

Akufo-Addo commissions Afienva road over bridge on Tema-Mpakadan railway project

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The President of the Republic, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, on Tuesday, 6th December 2022, commissioned the Afienva Road Over Bridge, a key component of the of the new 97.7-kilometre standard gauge railway line from Tema to Mpakadan railway project.

Describing the project as “a brainchild of the first NPP Government of 2001 – 2009, when the highly respected Christopher Ameyaw Akumfi was Minister for Harbours and Railways”, President Akufo-Addo explained that it was conceived to create a multimodal transportation network, involving road, rail and lake transportation, which will facilitate the haulage of cargo and the movement of people from the southern part of the country to the northern sector, through a mix of intermodal transport systems.

With the current transportation of domestic freight and transit freight between Accra, Tema and northern Ghana, and further to Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, being essentially road-based via Kumasi, Tamale, Bolgatanga, Navrongo and Paga, the President stated that the over-dependency Ghana’s road network, coupled with the lack of other transport alternatives, particularly between Accra and Kumasi, resulted in congestion, rapid deterioration of roads, and increases in road accidents.

It is for this reason, according to the President, that the then Ministry of Harbours and Railways, in June 2007, commissioned a feasibility study for a multi-modal transport link between Tema and Buipe, through the Volta Lake.

“The study was successfully completed in 2009, stressing the economic, financial and operational feasibility of the multi-modal freight corridor. Subsequently, the 6th Parliament, at the 14th Sitting of its Third Meeting, held on Monday, 31st October 2016, approved, by resolution, both the Credit Facility and the Commercial Agreement between the Ministry of Finance and the EXIM Bank of India, with AFCONS Infrastructure Ltd., also of India, as the contractor for the project,” he stated.

The project, the President told the gathering, will address the imbalance between transport modes for long distance transit and domestic freight movements from Accra/Tema northwards, and vice versa using the Volta Lake Transport System.

“In particular, existing port operations at the Tema Port will be improved, resulting in reduced vessel waiting time, container dwelling time, which will improve the competitiveness of the Port, as well as lead to reduction in freight transport costs, and enhance safety,” he added.

Transporting freight and transit cargo, via the Lake Transport System, President Akufo-Addo, reiterated will reduce cost of shipment and, by extension, reduce the cost of doing business in Ghana.

“Not only will it increase transit cargo volumes through the Lake, but will also expand domestic shipments to and from the Lake, and will serve as a boost for agricultural enterprises within the environs of the Lake,” he added.

President Akufo-Addo also inspected some of the ongoing works at the Afienyia Railway Station, as well as the works on the track, inspected work on the Volta Rail Bridge over the Volta River to assess the status of work.

“I have been assured by the contractor that the few outstanding works remaining on the project will be completed and the project handed over to Government for operations within the first half of next year,” he added.

The Tema-Mpakadan-Buipe multi-modal transport project, when successfully completed and operationalised, will link the Tema Port to the lake transport network, especially the north-south movement over a distance of some four hundred kilometres, and open up the Lake to the transportation of not only fuel and cement, but also containerized cargo and agricultural produce from the northern enclave and Afram Plains to the Port of Tema and other destinations.

Other economic benefits of the project include reduction of pressure on the road network (including the Eastern Corridor Roads, which are under construction), thereby reducing their early deterioration, and increasing their service life span; minimisation of the cost of transportation of bulk commodities, containers and agricultural produce to the ports and other destinations; provision of affordable, reliable and alternative means of transport for passengers who are not served by the road transport system along the corridor; and construction, operation and maintenance works of the railway infrastructure which will provide direct and indirect employment to a significant number of Ghanaians.

“I want to put on record that, in the last five years of my administration, more construction activity in the railway sector has gone on than in any period since independence. We have laid a solid foundation, which will receive an even greater impetus by the end of my tenure in 2025. My commitment to the development of a new modern standard railway network is unwavering”, he said.