

The Road Sub-Sector in Uganda: Its Recent Development, Current Initiatives & On-going Challenges

Presented by:

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Purpose of this Presentation

- 1 To briefly describe how the roads sub-sector has evolved since mid-1990's.
- 2 To summarise the current initiatives in the sector.
- 3 To highlight weaknesses in the sector and hence what lessons can be applied elsewhere.**

Note: The focus of this presentation is on the existing weakness and what lessons can be applied in other countries and sectors, as this is of greatest use to delegates. However, this emphasis on weaknesses in the sector should not detract from the progress that has been made in the sector since the mid-1990's.

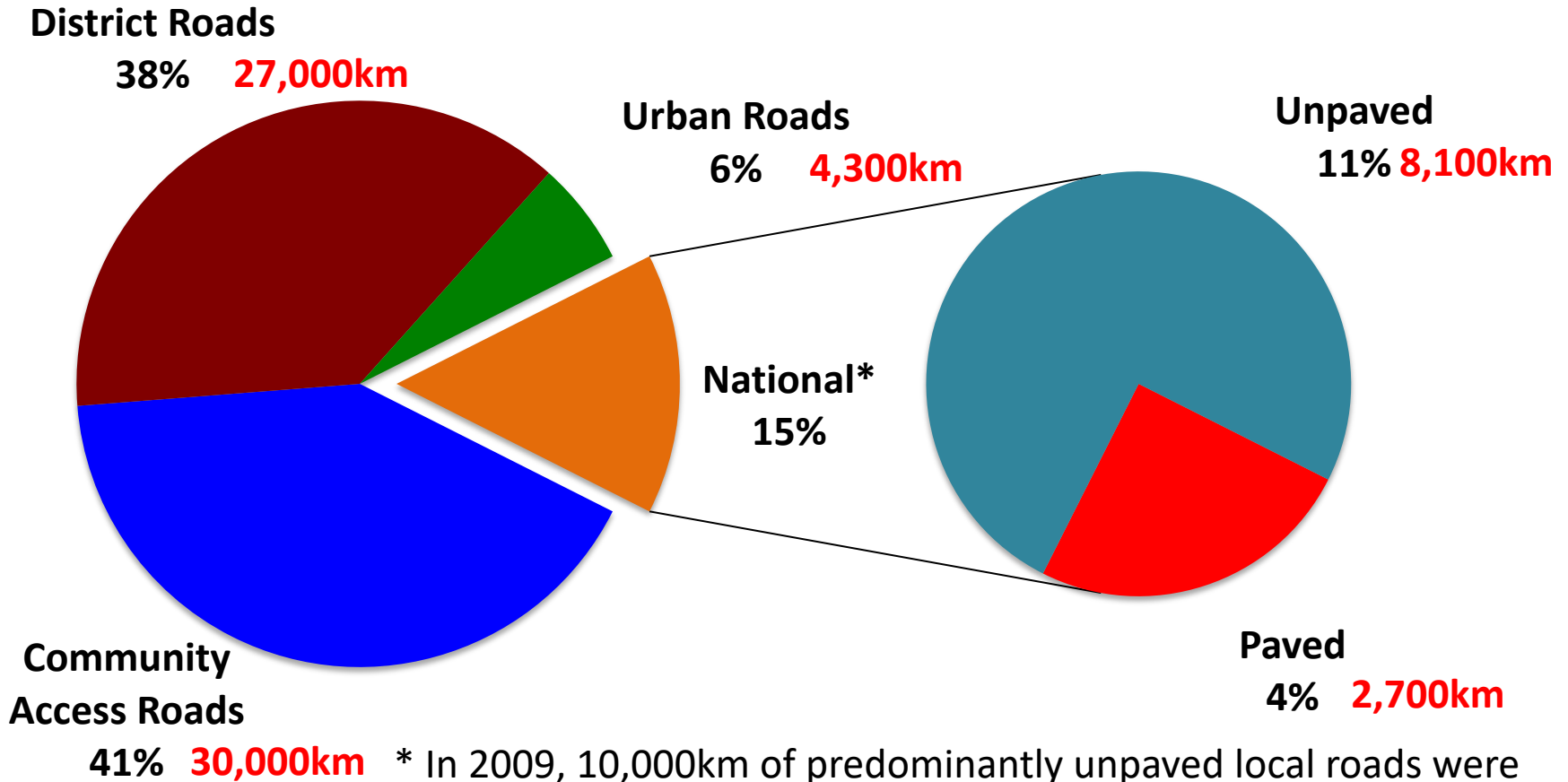
Sector Development

- 1 Began in mid-1990's with government policy to evolve towards the **principles of the RMI**.
- 2 Establishment of a **Road Agency Formation Unit (RAFU)** in 1998, focused on major projects & supported by World Bank (but not maintenance).
- 3 **RAFU evolved into UNRA in 2008**, taking on road maintenance from Ministry of Works.
- 4 **Road funding** originally from central government, but failed to provide adequacy, predictability, etc.
- 5 **Uganda Road Fund (URF)** established in mid-2010 to fund maintenance only on **all** public roads.
- 6 **Transport Ministry** slowly evolving away from engineering focused implementation towards regulation, oversight and policy.
- 7 **Local roads (DUCAR)** still relatively unreformed.

Current Initiatives in the Sector

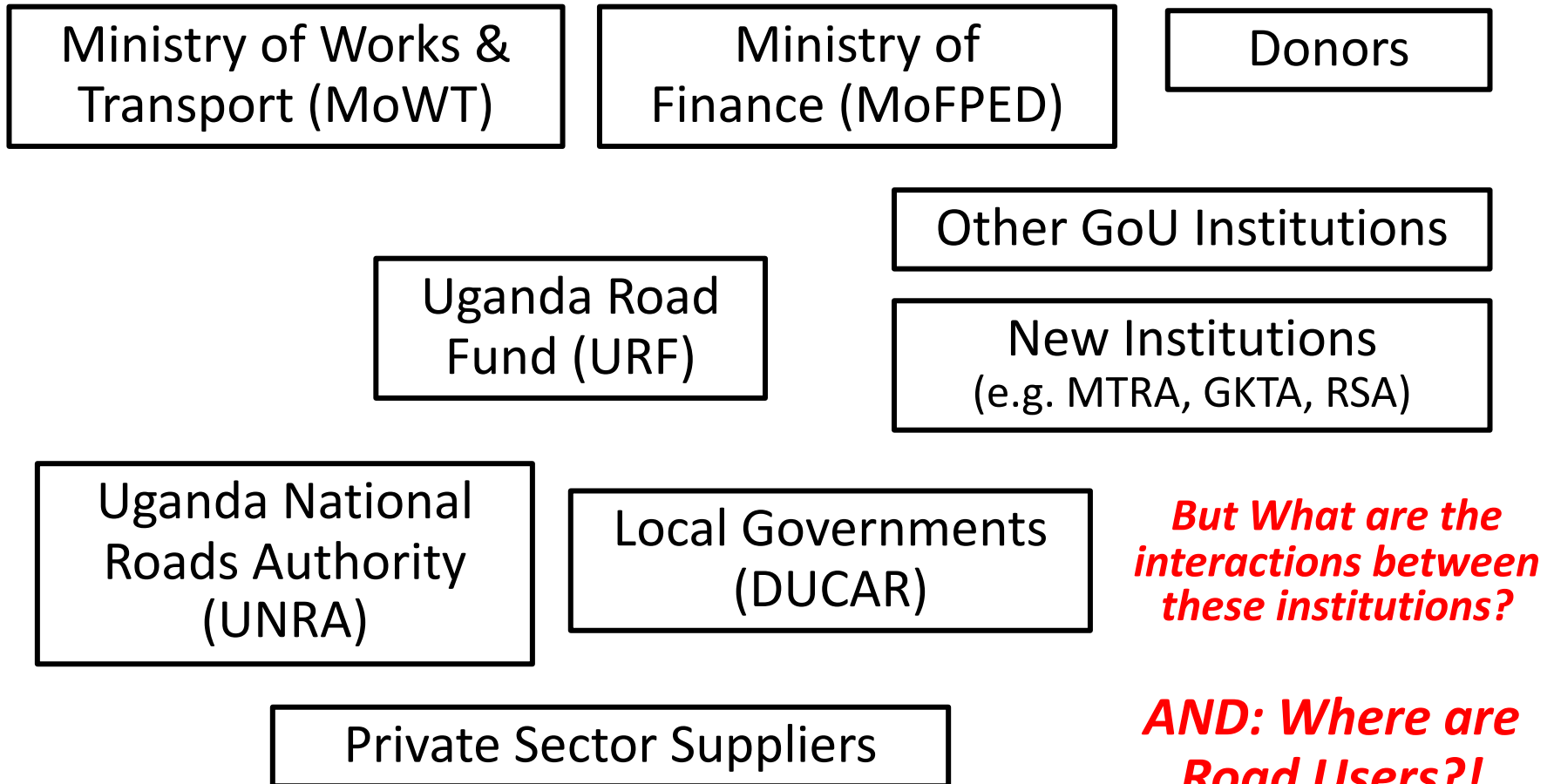
- Main **Donors** are World Bank, EU, DFID & DANIDA.
- Financial support for **road rehabilitation & development**.
- Ongoing **TA / Capacity Building to UNRA**.
- TA to help strengthen & develop **Ugandan Road Fund (URF)**.
- **High level assistance to MoWT** to strengthen policy formulation, regulatory and strategic planning functions.
- **Assistance to develop private sector capacity** (CrossRoads).
- Some support to strengthen **local government capacity**.
- Establishment of a **Multi-Sectoral Transport Regulatory Authority (MTRA)** to strengthen regulation of the sector.
- Establishment of a **Greater Kampala Metropolitan Transport Authority (GKTA)**.
- Establishment of a **Road Safety Authority**.

Uganda's Road Network*



* In 2009, 10,000km of predominantly unpaved local roads were reallocated/reclassified to UNRA/National Roads, without notice or budget changes.

Institutions Involved in Uganda's Roads Sub-Sector



Whole of Government Policies

- **Roads are the predominant mode of transport** in Uganda.
- **High priority** for government expenditure: central pillar for alleviating poverty and opening up country to markets.
- But **money allocations** for 'new' construction (& rehabilitation) far more than for maintenance (which receives insufficient funds).
- **Policy of Decentralisation** is resulting in an excessive (& increasing) number of local governments with poor capacity and coordination.
- No functional **classification system** used, nor mechanism for reclassifying roads. **Roads Act** requires updating.
- **Public Sector conditions of employment** are restrictive, unresponsive and uncompetitive.

Weakness 1: “Silo” Thinking

- Thinking within organisations and between institutions is often very limited and focussed on short-term / immediate concerns.
- Little appreciation of the broader impact of decisions and actions.

The solution is to adopt a broader, holistic or “Joined-Up” approach to decisions and action in the sector. Get the “big picture” right and the smaller pieces will often look after themselves.

Weakness 2: Poor Understanding of Broader Institutional Issues

- No clear understanding and consensus of what each institution in the sector should do and WHY.
- Decision makers have not thought through the implications of inappropriate responsibilities, actions and decisions.
- Excessive interference in operational decisions by external institutions, leading to overlapping or shared responsibilities, bureaucratic and slow decision making and hence poor accountability.

Solution: **Senior** decision makers in the sector need to clearly understand what should be the responsibilities of each institution and WHY. This takes time to achieve but allows reforms to be publicly defended and explained.

Weakness 3: Overlapping Responsibilities

- Many road management activities require involvement from several institutions.
- This leads to excessive bureaucracy, **slow decision making** and obscures responsibilities.
- This leads to weaker accountability and transparency.



Solution: Make responsibilities as clear and as unambiguous as possible. This requires clear and holistic thinking!
Clear responsibilities simplifies decision making and increases transparency by clarifying reporting and accountability needs.

Weakness 4: Unwillingness to Delegate

- Overworked senior staff who focus on details rather than broad, strategic issues.
- Disempowered junior staff with inadequate responsibility, motivation and incentives.
- Slows down decision making: bureaucratic.
- Reduces innovation in the organisation.

Solution: Break down organisation's overall functions into logical sub-units; Delegate responsibility for these sub-tasks, downwards; motivate staff; and install appropriate management information systems to monitor performance.

Weakness 5: No Clear Sector Strategy

- No coherent strategic plan for the roads sub-sector.
- Policies for the sector are outdated and inadequately robust: decisions are made in a policy vacuum.
- Confusion, uncertainty and disjointed activities.
- Mismatch between words and actions.
- Uncertainty discourages involvement of private sector suppliers in the sector.
- No clear leadership in the sector, leading to external (Donors) de-facto leadership. Where is the “ownership” and hence responsibility and accountability?

These problems require well-considered and thoughtful leadership in the sector and clear, consistent and continual communication.

Weakness 6: Lack of Involvement from the Sector's Customers (Road Users)

- The sector's development and management is being led by the supplier side, with minimal involvement from road users (the customers).
- Road users are clearly not satisfied with the services they receive, but are unorganised.
- Weak accountability from suppliers, leading to excessive political interference in the sector.

Road users need to understand the central role they should play in the sector and efforts made to organise their advocacy role.

Weakness 7: Inadequate Local Road (DUCAR) Management Capacity

- **No coherent strategy** for managing DUCAR networks.
- **Far too many local authorities** (cir. 120), which continue to increase each year.
- **Weak technical & financial capacity** to carry out road management functions within local authorities.
- **No coherent allocation of responsibilities** for local roads and hence accountability (MoWT, MoLG, URF, UNRA, etc.).
- **Problems on DUCAR roads are worse** than on National Roads: they still require managing.
- **Imbalance** between strong National road management (UNRA) and many, weak, uncoordinated local agencies.

Weakness 8: Limited Availability of Required Road Management Expertise

- Big problem attracting and retaining necessary skills, in public and private sectors.
- Uganda is competing internationally for the talents/skills it needs to manage its roads.
- Uganda's market is small: most experts in the sector know each other.
- Reluctance to criticise or hold someone properly accountable for delivery, leading to complacency and under-performance.

Other Problems!

- **Weak MoWT:** lacks leadership, regulation of sector, coordination, policy formulation, etc.
- **Overloaded UNRA,** especially following the unplanned doubling of its network.
- **Weak/new Road Fund,** with excessive interference from MoFPED.
- Excessive **Political interference.**
- **Very high costs** for road works.
- **Excessive contract delays and cost overruns.**

What to Do?

- **Ensure senior decision makers Have a Clear Understanding** of Who is responsible for what and why.
- Have a **Coherent, Long-Term Strategy** for the Sector.
- **Apply Clear Leadership & Consistent Communication.**
- **Educate, Organise & Involve Sector Users** (the Customers) in Policy formulation and accountability.
- **Allocate / Delegate Responsibilities Clearly** between and within organisations.
- **Give institutions the necessary resources** and let them get on with their jobs, BUT...
- **Demand Accountability** at all stages.
- **Establish Performance Agreements** focused on delivering results rather than inputs (treatments).