
IFRTD Network News

Keeping you up to date with the latest news, opportunities, events, resources and projects from across the IFRTD network

October 2011

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Dear Member

Welcome to IFRTD's latest newsletter. Remember to check the IFRTD website, as we are adding new articles all the time: www.ifrtd.org.

As always, we welcome your additions to our websites and this e-newsletter. Please send your contributions to newsletter@ifrtd.org.

You have been subscribed to this newsletter as a member of the IFRTD network. Please follow the instructions at the bottom of the email if you wish to unsubscribe from future editions.

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NEWS:  
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Ha Noi Mountain roads need more investment – Vietnam News

HA NOI – Mountainous provinces in the north of Vietnam are still suffering from inadequate roading, despite significant financial investment in recent years. In recent years, at least 3,700 out of 4,300km of highway roads have been upgraded and revamped and hundreds of villages have been able to establish main routes to towns. Lao Cai Province had invested more than VND3.3 trillion (\$158.4 million). Now 101 villages in the provinces have accessible roads to towns.

Nevertheless, most roads in these provinces, especially those that serve highland villages, are in poor conditions and the percentage of villages with concrete roads is low and the lack of funding for maintenance has led to the quick degradation. Nguyen The Ha, deputy chairman of Ba Vi District People's Committee in Ha Noi, said most villages in the areas could not afford the funds required for maintaining and upgrading their roads. "Only people who travel on those deteriorating roads with their countless numbers of pot-holes can understand the suffering of local residents on a daily basis," Ha said. Le Ngoc Hoan, chairman of the Viet Nam Bridge and Road Science and Technology Association, said the level of socio-economic development of the provinces was low which meant it was difficult for them to attract funding at local levels.

The Ministry of Transport recently approved the national strategic plan to develop Viet Nam's rural transportation until 2020, with vision until 2030. Under the plan, by 2015, all villages nation-wide will have a road that lead to their centres, at least 70 per cent of these roads will be of concrete, and all makeshift bridges will be eliminated.

To read more please go to: <http://vietnamnews.vnagency.com.vn/Social-Issues/215576/Mountain-roads-need-more-investment.html>

News from Global Mountain Forum, 11th October 2011, Lucerne Switzerland

More than 100 participants representing governments, non-governmental organizations, academia, civil society, politics, business and the United Nations system will look to sharpen the profile of mountains on the international agenda during the Lucerne World Mountain Conference, a two-day meeting starting today in Lucerne (Switzerland).

Featuring open space discussions with international leading experts on the environment and sustainable development, the Conference will directly link mountains to green economy and institutional frameworks, namely the two key themes of the forthcoming United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), also known as Rio+20.

"This Conference is an excellent opportunity to help mountains stand tall on the Rio+20 agenda" said Dr Daniel Maselli from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. "It's time to increase and secure political commitment for Sustainable Mountain Development", he added.

The Lucerne Conference aims to produce insights on how to better integrate mountain ecosystem services, which largely correspond to the criteria of a low-carbon or green economy, into a new paradigm of sustainability.

"The diversity of life engendered in the mountains forms the basis of many of our cultivars, medicinal plants and material resources" remarked Dr Ashok Khosla, Chairman of Development Alternatives, who was awarded the Sasakawa environment prize ("the Nobel Prize of the environment world") in 2002. Dr Khosla went on to add: "Their role in regulating our climate and water systems is fundamental to the sustenance of our life on this planet."

One key challenge addressed at the Lucerne Conference will be the need to regenerate and conserve mountain ecosystems, equally vital for densely populated downstream areas, at the same time as ensuring poverty reduction.

"Mountain economy is largely green. However, mountains still have a high incidence of poverty", admitted Dr Andreas Schild, Director General of the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD). Just as new opportunities for investment are emerging in renewable energy, agriculture and ecosystem goods and services, "green economy has to recognize, value and compensate mountain ecosystem goods and services. This requires the promotion of market driven instruments, government policies and international regulations for carbon sequestration". The Lucerne Conference is being held within the framework of the Mountain Partnership, a United Nations alliance of diverse stakeholders including governments, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

"The increasing demand globally and regionally for mountain products and services" said Mr Olman Serrano, Coordinator of the Mountain Partnership "calls for new governance safeguards: access and benefit sharing, ownership of natural resources and the participation of mountain and rural communities in the decision making process."

As tangible outcome of the discussions and multistakeholder partnerships taking place today and tomorrow in Lucerne, Conference participants will develop a Call for Action, to promote renewed political commitment for sustainable mountain development, in particular in view of the Rio+20 process.

"Healthy mountain ecosystems are the foundation of healthy people, both in the mountains above and in the plains below" affirmed Dr Khosla, concluding: "To save civilization, there is no greater urgency today than to regenerate and conserve our mountains."

Trend of investing in building of Expressways in Asian countries

Sudhir from CAI Asia wrote to SUSTAN AP Discussion list on the trend of investing in building of Expressways in Asian countries: "Unfortunately, other countries are also pushing the same agenda in intercity transport. Massive highways are being built across Asia. India is trying hard to build 20km a day of intercity national highways and the impact of such intercity highways are huge and we need to look more actively at intercity solutions."

Examples of the following can be seen in China

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111904060604576570084262352852.html> and India <http://www.livemint.com/2011/06/17150418/India-eyes-record-road-network.html>

Sri Lanka Daily News: More buses to supplement rural fleet

Sri Lanka Transport Board (SLTB) will add 200 new mini buses to its outstation fleet to uplift the public transport facilities in rural areas. An SLTB spokesman said that the Treasury is due to release funds under the directives of President Mahinda Rajapaksa to implement this programme which will solve the bus shortage along rural routes.

"Deploying new mini buses in rural areas would ensure convenience and comfort of the public," he

said. Meanwhile, a project to repair 1,000 SLTB buses lying idle islandwide at bus depots is being implemented to add them to the rural fleet.

To read more please visit <http://www.dailynews.lk/2011/09/28/news23.asp>

Thailand Bangkok Post: Rural roads could be built as flood retaining walls

The Department of Rural Roads will look into building flood-wall roads along waterways in more than 20 river basins. Deputy Transport Minister Chatt Kuldiloke said roads built along the rivers could serve as flood walls that prevent water run-off from the rivers from flooding residential areas along the riverbanks. Wicharn Khunakoonsawat, director-general of the Department of Rural Roads, said there are 25 river basins in Thailand. The construction of riverside roads at all 25 river basins must be in line with the national master plan on flood prevention. The master plan outlines which kinds of riverside roads should be built in each area. In some areas, for example, the drafters of the plan had suggested the riverside roads should be similar to mud dams. The recent flooding has affected 57 provinces and damaged more than 577 roads, Pol Lt Gen Chatt said. Provinces with the most damaged roads are Nakhon Sawan, Phichit, Sing Buri, and Chainat where flood levels have kept rising. To read more please go to: <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/local/259414/roads-could-be-built-as-flood-retaining-walls>

Colombia debates Rural Development Act

Much debate has been generated in Colombia concerning the draft law on rural development released by the Ministry of Agriculture. Academics, NGOs and social movements participate in the discussion, coinciding most of them in criticising the poor scope of the project regarding development issues and mitigation of poverty in the field. Among the main critiques, it is heard that it is more a law of land than one for rural development, it doesn't have policies and clear mechanisms to address serious poverty issues of peasants and has left out key issues like food security, innovation and institutional problems... To read more please follow this link: <http://www.rimisp.org/inicio/noticia.php?id=465>

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OPPORTUNITIES:  
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The Global Development Network (GDN) News : APPLY NOW Global Development Awards and Medals Competition. Research question on `Urbanization and Development`

Do you have a research question on `Urbanization and Development` you want to explore but are short of funds for? Here is a chance to receive grants of up to US\$ 30,000 to pursue your academic quest. The Global Development Network (GDN) is also giving you the opportunity to get up to US\$ 10,000 in recognition of the quality of your completed research under this topic. GDN promotes superior research through the Japanese Award for Outstanding Research on Development for innovative research proposals and its Medals for Research on Development for quality research papers. A second prize of US\$ 5,000 is awarded in the two categories as well. In addition, the finalists will be given a chance to present their work before an international high profile audience in development research at the 13th Global Development Conference scheduled to be held in June 2012.

Entries should be specific to the following themes:

1. The Interactive Economy and Urban Development
 2. Urban Externalities (Contagious Disease, Congestion and Crime) and Urban Poverty
 3. The Enabling Environment - Housing, Transportation and Infrastructure
- All applications and documents must be submitted electronically only at <http://opa.gdnet.org> For any further queries related to the competition write to us at awards@gdnet.org

World Congress of Rural Sociology 2012 Call for abstracts, Session N° 20 - "Latin American Rural Workers"

Historically, rural workers have been seen as hidden subjects by Rural Sociology. This is despite their importance increasing in recent decades, either due to their numbers as rural population or due to the role of their organisations in social conflicts all over Latin America. Current technological growth and development have not been accompanied by improved living conditions and work for Latin American rural workers, keeping them as one of the most disadvantaged sectors in the distribution of benefits from the agricultural boom. In general, their working conditions have not improved and their families have not been able to cut the cycle of the chronic poverty in which they find themselves in. In fact, many of the jobs created in this sector do not meet the necessary requirements to be considered as decent work. Therefore, in this sense many of the benefits of Latin American agriculture are shouldered by these workers and their lean salaries. [...]

The objective of this session is to see the exchange of research results that take into account the peculiarities of the effect of the restructuring of agriculture in work organisation and the emergence of new forms of paid work in Latin America. To submit abstracts to this session please do the following:

- Visit <http://irsa2012.com/event/irsa-2012/proposals/> where you will find detailed information on the process of submission of abstracts.
- Send a short abstract (150 words) by clicking on the link above to obtain a form for registration.
- Only submissions made on line will be accepted.
- Official language of the Congress is English. Therefore, abstracts in other languages will not be accepted.
- Deadline for submission of abstracts is 15th of January, 2012.
- At least one of the authors of the accepted abstracts should be registered until the 15th of May 2012. If not, the summaries will not be included in the program of the congress.

Contact: Mauricio Tubio, mtubio@gmail.com

The 2012 Carlos Slim Awards In Health

The main objective of the Carlos Slim Awards in Health is to recognize both individuals and institutions that are committed to improving the health of Latin American populations and as a result, facilitated the generation of solutions that address the main public health challenges that Latin America is facing.

The Carlos Slim Awards in Health are granted annually in the following two categories: "The Carlos Slim Award for Life Achievement in Research" which honours individuals dedicated to both health research and to the creation of solutions that address the greatest public health challenges facing Latin America. The second "The Carlos Slim Award for Outstanding Institution" award honours non-profit Latin American organizations whose programs, whether academic or in the field, have contributed successfully to the improvement of health of populations within Latin America.

In addition to receiving the Carlos Slim Awards statuette, an economic incentive of US\$100,000 dollars (or its equivalent in local currency) is granted per award category. For more information and submission details please see <http://www.salud.carlosslim.org/Paginas/Premios2012.aspx> or email Ms. Dulcinea Menendez at premios@salud.carlosslim.org.

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EVENTS:  
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Fleming Gulf: Safe Roads Middle East, 21st-22ns November 2011, Dubai

According to recent research findings by Roadway, Transportation, and Traffic Safety Research Centre (RTTSRC), "Road accidents and injuries are costing the economy Dh 20 billion annually and the UAE suffers about 10,000 crashes annually, resulting in 2.7 fatalities per day." The Middle East region has accepted the growing problems of safety of road users. The region has aggressively started working towards eradicating the problem from its root & is focusing on elevating the standards of safety. Acknowledging the problem is one step closer to the solution. We are pleased to announce our inaugural conference Safe Roads Middle East which is scheduled to take place on 21st and 22nd November 2011 in Dubai.

Key topics include: Enhancing Road Safety delivery through effective plans & strategies, minimizing the risk of accidents by effective planning decisions on new transport infrastructure projects and acknowledging cultural and behavioral diversity of the population in the Middle East.

For more information please visit <http://www.fleminggulf.com/cross-industry/middle-east/safe-roads-middle-east-conference>

Call for Papers - 3rd IRF Middle East Regional Congress, Gulf International Convention Center - Gulf Hotel, Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, January 9 - 11, 2012 - Submission Deadline (October 15 2011)

IRF is pleased to announce that it is currently accepting technical papers for the 3rd IRF Middle East Regional Congress. The Congress is IRF's signature, largest, and most comprehensive event in the Middle East in 2012 which will be held under the patronage of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, and supported by the Ministry of Works.

Transport professionals with an interest in the Gulf/Middle East region are invited to submit an abstract on one or more of the Congress topics. Guidelines for the submission of a manuscript for review and the final presentation format will be communicated upon the acceptance of the abstract.

Topics:

- Road Safety
- ITS & Traffic Management
- Pavements and Materials
- Sustainable Transport /Public Transport
- Asset Management

The abstract should be submitted to bseng@batelco.com.bh and copied to Magid Elabyad at IRF (melabyad@irfnews.org) to forward to the Technical Committee. For more information on the Congress, please click: <http://www.irfnews.org/news-events/event-detail/irf-middle-east-regional-congress/>

IFRTD Executive Director to invited to participate in the 2nd Road Safety Conference for Africa hosted by UNECA, 9-11 November

The Sub Saharan Africa Transport Policy Programme [SSATP] and the Global Road Safety Facility both of the World Bank, the Government of Ethiopia, the International Road Federation, the African Development Bank, the African Union Commission and the World Bank are organizing the 2nd Road Safety Conference to be hosted by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa [UNECA]. The conference will help prepare an African Plan of Action that takes into account safety from the perspective of African Countries. The Plan of Action is expected to be endorsed by the African countries through the African Union Conference of Ministers in charge of transport as the guiding document for the implementation of the Decade of Action for Road Safety.

IFRTD Board Chairman invited to present in the Bonn Symposium 2011, 1-2nd December

2011

The theme of the Symposium is: Mobility - Development- Culture: Towards sustainable transport strategies for developing regions. It is sponsored by among others, Stiftung Entwicklung und Frieden.

The symposium will be addressing the question of how mobility be shaped so as to sustainably promote social and economic development and meet the various needs of the present generation without undermining the quality of life for the future generations. The Bonn Symposium 2011 aims to provide answers to the question of how mobility, development and sustainability can be reconciled in a meaningful way, with a particular focus on developing regions.

The chairman of the IFRTD Board, professor Danang Parikesit will be making a presentation on links between Mobility and Development.

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RESOURCES:  
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Video: Mobile clinic for 'transport' ponies in Cambodia, BBC News Asia-Pacific

Pony carts are among the preferred means of transport in rural Cambodia but few know what to do when the animals fall sick. But a local NGO has been de-worming ponies, offering mineral supplements and treating injuries for free. It claims it is saving ponies lives as many owners stop feeding sick animals when they are not considered a worthwhile investment any more.

To watch the video please see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-14980783>

Walkability survey results – report by Sudhir Gota, Technical Manager (Transportation), Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities Center (CAI-Asia)

Over the last one year we along with several partners have been conducting walkability surveys across Asian cities. With great help from several NGO's, students, citizens and government officials we have reached 21 cities across Asia. You can read about the survey findings @ the following 3 links:

<http://cleanairinitiative.org/portal/node/7495>

<http://cleanairinitiative.org/portal/node/7353>

<http://www.walk21.com/papers/B102A%20-%20Punte%20-%20walkability%20in%20Asian%20cities.pdf>

“Walkability score” for each city was determined using following parameters: Walking path modal conflict, availability of walking paths, availability of crossings, grade crossing safety, motorist behaviour, amenities, disability infrastructure, obstructions and security from crime. The survey was conducted across different type of land use such as residential, commercial, educational and public transport terminals. Pedestrian interview surveys were also conducted along with the field walkability surveys. These surveys were conducted to validate the results of the field surveys as well as to collect the feedback and opinion of the pedestrians. Nearly 5000 pedestrians were interviewed across several cities (including use of online survey found here

http://cleanairinitiative.org/portal/sites/default/files/walkability_online_survey.pdf)

Asia-Pacific NGO Network Meeting for New Decade (2013-2022, Seoul Statement, (Adopted

by participants on 2 September 2011)

Richard Arceno of the Philippines NFG reports:

Leaders of the disability movement in Asia-Pacific region, members of Asia Pacific Disability Forum (APDF), board members of Korea Organizing Committee of APDF Conference 2012, and disability activists from more than fifteen Asian countries are attending the Asia-Pacific NGO Network Meeting for New Decade (2013-2022) held in Seoul, Korea, from 1 to 2 September 2011.

We, the participants of the Meeting, affirm the BMF and the BMF+5 Frameworks for Action and the general principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

We also acknowledge the progress made through the First (1993-2002) and the Second Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons (2003-2012) in terms of improvement of human rights conditions of persons with disabilities with appreciation of the efforts of APDF members in all Asia-Pacific regions.

As for the coming New Decade, we recognize the necessity of developing new objectives and strategies and learning from best practices of previous experiences of past two decades for APDF to bring about fundamental social change to eliminate all the discrimination, oppression, and poverty faced by persons with disabilities in Asia-Pacific region.

Based on review of the past two Asian and Pacific Decades, we present the following recommendations with deep sincerity.

1. Disability is a human rights issue. Therefore, ratification and implementation of the CRPD along with its Optional Protocol is a significant goal to achieve for each and every Asian-Pacific country in the New Decade.
2. However, we see that ratification of the CRPD will only be meaningful when it happens as the result of grass-rooted public struggles of persons with disabilities. Human rights of persons with disability are not to be given but to be won.
3. The purpose of networking disability NGOs and DPOs is to boost the grassroots disability movement in every Asia-Pacific country. Therefore, the best strategies and practices are to support community-based inclusive development and also to focus on independent living. Strong solidarity and mutual support are needed to develop programs that are suitable for each Asian-Pacific country.
4. We recognize that the core agents of grassroots disability movements are persons with disability themselves, especially women with disabilities. On the other hand, we also emphasize robust alliance with and active participation of parents with offsprings with disabilities and disability-related professionals who uphold the abolition of social discrimination and oppression against persons with disabilities.
5. We recommend APDF devise twin-track action for the New Decade. One is, at the high and diplomatic level, to ensure each Asia-Pacific country to ratify and implement CRPD along with its Optional Protocol. The other is, at the grassroots and public level, to educate and foster "disability warriors" and widespread disability movement throughout the whole Asia-Pacific country.
6. APDF should play its pivotal role in New Asian and Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons, 2013-2022. In order to do it, APDF needs to work together with all Stakeholders in close collaborations in terms of its action, structure and finance. We are applauding all the APDF members, disability leaders and activists who have devoted themselves to move the world one step ahead. Now, the New Decade is coming. Let's go hand in hand until the day of "Make the Right Real."

The IFRTD is a global network of individuals and organisations working together towards improved access, mobility and economic opportunity for poor communities in developing countries.

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