

Road Safety Management Reforms

The Problem

Prior to the establishment of the Federal Road Safety Corps in 1988, the World Bank had declared Nigeria as the worst country, only after Ethiopia, to drive a motor vehicle. This was due to the worrisome high rate of carnage on Nigerian roads. However, following a series of reforms introduced in line with the current (2011-2015) administration's transformation agenda, the World Bank recently declared the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) as the best example of a lead agency in Africa and even recommended that other developing countries emulate Nigeria's experience as a model for improving their country's road safety profile.

This impressive transformation was made possible due to some of the reforms, which were carefully conceived in line with the government's transformation agenda aimed at placing Nigeria's roads within the league of the twenty global safest roads by year 2020.

Reform Actions

Revamping of the National Uniform Licensing Scheme: Despite over a decade of operating the National Uniform Licensing scheme (NULS), which comprises the national driver's licence and number plate, this administration observed new challenges that emerged: the possibility of a car having multiple number plates; absence of safety and security features on number plates; non-existence of a comprehensive database, which makes crimes committed with vehicles difficult to track; and the possibility of obtaining multiple licences by a driver. Determined to remedy these challenges and bring the scheme at par with global best practices, the FRSC engaged on a strategic rebuilding of the entire National Uniform Licensing scheme (NULS) spectrum for a robust identity management system using biometrics to support unique identification of licence holders and a plate numbers regime tied to individual owners and not just the vehicle.

Launching of New Biometric Drivers Licence

In 2010, President Goodluck Jonathan launched a new national driver's license for Nigeria. The biometrics driver's licence, which meets international standards, makes multiple possession by any driver impossible. It is also mandatory for fresh applicants to undergo stringent oral and practical examinations in addition to being sponsored by a certified driving school before being eligible for issuance of a driver's licence. The NULS reform also saw the introduction of new number plate regime in Nigeria with a secured national database.

Making roads safer through increasing highway enforcement:

In implementing its critical mandate of accident prevention and making roads safer, the FRSC within the reforms initiated by this administration, embarked on strategic activities for preventing and minimising road traffic carnage (RTC) through enforcements as well as providing prompt attention and care to victims of road crashes. With the aid of information technology, the FRSC now has capacity to track real-time the location of all her operational vehicles including patrol vehicles, tow trucks, and ambulances and also communicate with them instantly to attend promptly to traffic emergencies.

Establishment of Modern Emergency Centre

A modern emergency call centre with a toll free line 122 is providing a platform for members of the public to report traffic incidents and emergencies to the Corps for prompt response and transportation of critically injured crash victims to hospitals. With an electronic dashboard in operation, the FRSC is able to monitor its operations nationwide and generate critical intelligence for efficient deployment of resources.

As part of efforts at improving safety, getting Nigeria's accession to the Geneva and Vienna Conventions on road signs and markings was made possible by this administration in 2010. Within the sub-region, Nigeria is providing technical assistance to Sierra Leone with the secondment of three FRSC experts aimed at enhancing safe motoring environment in the Republic of Sierra Leone. In the same vein the government of the Republic of Ghana despatched a 10 man technical team comprising the police, likening and other road safety and traffic administration related agencies for a study of the Nigeria's Federal Road Safety Corps lead agency model, for possible replication in the Republic of Ghana.

Adoption of the Nigeria Road Safety Strategy (2014 – 2018): The Nigeria Road Safety Strategy (NRSS) document was designed to pave the way for concerted national action on reducing fatal and serious injury on Nigerian roads. The essence of the document, which has been considered by the Federal Executive Council, is a medium term road sector policy to re-define the approach on road safety in Nigeria and to create a lasting legacy for the future generation. Core to the strategy is the development of a framework in line with the World Health Organisation's recommendation and also for emulating global best practices. The NRSS defines the responsibilities of the various tiers of governments and non-governmental agencies for envisioning a country where road traffic crashes result in zero death in Nigeria.

Adoption of the Road Transport Safety Standardisation Scheme (RTSSS): A policy for regulating road transportation has been instituted by this administration. The Road Transport Safety Standardisation Scheme (RTSSS) prescribes minimum safety standards for all fleet operators with minimum of five vehicles. The RTSSS launched by President Jonathan has enabled the country to obtain critical information of all registered operators including data on the types of vehicles used by operators, their vehicular registration, driver's records, crash history, and offences committed. Annually operators are graded and certified in accordance to their safety ratings. This in part would guide commuters in choosing the preferred operators in terms of their safety ratings. A website, www.frsc-rtsss.org, contains the categories of fleet operators and other general travel information, location of tow trucks, petrol stations, and hospitals on the website.

Installation of Speed limit Devices

Installation of speed limiting devices in vehicles: Following massive road rehabilitation under this government's transformation agenda, there was an uptick in road crashes caused by speeding. This necessitated proactive initiatives to stem the trend with the introduction of compulsory installation of speed limiting devices in vehicles operating on Nigerian roads. A draft speed limiting regulation has been drafted in collaboration with the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) to facilitate enforcement. Part of the regulation includes compulsory installation of speed limiters on all commercial vehicles. Based on SON CAP approval for the installation of speed governors, enforcement of speed limiting devices will commence on 1st June 2015 for commercial vehicles and will thereafter be extended to other categories of vehicles. It is envisaged that the initiative would crash road traffic crashes by at least 30%.

Improving fleet management and road safety literacy: The government has introduced a standard school bus policy to ensure that both private and public schools can convey children to and from school in comfort and safety. This is in addition to the federal government's directive that road safety should be infused into school curriculum and

taught at all primary and junior secondary schools nationwide. A new category of driver's licence is being introduced for regulating and certifying convoy drivers.

Main Achievements

1. With the NULS, it is possible in one index to view the identity of vehicle owners tied to their driver's licence, traffic offences committed, motor vehicle insurance, and road crashes, making it easy to instantly locate every traffic offender, including fleeing offenders. Today, the NULS database is shared with security organisations like the police, state security agency, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and relevant financial institutions to combat financial crimes and promote national security.
2. Nigeria now enjoys reciprocity with EU countries and some states in the United States of America, where holders of the new Nigerian driver's licence who reside abroad can exchange their Nigeria's driver's licence for a driver's licences of these aforementioned countries.
3. Figures from the FRSC show that the reforms have actually reduced road traffic crashes by 50%, reduced deaths from road crashes by 28% in 2010, reduced road traffic carnage crashes (RTC) by 11%, and reduced deaths from road crashes by 8% in 2011. Official statistics from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) reveal that, apart from 2005, road accidents and fatalities from them consistently went up from 2005 to 2009, so the improvements from 2010 are worthy of commendation¹⁰.
4. Road safety management reforms have brought issues of safety on the roads on the consciousness of Nigerian drivers. The regular public awareness campaign mounted by the FRSC has made this possible.
5. The fleet management and road safety literacy campaign has led to the training of 700 convoy drivers nationwide. The training of all government drivers is also in progress.

Key Challenges

1. Lack of driver testing before the issuance of drivers' licences
2. Lack of vehicle testing before the issuance of roadworthiness certificates
3. Weak enforcement of regulations dealing with traffic offenders, particularly over-speeding, reckless driving, and overloading of commercial vehicles
4. The culture of impunity on the road by reckless drivers

Assessment of Reform Initiative

When judged against the 10 criteria of assessment of reforms, significant achievements have been recorded in road safety management in Nigeria.

S/No.	Assessment Criteria	Result of Assessment
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¹⁰ Digitalised systems employed since 2010 for tracking Road Traffic Crashes indicates increases in number of crashes, casualties and fatalities – FRSC annual Report 2013

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1.	Have the reforms improved the quality and quantity of public services?	Road accidents crashes and fatalities from them are shown by improved digitised data to have increased since 2010. However other services provided that include the modern emergency care and emergency call centres are designed to mitigate fatalities from road crashes over time and are have been positively received by the public as indicated by an increase in number of calls fielded through the call centres
2.	Do more people now have access to services, including disadvantaged groups such as women, young persons, and people with disabilities?	Yes. As a special drivers license grouped as Class J is issued for the disadvantaged drivers, as part of efforts to create a more inclusive road use
3.	Have reforms reduced the cost of governance?	Not Applicable
4.	Have the reforms made the service more affordable for citizens?	Not Applicable
5.	Have the reforms reduced corruption?	Yes. Touting of drivers licence has been phased out with the new process of acquiring licence. FRSC officials are reputed to be far less corrupt than the police and other enforcement agencies.
6.	Have the reforms reduced unnecessary bureaucracy and red tape?	No. The new driver's licences are tortuously difficult to get and has opened a corrupt window for people who can get them easily and quickly for a fee. However, the establishment of more centres across the country has reduced the initial difficulty experienced by applicants.
7.	Are the reforms likely to lead to improved development outcomes?	Yes, as prevention of untimely deaths improves quality of life through raising life expectancy.
8.	Are things improving, staying the same or getting worse?	Things are not improving in the core business of the FRSC, which is reducing accidents crashes and fatalities. Collaborations with fleet managers to ensure installation and use of speed limiting

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		devices and increased highway enforcement of speed limits are beginning to show some positive results.
9.	Where things are improving, will those improvements endure?	This is difficult to predict at the moment, as there is not yet a change of driving culture. An improvement in FRSC public enlightenment and enforcement of traffic regulations should help to improve road culture in Nigeria.
10.	Where things are not improving, what should be done?	Not Applicable.

Proposed Next Steps

1. Institute a rigorous driver-testing scheme through the state's Vehicle Inspection Office before driver's licences can be issued. Regular monitoring of driving schools to ensure that applicants of drivers licence are properly and trained.
2. Work with vehicle inspection offices to put in place a proper vehicle scheme to ensure that vehicles are rigorously tested before certificates of roadworthiness are issued.
3. Continue with on-going reform initiatives that consolidate the gains recorded in the last few years of implementing the reforms.
4. Strengthen enforcement mechanism for dealing with traffic offenders.
5. Continue with capacity training of staff of FRSC to bring the Corps into cutting edge.
6. Deploy more officers on the roads and reduce the number of office-based staff by seeking a legislative approval to employ more staff to cope with enormous challenge of curtailing the culture of impunity on the road by reckless drivers.