

Chair's Summary of the CSD Transport Seminar

The CSD Thematic Seminar on Transport was held at UN Headquarters on 13 April 2010. The event was moderated by Ms. Tania Valerie Raguz, Vice Chair of CSD18. An introductory statement was made by Mr. Aslam Chaudhry, Chief of the Global Policy Branch of the Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). Mr. Chaudhry enumerated the key messages comprised in the “SG report on Transport”. He emphasized the need to find feasible common approaches and ways of expanding transport services for sustainable development, while enhancing without delay an effective, comprehensive and rapid transition to more sustainable low-carbon transport systems. A more sustainable transport future for all was achievable.

A film entitled “*Connecting Development - Roads in Peru - The World Bank*” was shown prior to the first panel presentation by Mr. Peter O’Neill, Lead Infrastructure Adviser, World Bank. His presentation focused on the financing and management of rural roads. He explained that in rural areas, especially in developing countries, the establishment and/or expansion of adequate transport infrastructure and environmentally benign and affordable transport services was urgently needed in order to facilitate and enhance the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. While elaborating the advantages and disadvantages of different options for the funding and management of rural roads (e.g. special purpose road agency, new generation road funds), he emphasized the importance of local capacity building as well as road maintenance, which was often neglected yet indispensable in order to reach sustainable transport.

Two short films entitled “*The world is your home-look after it*” and “*A Breath of Air- What Pollution is Doing to Our Children*” were shown before the presentation of panelist Mr. Sergio Sanchez, Executive Director for the new center of the Clean Air Initiative for Latin American Cities. Mr. Sanchez spoke about the co-benefits of public transport systems in urban centers. While referring to the “Bellagio Declaration on Transportation and Climate Change” he explained that effective climate action was incomplete without addressing the overall system performance of the transport sector. One key message of his presentation was that the overall benefits of public transport systems (e.g. reduction of air pollution) were in the long run higher than the (total) costs. A comprehensive approach including enhanced freight management, integrated transport, land use and environment strategies, improved public transportation systems, travel demand management as well as improved technologies and fuels, was important. The trend of increasing motorization could be countered by promoting the use of more sustainable public transport systems.

Ms. Jennifer Ewing Thiel, Director, Tools and Technical Innovation Division, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) provided information on “hidden subsidies” for car transportation. She presented a study made by ICLEI identifying those “hidden subsidies” by subtracting the expenditures of cities for car transportation (e.g. for road construction, traffic management etc.) from their income in this area (e.g. through parking fee collection, fines etc.). In Europe the amount of (hidden) subsidies for private car transportation was higher than the amount of subsidies for public transport. In average, cities were only recovering 30% of their expenditures for private car transportation. She encouraged cities to analyze their hidden subsidies and to increase the funding and facilitate the use of public transport, while focusing on comprehensive, multi-modal transport

systems (buses, subways, bicycles, walking etc.). Furthermore, the cost recovery for the use of private vehicles (e.g. introduction of tolls, parking fees etc.) should be increased.

Mr. Michael Replogle, Global Policy Director and Founder of the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP), presented the role of international partnerships in promoting sustainable transport solutions. He noted several CSD partnerships that were addressing both sustainable transport and climate change issues, while then illustrating more in detail the Partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT) which emerged from the Bellagio Meeting on Transport and Climate Change in May 2009. The main objectives of this partnership were to integrate sustainable, low carbon transport in climate negotiations and in national/local climate policies and programmes as well as to contribute to sustainable development and the millennium development goals by providing access to or for goods and services by lower income groups. In conclusion, he emphasized the need for better data collection in the transport sector.

Following the panel presentations, the interactive discussion revolved around several key issues, including:

- The access to basic services in rural areas through the establishment and/or expansion of adequate transport infrastructure and environmentally benign and affordable transport services should remain a main goal.
- Especially in the context of increased global urbanization, particular attention has to be given to adequate integration of non-motorized transport in multi-modal, all-inclusive transport and urban planning strategies.
- There is a need for a change in the global consumer preferences away from the wish of car ownership (“the American dream”) towards the use of low carbon and public transport systems. Raising public awareness and the implementation of adequate policies and programmes can hereby play an important role.
- Capacity-building at the local level is required in order to make rural road projects sustainable. A particular focus should hereby be given to road maintenance in the long-term.
- The effects of global tourism have to be taken into consideration. Attractive travel alternatives using low-carbon and public transport modes have to be promoted while involving all stakeholders in the process.
- There is a need for a more comprehensive data collection on transport activities, especially in developing countries. Furthermore better measuring mechanisms identifying the impacts of transport on climate change, but also the co-benefits of low carbon and public transport systems (reduction of air pollution etc.) have to be implemented.
- Global best practices should be exchanged in an attempt to adapt and/or duplicate them in other countries.