

# **FIRST CONSULTATIVE MEETING**

**ON**

## **IMPROVING ACCESS, MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT FOR THE POOR**

### **SETTING AN AGENDA OF ACTION FOR PAKISTAN**



**JUNE 13, 2007**

**NRSP CONFERENCE HALL, ISLAMABAD**

## Meeting Minutes

**Date:** Wednesday, 13<sup>th</sup> June 2007

**Venue:** Conference Hall at National Rural Support Program (NRSP) – Islamabad

**Participants:** List is attached

### Proceedings:

The program started with a welcome note by Ms. Salma Saleem, Communication Officer, - Shehersaaz. Mr. Amir Habib recited a few verses from Holy Quran. Later Ms. Saleem requested the distinguished guests to introduce themselves.

#### Ms. Almas Saleem

Ms. Almas Saleem, National Coordinator, Shehersaaz, gave a brief introduction of the organization, its network approach, working methodology, thematic areas and how it has been acting as a National Forum Group (NFG) of International Forum for Rural Transport and Development (IFRTD). She briefed the participants about the objectives of the meeting as;

- To provide an opportunity and platform to the participants where they could share their work, experiences and programs related to improving mobility and transport for the poor
- To discuss policies, issues, challenges and opportunities in these sectors
- To indicate, discuss and recommend context specific solutions, and;
- To brainstorm the idea of evolving/expanding a forum/common platform or network of concerned institutions and individuals and its working mechanism.

#### Abdul Shakoor Sindhu

Mr. Abdul Shakoor Sindhu, Principal Coordinator, Rural Development Policy Institute (RDPI) and focal person for existing NFG gave a presentation about IFRTD on behalf of Mr. Ranjith De Silva, Asia Region Coordinator for IFRTD. In his presentation he briefed the participants that how IFRTD works and what is the purpose and role of NFGs. He said that anyone can become a member of IFRTD. It is not necessary that the individual should first become a member of some NFG, he revealed.



Mr. Sindhu said that transport sector issues can only be discussed comprehensively by keeping in sight three interconnected concepts; access, mobility, and transport, He gave a brief description of these concepts.

He said that transport plays an important role in the achievement of almost all the indicators of human development and millennium development goals.

Responding to Mr. Irteza Haider's query that does IFRTD work by going straightaway with the communities, so as to know what their needs are, Mr. Sindhu told that IFRTD does not work with communities directly, but through its institutional and individual members and NFGs.

After giving his presentation Mr. Sindhu invited the participants for open discussion and acted as a moderator for the rest of the session

### **Irteza Haider**

Mr. Irteza Haider, DPM at National Rural Support Program (NRSP) said that franchised transport in the form of Varaan (a public-private venture bus service that used to ply between Rawalpindi and Islamabad and their suburbs) was initiated for the ease of people who commute on daily basis. Referring to a research study that he undertook on the service, he said that service was a great relief for people but later on under pressures of various kinds, the service was stopped leaving people at the mercy of the private transport operators for whom there is no regulatory mechanism in place. He said that public interest pressure groups are required to influence the transport policy and practices. Mr. Haider laid stress on the need of carrying out a study on transport needs in the rural and urban areas. He said that here are three main indicators to assess the effectiveness of a transport system: Safety, equity, and efficiency.



Mr. Haider noted that with the introduction of car leasing schemes, there has been a manifold increase in number of cars, which is the major reason behind the traffic congestion especially on urban roads. He said there is no integrated transport planning mechanism which could assess the capacity of roads and allow and regulate the traffic accordingly.

He said that although efforts are being made in the transport sector but these efforts are not based on proper research. He said that National Transport Research Center and Universities can fill the gap of transport research.

He briefed about the National Rural Support Program's initiatives in community based transport infrastructure (village roads, pathways etc). He suggested that Rural Support Programme Network (RSPN) which is an overarching body of 10 Rural Support Programs should be involved in the networking efforts and there platform should be used to take the network's message to thousands of CBOs and communities who are attached with Rural Support Programs. He also recommended that a bibliography of the material available on transport sector in the context of Pakistan should be developed.

Referring to the National Transport Policy, Haider asked the representative of National Transport Research Center (the body entrusted with the preparation of the policy) that how the policy responds to the needs of poor. Mr. Khizer (representative of NTRC) replied that the concept of mass transit is there in the policy. The new transport policy provides broad guidelines about the transport sector and doesn't go into detailed and area specific measure, he added.

Irteza recommended for the establishment of a working group that could draft the strategy of the network. He also offered his time and efforts for linking the proposed network with RSPN.

### **Khizer Javed**

Khizer Javed, Research Assistant at National Transport Research Centre (NTRC), told the upcoming National Transport policy is being reviewed by the Senate's standing committee for its approval. He told that Asian Development Bank has extended financial and technical assistance for the preparation of the policy. He revealed that the policy in question is overarching and is not restricted to road sector only.



Adding to Khizer's briefing Amir Zafar Durrani from World Bank told that the policies are broad frameworks that deal with major issues.

Sindhu raised a question that whether there has been a consultation process with the stakeholders and transport users while preparing the policy? Replying on behalf of Javed, Durrani said that transport users need not to be involved at every step of the policy as the policy makers are aware of their issues. He suggested that let the policy be approved and later the amendments can be made.

Responding to Durrani's comments, Ehtesham from NRSP and Qaswer from RDPI said that this has been a major flaw in our policies that they don't match with people's needs. When people are not bothered to ask to, how the policies can claim to be "national" and represent the people's needs, they questioned.

Referring to a statement in the loan agreement for preparing transport policy, Sindhu said that according to the lender (ADB), NTRC does not have required skills and capacities to prepare a national transport policy. What are the reasons that despite having attained an age of more than three decades, NTRC is unable to draft a policy, and why always we need to ask the international financial institutions to help us draft our policies, Sindhu asked. Responding to this question, Javed said that we do not have required human resource and capacity to prepare this level of policy.

Mazhar Nawaz, Field Manager, RDPI Thal, drew the attention of the participants towards state and citizens' relation. He was of the view that modern days states are driven by private and profit motives and people who do not have capacity to pay are missed out in policies and development decisions. He gave an example of Choubara where the mobility is a big issue for the people living in the desert locations but government policies and program do not cover their needs since majority of them is poor and have no access to power politics.

Javed and Durrani noted that there is a marked development in highway sector due to which intercity travel time has reduced. They held the view that this development has benefited all irrespective of their paying capacity.

(Due to some other engagements, Javed had to leave the meeting at 1:00 pm)

### **Sardar Aftab Ahmed**

Irritated by the length of discussion on National Transport Policy, Sardar Aftab, Chief Executive, Kashmir Development Foundation, said that the discussion on the transport policy was not the primary objective of the meeting. He said that there should be a discussion on actual problems and ground realities. He briefed the participants about the mobility patterns, transport infrastructure and modes which are in place in Pakistani Administered part of Kashmir. He said the pathways on mountains are not only necessary for people's movements but also for those of cattle and animals which are an important component of poor people's livelihood.



He said that after 8<sup>th</sup> October, 2005's disastrous earthquake in Kashmir, the condition of roads and pathways is dilapidated. He drew the attention of the participants towards the mobility needs of people who have become disabled due to earthquake and how difficult it is for them to mover on mountainous paths. He said that even if the roads are constructed in those areas, the people who are disabled cannot take benefit of them until they are provided with required instruments which are very expensive for a poor person to purchase. He said that the government is providing no budget for the

maintenance of roads and pathways in Kashmir. Mr. Aftab recommended that there should be area specific policies. He said that as a measure towards betterment of the transportation, the concerned authorities should pay attention towards road safety, road furniture, road conditions and environmental impact of new road projects.

### **Naseer Ahmed**

Naseer Ahmed, Manager Field Operation, Devolution Trust for Community Empowerment (DTCE), said that affordability of transport fares is a serious issue. He pointed out that there is no mechanism to regulate the transport fares. If transport is available but people can not afford them, then there is no use of such transport no matter how good it may be, Naseer added. Referring to DTCE's work, Naseer told that the institution is meant to provide support to Citizen Community Boards (community based organizations that have been regularized under the new local government system in Pakistan). He said that CCBs can play a very useful and important role in fulfilling people's mobility needs. He suggested that CCBs should be made part of the networking efforts.



Referring to monopolies in the public transport sector, Naseer said that the informal monopolies have in turn become mafias who do not allow new entrant in this sector. He said that these mafias are sustaining the exploitation of people as they remain unable to access good quality, efficient and affordable public transport. Giving an example he told that nearly 15 buses of Daewoo Bus Service were put ablaze by local transport association when they initiated their service from Rawalpindi to Peshawar.

Naseer said that piecemeal effort on part of government to fulfill mobility and transport needs can not deliver. He referred to a recent initiative by the Ministry of women development where two buses have been arranged to provide transport facility to women moving from Rawalpindi to Islamabad.

Naseer offered DTCE's full support for the network and agreed to host one of the meetings of the network.

### **Dr. Atta-ul-Mohsin**

Dr. Mohsin, National Project Coordinator, National Urban Poverty Alleviation Program, (NUPAP), Rawalpindi, said that a lot of people are yet not aware of ways to meet their needs. For that purpose we will have to make them aware, he added. He said that it is a pleasure to see that National Transport Policy is being brought which is a major step forward towards the development of transport sector in Pakistan.



Dr. Mohsin told that NUPAP is working with CCBs. He was of the view that poverty is due to lack of choices which people could have. He further emphasized that:

- Local stakeholders and user groups should be empowered
- Policy should be based on ground realities
- People, especially road users are to be considered before making any policy

- Separate transport for women is also required or maximum number of seats should be fixed for them in public transport vehicles.
- Categorization of the users is also required (school going children, working women, people moving to their offices, general commuters etc).

Giving example of Turkey in this regard, he said that the best way of dealing with enormous transport volume in working hours is that the timing for schools and offices should be different.

### **Amer Zaffar Durrani**

Amer Zaffar Durrani, Senior Transport Specialist, The World Bank in Pakistan, emphasized the need of bringing professionalism and consulting specialists in the transport sector. He said that often people begin to comment on policies without reading the policy document. He said that to understand the transport sector and its issues there is a need to understand and differentiate between access, mobility and transport.



He referred to a study undertaken by the world bank on rural peoples mobility pattern and said there are lot of trips made by them which have no economic value. He said to design the policies there is a need to first understand the mobility patterns and people's needs.

He said that World Bank has been providing lot of funds for the capacity building of institutions in Pakistan, but unfortunately these funds couldn't be utilized judiciously resulting in these institutions asking for more and more financial and technical support from World Bank and ADB etc.

Referring to transport issues in urban areas, Durrani said that measures are not taken to provide facilities for the pedestrians. This has resulted in urban places having no infrastructure for the pedestrians, he added.

Answering to a query made by Amjad Bhatti, Durrani said that to provide access is the responsibility of the government but to provide mobility is not. Giving an example he said that to connect different areas is the responsibility of the government so that people could move but to make them move on these roads can not be termed a government's responsibility.

Answering to another query, Durrani said that monopolies in the transport sector are unavoidable as they exist throughout the world. The actual need is to regulate these monopolies, Durrani maintained.

Commenting on the mega road projects, Durrani said that when motorway's alignment was being decided, together with the then Chief of NTRC, he had raised a number of objections. He said that though the projects of this kind may interrupt the mobility of some communities but development is based on the principle of bringing good to majority.

Durrani was of the view that every person can not suggest a solution. People can raise their issues but when it comes to devising solutions for them, the matter should be left to the professionals, Durrani maintained.

Durrani appreciated the idea of the network and said that World Bank is ready to provide every possible support. He offered to host the next meeting and suggested that more people from concerned institutions should be invited. He also offered to assist Shehersaaz in inviting more participants for the meeting. Durrani also suggested that a desk research should be carried out to

prepare a bibliography of the transport related literature available on Pakistan. He also offered financial support for the study.

### **Amjad Bhatti**

Mr. Amjad Bhatti, Development Journalist, said that segregating 'access' from 'mobility' is quite confusing. He said that International Financial Institutions are pushing the national governments to give the services which are supposed to be a state's responsibility, in the hands of the private sector.



He said that who is responsible when it comes to the provision of transport facilities to poor. Giving example of the Islamabad-Lahore motorway, Amjad said that providing mobility to some has created the issue of access for others as the motorway has divided communities. In many instances people of a particular village have been rendered unable to meet their families in the same villages and the infrastructure has also divided the farmlands, he revealed.

Amjad appreciated the idea of the network and suggested that the proposed network should also act an informed group monitoring transport related interventions and projects.

### **Mazher Nawaz**

Mazher Nawaz, social activist and Regional Coordinator, Rural Development Policy Institute (RDPI), Thal, said that poor people are needed to be politically activated to demand their rights and get their grievances registered. He said that the whole development process seems to be divorced from political process in which poor people could effectively participate. He said that transport sector attract maximum public funds but despite this situation poor people's mobility needs are not being fulfilled.



He said that state should take the responsibility of providing poor people with affordable and efficient transport services both in urban and rural areas of Pakistan.

### **Syed M. Nadeem Kazmi**

Syed Nadeem Kazmi, General Secretary, Road Users Association of Pakistan (ARUP) that road sector development is heavily biased towards motorized transport neglecting the needs of pedestrians and cyclists. He said that our roads have become death traps for pedestrians and especially for the schools children as there are no provisions available for the road safety for these users.



## **Outcome**

The following are the important outcome of the meeting

- More meetings are needed to formalize the network
- Next meeting will be held in July or August, 2007
- A working group comprising all the participants of the meeting will be established to pave way for the establishment/extension of the National Forum Group
- A strategy will be drafted to be approved by the working group in the next meeting to be held at RSPN
- World Bank and DTCE will also host one meeting each of the group
- The meeting will be regularized and groups/forum will meet every three months
- The network will be institutionalized with in the objectives of IFRTD
- A bibliography of literature available on transport in context of Pakistan, will be prepared

**List of Participants  
Strategic Planning Meeting (SPM)  
June 13, 2007 at NRSP Hall, Islamabad**

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