

# SADC states agree on standard road, traffic signs

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The road network was the main item of agenda for the Association of Southern Africa National Road Agencies' (ASANRA) 31st Board Meeting at the Arusha International Conference Centre here.

The meeting addressed among other issues, harmonisation of the regional road networks with the view of creating safe, effective, efficient and sustainable world-class transport infrastructure.

Tanzania Roads Agency (TANROADS) Chief Executive Officer Engineer Patrick Mfugale said different levels of economies and individual countries' budget allocations resulted into different quality standards, road and traffic signs.

"When member countries embark on construction of their individual roads, they should take into consideration SADC standards instead of just building them indiscriminately," said Engineer Mfugale.

Deputy Minister for Works, Transport and Communication Engineer Atashasta Ndiye (pictured), officially opening the meeting, pointed out that most of SADC road networks pass in Tanzania, which is becoming the region's road transport hub.

He said Tanzania's classified road network measures 86,472 kilometres, including the Tanzania-Zambia (TANZAM) highway, which links Dar es salaam to Lusaka and the Mtwara Corridor, which runs from Mtwara Port to Lilongwe in Malawi through Lake Nyasa.

According to the Minister; Tanzania also hosts the Central Corridor, joining Dar es Salaam Port to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and part of the Great North Road that runs from Cape Town in South Africa to Cairo, Egypt.

Established in 2001, ASANRA is an association of national roads agencies or authorities in the SADC region and operates in line with the community's protocol.

The main goal of the association is to enhance regional policy coordination and road transport system integration with the key objectives of improving intra-regional road transport efficiency and lowering transport cost.

ASANRA also fosters the development, operation and maintenance of a regional integrated road transport system, cooperating with other SADC agencies in considering matters of mutual interest in serving the regions highway needs.

It as well seeks to develop and improve methods of administration, planning, research, design, construction, maintenance and operation of infrastructure and facilities.

The association further conducts regular consultations with SADC ministers on regional transportation policy while developing technical, administrative and operational voluntary standards and policies.

It was stated during the meeting that road transport is the most dominant mode of freight and passenger transport, carrying between 80 and 90 per cent of goods and services in the SADC region.

Road transport accounts for about 20 per cent of the regions cross border trade and is the only form of access to rural areas where majority of the population dwell.