

**Zambia Daily Mail – Monday June 23, 2008**

## **RSZ, TAZARA set to improve rail transport**

By CHARLES MUSONDA

The Railway Systems of Zambia (RSZ) has started negotiating with the Tanzania-Zambia Railways (TAZARA) to enhance operations of the two companies to save Government from huge road maintenance costs.

RSZ Chief Executive Officer Benjamin Even said this in a statement issued in Lusaka yesterday “it is imperative that negotiations with other companies in the railway sector are opened in order to save the deteriorating road network.”

Mr Even said haulage of heavy goods was detrimental to the road network and that it was for that reason RSZ had embarked on an ambitious programme of rehabilitating the railway network.

“The Railway Systems of Zambia has already started injecting funds into the Democratic Republic of Congo railways to assist with improved rail operations to the mutual benefit of all stakeholders in Zambia and the region,” he said.

Mr Even said RSZ recognized the need for additional investments as an obvious business demand using its market intelligence as evidenced by the accelerated investments of US\$2 million the company had put in since January this year.

He said RSZ shareholders have agreed to pump more funds into railway operations beyond what is stipulated in the concession agreement.

Mr Even said the shareholders had committed themselves to improving operations by injecting more funds into railways’ operations.

He said the shareholders made the commitment at a meeting they had with Minister of Communication and Transport, Dora Siliya, and her Commerce, Trade and Industry counterpart, Felix Mutati.

“RSZ is currently working on an investment plan which will be tabled before Government for appropriate action,” Mr Even said.

He said RSZ expected the government to demonstrate practical commitment in resolving outstanding concerns relating to vandalism, fuel levy, and unfair competition existing between road and rail transporters.

Mr Even said the proposed investment plan took into account Government's recognition that the Zambian economy required a viable and vibrant railway system which should proactively contribute to the desired rapid economic growth.