

Rural Transport and Development Workshop - Arusha, Tanzania (29-30 November 2010)



Delegates during the Arusha workshop

The quality of a nation's road infrastructure obviously impacts widely on its potential for economic growth and development. Poor roads increase transport costs, inhibit access to markets, and reduce business competitiveness. Badly maintained or non-existent roads also make it harder to access to basic amenities such as schools, hospitals and clinics with consequent impacts on health and education. Roads are therefore integral to the achievement of many of the Millennium Development Goals and holistic discussion on this topic is timely.

Delegates at the Rural Transport workshop viewed a series of presentations examining road design, road planning, the financing of infrastructure projects and road research. Among the speakers was John Hine, Senior Transport Policy Specialist at Tanzania's Ministry of Infrastructure Development, and Geoff Fishbourne, AFCAP Programme Manager - both highly regarded and vastly experienced in the challenges infrastructure projects face in the developing world.

The key messages from the workshop have been collated into a briefing note to enable the lessons learnt to be circulated more widely. All participants and AEF signatories have received CDs containing copies of the briefing note and encouraged to share it with their colleagues and the note has been distributed via the extensive networks of the Africa Community Access Programme. It has also been posted on the websites of the A-UK partners. Interestingly, the note has stimulated an intense international debate about some of the technical issues it addresses including experts at the World Bank, which has in turn highlighted the fact that there is now a dearth of experienced road engineers with a knowledge and understanding of the specific constraints and needs of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Activities such as the Rural Access workshop make a crucial contribution to addressing this problem of dwindling capacity.