

Angola holds its (2nd RTCC) **Second Railway Technical Cycle of Conferences** in Luanda on 10 - 11 October 2023, organised by ATECFA (Associação dos Técnicos Ferroviários de Angola – Angolan Railway Technicians Association) in close partnership with CFL (Caminho de Ferro de Luanda – Luanda Railway Company) and supported by CFB (Caminho de Ferro Benguela), CFM (Caminho de Ferro de Mocimedeas), ANTT (Agência Nacional dos Transportes Terrestres) and MINTRANS (Ministry of Transportation). This event also celebrates the 135 anniversary of the railway exploration in Angola and to highlight the SADC Railway Safety Week .

The idea is to contribute to promote technological development, the improvement of public policies, the training and technical development of professionals in the sector, to promote railway safety campaign involving members of community around railway infrastructure, the exchange of information and the dissemination of best practices nationally and internationally.

The Conference is being organised under the theme of: **THE CHALLENGES OF EXPANSION OF RAILWAY TRANSPORT NETWORK: THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PARTICIPATION OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR"**

The event expect 250 participants including, senior officials from Ministry of Transportation, Angolan railway high authorities, Angolan public and private railway companies, governmental high officials, local academics, international experts from the railway industry, private companies headquartered in Angola, and railway-related associations.

Angola is going through a new page in the transport sector in general, highlighting the entry of private companies in the railway sector, in particular in the Lobito Corridor.

Also noteworthy is the construction works of the New Luanda International Airport - António Agostinho Neto Airport, the construction of a railway branch that connects the CFL to the new Luanda airport, under construction of new stations fully equipped to serve the interconnection with the airport. All this new infrastructure is scheduled to be inaugurated in December this year.

These new infrastructures have their inauguration announced for December of this year. A source connected to the dossier reported that 2300 candidates submitted their applications and were among many selected for the specific psychotechnical tests.

Recently, the new Boards of Directors of the three public railway companies (CFM, CFL, CFB) were appointed.

Since 2010, new laws have been passed aimed at a profound restructuring of the transport sector in general.

The expansion of Angola's rail network is on the agenda, as well as several projects to interconnect the three railway lines, currently without interconnection with each other.

A major challenge in line is the existence of a specific system of vocational training, with regular programs, refreshment course and other initiatives aimed at a properly qualified and updated workforce in the face of the challenges surrounding the railway industry and operations today.

Despite the existence of three railway vocational training centres in the country, built under the loan of the Republic of China, these centres are still struggling with a series of handicaps that hinder their entry into service, and thus be able to provide the labour market with trained personnel ready for the demand for the modernisation of the sector in this era of information and communication technologies.

Universities, technological institutes do not yet attach great importance to the inclusion of courses specific to the rail transport sector. Better and effective cooperation between public and private railway companies and universities and technological institutes should certainly bring about changes in the field of vocational training at various levels.

It is also worth mentioning the recent emergence of non-governmental organizations linked to the railway sector and other areas of transport, which also intend to develop various programs to contribute to the improvement in the elaboration of public policies by the government, as well as to advocate the promotion of best practices, aiming at the emergence of an integrated sustainable transport system, modern and inclusive, to better serve the development of Angola's economy and its integration in the Southern African region.

The last SADC summit, which took place in Luanda in August, is also part of this general perspective of the transport sector.

