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## PRESS RELEASE

### IMPROVED RIVER TRANSPORT COULD SAVE MONEY AND TIME FOR AID DELIVERY (REPORT)

**Juba, South Sudan, 23 March, 2018** – Developing the river infrastructure and transport system could improve access and reduce the cost of transport of food and aid in South Sudan. Some of the country's biggest humanitarian issues are directly linked to, and worsened by its poor infrastructure. The country has the highest relative cost of food in the world according to the World Food Programme and over five million people are estimated to require food support in 2018.

Therefore, leveraging the river for transport would be opportune, concludes a report published by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and funded by the Government of Japan. The study assessed the feasibility and cost of developing South Sudan's river barge transport system.

While used locally for smaller transports, the White Nile River is barely used for larger goods transports. This is because the river is not deep or wide enough for barges to pass in some parts. The lack of port structures also makes unloading goods difficult or impossible – most ports today do not have a jetty.

The study assessed the river conditions through a bathymetric survey (mapping of width and depth) between Juba and Bor. Assessment of nine river ports was carried out in Juba, Mangalla, Mingkaman, Bor, Shambe, Bentiu, Malakal, Melut and Renk to inform future investments in port infrastructure.

The findings show that dredging is necessary to enable barge transport on the river and could provide long-term financial savings for humanitarian donors. Rehabilitation of river ports and installation of navigation aids are also key recommendations of the study, which provides a breakdown of the estimated costs of investment by area and location.

"We are very pleased that UNOPS successfully concluded the feasibility study of the river transportation. The Government of Japan will continue to support South Sudan. We recently announced the support of 34 Million USD," said H.E. Seiji Okada, Ambassador of Japan to South Sudan, at a workshop in Juba to discuss the findings.

Also present at the workshop were representatives from the government, including Hon. Taban Deng Gai, First Vice President; Hon. John Luk Jok, Minister of Transport; and Hon. Rebecca Joshua Okwaci, Minister of Roads and Bridges, as well as embassies, international organizations, UN agencies, NGOs and the private sector to discuss how river transportation could be improved.

UNOPS South Sudan Country Director, Peter Mutoredzanwa, hopes UNOPS will continue to be part of developing the river infrastructure in South Sudan: "The feasibility study is just the starting point. Now it is up to all of us to build on this and move towards creating a comprehensive barge transport system. This would not only bring emergency humanitarian response benefits but could also help fuel much-needed economic development."

Japan and UNOPS have previously collaborated on a number of infrastructure projects in South Sudan, including facilitating humanitarian access through the construction of a port facility in Mingkaman.

The full *Report on River Barge System Feasibility Study Project* can be found [on UNOPS website](#) (please scroll down), or [download the full report here](#).

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## **About UNOPS**

UNOPS provides peacebuilding, humanitarian and development projects with project management, infrastructure and procurement services. UNOPS projects in South Sudan are primarily focused on infrastructure development, assisting partners with the design, construction and rehabilitation of roads and airstrips, to improve access to livelihoods and basic services, as well as social infrastructure, such as schools and health clinics. UNOPS also provides camp management services to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

For more information about UNOPS work visit: <https://www.unops.org/south-sudan>

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