

# Accessible Transportation Around the World



The Newsletter of  
Access Exchange International  
January 2010

## Transit Access Training Toolkit completed for use by bus drivers and transit staff around the world



Workers complete one of several underground busways into Lima's Central Station, the core of the new system. - Photos for this article by Tom Rickert

### Lima, Peru: Another accessible mass transit project on the way

With nearly nine million residents, Lima is one of the world's twenty largest cities. And Lima's *Metropolitano* Bus Rapid Transit system, a major project with total costs coming to a half billion dollars, is nearing completion to begin service in 2010.

Tom Rickert of Access Exchange International was provided with a day-long tour of construction of the new system during a visit to Lima in October, focused on accessibility features of the new system's main trunk line corridor. Everyone – including seniors and persons with disabili-

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Reckless driving can make buses inaccessible to most seniors and passengers with disabilities in many developing countries. The *Transit Access Training Toolkit* -- prepared on behalf of the Disability and Development Team within the Human Development Network of the World Bank -- helps address this problem. The Toolkit includes posters such as the samples shown below, as well as pocket-size guides and other tools to help train bus drivers and transit personnel even where there are no local resources to address the need for safe and courteous driving.

The Toolkit is available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, and in printed and CD *(continued on page 3)*



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# Paratransit services expand in São Paulo, Brazil



Student transport in one of the world's largest metropolitan areas has taken a big leap forward with the introduction of 52 accessible door-to-door vehicles to provide services to young people with developmental disabilities or who use wheelchairs.

Named "Ligado" (which means "connected" in Portuguese), the new service started up this past July with the aim of serving some forty cities and towns in the São Paulo metropolitan area. Service is planned to expand to include the metropolitan regions of the cities of Campinas and Baixada Santista, also within the State of São Paulo.

Ligado operates free of charge. The new service brings together several state and municipal departments as well as social service agencies that are cooperating with the new program. Funding comes from the state government and passes through EMTU, the local transport company of São Paulo that operates Ligado.

The new Ligado paratransit program is based on the success of Atende, a door-to-door service operating within the city of São Paulo. Atende currently operates some 300 vehicles and provides more than 1.5 million annual trips. AEI reported on Atende in the January 2004 issue of this Newsletter.

AEI has been in correspondence over the past two years with Moacir Mariano da Costa, who heads up the planning and operation of Ligado, recommending international resources relevant



**Photo: Councilwoman Mara Gabrilli, a wheelchair user, boards a Ligado vehicle following an inaugural ceremony for the new service.**

to the new service. Our Brazilian readers may wish to obtain more information in Portuguese by writing "Ligado transporte porta a porta São Paulo" in a search engine.

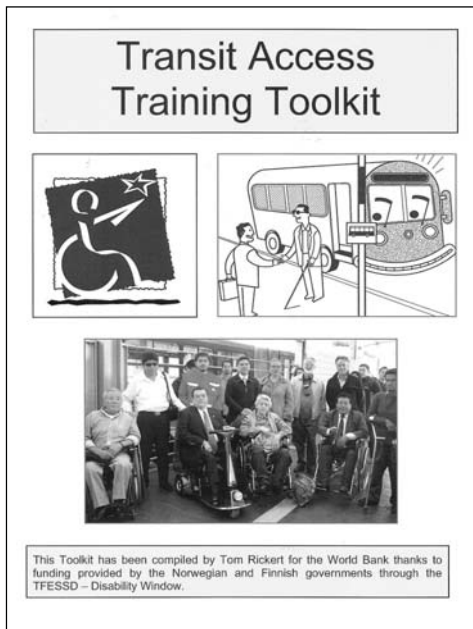
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## **Register now for the 12<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Mobility & Transport for Elderly and Disabled Persons**

We urge our readers to consider registering for the 12th TRANSED conference to be held June 2-4 at Hong Kong's Convention and Exhibition Center. Go to [www.transted2010.hk](http://www.transted2010.hk) for detailed information from the Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation, the sponsor of this triennial event that is co-sponsored by the USA's Transportation Research Board. Reduced early-bird registration will end on December 31.



The Conference themes include affordability, environmental concerns, new technologies, accessible tourism, and travel solutions for those with cognitive and sensory disabilities. Local study tours will precede the Conference on June 1 and three-day study tours to Shanghai, Beijing, and Guangzhou will follow the Conference beginning on June 5.



## Where there is no trainer Transit Access Training Toolkit

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versions, thanks to an initiative of the Bank using funds provided by the governments of Norway and Finland. Tom Rickert, Executive Director of Access Exchange International, was commissioned by the Bank to compile the Toolkit. Important input into the materials was provided by transit drivers and persons with disabilities during focus groups held in Mexico City, sponsored by Libre Acceso, AC, and in New Delhi, sponsored by Svayam, the non-profit arm of Jindal Saw, a major corporation. In addition, sections of the Toolkit were reviewed by practitioners in eight countries in the Americas, Africa, and Asia.

The Toolkit includes pocket-size guides for bus and taxi drivers, posters, public service announcements for TV or radio stations, and instructions on how to sponsor a disability awareness event. Stakeholders around the world may choose to translate all or part of the Toolkit. Translations are already going forward in India, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka. The Toolkit materials may be reproduced without permission for non-commercial purposes only, provided the source is acknowledged.

The Toolkit is available free of charge as an e-mail attachment, as a CD, or in print. Contact [tom@globalride-sf.org](mailto:tom@globalride-sf.org). It will soon be available to download at [www.worldbank.org/disability](http://www.worldbank.org/disability).

## Some comments from recipients of the Transit Access Training Toolkit

“... It arrived in our hands at an excellent moment as we are carrying out a training program for our drivers, ticket booth operators, and other personnel” – from the manager of a Bus Rapid Transit system in Latin America

“This kit includes important points for transport workers. . . . Illustrations are very unique and I will use them for introduction of our program for bus drivers. The (public service) announcements will also be useful.” - Japan

“I have sent the materials to my colleagues in the transport sector of my ministry” - Chile

“It is very useful for us. . . . We will put it in our website and would see what we can do with it both at the national and regional levels.” – from the office of an international disability agency in Thailand, working in the Asia-Pacific Region

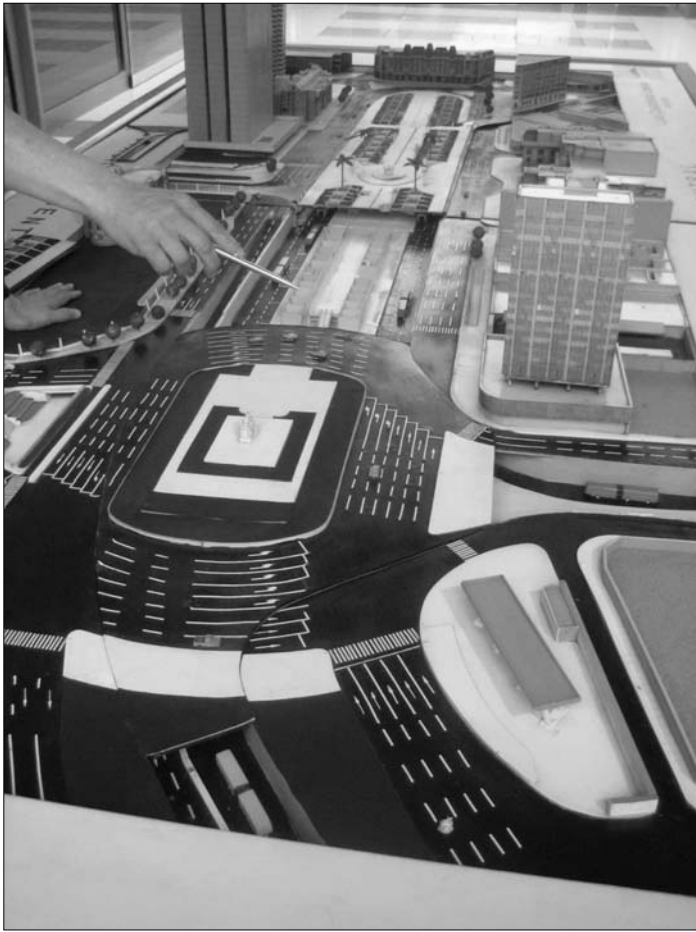
“This material is valuable and great complement to our ongoing effort in Vietnam. I will share (it) with our Vietnamese partners.” – from an NGO working with persons with disabilities

“The Toolkit will be useful for our accessibility work here in Ethiopia. . . . send us a printed version and also the CD for our Disability Information Resource Center.” – from a disability agency in Addis Ababa

“Avoid sudden stops” warns the poster at right in its Portuguese version. Unsafe driving is a major reason why public transport is not accessible to millions of persons with disabilities around the world.



Rickert has also been commissioned by the World Bank to complete a follow-up project to address practical barriers in the transport sector that hinder local efforts to promote universal accessibility. Plans call for extensive input into the project during meetings with stakeholders in Colombia in early 2010. Our next Newsletter will report on the project.



## Accessible mass transit in Peru

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ties – benefits from these features.

The Metropolitan Bus Rapid Transit trunk line runs through Lima on a north-south axis, and is serviced by feeder lines focused on major terminals at the ends of the corridor. 522 new buses – mostly large articulated models – are being manufactured for the system.

“Access for all” is one of the stated goals of the system. Other goals include improved service, reduced pollution, better regulation, improved traffic control, increased safety, fare collection using contactless debit cards, and integration of the bus system with bikeways. But “access for all” is never automatic. As with all BRT systems, Lima’s Metropolitan will require an ongoing commitment to proper maintenance, bus driver training, and a growing network of accessible sidewalks leading to feeder buses and to the main trunk lines.

The scope of the project is shown by this model of a portion of Lima’s accessible underground Central Station now nearing completion. High-contrast signage within the station is shown below. At bottom: An illustration of the Metropolitan’s accessible floor-level boarding – a feature of most BRT systems around the world.



Walter Paredes Rojas, who heads up the project, welcomes a participant to a public meeting to review construction proposals (above). Beyond the trunk line served by long articulated buses, and feeder lines with regular buses, 3-wheeled *tuk-tuks* are the main transit mode in outlying barrios.



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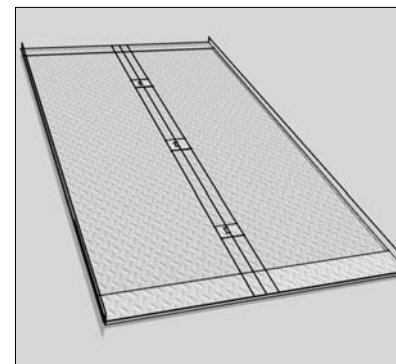
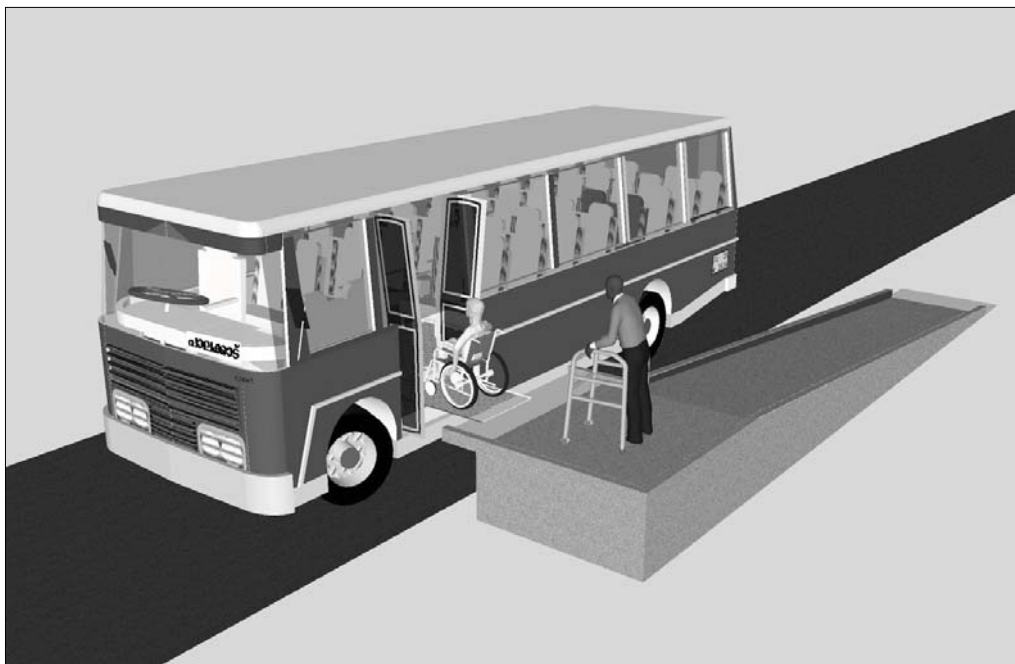
**SPECIAL THANKS** for the pro bono assistance of Tanya Slesnick (our auditor), Maureen Blumenthal (office assistance), Nicolas Finck (editorial assistance), Rachel Ede and Sung Choe (web site assistance), and Susan Rickert.

Visit our web site at [www.globalride-sf.org](http://www.globalride-sf.org) for 130 updated links to information on accessible transportation from countries in Europe, the Americas, Africa, and Asia.

AEI is tax exempt under Article 501(c)(3) of the USA's Internal Revenue Code and contributions are tax-deductible. Our financial records are audited on an annual basis.

**An idea to consider**

**Using Bus Rapid Transit concepts to provide access for passengers with disabilities on "regular" bus routes**



From our beginnings in 1990, the concept of level boarding for wheelchair users has been of special interest to Access Exchange International. The concept meshed with the larger innovation of level boarding

for *all* Bus Rapid Transit passengers by South American BRTs during the same period. This concept drawing by Jamie Osborne, of the Accessible Services office of San Francisco's Municipal Transportation Agency, illustrates level boarding from a small wayside platform dedicated for use by passengers with disabilities (platform railings not shown). The key is the inexpensive folding bridgeplate (inset at right), which in this drawing is envisioned as stored on brackets in the interior of the bus for deployment by the driver when needed (drawing at left). The bridgeplate concepts come from light rail usage in Sacramento, California, and from historic streetcar usage in San Francisco. Bridgeplates have been successfully tested with buses in San Francisco, USA; Moscow, Russia, and Pretoria, South Africa. The concept could also mesh with use for all passengers in some variants of BRT feeder bus systems with boarding from ramped platforms, but may require bridgeplates mounted outside bus doors as with some BRT systems in Brazil and Ecuador. **We seek comments from international stakeholders about how the concept might be developed both (1) to serve passengers with disabilities at key sites on regular bus routes, and (2) to serve all other passengers, for example along feeder routes to Bus Rapid Transit trunk lines.**

# New guides, expanded rail access assist disabled passengers in India

A 70-page report for the Indian Road Congress, titled *Guidelines for Inclusive Pedestrian Facilities*, was published in August by Anjee Agarwal of Samarthyam, a disability NGO promoting access for all in India. A series of smaller technical guides on universal design, accessible road and pedestrian



design, and related topics is also described at their web site at [www.samarthyam.org](http://www.samarthyam.org). The picture above is from *Traffic Police & Hum Tum*, a well-illustrated brochure by Samarthyam to train traffic police concerning disability awareness. In addition, a 260 page compendium titled *Access for All: Training Manual to Promote a Barrier Free Environment*, was published by the Rehabilitation Council of India in 2008, authored by Anjee Agarwal of Samarthyam and by Sanjeev Sachdeva.

## 1,500 rail stations to be made accessible

Railway authorities are aiming to improve access to 1,500 railway stations in India by the end of 2010, including access features for parking, walkways, signage, ticketing, bathrooms, and waiting areas. Small battery-operated cars are planned at major stations to assist in reaching special train cars for passengers with disabilities. Perhaps foremost among these efforts is the revamping of the New Delhi railway station with extensive input concerning access features from Samarthyam. The station will be a transit hub for the Commonwealth Games to be held in India in October, 2010. However, at a national level the ambitious program to improve rail stations is not without some initial problems. Members of the national Disability Rights Alliance, meeting in Chennai at a forum for "Making the Railways Inclusive," have noted concerns ranging from other passengers illegally crowding accessible coaches, to a lack of food service on long-

distance trains, a lack of station attendants needed to operate the battery-operated vehicles, and inadequate announcements about the location of accessible coaches. And the Bombay High Court has taken Mumbai Central rail station personnel to task for constructing just one accessible toilet in a huge station with nine platforms!

A second 15-kilometer accessible Bus Rapid Transit corridor with 30 stops and adjacent bicycle and pedestrian paths is planned in New Delhi, aimed at correcting problems encountered with an initial corridor. The bus terminals of the Delhi Transit Corporation are being equipped with fourteen accessible toilets, noted Samarthyam.

Jamie Osborne, while on leave from San Francisco's transportation agency, completed several months as a resident resource person in India, including presentations made by him at campuses of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in New Delhi and in Roorkee. Osborne accompanied Tom Rickert of AEI and Lalita Sen of Texas Southern University as international presenters at a conference on accessible transportation sponsored by Svayam in New Delhi this past March. (Sources for this article included *Disability News India*, *The Times of India*, *Svayam*, *Samarthyam*, *The Hindu*, and *the India Express*.)

## DC workshop to focus on Innovation in Accessible Transport for All

A workshop on Innovation in Accessible Transport for All will be held on Thursday, January 14, 2010, at the World Bank in Washington, DC. The event is co-sponsored by the International Transport Forum and the World Bank, with presentations on innovations in policy, planning, design, and technology in the promotion of access for all in public transportation around the world. Contact Mary Crass at [mary.crass@oecd.org](mailto:mary.crass@oecd.org) to reserve a place. The annual international roundtable on accessible transportation, co-sponsored by AEI and the International Centre for Accessible Transportation (ICAT) every January in Washington DC, will not be held this year in order to enhance our support for this workshop. We urge the many persons who have participated in our roundtable series over the past ten years to take full advantage of this one-time opportunity. We plan to resume our roundtable series a year from now.

# News and Notes from Around the World

• **Argentina:** An Accessibility Map of Buenos Aires is now available to persons with disabilities by clicking destinations to get detailed access information, reports COPINE, a city agency in Buenos Aires. . . . Advocates are actively promoting an accessible taxi fleet in Buenos Aires. AEI has been assisting with international contacts. . . . Angel Nestor Croci reports that the city of Mar del Plata has created a model pilot project to demonstrate pedestrian accessibility.

• **Brazil:** The São Paulo Metro is moving ahead toward completion of an access improvement plan by the end of 2010, reports Maria Beatriz Barbosa. . . . Vital Amílcar Silva Neto (photo below) has completed a case study analysis of accessible public transportation in Recife, the largest city in northeastern Brazil. An electronic copy of his 329-page dissertation is available in Portuguese by



contacting him at [euamilcar@gmail.com](mailto:euamilcar@gmail.com). It was completed as a post-graduate project in civil engineering within the Federal University of Pernambuco, Brazil. AEI publications and correspondence served as some of the many resources brought to bear on the project, that illustrates what we hope will be a growing interest by students in many countries to focus on the mobility needs of seniors and persons with disabilities.

• **Canada:** Contact [pat.weir@oct-cta.gc.ca](mailto:pat.weir@oct-cta.gc.ca) for news from the Canadian Transportation Agency on pending upgrades for air, rail, and ferry accessibility. . . . Todd Litman of the Victoria Transport Policy Institute analyzes the problems of sidewalk accessibility in Buenos Aires in a helpful blog at [www.planetizen.com/node/41097](http://www.planetizen.com/node/41097).

• **European Commission:** Go to [www.euro-access.org](http://www.euro-access.org) for the results of a two-year project analyzing the status of accessible public transport in the European community. A key finding was the need to establish a common European methodology to enable towns and cities “to measure how well they are doing and to prioritize areas for further improvements,” notes Ann Frye of the UK. By way of follow-up, the Mediate Project is working on this very concern: go to [www.mediate.euregio.net](http://www.mediate.euregio.net). Ann also reports that “improving accessibility for persons with reduced mobility” is one of the specific priorities of the Commission’s newly published European Action Plan on Urban Mobility.

• **Italy:** “Talking Signs” are being installed on buses and the railroad station in Trieste. The system enables blind passengers to receive audible information to navigate transit stops and stations and know what buses or trains to board. Information at [www.talkingsigns.com](http://www.talkingsigns.com).

• **Malaysia:** The KTMB Railway intends to add access features to five stations serving the greater Kuala Lumpur area during 2010. Seven stations are already equipped with basic access features, according to a report from *Disability News Asia*.

• **Mexico:** Mexico City’s international airport has hired some 60 bilingual workers with disabilities. They will greet passengers and direct them to the next stage of their journeys, notes *The Economist*.

• **South Africa:** Rea Vaya, Johannesburg’s new Bus Rapid Transit system, initiated accessible service in August connecting Soweto township with downtown Johannesburg. Plans call for expanding the accessible Rea Vaya system to be one of the largest in the world by 2013, with 122 kilometers of corridors and 150 stations. However, aspects of the larger project have been hotly opposed by jitney and private bus drivers, a concern found in many cities until drivers are persuaded that they can be successfully incorporated into the new system. Also, wheelchair riders have reported problems with an excessive gap between the station platform and bus floor. Better driver training and other changes may be needed

• **Sri Lanka:** “Developing Disability Sensitive Transport Infrastructure” was the subject of a workshop held this past June in Colombo, Sri Lanka (photo). The conference was chaired by Ranjith de



Silva, the Asia-Pacific Coordinator of the International Forum for Rural Transport and Development (IFRTD), and included presentations by high-ranking officials with several Sri Lankan ministries

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# News and Notes

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in addition to strong participation by a network of organizations and individuals working on behalf of mobility for all.

- **United Arab Emirates:** The new elevator-equipped Dubai Metro (photo) is reported to be accessible to all passengers, notes Betty Dion of Canada's Global Alliance on Accessible Technologies and Environments. Dubai may be the world's fastest growing city.



- **USA:** Illustrating the growing impact of Bus Rapid Transit around the world, *The New York Times* recently ran a front-page article on Bogotá, Colombia's accessible TransMilenio BRT system with the headline, "In Poor Cities, Buses May Aid Climate Battle." User-friendly access features are typically an integral part of BRT system design and one part of our job is to help make sure that BRT systems that look accessible really are accessible in terms of design details. . . . Project ACTION in Washington DC has issued a valuable new video for training bus drivers, titled *ACCESS Matters*. The video is available without charge on CD-ROM by going to [www.projectaction.org](http://www.projectaction.org), and includes support materials for trainers and bus drivers dealing with such matters as priority seating, use of lifts and wheelchair securements, bus stop and route announcements, and service animals. Project ACTION has also released a fact sheet titled "Universal Design & Accessible Transit Systems: Facts to consider when updating or expanding your transit system". . . . We thank Gerhard Menckhoff for recommending a research report with some great ideas on making streets and pedestrian crossings safer and more accessible: go to *Planning Complete Streets for an Aging America* at [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org). Additional creative ideas are found by going to *Safe Routes for Seniors* at [www.transalt.org](http://www.transalt.org) in New York City.



## Three cheers for the Brits! Meet CGB (Kit) Mitchell

Dr. C.G.B. (Kit) Mitchell is best known to many of us as a pioneer of accessible transportation, often volunteering his work upon referral by AEI, such as in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, and Bangkok nearly a decade ago. During the past year, Kit worked with the U.N. Development Program and Malaysian authorities on a highly successful project to plan improvements to accessibility in the World Heritage historical site of downtown Penang. Plans for 2010 include his volunteer work to assist the island republic of Mauritius to implement accessible bus service. Kit has taken the lead in freely sharing documents and photos about accessible transport with practitioners in dozens of countries around the world. No one better exemplifies the concept of "transport professionals without borders."

Kit has also been a key person within the accessibility work of the USA's Transportation Research Board, recently completing several years as co-chair of its Committee on Accessible Transportation and Mobility. He has also been a key person in the TRANSED conference series on mobility and transport for elderly and disabled persons.

Kit's background was with the UK's Transport Research Laboratory (TRL), where his many duties included heading up their Access and Mobility Division. The UK is home to several key collaborators in our work and other countries owe a great deal to the pioneering research carried out by Kit and his colleagues to contribute to the emerging international norms in our field.

Photo below:

**Kit Mitchell discusses curb ramps with Tan Kuan Aw, a campaigner for accessibility in Penang, Malaysia.**

