

Mobility – Development – Culture

Towards Sustainable Transport Strategies

Mac Mashiri, a board member of the IFRTD represented IFRTD as the keynote speaker at the ***Mobility – Development – Culture: Towards sustainable transport strategies*** hosted by the German Peace Foundation based in Bonn late last year (1-2 December 2011).

Speakers and participants were invited from developed, transition and developing countries representing not-for profit organisations, networks, governments, development banks, development activists, academics and consultants. Countries represented included Colombia, Canada, Ethiopia, Germany, India, South Africa, Uganda, UK and USA.

Presentations from the various invited speakers sought to respond to issues of mobility, development and culture with the specific aim of finding sustainable pathways of moving towards equitable low-carbon mobility in developing and emerging countries. Mac's (IFRTD's) presentation revolved around strengthening transport interventions for rural development, through the proactive development and judicious deployment of innovative technologies including ICT with specific reference to achieving the MDGs. There was indeed a lot of discussion on and interest in this approach which served to highlight the contrasts particularly given that most of the presentations related to urban environments. It also provided an opportunity to market the IFRTD brand and what it stands for – which again was well received.

After two days of facilitated discussions, the Bonn Symposium generated essentially three holistic messages as “take-aways”:

- It must be recognised that the transport and mobility nexus is primarily a ***political question***. The challenge is to garner adequate ***political will and momentum*** to plan and universally design urban and rural spaces in such a way that everyone has equitable access to mobility and socio-economic development opportunities. The watch words are ***people*** and ***access***.
- ***Broad-based stakeholder participatory processes*** in development planning, implementation and evaluation must be institutionalised with a view to ensuring the widest possible acceptance of interventions and thus widen their impact, and by extension, entrench sustainability.
- Need for extensive ***capacity building*** interventions to build better ***institutional frameworks and improved human capacity*** particularly at the local government level which is recognised as the coalface of service delivery cannot be over-emphasized.



