**PRESS RELEASE**

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 **2019 ROAD USER SATISFACTION SURVEY**

**1.0 BACKGROUND**

Uganda Road Fund (URF) as the agency mandated to finance routine and periodic maintenance of all public roads strives to ensure that its operations are designed for the provision of the best services to road users by maintaining a high degree of responsiveness to their needs. URF therefore undertakes periodic road user satisfaction surveys as a mechanism through which road users can provide feedback to the Fund and its stakeholders on the quality of service provision in the roads asset.

The 2019 Road User Satisfaction Survey is the 7th of its kind in Uganda and the 3rd to be undertaken by URF. The survey involves randomly selecting and interviewing road users at predetermined points on all categories of public roads including national roads which are managed by UNRA, city roads managed by KCCA, district roads managed by the various districts and Urban roads managed by Town Councils and municipal authorities. The sample for the 2019 survey included 2,800 road users constituting pedestrians, cyclists, passengers, motorcar drivers, bus drivers, taxi drivers, and truck drivers.

Data collection for the survey was undertaken in February and March 2019 with the reference period being the 12 months before the date of data collection. Topics of interest included general satisfaction with the road network, rating of performance of road agencies on various aspects, rating of availability of roadside services and amenities, road users’ perceptions about road safety, driver behavior, and opinions on cross cutting issues in the sector among others.

**2.0 OBJECTIVE OF THE RUSS**

The overall objective is to provide a mechanism through which road users can provide feedback to providers of services in the roads subsector.

Specifically, the 2019 RUSS aimed to:

1. Measure the level of user satisfaction with the public roads network;
2. Determine how users’ experience with different road attributes has changed relative to previous years;
3. Establish the reasons for changes in (2) above if any;
4. Establish road user perception about road safety and related issues;
5. Evaluate the performance of road agencies in meeting user expectations; and
6. Determine areas of focus by road service providers in order to improve satisfaction of road users.

# 3.0 KEY FINDINGS OF THE 2019 SURVEY

# *Road User Satisfaction*

* About 57% of road users were satisfied with the road network in 2019 compared to 27% in the last survey 2 years ago. The year 2019 had the highest percentage of satisfied road users since the survey started in 2012;
* The improvement in road user experience was attributed mainly to better road maintenance and rehabilitation. Other contributing factors were road widening; quicker journey times and perceived improvement in road safety.
* The highest satisfaction scores were observed in Western region followed by Eastern and central regions respectively. Northern region and Kampala had the lowest levels of satisfaction.
* National roads had the highest satisfaction levels followed by KCCA roads. Roads under districts, municipalities and town councils had the least satisfaction scores.
* The major reasons for dissatisfaction with Uganda’s roads in 2019 were the same from previous years, namely: narrow road widths, potholes, inadequate road maintenance, poor drainage and dust.

# *Availability of road related amenities and services*

* Road users considered eateries, fuel stations and police posts as satisfactorily available on most roads. They however decried the unavailability of public toilets and roadside parking facilities.
* KCCA roads were rated as having the most readily available facilities above. District and Urban roads were found to be the most lacking especially for public toilets where about 70% of the road users rated their availability as unsatisfactory.
* It should be noted that the above services might not always be directly under management of road agencies. However, one of the poorly performing services directly under management of road agencies was incident management (post-accident cleanup) which road users deemed wanting on all the different categories of public roads.

# *Road Safety*

* The percentage of road users who felt safe on Uganda’s roads increased to 58% compared to 37% in 2017.
* Road users perceived the roads in western region as the safest with over 74% of road users in western region reporting that they felt safe on roads in the region followed by eastern region (60%) and Kampala (56%). Central and Northern regions had the lowest safety scores with less than 50% of respondents feeling safe on the roads in the 2 regions.
* Similar to previous years, pedestrians felt the most vulnerable of the road user groups with only 53% feeling safe on Uganda’s roads.
* UNRA roads were considered the safest roads in 2019 followed by KCCA roads. Roads users felt that district, urban and community access roads were the least safe road category.
* Driver training by a licensed driving instructor was at about 57% among drivers and only 11% among motorcyclists. Similarly, driving permit ownership was over 90% among drivers and only 18% for motorcyclists.
* The reasons advanced for not feeling safe on Uganda’s roads included narrow roads (26%), potholes (20%), dust (15%), reckless driving (11%) and poor signage (6%) respectively.

# *Public opinion on other roads related issues*

* Road users still have challenges in identifying the correct government entity (UNRA vs Local Government authority) that is responsible for a particular road or the agencies’ mandates regarding roads.
* User perceptions about the Government’s commitment towards reducing road accidents and repairing roads remained positive with about 90% of respondents being of the view that the Central Government is indeed committed towards improving the public road network.
* Road users however felt that road agencies do not attend to road repairs in time nor to appropriate quality.
* Similarly, many of the respondents (about 40%) felt that the road designs do not meet the needs of special interest groups such as pedestrians, school going children and persons with disabilities.

# *Priorities for implementation*

Road users considered the following areas as the priorities that road agencies should focus on in subsequent years in order to meet and sustain road users’ expectations. The leading areas for prioritisation were road maintenance, paving unpaved roads and widening of roads respectively.4.0 RECOMENDATEIONS

For a better road user experience, it is recommended that besides addressing the priorities identified by road users, the following interventions should be undertaken:

1. The Ministry of Works and Transport should ensure that the issues identified by road users are incorporated in the sector’s long and medium term plans such as the Road Sector Development Plan and strategic plans of associated agencies. Of concern are issues of road safety, roadside facilities, green/eco-friendly vehicles, and provision of utility corridors among others.
2. Concerted efforts should be undertaken to improve road safety by all concerned agencies including the MoWT, UPF, Transport Licensing Board and National Road Safety Council. Of particular concern should be:
3. Enforcement of driving standards and regulations among all drivers especially motorcyclists;
4. Strengthening road safety awareness programmes targeting behavioural change among road users, particularly on the critical role that human factors play in road accidents; and
5. Ensuring that road designs cater for needs of special interest road user groups. To this end, MoWT needs to enforce the NMT Policy to ensure that ‘Universal Design’ principles are included in all new and refurbished NMT infrastructure. Similarly, existing non-compliant NMT infrastructure should be retrofitted to ‘Universal Design’ principles.
6. Road agencies should continue engaging the general public in their activities as a means of increasing public awareness of the roles of road agencies. Similarly, the public should be educated on their responsibility towards preserving the roads asset including road furniture. Finally, road agencies should endeavour to always make available information on ongoing road projects such as source of funding; contractors; scope of works; and start and estimated completion dates as means to manage road users’ expectations.
7. The Government should provide the much needed capacity support to DUCAR agencies to enable them efficiently manage their vast road networks and meet road user expectations. The new road equipment from Japan has greatly helped towards ensuring that roads are better maintained. However, related challenges still persist such as poor remuneration of machine operators which affects staff turnover among the operators. In addition, the ministry still needs to plug gaps of lack of key road equipment especially in urban councils if quality works are to be achieved within the force account guidelines.

Additionally, a review on the mode of delivery of Force Account in Designated Agencies should also be considered.

1. Efforts towards an integrated transport system should be intensified. The Government through MoWT should strengthen the pursuit of a multi-modal transport system to avoid over-reliance on road transport. Incorporation of light rail and Bus Rapid Transit system will go a long way in addressing congestion on our roads especially within the city and surrounding areas while water and railway transport would provide efficient options for cargo transport over long distances. This would in turn reduce deterioration of road infrastructure resulting from overloaded heavy goods vehicles.
2. Finally, GoU needs to match funding for road maintenance with actual maintenance needs to a reasonable extent. This is especially so considering that with the exception of narrow roads, most of the major reasons for dissatisfaction with Uganda’s roads are in a way related to inadequate financing of road maintenance.