

President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi receives Great Road Builder Award

Egyptian president Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi has been named this year's winner of the Babacar Ndiaye Great Road Builder Award. The award recognises heads of state whose countries initiate outstanding projects or achievements in relation to the development of roads, transportation and mobility.



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Al Sisi was recognised for his “personal leadership” in the development and construction of projects in Cairo, such as the Heliopolis metro station, as well as a suspension bridge project on the Nile, George Orido, a spokesman for the selection committee of the Africa Road Builders said during a virtual inaugural meeting of the group.

For their “remarkable contribution in the area of road infrastructure and connectivity”, Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara and African Development Bank (AfDB) president Akinwumi Adesina were also awarded special prizes, Orido said.

Enabling sustainable socioeconomic growth

Speaking on behalf of Adesina, Solomon Quaynor, the AfDB's vice president, private sector, infrastructure and industrialization thanked the conference organisers for recognising the bank's role in road infrastructure on the continent.

“Road transportation is a critical enabler for productivity and sustainable socioeconomic growth. Over the past 12 years, the bank has financed more than \$8bn of regional transport projects. As a result, close to 13,000 km of regional highways have been built on 17 road corridors, along with 26 one-stop border post facilities,” Quaynor said.

Panelists at the event also included Professor Carlos Lopes, president of the Bureau of the Conference; Ivorian Pierre Demba, director general of AGERoute – Ivory Coast’s road management agency; Raoul Jaquand, vice president strategic business developments and partnerships for Africa Assault System; and Emile Fort, West Africa manger for Lumiplan.

Challenges to be met

Fouad Safer, director of transport and infrastructure studies at the National Bureau of Studies and Development (BNETD) in Côte d'Ivoire said the challenges to be met included the balance between the development of cities in Africa and that of transport, the promotion of professionalisation of transport, renewal of vehicle fleets, promotion and restructuring of transport networks.

“There is an urgency to have new generation of mass transport to improve the quality of life of our populations,” Safer said.

Mamadou Faye, administrator of the Senegalese Autonomous Road Maintenance Fund (FERA), said: "Road infrastructure is the most expensive capital in Africa. Without proper and timely maintenance, the roads deteriorate. So it's not just about building, it's also about maintaining, having a funding model for road maintenance. In addition, we must invest in mass transport and innovation. It's fundamental to improve performance."

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