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I. INTRODUCTION

The trans-community road Bamenda-Enugu corridor is 443 km long. The Cameroon road sections Bamenda-Mamfe-Ekokis 203 km and the Nigeria road sections Mfum-Ikom-Abakaliki-Enuguis 204 km. The road network cuts across the North-West and South West Regions of Cameroon and Cross River, Ebonyi and Enugu states of Nigeria. The project was financed by African Development Bank (ADB), borrowers Cameroon and Nigeria. It was constructed by China Communication Construction Company (CCCC) and CIMA International as control mission between July 2008 and December 2013. The total length of the road was divided into three lots, the first lot from Bamenda-Batibo-Numba, while the second phase from Numba- Bacou-Akajbe and the third links Mamfe-Ekok border.

The Project has a considerable socio-economic dimension, and its environmentally sustainable. Its total cost appraisal was 423 US million dollars, of which the bank provided 288 million US dollars loan and a grant of 25million US dollars. The balance was financed by the World Bank, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Government of Nigeria, Government of Cameroon and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The construction of the Highway was a revolution as a journey in yesteryears referred to as a night mare changed into a beautiful reality, the tarred road and other additional structures pave an important part linking the North-west through Mamfe-Ekok in the South-west regions towards Nigeria. The 64.258 km Bamenda-Batibo-Numba is along the National Road No. 6 on the Bamenda-Mamfe-Ekok-Enugu corridor. This project was in line with the African integration policy of linking regions. The road therefore helped to reinforce cooperation between the countries of the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) and those of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and especially between Cameroon and Nigeria. Thus among other things the trans-community highway was to remove obstacles to free flow of traffic, limit the number of checkpoints and regulate axle load. ADB in its executive review rightly pointed out with particular reference to the spill over effects of the highway on Cameroon and Nigeria that;

The direct beneficiaries of the programme are transport service users, as well as the 11,000,000 inhabitants (3,000,000 in Cameroon and 8,000,000 in Nigeria) in the programme area, representing 7% of the total population of the two countries. The programme will reduce overall transport cost, and improve the living conditions of the populations living along the road. Will help to strengthen cooperation between the two countries (Cameroon and Nigeria), which are the engines of the regional economies, and support efforts by the international community to build confidence between both countries. The opening up of the program area will significantly reduce poverty, the incidence of which is particularly high (40%). The high way will facilitate trade in manufactured and agricultural products between the two countries. Furthermore, particularly in Cameroon, the project would help boost the national food production and supplement the last Bank interventions in the transport sector.

To achieve this objective studies were carried out and the financial realisation of the project was concluded with ADB as seen on the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount in US Dollars</th>
<th>Instrument</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African Development Fund, ADF LOAN (multinational allocation)</td>
<td>125.76</td>
<td>Project Load</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Development Fund, ADF(Country allocations)</td>
<td>62.88</td>
<td>Project Load</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Development Fund, ADF GRANT</td>
<td>16.16</td>
<td>International Support and rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan Bank for international cooperation, JBIC (Loan to Cameroon)</td>
<td>27.36</td>
<td>Loan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International development association IDA</td>
<td>18.73</td>
<td>Loan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government of Cameroon</td>
<td>10.84</td>
<td>Capital Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government of Nigeria</td>
<td>14.20</td>
<td>Capital Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>Operating budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>276.73</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table: Financing Plan of the Road
The project was fallout of the Green Tree Peace Accord between Cameroon and Nigeria over Bakassi peninsular. This stretch of road from Bamenda to Enugu was equally in line with the one-time dream of a trans-African road from Mombasa in Kenya to Nouakchott in Mauritania. The envisaged road network project was launched in 1972 with its headquarters in Bangui, Central African Republic and its first director was Dr. Mundi a Cameroonian. Like many Pan-African projects it collapsed due to lack of political will.

The construction of the Bamenda-Enugu road saw the one-time narrow earth road changed into an international highway with heavy traffic characterised by movement of goods and people on both sides. But unfortunately the highway people had longed for became horrendous as control check points and money extortion on the road made it undesirable to users.

The objectives of the study thus are; to expose the corrupt practices on this beautiful Highway, the suffering that users endure and the call on both governments to take extra measures to eradicate corruption and humiliation of people on this highway.

Key words: Integration, Road, control, movement, goods, checkpoints, extortion

II. HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE OF THE ROAD

Following the peaceful resolution of the Bakassi conflict which ended with the signing of the Green Tree Accord in 2006, Presidents Paul Biya and Olusogun Abasajo and their governments resolved to foster integration and co-operation amongst and within their people one of which was to construct the highway linking their countries. The ADB after consultations with the two governments agreed to finance the project.

On the Cameroon side after Mamfea stretch of the road branches to Mutengne via Kumba. When the Mamfe-Kumba-Mutengene stretch will be completed it will link Bamenda to Kumba which prior to the ADB financed project was a nightmare. It should be remembered that the idea to link Cameroon and Nigeria by road was a British initiative in 1929. The announcement by the Secretary of State for Colonies to connect both territories by road was based on the fact that Southern Cameroons was administered as an integral part of South Eastern Nigeria. The project to link Ikom-Mamfe and the Widikum Palm oil belt started in 1936 and ended in 1938. When Ikom-Mamfe section was realised the town became a big commercial centre in Southern /West Cameroon. The Director of Customs in West Cameroon was resident in Mamfe. Goods came in from Nigeria by road and through the River port on the Cross (Manyu) River. But the gradual degradation of the roads in and out of Mamfe, the outbreak of the Biafra – Nigerian civil war and the closing of the Cross River Port, Mamfe lost its commercial glory. The road system became so bad that the Public Works Department (PWD) in West Cameroon worked an itinerary on how vehicles moved in and out of Mamfe. On this platform vehicles moved to Mamfe from Kumba and Bamenda term in uses on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and out of Mamfe on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. This was in bid to avoid accidents on the narrow bad roads. This was commonly known in pidg in English as “Mamfe go down” and “Mamfe come up”.

The advent of the Trans Cameroon-Nigerian road dis-enclaved Mamfe, created a link between North West and South West Regions of Cameroon and again saw the massive import and export of goods to and from Nigeria. The impediments on the cherished highway for immediate beneficiaries remained the numerous check points and bribes given to road control officials.

III. TYPES OF REGULAR TRAVELLERS

On this international highway the frequent users from Cameroon are; businessmen, students studying in various Nigerian High Institutions, those going for visas at Abuja, those going to Synagogue Church of All Nations (SCOAN) and visitors to relations based in Nigeria.

From Nigeria majority of those who regularly used the highway are Nigerian traders resident in Cameroon and their family relations who come to visit. These traders are mostly resident in the towns of: Mamfe, Kumba, Bamenda, Limbe, Tiko, Douala and Yaounde. It should be recalled that following the 2005 Cameroon general population census, Nigerians living in Cameroon were over four million. Items of trade ranged from manufactured goods, food stuffs and cash crops. From Nigeria, traders imported mostly manufactured goods while from Cameroon mostly food stuff, like rice, potatoes, beans and forest products are taken to Nigeria.

IV. IMMIGRATION FORMALITIES AND BOARDER CROSSING CAMEROONIANS TO NIGERIA

At Ekok frontier police post, travellers present their identification papers as they cross over to Nigeria, passports are stamped or a pass is issued with a charged fee of 2000 Francs CFA. The car boarded to cross must be registered with Inter-boarder Transport Union known as United Brothers Association. It is comprised of youths from Nigeria and Cameroon living around the border towns of as Ekok, Ikom and Ajassor. Membership into the Association is strictly controlled. They also helped to identify the local travellers who are border town residents from those coming afar. They worked in close collaboration with the law enforcement officers of both sides of the border. Passengers pay 4500 Naira (7500 FCFA) to the drivers from Ekok to Ikoma distance of 27km. This amount includes immigration fee to Nigerian immigration where

passports or pass are stamped and a number of days to stay in Nigeria stipulated. The longest duration is three months after which if not renewed you are an illegal immigrant in Nigeria. It should be noted that a pass permits a Cameroonian to go to Ikonomly, but most of the time migrants used it to go all over Nigeria and to ECOWAS countries such as Benin Republic and Togo.21

From immigration command at Mfum to Ikom there are about seven check points in a distance of about 27km. The drivers are the middlemen between the emigrants and the officers on the checkpoints. Each checkpoint has a specific amount that must be given collectively by the driver of the car and the amount is not known by the passengers. The officers hardly examine the travelling papers of the passengers and at times they may examine the boats of the cars for Contra banned goods like imported rice and drugs.22

At Ikom-Enugu via Abakaliki there are two travelling agencies that carry most Cameroonians; Lisbon and Young Shall Grow. After the travelling fee has been charged, all Cameroonians pay an addition amount of N.5,000 Naira each for “Road settlements” again the amount given at each check point is only known by the drivers and the officers in charged.23

At Yahe check point where the road branch to Abakaliki and Imo respectively, the following services are effectively present 24/24; Immigration, Mobile Police, Road Safety, Drug Control Agencies, Vehicles Inspection Officer (VIO) and the army unit. When the two travelling agencies mentioned above or any other transport car arrives, the first order was that all passengers down and foreigners orientated to a control office to present all their travelling documents. At this check point whether the traveling documents are correct or not each Cameroonian will pay the sum of 1000 Naira and surrender the pass and passports are stamped.24

The implication for travellers with PASS is that they cannot circulate without the immigration identification document issued at Cameroon Immigration office Ekok. In order to regain the pass travellers pay an additional amount of 500 Naira. This pass is presented at this check point on return from Nigeria and is finally surrendered to the Cameroon immigration frontier police at Ekok. The road settlements are so many in spite of the good road, and thus make the journey unpleasant and tiresome in addition to humiliation. The somehow unpleasant part of it again is that if a fault is found, hours will be spent at that point of which at the end bribe will still be taken. At some checks passengers are won to corporate fast with the driver to ease their quick departure from that point.25

The above episode refers to ordinary travellers. The business men on the highway have a different story from either coming from Lagos, Onitsha, Enugu or Abakaliki to Ekok via Ikom. Their goods are escorted by agents of Nigerian Transporters Union. The escorts are paid a sum that ranged between 60000 Naira and 70000 Naira for road settlements to Ikom. From Ikom to Ekok the goods are handed over to another escort group because of what they call geographical entitlement and an amount of 100 000 Naira is paid for the service. This amount includes customs export tax. Once on the Cameroon side, the goods are handed to the owner and the Cameroon customs will access import tax.26

V. EKOK-BAMENDA (NAVIGATION OF GOODS)

After the goods have been accessed and the clearance tax paid (import tax) another money is paid at the custom brigade office and immigration office respectively amounting to 60,000 Frscfa. At this point no receipt is given. At the Ekok check point towards Eyumbojaick an amount of 10,000 Frscfa and 20,000 Frscfawas paid to the combined elements of police and custom respectively.27

From this check point to Akwen where an army unit and custom brigade are stationed an amount of 10000Frscfa is paid to the army and the custom and a receipt of 5000Frscfais issued, for what is called over time. At Ibinside Gendarmerie checkpoint, an amount of 10 000Frscfa is also paid. From Ibinside, the next check point is at Bisongabang, where 40000 frsca is paid to the Gendarmerie Routier. Below the Mamfe Divisional Hospital 30000 Frsca is paid to the Police and Gendarmes at that check point. At the divisional custom office Mamfe town where goods are assessment is done and an amount of 150000Frscfais paid and no receipt is given. From Mamfe, no money is paid at the Okoyong Police/Gendarme checkpoints because the mix check point below the hospital will always call to inform them. But most often than not they always ask for motivation of 4000Frscfa per group.28

After Okoyong is the Numba and Widikum Gendarmerie checkpoints where an amount of 15 000Frssis paid per checkpoint. After Widikum is Batibo Gendarmerie and police checkpoints where 40000Frss is paid to the two units, and at the custom check point 10000frs is paid again and a receipt of 5000FCFAis issued. At Bali an amount of 65000Frscfa is paid which is divided as follows; police: 20000, Gendarmerie20 000 FCFA, Research Unit 15000FCFA and the representation of the Region Commander 10000 FCFA. After Bali, 30000 FCFA is paid to the Routier and 30000FCFA to Police and Gendarmes at mile 90 Bamenda.29

At this point, a truck of twenty tons loaded with goods had completed its journey to Bamenda town irrespective of what type of goods carried. Smaller trucks may pay less but what is observed is that, only customs at Ekok issue receipts for import and export goods.30

It should be noted that while it is optional for Nigerian traders to enlist the service of Escorts in Nigeria, it is compulsory for Cameroon traders. In Cameroon, Nigerian enjoys right to effect settlement of their goods themselves without a middleman.31
VI. NIGERIAN TRAVELLERS TO CAMEROON

At the border the Nigerians pay immigration fee at the Nigerian border and obtain pass or passport stamped. At the head bridge on the Cameroon side travelling documents are collected with an amount and sent to the main office for immigration formalities. With valid documents that is: Passports, vaccination card, resident permit an amount of 2000frs is paid at each check point from Ekok to Bamenda. But without valid travelling documents mentioned above the amount paid was negotiable.

In the past Nigeria did install many check points on their part of the highway. But when the Cameroon security forces intensified the extortion of money from Nigerians, the Nigerians security and emigration also intensified the extortion of money from Cameroonian in Nigeria as revenge. These are things that happen on this highway that its main objective was to alleviate poverty and foster love amongst Cameroonian and Nigerians. [32]

VII. WHY THIS STUDY?

The activities of the officials on this highway do not represent the aspiration of the governments of Cameroon, Nigeria and ADB. Integration at the grass roots is not appreciated and people continue to be foreigners to each other. The exploitation of road users had encouraged bribery, corruption, smuggling, antagonism and fall in government revenue. Individuals in position of authority grow very rich while the people the highway was meant to serve remained very poor. People turn to hate the governments mean while individuals are at the centre of the extortion.

VIII. WHAT IS NEW?

The anti-corruption commissions in Cameroon and Nigeria have probably not done enough sensitisation on this highway to deter bribe taking and humiliation of citizens. It is interesting to note that the units of anti-corruption do exist in the administrative units that the highway passes through. This anti-integration activity’s skill’s trade and cooperation among African nations and increases dependency on European, Chinese and American goods that enter these countries very easily.

IX. CAUSES OF ROAD SETTLEMENT (BRIBERIES)

On this high way they are goods that are permitted by the Cameroon and Nigerian governments for importation and exportation. Most traders do not follow the law of importing what is permitted. At the custom clearance illegal goods are not declared because they are considered as counter ban goods. This is where corruption sets in as traders bribe to carry the goods across. At various check points therefore, if it is discovered they continue to bribe their way out. Also at time controllers at a control post will inform their colleagues by phone of the lorry carrying lawful goods. If a lorry carrying goods permitted for importation or exportation after declarations and issuance of custom valid document they do not have much money to give as settlements. Traders who imported just one set of good for example ties, is easier to access and the weight calculated fast at Weight Stations. But if a lorry is over loaded, it has enormous problems to go through because those check points will easily detect the overweight and negotiations come in. [33]

Most of the officers at the check point do not master the custom issued documents and when they need money, they create unnecessary motives which causes delays and traders being impatient, turn to give bribes to go fast. [34]

Custom methods of assessment on the Cameroon side for example are by the use of instruments that film the goods in the truck. This information is sent to Yaoundé from were assessment at times takes a long time to come for payments to be made. Most often, the machines are said to be bad and dozens of trucks are lined up waiting assessment bills weeks. [35] To solve the problem, custom officials would resolve to manual assessments. The process is said to be very difficult especial in situations where trucks have assorted goods and in most cases the traders turn to bribe custom officials. [36]

As a whole, even if a trader fulfils all the conditions they are certain check points where they must pay what is called ‘Landing Fees’. Which receipts are not issued. Informants mostly traders wander if the money goes to the state treasury. Of all the roads that goods enter Cameroon from Nigeria, the Bamenda-Enugu corridor is said to be the most expensive to carry goods across because of several payments at checkpoints. [37]

The various checkpoints from historical records have a silver lining. However they help to reduce recklessness driving on that high way and consequently they have not been many ghastly accidents. [38] Although it is natural that people, goods and labour circulate freely in normal settings, on this highway extreme poverty that youths experience has not resulted to high way banditry perhaps due to the closeness of the checkpoints. Thus attacks on Lorries and travellers have not been a cause of concern on this high way which is opened on both side from 7am to 6pm. These are some of the advantages traders and travellers enjoy. On the issue of settlements, it is the final consumer who pays the price. Prices continue to rise and make African goods not competitive as people will go for Chinese goods that are cheap.

The immediate partitioned ethnic groups at the borders (Ejaghm) who are found on both sides of the countries freely cross either way with their cars or goods between Ikom and Eok. The officers at check points call them “Taiwanese” meaning, those who have nothing to offer. At the border CFA and Naira are the common currencies traders and travellers use. Currency exchange is done in black markets and fluctuates from to time. The construction of a new bridge on the cross river and a join control bureaux will
surely reduce some of the challenges travellers and traders face.

X. CONCLUSION

The High way Bamenda-Enugu is an important road that links the peoples of Cameroon and Nigeria. The main purpose of the project was to alleviate poverty and promote corporation and integration. In line with the politics of African Regional Integration the road promotes trade amongst people and Nations. The project was financed by the African Development fund in partnership with international financial institutions, Cameroon and Nigeria borrowers. The two countries were to pay back the loan in 40 years after 10 years of grace. The most cherish road since its operation because of numerous checkpoints has not to a large extent promoted trade or facilitate movement of people. The emigration procedures and road check points have made it a nightmare for users. The illegal extortion of money from users has neither helped the people nor governments of Nigeria and Cameroon, as high way officers enrich themselves under the watchful eyes of supervisory authorities.

END NOTES

2 African Development Bank (ADB) is one of the successful Pan African institutions. It was created in 1964 and it started business in 1967 with 33 subscribed regional members at present it has a membership of more than 77 including powerful countries of Americas, Asia and Europe. Its headquarters is in Abidjan- Ivory Coast. Its main objective is to contribute to economic and social progress of its members.
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10 Interview with John Nyako, Peter Membia, Douala and Bamenda 20th and 26th June 2016
12 NAB.File No sp.65939/1/1926,lkom-ManfE-Bamenda Road.
14 Interview with Raphael Etta Oyumojok, 25 October 2015
15 InterviewJedelMahaEllagos 10 August 2017
16 Cameroon population census 2005
18 It is an instituted Union under the Nigerian Transporter Union. It has offices on both sides of the border.
20 Ibid.
21 Immigration Laws states that, travellers must be in possession of valid documents as prescribed by the law.
22 Interview with John Ekio, Ikorn 20th March 2014
23 Interview with Akinjoh Peter, Abakiliki, 14 April 2011
24 Interview with Julius Tanuh, Onisha 9th September 2010
25 Ibid.
26 Interview with James Iguna, Ikorn, 7 August 2017
27 Interview with IzeNkwokou,Besongabang, 12 July 2017
28 Interview with Chukou Destiny, Mamfe, 9 June 2016
29 Interview with TamuhFanyuy, Bamenda 9 August 2017
30 Interview with Eric Ojoh, Ikorn, 10 August 2016
31 Interview with TsheyAnyeh , Mankon , 10 October 1017
32 Interview with NkemOumadou, Abakaliki, 14th August 2017
33 Interview with JedeOlusongoEkoh ,12 January 1014
34 Ibid.
35 Interview with ChrisantusAnye Manga, Bamenda,10 April 2015
36 Ibid.
37 Interview with EmmanuelAnye Manga, Bamenda,10 April 2016
38 Interview with AkinjoPeter, Bamenda 23 June 2015