

Kenya receives locomotives for China-funded railway

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MOMBASA, KENYA: Kenya has received six locomotives from China, which will run on a China-funded standard gauge railway (SGR) due to start trial operation in June.



[Image Source: New China](#) - Kenyan Minister for Transport and Infrastructure James Macharia (C) and the Managing Director of the Kenya Railways Corporation Atanas Maina (R, front) attend the reception ceremony of the first batch of locomotives for the Mombasa-Nairobi standard gauge railway in Mombasa. Photo: Sun Ruibo/Xinhua

A ceremony was held on Wednesday at a port station in the coastal city of Mombasa, where the locomotives docked on Monday. Minister for Transport and Infrastructure, James Macharia, and Chinese envoys attended the ceremony to receive the locomotives manufactured by the China Railway Construction Corporation Limited (CRCC).

In his opening remarks, Macharia said the delivery of the first batch of locomotives marked a major milestone "in the journey to complete the Mombasa-Nairobi SGR project."

The 472 km railway links Mombasa to the capital Nairobi and will extend to the country's western border. China finances 90 percent of the project. Construction work is being carried out by the China Road and Bridge Corporation.

Kenya has sourced 56 locomotives from the CRCC to ferry passengers and goods on the railway line. "The locomotives are very modern and will give us quality service. Kenyans will be happy for the service they will provide," Macharia told

reporters.

Four of the six vehicles are DF8B diesel locomotives. The DF8B is the main traction locomotive model of the Chinese railway system, with 3,100 kilowatts of power and a maximum speed of 100 km/h. The other two are DF7G shunting locomotives with 1550 kilowatts of power, which will be used for marshaling and dispatching locomotives and rolling stock within stations.

The Mombasa-Nairobi railway is expected to begin trial operation in June and to officially open by the beginning of 2018. Kenya anticipates a boost to socio-economic growth upon the launch of the line -- the first phase of the China-funded SGR project in the country.

Macharia said that besides revolutionising transport, the modern railway would position Kenya as a trade and manufacturing hub. "This project will accelerate economic development of our country," he said, adding that railway development would underpin Kenya's quest for attaining industrial transformation.

The managing director of the Kenya Railways Corporation, Atanas Maina, said the trial operation of the railway in June would stimulate economic growth and help attract foreign direct investments in Kenya.

The second batch of locomotives, including DF11 passenger locomotives, is due to arrive at Mombasa port by the end of January.

The China-funded railway line in Kenya is expected to eventually extend to other East African nations.

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