

IRF plan on roads of Iran

In a workshop on transportation which was held in Tehran with the presence of the members of ECO, Anthony Pearce the Honorary Director General of International Road Federation (IRF) who attended as a guest in this congress answered the questions of Rahbaran magazine reporter .In this report Mr. Pearce explained about the activities of this Federation in the field of reforming roads and signals and presented the methods for improving the road infrastructure situation globally.

Q. Please explain about the International Road Federation (IRF) briefly?

This federation was established in 1948. It is an international, non-governmental, non-profit organization with the aim of promoting more, better and safer roads. We have members in more than 90 countries; some 55 government are members, and in addition members come from the private sector – companies involved in construction and planning of roads.

Q. Is there any cooperation and interaction between this Federation and countries, including the members of ECO?

Yes, certainly the International Road Federation was established to promote best practice world-wide. What we do includes holding educational programs on the issues that are under consideration by the governments - for example in December we held a training programme on road safety in Cyprus for the government and private sector, we tried to help them with expertise in order to help them achieve their goals. Over the last 15 years we have done a lot of work on the promotion of Silk Roads. We have held 4 major conferences on this - in 1998 in Ashkabad, in 1999 in Tashkent, in 2004 in X'ian and in 2007 in Istanbul we held meetings to the promotion of this ancient road. This is very important because this route is a transit road that pass through Iran (about 900 km from Turkmenistan to Turkey) which had been a very important transit road for thousands years . In addition, we are in cooperation with countries and organization like ECO with the aim of the better promotion of the roads.

Q. What are the proposals of the Federation for Iran?

First, on road safety. In Iran road casualties are numerous, around 5, 6 or 8 times the EU average. We can put together a programme with the assistance of the World Bank to improve road safety. We can help Iran with the participation of private sector. Three years ago, former head of RMTTO asked about the possibility of organising private sector participation on establishing speed control cameras on the roads of Iran with the aim of fining violators (the cause of 25% of accidents in Iran) in order to improving the situation in Iran.

IRF can help you in the field of investment. The aim is not just building roads but you need to maintain them. We can help with setting up long term maintenance programmes with the private sector with stable price. There are many activities that IRF can help Iran.

Q. What is your proposal for our organization?

We can help RMTTO provide a better service at a lower cost - looking at long term maintenance agreements for the management of roads, for example. With this type of agreement a company may undertake to repair and maintain a road for 20 years at a stable price (allowing for inflation). So instead of constructing or maintaining roads, your organisation will change to one which manages the provision of services for the maintenance and upkeep of roads, including the repair and cleaning, and for example the installation of an emergency telephone system by the side of road. You determine the range of services and so the contractor does that. International experience shows that this method is 20% cheaper than the Ministry itself doing all these activities. So, not only does the Ministry get a better quality product but also and the user of the road have a better service.