

**Statement by Mr. Bruce Thompson**  
**European Commission**  
**Member of SSATP Board**

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Honourable Popane Lebesa, Minister of Public Works and Transport,  
Honourable Ministers of Transport and Equipment of countries represented here,  
Honourable Members of the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho,  
Dear colleagues and members of the SSATP Board,  
Representatives of multilateral and bilateral partners,  
Ladies and Gentlemen, invited guests and participants,

I would like to thank the Chairman of SSATP Board, Hachim Koumare, for giving me the privilege of making an opening statement on behalf of the Board. So let me start by saying that it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 2006 SSATP Annual Meeting.

**This year the Annual Meeting brings together 35 countries**, an increase of three from last year with the entry of Liberia, Namibia and Sierra Leone. SSATP is becoming an ever-expanding family. Participants come from the private and public sector, not only from the transport sector, but also from the sectors that transport serves, such as commerce, health and education. Such a wide participation recognises the role SSATP plays in facilitating the design of affordable, safe and efficient transport policies and strategies, the dissemination of good practices and knowledge sharing. Moreover your presence here demonstrates the partnership that SSATP inspires, which you use to link up with development partners at country and regional level to deliver better transport and related services that contribute to economic growth, poverty reduction and regional integration.

**Each Annual Meeting marks a step in the Programme's evolution.** In 2001 at Saly, it was a case of re-establishing confidence between partners, donors and the World Bank, as well as a drive for becoming more beneficiary focused. In 2002 the Maputo meeting established SSATP's strategic purpose of poverty reduction. In 2003 at Kigali, we saw the adoption of a framework for a Long Term Development Plan (2004-2007). At our 2004 meeting in Addis Ababa the facilitation role of the informal Ministerial Advisory Group led to the AU position of the role of transport in reaching the MDGs. Last year, the Bamako meeting gave a voice to women in transport, led to an increase of the programme management staff in Africa and the Bamako Declaration that reinforces implementation of SSATP principles and practices. This evolution over the past five years, I believe, shows how SSATP has adapted to beneficiary demands and wider development initiatives.

**This year we are approaching a new turning point in SSATP's life.** We are three-quarters of the way through the Long Term Development Plan. People are asking questions – how are we doing, what have we achieved, what's not working or what's working well and why, what do we need to change,

how should we change and who does it and what happens after 2007, the end of LTDP. These are all very hot topics.

Answers to these questions should come from what is called the Output-to-Purpose Review of the LTDP. This Review, guided and coordinated by an external consultant, has built upon the SSATP participatory approach. The Review has involved stakeholder participation and African expertise to carry out country and regional case studies. I look forward to some open discussions on the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Review.

Without giving away all the news that we will learn this week from the Review, I would like to focus on **some key achievements and consider their wider impact:**

- The Poverty Reduction Transport Strategy Review, PRTSR, an active process in two-thirds of our countries and completion achieved in about half of them. It has stimulated much debate across sectors and has delivered action plans as to how transport policy and strategies can better respond to growth and poverty reduction. Ministers confirmed their willingness to work with the relevant agencies to implement the recommendations through the “Bamako Declaration”. The coming year will show the impact of these reviews in the way transport is positioned in 2<sup>nd</sup> generation PRSPs and the resources allocated to transport.
- Facilitating road funds and road agencies has been SSATP’s core business and its impact in many countries, by working through road sector programmes, has led to improved road conditions and better value-for-money of government investments in roads. Our fledgling associations of African road maintenance funds, ARMFA, and of road agencies, AGEPAR and ASANRA have the potential of becoming centres of excellence as promoters of sound management of road funds and road networks.
- Regional integration—a challenging development objective—with a renewed focus in the AU-NEPAD Infrastructure Action Plan. SSATP has responded robustly and through the RECs Transport Coordinating Committee is facilitating the establishment of corridor management groups and observatories on selected corridors. Together with updating and harmonisation of corridor legislation the move to one-stop border posts, as one example of impact, is underway in programmes supported by development partners.

**Identifying policy solutions and good practices to several key issues remain.** This is particularly the case for urban and rural transport services, road safety and the complete integration of gender, environmental and health (HIV/AIDS) within SSATP. We look to the OPR Review to provide guidance as to how the SSATP themes need to change to reach the goal of LTDP.

**Looking beyond 2007 calls for some hard decisions as to the future of SSATP.** We also need to take account of several major development initiatives launched during the life of the LTDP. These initiatives increase the expectations as to the extent and quality of transport infrastructure and its related services. Such initiatives include:

- the emergence of the African Union Commission
- the evolution of the AU-NEPAD Infrastructure Action Plan

- the Commission for Africa Report that led to the creation of the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa with its Secretariat hosted by the African Development Bank
- the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness
  - the World Bank Africa Action Plan, and
  - the EU-Africa Partnership on Infrastructure

**Outcomes of this Annual Meeting should inform the debate on SSATP's future** and guide the follow-up process that defines our future goals. We will also look to the outcome of the Ministerial Advisory Group, which will add considerable value to the process.

Ladies and gentleman,

Now, on behalf of my Board Chairman, Hachim Koumare from UNECA and my other Board colleagues Sanjivi Rajasingham from the World Bank and Kaba Diakite from the private sector, I would now like to turn to the very pleasant task of thanking the Prime Minister the Honourable Pakalitha Bethuel Mosisili, the Government and people of the Kingdom of Lesotho for their efforts to make this meeting a success. I believe you would agree with me that this is clear proof of their commitment to SSATP.

I would also like to sincerely thank the Honourable Popane Lebesa, Minister of Public Works and Transport for inviting the Programme to Maseru and for being the Guest of Honour at this opening. We are grateful for his personal commitment and his involvement, which started earlier in June at a high-level meeting in Dublin that initially shaped this Annual Meeting. We are also grateful to his dynamic team that also participated in the Dublin meeting and the Planning Retreat held a few weeks ago in Belgium. These efforts and Lesotho's gentle hospitality set the scene for a successful Annual Meeting.

I would also like to thank the staff of the programme in their unstinting efforts to get us all to Lesotho and for putting together a very comprehensive schedule for the Annual Meetings.

I wish you all success in your meetings and thank you for your kind attention.

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