

# Minutes of the 4<sup>th</sup> TransNet Meeting – July 10, 2001

## Participants

Laurent Balsiger, Philippe Benninger, Andreas Beusch, Pierre Charles Bugnon, Pascal Christe, Juerg Christen, Markus Fahrni, Thomas Fisler, Franz Gaehwiler, Patrick Kilchenmann, Barbara Del Pozo, Roland Python, Urs Schaffner, Werner Wirz, Josef Zimmermann, Peter Züst.

## Excused

Huber Eisele, Markus Engler, Beat Gruber, Markus Hischier, Paul Peter, Elisabeth Pitteloud Alansar, Ueli Scheuermeier, Peter Tschumi

## Chairperson

Roland Python

## Venue

SDC Headquarters, Ausserholligen 130, Berne

## Next meeting

Last semester of 2001, date not yet fixed

## Welcome of Participants

Roland Python (PYR) welcomed all TransNet members. He noticed with satisfaction the ever-increasing number of participants and the growing success of this recent network. He welcomed the new members who responded positively to the invitation to make presentations: Josef Zimmermann, Thomas Fisler, Philippe Benninger, and Barbara del Pozo. Finally, Laurent Balsiger, Pascal Christe and Markus Fahrni were also warmly greeted. After a short round of table of self-presentation, PYR mentioned that this meeting was his last one before his departure to Sofia, where he will be posted for his new assignment as deputy coordinator.

## Information about the future of Transport in the Thematic and Technical Resources Department (Social Development Division, SoDev)

Barbara Del Pozo, deputy head of the SoDev, was pleased to see that the subject of Transport is still considered an important aspect of development and that aspects of good governance, poverty alleviation, gender balance and sustainability have become so prominent themes in this sector. She was surprised that the topic can gather such a number of interested persons and professionals and regretted that women were not very much represented in the network....

She informed that the new strategy of SDC in the Transport sector has been accepted. Several TransNet members participated in its elaboration and the change of view taken by SDC is generally known: the objective and ultimate goal of Transport is access and livelihood. Transport is a means to achieve this goal.

She also briefed the forum about the ideal profile for the successor of PYR within the Thematic and Technical Resources Department (TTRD). SDC is looking for somebody who has a more multi-faceted background (communication, sociology or environment) than for an engineer. Like PYR, his/her tasks will be to support all organisational units and sections of SDC (global knowledge, partnerships, etc.) with emphasis on internal training aspects. However, the ToR are not yet exactly defined, thus confirming the need for somebody open-minded.

Finally, she thanked PYR for his good work and initiatives. Werner Wirz also extended his thanks to PYR and added that “one should not forget that hardware is required as well...”. Juerg Christen thanked PYR for giving the opportunity to develop this network and expressed the hope that this initiative could also continue with the support of TTRD after PYR’s departure.

### **The Strengthened Maintenance Divisions (SMD) Programme, Nepal**

Thomas Fisler (TF) presented the SMD programme that SDC is directly implementing in Nepal. Handouts of his presentation can be found in Annexe 1. An open discussion took place after his presentation. Andreas Beusch asked about the sustainability of the project after the closing of SMD and its departure from the Department of Roads (DoR) office. TF replied that change of habits are taking a long time and need a close coaching. SMD is process-oriented, and willing to have a long-term commitment. SMD programme is also not so costly, because no funds are provided for the maintenance activities themselves. A lot of initiative is left to the engineers of the DoR. TF has observed that the mindset has started to change. Another factor contributing to sustainability is the pressure from road users and from the numerous lengthworkers throughout the country. Urs Schaffner asked why not increasing the number of lengthworkers. TF replied that this number is already increased during monsoon. He is waiting for an increase of the routine maintenance budget of DoR, for being able to do it all year long. He does not want to artificially support this activity. It has to follow a process. It was also noted that such a programme is fostering good governance, because it leads to transparency (Yearly Plan of Operation, need-based budget, policies, norms, standards, etc.)

### **The District Roads Support Programme (DRSP), Nepal**

Josef Zimmermann (JZ) presented the DRSP. The highlights of his presentation can be found in Annexe 2. JZ explained SDC’s long-term commitment and involvement in the transport sector in Nepal. He then explained the design, the objectives and the implementation of the DRSP, as well as the different partner organisations that are closely collaborating with the programme. Special emphasis was given to poverty, gender and good governance aspects of the programme. His presentation was followed by a lively discussion. It was appreciated that the project is aimed at providing access to remote areas thus improving the social and economic condition of the population. It was also felt that labour-based technology and working methods have once again proven to be a good solution, especially for the hilly areas and the unstable slopes of Nepal. Furthermore, it provides job opportunities to the poor and disadvantaged segment of the population. It was also mentioned that social interventions prior to construction work increase the awareness and understanding of local population towards new roads particularly regarding maintenance. Income and non-income generating activities initiated “beyond the roads” will not only enhance the benefits of the road after construction, but also contribute to the mitigation of negative impacts of the roads.

### **Presentation of the World Road Association and its Swiss National Committee**

Philippe Benninger (PB), new TransNet member and representative of the OFROU, presented the World Road Association (PIARC) and its Swiss National Committee. A short summary of his presentation, the list of the Swiss representatives of the Technical Committees (TC) and of the strategic themes of the TC can be found in Annexe 3. After his presentation, TransNet members agreed that it would be very useful to find synergies and collaborations between our network and the PIARC, especially with its technical committee on Technological Exchanges and

Development. Because of time constraints, the discussion could unfortunately not be continued.

### **Meeting Closure**

Two presentations had to be skipped due to time constraints. PYR thanked again all lecturers and wished success for the continuation of TransNet.

### **List of Annexes**

Annexe 1: SMD Programme  
Annexe 2: DRSP Programme  
Annexe 3: PIARC

St. Gallen, 18.07.01,  
Patrick Kilchenmann, SKAT