

**CONSULTATIVE MEETING OF THE ETHIOPIAN FORUM  
FOR  
RURAL TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT  
(ENFRTD)**

**September 6, 2007**

**IMPERIAL HOTEL  
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

**SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS**

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## INTRODUCTION

Prior to the start of the meeting registration of participants and distribution of various printed materials had taken place. These issued publications include IFRTD Network Reports (2005), Forum News (Vol. 12, 13), ENFRTD and Transport Code of Practice.

Those who presided over the podium of the Consultative Meeting on the Strategy of the Ethiopian National Forum for Rural Transport and Development held in the Imperial Hotel Conference Hall, September 6, 2007 were Ato Roberto Iacona, ENFRTD president; Mr. Peter Njenga, IFRTD Coordinator for Eastern and Southern Africa and Dr. Taye Berhanu, ENFRTD Executive Director.

Ato Iacona opened the meeting by welcoming the participants who were from various public, private and international institutions and briefly explaining the deplorable transport situation in rural Ethiopia. He emphasized the significance of in-depth understanding of the complex transport problems faced by the rural population of Ethiopia, particularly women and children; by way of coming up with pragmatic solutions. In this regard Mr. Iacona reminded the participants the importance of experience sharing through open and frank discussions. Finally, by requesting the participants to introduce themselves and Dr. Taye Berhanu to chair the meeting, Ato Iacona left for another urgent duty elsewhere.

The chairman started his task by announcing the possibility of using both languages, English and Amharic, during the meeting.

Dr. Taye, by highlighting the overall objective of the brief meeting as growth and development, emphasized to the participants the significance of brainstorming and experience sharing to realize the “new dreams” for change. “What should be our strategy for the future to bring about transport sector development, particularly in rural Ethiopia?” was the question he posed to the participants, who according to him represented different governmental and non-governmental developmental organizations, including the ILO, World Bank and Initiative Africa. Having said this, Dr. Taye went on to explain the minor changes made on the programme of the one day meeting. Finally, extending his thanks to Mr. Peter Ndjenga for the financial assistance made by his organization that made the present meeting possible, Dr. Taye requested Mr. Njenga to present his paper on **Networking** (for rural transport and development).

# PRESENTATIONS

## 1. IFRTD IN PERSPECTIVE

Mr. Peter Njenga, IFRTD Coordinator for Eastern and Southern Africa National Transport Forums, started his presentation by introducing the IFRTD, the International Forum for Rural Transport and Development, as a global network of individuals and organizations for the improvement of access and mobility of the rural poor in the developing countries. The IFRTD secretariat located in the UK, explained Mr. Njenga, use three main languages viz., English, French and Spanish. Presently, the members of the forum at various categories, according to the presenter, had reached 4000. And the EFRTD is among the twenty-nine affiliated national members of the IFRTD. In the list of partners of the forum mentioned were the World Bank, UN, DFID, SDC, Sida, GTZ, WHO and ILO. Providing platform, promoting integration and information as well as the multiplication of good practice through policy dialogue and advocacy were expressed as the global objectives of the forum. Unlike in the past, the speaker stressed transport sector development ought to facilitate the advancement of social development along with economic progress. Through transport development nowadays not only poverty reduction but also education, health and gender issues, with particular focus to the rural poor, should be addressed.

However, in spite of this officially accepted belief and the heavy investment on transport development by the World Bank and the like the impact of the sector's development on poverty reduction is very limited according to the speaker. Rural roads as well as means of transport are lacking. The access needs of rural households to grinding mills, markets, health stations, employment etc. were not as studies in the 1980's reveal, well recognized. By way of explaining the need for the origin of IFRTD, which facilitated international network partnership to accelerate research and application of new knowledge in the field, Mr. Njenga analyzed and elaborated in depth, mistakes and lessons learnt from the piece meal approaches of the past.

The speaker concluded his presentation by requesting the house to dwell on the key question of how to improve networking and collaborative efforts between IFRTD globally, the national network in Ethiopia and other regional actors to add value to rural road development.

The chairman, Dr. Taye, after thanking Mr. Njenga for his well elaborated and interesting presentation requested the participants for comments and questions.

Among the questions thus raised and comments made by the participants after Mr. Njenga's presentation include the following.

- To what extent are undesired social consequences such as road accidents, the acceleration of communicable diseases like STDs, HIV/AIDS, etc of transport development tackled in the sector's plan?
- While transport problems are prevalent both in rural and urban areas the focus of the IFRTD seem to be on the former. Why?
- Would you please give us some examples of successful efforts (best practice) in the sector?

Mr. Njenga in particular, the chairman and other participants as well, based on their specific experiences, responded to all the questions and comments made.

In regard to the first question, observations related to common road accidents were thoroughly discussed and the significance of continuous action on relevant educational as well as legal measures was prescribed. The project that has been undertaken by the ENRTD about the Shire-Shiraro road upgrading construction work (Northern Ethiopia) was presented as an example of possible effective measure to prevent the spread of STDs and HIV/AIDS along with the sectors development activities. Through this project, by a team composed of a psychologist and a nurse efforts are being made to mitigate the spread of STDs and HIV/AIDS. The efforts include counseling, the provision of educational services as well as conducting monitoring activities on a continuous basis. Similarly in regard to road safety, the ENRTD, it was explained by the Executive Director, workshops had been conducted in Mojo and Zway (Southern Ethiopia) in which the various relevant bodies in the area participated.

The major reasons, other than national policies, for the rural focus of IFRTD according to Mr. Njenga were:

- The fact that the major concentration of the population in the underdeveloped countries is in the rural areas;
- The fact that the major focus for many developmental organizations are urban areas; and,
- The fact that there are specialized organizations like the UN Habitat already engaged in urban areas.

As examples of good practice pilot projects in India, Tanzania and Malawi were discussed. These pilot projects were research based and employed the integrated approach method.

Mr. Njenga responding to the question posed by himself at the Conclusion of his deliberation, he stated that though the IFRTD couldn't go

much further in direct financial assistance than making such a modest meeting as the present one possible, the national forum could use those in the network for support. The exchange of information/ knowledge possible through the IFRTD, he emphasized, should not be, however, be underestimated.

## **2. ENFRTD's Objectives and Activities**

The second presentation entitled ENFRTD's Objectives and Activities was by Dr. Taye Berhanu. Mr. Peter Njenga chaired the session. Dr. Taye started with the introduction of the Forums objectives, which he said is to promote the development of Ethiopia's rural transport system. ENFRTD was officially registered as non-governmental organization on July 5, 2004 by the Ethiopian government. The organization, Dr. Taye explained, responds to the accessibility and mobility needs of the rural population in general and the rural poor women, children and the disabled in particular. As such the following roles of ENRTD were elaborated extensively.

- Undertaking feasibility studies for the promotion, introduction and implementation of improved rural transport and better mobility;
- Promoting, influencing and facilitating the successful application of improved policies, planning and financing mechanisms and technologies towards improving the accessibility and mobility of the rural poor;
- Promoting networking and exchange of information with pertinent organizations, national regional and international organizations, including donor and developmental agencies, on matters related to rural transport and development; and,
- Undertaking advocacy and lobbying activities in ameliorating the problems of the rural poor.

Following Dr Taye's elaboration in the organizational set-up of the ENRTD, its membership requirements and activities, participants carried out warm discussions.

As related to road transport development, the major focuses of the Ethiopian forum according to Dr. Taye's emphasis are health (maternal health, critical patients, disabled people, HIV/AIDS), rural road safety, potable water supply, research and policy issues, capacity building and awareness creation. Activities carried out by the EFRTD in these areas of focus include conducting workshops on awareness creation, Shire-Shraro STD's and HIV/AIDS Prevention Project, Dimma Water Project, Road Safety Project, Safe Transport of Critical Patients Project, Publications of Transport Code of Practice (in Amharic and English), Collaborative Work with Mojo/Zwai Cart Owners etc. Following the presentation, the participants held hot discussions and Dr Taye responded to the various issues raised.

### 3. Access and Mobility: On-going Lessons

The final paper in the morning session entitled Access and Mobility: ERTTP'S On-going Lessons was presented by Ato Mulugeta Demessie, ERA, ERTTP's Programme Board Coordinator. The chairman for the session Mr. Peter Njenga introduced the presenter and as the time for lunch was approaching, he requested the presenter to respect the time limit given in the programme. Ato Mulugeta in his presentation referred to a study by the ERA in village level travel and transport study finding of 1998 and the ongoing WIDP (Woreda Integrated Development Program – Woreda means district) studies that deal on indicators of trip magnitude to major services in four Woredas.

Ato.Mulugeta's presentation focused on the transport and non-transport interventions that are introduced in eight pilot Woredas in different regions of the country. He explained the organizational structure of ERTTP from the Woreda level to the Federal Government level. He also explained the activities of creating broader commitment, community based activities, the role of the Road Fund Agency and the attempts being made towards making integration of sectors under the framework of the Woreda Plan.

To further illustrate the extremely low level of road network and transport development in Ethiopia, Ato Mulugeta showed the comparative status of the country in relation to low-income countries of Africa and other developing countries. 85 percent of the Ethiopian rural population has never from moved his birthplace. As accessibility and mobility problems are thus extreme in the country, Ato Mulugeta concluded his presentation by stressing on the vitality of integrated and participatory planning approach by all those concerned (viz. the government at all levels, donors and local communities) in finding solutions.

The chairman by thanking Ato Mulugeta for his presentation opened the floor for questions and comments. Following are some of the questions and comments made by the participants.

- What are the financial sources and time frame of WIDP?
- What should the roles of ENFRTD be in assisting the successful implementation of WIDP?
- What is the influence of WIDP in the integration of rural road development and transport facility improvement on one hand and efforts of stakeholder on the other?

Ato Mulugeta, along with other participants, has responded to all the questions and comments made. The decentralization policy of the country, according to him, has made the Woreda a focal point in the planning and implementation of the programme. The project priority list of a given Woreda is determined with the active participation of the Woreda Councils, the community

and the Woreda desks. The financial sources of the WIDP are said to be the government, donors and the community concerned. The time frames of the programme are said to be five and twenty years. Aspects such as the integration of road with other transport facilities are well considered in the studies of the programme. According to Ato Mulugeta, though early to tell the level of success in the integration of activities of the programme, the results of the efforts made so far are encouraging.

The chairman thanking the previous two paper presenters and posed the question how each of the participants present at the meeting should contribute to the realization of the forums' objectives closed the morning session at 12:45. Invitation for lunch at the same hotel to all the participants was announced. And the afternoon session was to convene at 1:30pm.

#### **4. Networking**

W/o Azeb Wuhib chaired the afternoon session. It started with a heated debate among participants in regard to road and transport safety in the country's rural and urban areas. Professionals and other participants at great length and depth discussed not only problems but also practical solutions. Research based educational and legal measures on a continuous basis by all those concerned bodies and the integration of efforts is strongly recommended for better results in the future.

Following was Mr. Peter Njenga's presentation on networking. Mr. Njenga explained IFRTD's various activities with main focus on topics such as mobility and health, transport indicators, rural transport safety, rural road development as well as gender issues as related to transport development.

He also informed the participants of the Annual Global Forum for Health Research, an international network symposium that would be held in November in Beijing. In this connection the speaker referred to the case study conducted by Dr. Abera and Dr. Taye of the Ethiopian Forum on the accessibility of health services to critically ill patients.

Mr. Njenga finally mentioned IFRTD's major partners in its networking activities, requested all participants to make contributions to the forums free quarterly publication and thanked all participants.

### **GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Ato Samson Tadesse chaired the final session of the meeting that dealt with the way forward for EFRTD. The chairman invited Dr. Taye to make his opening remark on the subject at hand and the participant to follow suit.

Dr. Taye started his remarks by referring to the development problems of the rural population in the developing countries as related to transport issues that were raised

and discussed thoroughly in the morning session. The fact that the EFRTD got the mandate to address to these problems in the country was appreciated. The organization's effort in creating awareness in road and transport safety, making concerned bodies conscious of transport issues in their sectoral development plans, the direct intervention in the prevention of the spread of HIV/AIDS, the Dimma Water Project that benefited the surrounding rural population in general and the women of the area in particular and the research on safe transportation means for critically ill patients were sighted as encouraging efforts.

However, in light of the scope of rural transport problems in the country, Dr. Taye stressed that a lot remains to be done in the future. Among the challenges he listed were, funding, voluntarism, marginalization of issues, weak networking, absence of focal or parent organization and sustainability.

Strengthening networking with IFRTD and regional forums was suggested as the starting point in looking for the means to address the challenges faced by the ENFRTD.

During the discussion that followed, strengthening the national forum in individual and organizational membership, finding a parent organization that would sponsor programmes, working in close collaboration with local communities and working in partnership with governmental and non-governmental organizations were among the major recommendations made to overcome the challenges.

Moreover, the growing serious problem of road accident in the country had attracted a big attention in the afternoon's session. The problems attributed to reckless drivers, pedestrians' non-conformance to the traffic rules and defects of the vehicles were discussed in terms of their respective degree and magnitude of contributing factors to causes of road accidents that claim millions of lives and millions of dollars. It was disclosed that causes of accidents were drivers- 85%, pedestrians, 5% and road conditions, 10% the rest others.

The following issues were also highlighted as major or potential areas of ENFRTD's future activities.

- Prepare research based manual for safe transport;
- Closely work with development partners and other stakeholders;
- Strengthen the Horse Cart Owners' Associations;
- Exert every effort to influence government bodies to channel government budget to civil societies for the implementation of projects of national interest.; and,
- Make joint efforts with other national forums to contribute to the further promoting and strengthening of IFRTD to make it a

## dynamic parent organization of national forums

Before the closure of the meeting the chairman invited Mr. Njenga and Dr. Taye to pass their messages. Mr. Njenga by witnessing the growth of the EFRTD in the past expressed his thanks to the national forum for making the meeting possible and the participants for their active participation. Dr. Taye in his turn expressed his appreciation to all participants for their time and constructive suggestions and assured them of his commitment in translating their important inputs into practice. The meeting ended at 4:30 with his best wishes for the millennium.

**CONSULTATIVE MEETING OF THE ETHIOPIAN NATIONAL FORUM FOR RURAL  
TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT (ENFRTD)**

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

Place: Imperial Hotel, Addis Ababa

Date: September 6, 2007

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
1	Abebe Asrat	National Road Safety Coordination Office
2	Abebe Demessie	Ethiopian Road Transport Authority
3.	Abera Alemneh /Dr.	ENFRTD
4	Alem Shumeye	Helvetas
5	Atnafu Bogale	Attorney and Legal Consultant
6	Azeb Wuhib	ENFRTD
7	Bonsu, K. Osei Bonsu	ILO
8	Getachew Alem	“
9	K. Osei-Bonsu	ILO
10	Kunuz Abdela/Dr.	WHO
11	Legesse Mamo	Private
12	Mesfin Seifu	Ethiopian Transport Authority
13	Messelu Tadesse	Afrifrcra Beza College
14	Moges Gebru	Ministry of Health
15	Mohammed Taha	Bus Drivers Association
16	Mulugeta Demessie	Ethiopian Roads Authority
17	Peter Njenga	IFRTD
18	Roberto Iacona	ENFRTD
19	Samson Tadesse	“
20	Selamawit Fikru	Initiative Africa
21	Taye Berhanu/Dr.	:"
22	Wako Chemedo	Private
23	Yared Girma	“
24	Yemeserach Getaneh	“
25	Yeshashwork Kindanu	“
26	Yimer Aragaie	Ethiopian Red Cross Society
27	Wondewsse Belaye	Bus Drivers' Association

**CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON THE STRATEGY OF THE ETHIOPIAN NATIONAL  
FORUM FOR RURAL TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT (ENFRTD)**

Date: September 6, 2007

Venue: Imperial Hotel

**Agenda**

1. IFRTD / ENFRTD in Brief
2. ERTTP in Brief
3. Priorities
4. Challenges
5. The Way Forward

**PROGRAM**

<b>TIME</b>	<b>ACTIVITY</b>	<b>PRESENTER</b>	<b>CHAIRPERSON</b>
8:30 - 9:00	REGISTRATION	ENFRTD	
9:00 - 9:05	WELCOME REMARK - INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPANTS	Ato Roberto Iacona, president, ENFRTD	Ato Roberto Iacona, president, ENFRTD
9:05 - 9:15	INTRODUCTION TO THE OBJECTIVE AND PROGRAM OF THE MEETING	Dr. Taye Berhanu Executive Director, ENFRTD	“ “
9:15 - 9:30	IFRTD IN PERSPECTIVE	Mr. Peter Njenga	“ “
9:30 - 10:00	ENFRTD'S OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES	Dr. Taye Berhanu	“ “
10:00 - 10:30	COFFEE /TEA BREAK		
10:30 - 11:00	ACCESS AND MOBILITY : ERTTP'S ON - GOING LESSONS	Ato Mulugeta Demessie, ERA, ERTTP's Program Board Coordinator	Mr. Peter Njenga
11:00 - 12:00	DISCUSSION	Participants	“ “
12:00 - 12:30	PRIORITIES IDENTIFICATION	Participants	“ “
12:30 - 1:30	LUNCH		
1:30 - 2:00	NETWORKING	Peter Njenga	W/ro Azeb Wuhib
2:00 - 2:30	DISCUSSION	Participants	“ “
2:30 - 3:00	THE WAY FORWARD	Dr. Taye Berhanu	“ “
3: 00 - 3:30	COFFEE/TEA BREAK		

3:30 - 5:00	DISCUSSION ON THE WAY FORWARD	Participants	Ato Samson Tadesse
5:00 - 5:30	CONCLUDING REMARKS	Participants	“ “