



Phil Kirkland began the meeting by giving an account of the PWI and its activities before proceeding to the main presentation.

The Namibian railway network [see map below], which extends for some 1,480 miles at a gauge of 3 feet 6 inches (1.067m), carries predominantly freight train services and a small number of passenger services (including 'Desert Express' between Windhoek and Swakopmund, Rovos Rail from South Africa). Namibia Rail Construction (a joint venture between operator TransNamib and D & M Rail Construction (Pty) Ltd.) is responsible for carrying out track maintenance, rehabilitation and new track construction.

Recent developments have involved three different types of construction. Firstly the permanent way on the existing route between Kranzberg and Tsumeb, which serves significant freight flows between Walvis Bay and the north of the country, has been completely renewed since 2011. Its existing construction (flat bottom rails on steel sleepers with jointed track) had deteriorated over time; it was reconstructed with heavier flat bottom rails on concrete sleepers and continuous welded rail. The project employed an intensive labour regime, and the practices associated with this method of working were contrasted with the methods employed today on Network Rail and equivalent bodies in the UK.

Secondly the new 192 mile northern extension route from Tsumeb to Oshikango (and 36 mile branch from Ondangwa to Oshakati) has also been constructed in three stages since 2005 to modern, maintainable standards. Maintenance equipment for both renewed track and new construction has had to be upgraded accordingly, in particular through the investment of £2 million in a Plasser 08-16SH tamping machine, which has replaced two life-expired tampers and can work on both plain line and S & C formations. Other equipment now available includes rail-mounted jeep and trailer combinations and a track recording trolley.

Thirdly the existing route between Luderitz and Aus, which reopened in 2018, has been rebuilt using tubular modular track (T-Track), a track form unique to South Africa which provides solutions in low lying areas or those subject to desert conditions (here on a new alignment due to a track washout). It features twin reinforced concrete beams linked with steel tie bars (to maintain gauge) without ballast or sleepers, and rails fixed using standard fastenings. This type of track avoids line blockages due to blown sand, which occurred with conventional construction under these conditions, by allowing sand to blow underneath the gap left between concrete beam and rail.

Several future network extensions are planned in order to connect Namibia with neighbouring countries. These are the links from Oshikango north into Angola, from Gobabis east into Botswana (as part of the Trans-Kalahari Railway) and from Grootfontein east into Zambia.



The railways of Namibia

- Nakop to Windhoek
- Seeheim to Luderitz
- Windhoek to Gobabis
- Windhoek to Kranzberg
- Kranzberg to Swapokmund and Walvis Bay
- Kranzberg to Tsumeb
- Otjiwarongo to Outjo
- Otavi to Grootfontain
- Tsumeb to Oshikango



Map of Namibian Railway Network (image: WCM)

NOTE: The total route length is 1,480 route miles or 2,382 route km, not as stated on the map.

Philip Benzie - PWI Lancaster Barrow and Carlisle Section Secretary



High quality infrastructure Ondangwa to Oshikango and Oshikato

Improving inspection and maintenance techniques







Suzuki RRV HiRail inspection vehicle











Supplied by Plasser South Africa, 08-16 Split Head Universal tamper with DAR and WIN ALC





The newly built Ondangawa triangle.
To the left, the route to Oshakati, to the right the route to Oshikango.



Meanwhile across the border in Angola.....









New tourist operations Namibia

Phil Kirkland
Vice President for England (North)
The Permanent Way Institution



TransNamib
The Desert Express

Rovos Rail

The Pride of Africa





Moving forward

Phil Kirkland
Vice President for England (North)
The Permanent Way Institution

Future plans, aspirations and strategies

For Namibia to fully position herself as a key logistics hub within the southern African region, it must consider expanding its rail network to connect to neighbouring countries like Angola, Zambia and Botswana.

In order to achieve this, the following key projects must be completed:

- A rail link between Grootfontein , Rundu and Katima Mulilo towards Zambia:
- The rail extension east from Gobabis to Buitepos (border rail head)
- The development of the Trans-Kalahari railway towards Botswana.



Angola



Zambia



Botswana

N\$10 Billion loan: Arandis to Walvis Bay line upgrade contracts

Work on the projects started at the beginning of March 2019 and will last for 27 months.

Arandis to Kranzberg

A joint venture between two Chinese companies Qingjian Group and Unik Construction Engineering won the tender.

Kranzberg to Walvis Bay

Three Chinese companies, including China Gezhouba Group Company Limited, had been forwarded tenders to upgrade the railway line.

Stunned local bidders said Namibia was a “bad place” for local contractors, who seem to be perpetually excluded from lucrative contracts.

It remains to be seen as to who will be awarded any new railway contract to build north to the Angolan Border, or east to Botswana and/or Zambia



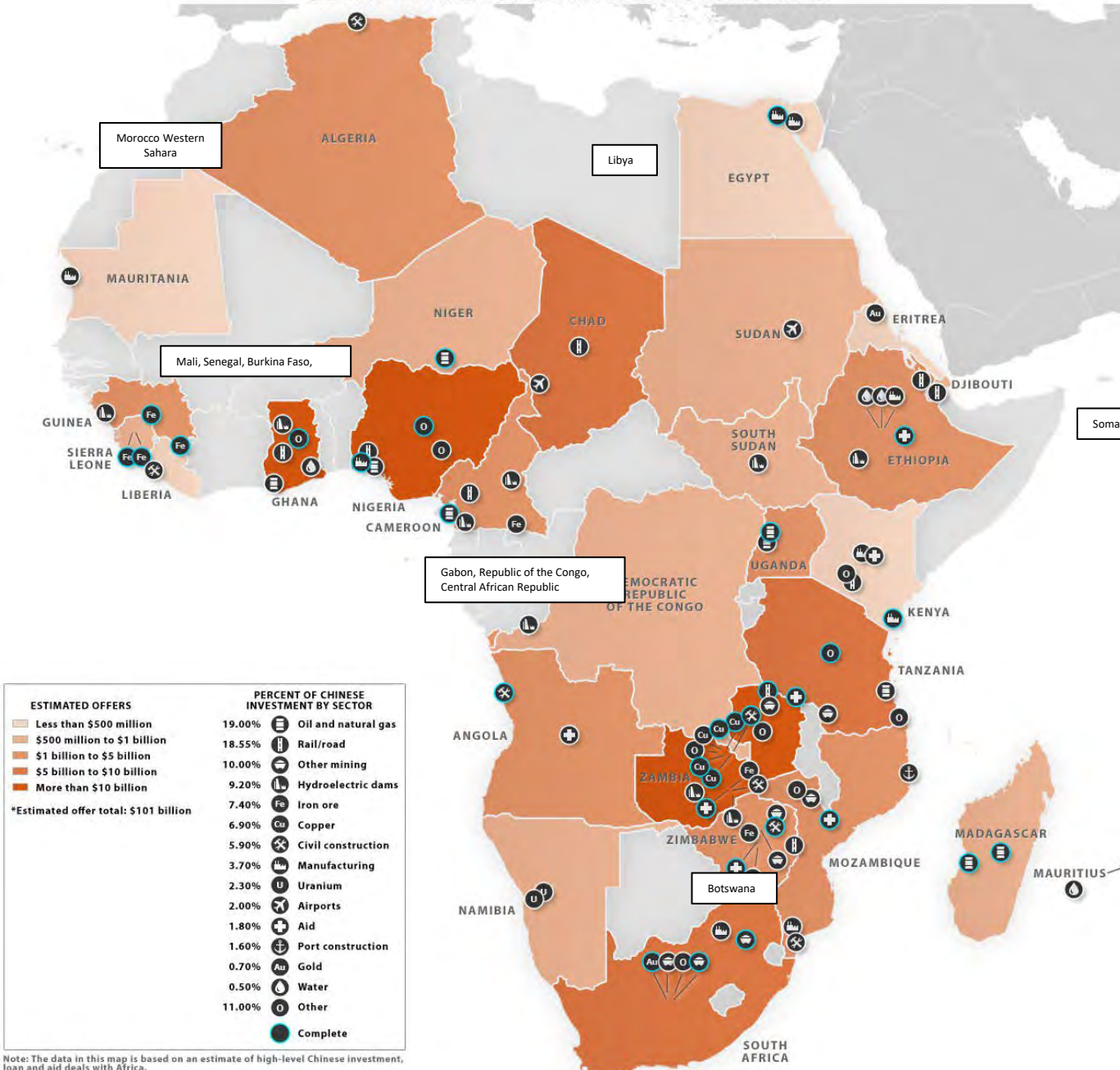
New York Times Magazine

THE MONEY ISSUE

Is China the World's New Colonial Power?

The rising superpower has built up enormous holdings in poor, resource-rich African countries — but its business partners there aren't always thrilled.

CHINESE INVESTMENT OFFERS IN AFRICA SINCE 2010



Investments
in Africa
by
The People's Republic
of China



Chinese Embassy Windhoek - Economic relations

China and Namibia have developed close economic relations, with trade increasing two-fold between the two countries from 2003-2006. The Export-Import Bank of China signed off a concessional loan for purchasing of locomotives, wagons and infrastructure for the new railway being built in northern Namibia, and China further pledged concessional loans, preferential export buyer's credit, grants and of interest-free loans.



Chinese built Ghost towns



Chinese built affordable housing

The Trans-Kalahari Railway (TKR) project

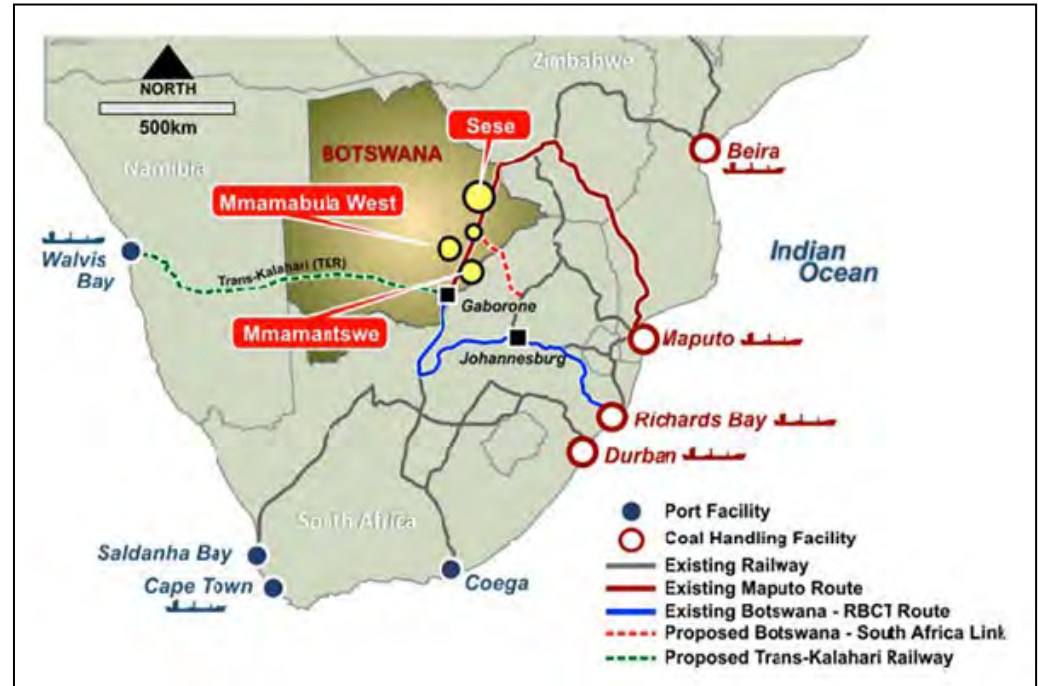
A 1,500-km 25Kv AC railway that traverses the two countries to the Port of Walvis Bay.

The project is expected to cost US\$14.2bn

TKR cuts the existing distance by 400 kilometers and provides linkages between the Americas and East European markets and the Southern African hinterland.

The TKR would connect Botswana to the Namibian Atlantic coast, traversing the vast semi-arid, sandy Kalahari Desert from Botswana to Namibia, with the sole benefit of connecting the land-locked Botswana to Namibia's port of Walvis Bay, thus unlocking the value of significant coal reserves in Botswana.

TKR would benefit landlocked countries like Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe



Exciting times, but still clouded by Politics

Thank you

