; estimated cost \$150-200 million;

B) Wau-Tumburra-Aubbo at mid Afro-borders, length about 350 km. Estimated cost \$170 million;

FIGURE 1



C) Nayala (Chad-Central Africa junction) of length 300 km. Estimated cost \$150 million.

Preliminary studies recommended option (C) or option (B).

### 3. Sudan-Chad

Interconnection would be done via the extension of Nayala with both Chad and Central Africa, at the same time, 300 km can link the two countries with Sudan.

### 4. Sudan-Ethiopia

Actions took place at the end of 1999, after the last meetings between the Executives of the two countries; from administrative and leaders level, the first surveys' recommendations are:

1. Huirry-Samsum-Basenda-Gallabat: 241 km
2. Huirry-Samsum-Dokka: 261 km
3. Geddarif-Dokka-Gallabat: 170 km
4. Demazine-Ethiopia border.

Later on, an invitation for constancy will take place, so as to conduct feasibility and technical studies services for choosing the suitable route for the linkage between the two countries.

### 5. Sudan-Eritrea

Since the Second World War, in 1945, Sudan-Eritrea was linked with a rail track length of 52 km, 26 km inside the Sudan and the rest to Eritrea's Tesanai city. For the rail branch

from Malauia, 28 km south to Kassala, the operation of this section had stopped since 1966. Estimated cost of reconstruction is about \$15 million.

#### 6. Sudan-Uganda

It is significant to put into consideration that it is the unique entrance and the suggested way for the African south, starting from Wau across Juba, Nomoly to Ugandan Gulu. It is 625 km, while the cost for its reconstruction inside the Sudan borders is about \$207 million.

#### Conclusion

As we have mentioned, rail tracks have a great role, and benefits in social and economic areas, for the African continent. In addition to safety, economical cost, ability to confront the critical transport crisis, save the environment from pollution, noisy continuous movements, and less consumption of fuel, railways everywhere are more favorable than other modes of transport.

The subject requires the African governments to work jointly to overcome all obstacles and constraints that hinder their way, so as to reach the goals that are required for African unity in various fields.

#### Recommendations

In the short term:

1. Submit feasibility studies for inter-African rail links.
2. Activation of bilateral agreements in the way of linkage of countries with each other.
3. To enable the Railways Union to play an effective role in African interconnection, by which member railways should honor their obligation towards the Union.
4. UAR must play its role in coordination and harmonization between the African railways, to reach the goal of unifying the rail terms across the continent.

In the long term:

1. Union of African Railways effort must go ahead in their studies of having one type for railways' length and characteristics.
2. Encourage the existing rail industries in some African countries, until they are able to produce rail spare parts and equipment.
3. Financing of the extension of rail to link African countries, is the government's responsibility.

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Kamal Ali Mohamed

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## Development of Nile Water Resources

*Kamal Ali Mohamed is an engineer, and is Minister of Irrigation and Water Resources of Sudan. His speech was entitled, "Water Potential of the Nile: Achieving Peace Among the Nile Riparian Countries Through the Development of the Water Resources of the Nile."*



#### Introduction

The River Nile, shared by ten riparian countries, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo (D.R.C.), Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda, is one of the most important rivers in the world. The salient hydrological data are appended as annex 1. The area encompassed by the basin is 3 million square kilometers, which is about 10% of the land area of Africa (**Figure 1**). The total population of the basin today is 140 million people.

The basin has variety of climatic zones, ecosystems, and cultures. It was the home of famous civilizations in history. The Nile is a great asset with a lot of opportunities for cooperative socioeconomic sustainable development and integration.

Today, despite its vast natural resources, the people of the Nile Basin face the challenges of alleviating poverty, instability, imbalance between population growth and available food and water supplies, environmental degradation, and peace threats and foreign intervention (in the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes, etc.).

#### Cooperation in the Nile Basin

Cooperation among the countries of the Nile Basin dates back to 1967 within the context of the Hydromet. Studies of the Equatorial Lakes Project have been steered by a basin-wide technical committee, composed of the heads of Water Resources Ministries of all the riparian countries, including Ethiopia as an observer. This has laid formidable ground for basin-wide cooperation. This cooperation continued until 1992, when the Ministers of Water Resources met in Uganda and agreed to further cooperate to formulate an action plan. Cooperation continued until 1996, and culminated in the Nile Basin Initiative, supported by the World Bank and other do-

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