

---

## Ethiopia plans USD 720 million for roads in 2009

*Tuesday, 24 Feb, 2009*

Reuters reported that Ethiopia has set aside ETB 8 billion to construct new roads and upgrade dilapidated ones in 2009. The nation's roads have suffered decades of neglect but the government has said that the network's expansion is a top priority. Crumbling or overloaded infrastructure is seen as an obstacle to economic development in many African countries.

Mr Samson Wondimu public relations head of the Ethiopian Road Authority said that the Horn of Africa country has spent USD 3.6 billion over the past decade to build 101,359 kilometers asphalt and gravel roads.

Mr Samson said that "Recognizing the importance of road transport in supporting social and economic growth and in meeting poverty alleviation, the government has placed increased emphasis on improving the quality and size of road infrastructure. The development of the country's road network was given top priority as a core component of the country's economic progress."

Mr Samson said that major roads are being resurfaced or upgraded and networks of local feeder roads are also under construction, adding that all major agricultural production areas and tourist attractions were now connected.

He said that "The average distance from a road has been reduced from 21 kilometers in 1997 to 12.8 kilometers in 2008."

Mr Samson said that Ethiopia used heavy machinery to shatter the impregnable natural stone walls and canyons that form a fortress into northern Ethiopia where the historic regions of Axum, Lallibela and Gondar are to be found. Highways linking the capital Addis Ababa with neighboring Djibouti's Red Sea port and those connecting regions producing the country's major export crop of coffee were now in superb condition. Just over a third of the USD 3.6 billion spent was provided by the International Development Agency, the European Union and Japan, while the state paid the rest.

He said that Ethiopia's Emperor Haile Selassie's regime inherited only 6,400 kilometers of road following the fall of an Italian Fascist occupation of the country. A military regime that overthrew Haile improved the network to 18,000 kilometers. Ethiopia has a national carrier that is reputed to be one of the largest and fastest growing in Africa. The country also has a 850 kilometers railroad linking it with Djibouti's port and is used to ferrying bulk cargo.

(Sourced from Reuters)

For more news visit at [www.steelguru.com](http://www.steelguru.com)