

Scientific and Technological Community

Statement during the CSD-18 Ministerial Roundtable 3 on Meeting the Challenges of Transportation Needs in the 21st Century, New York, 13 May 2010

Mr. Chairman,

The Scientific and Technological Community recognizes that for many countries, in particular developing countries, the expansion of transportation, and in particular of transport infrastructure, is an important necessity, not the least for providing farmers access to markets. However, an increasing decoupling of this expansion of transport from fossil fuel consumption must be achieved.

New transportation technologies are progressing on many fronts towards lower emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases. Nevertheless, even with the aggressive implementation of cleaner vehicle technologies, in developed and emerging countries there remains a strong need to reduce demand for personal vehicle transport and long-distance road transport of goods.

Technological innovations are gaining commercial success in differing rates. Their continued market penetration needs to be encouraged through appropriate economic incentive programmes, as well as enhanced targeted research, engineering, and deployment efforts. Actions for promoting cleaner fuels and vehicles, including hybrid and electric cars, must also be complemented by policies to diversify mobility means, to introduce efficient and sustainable public transport, in particular in urban zones, and to enhance public space management in cities with new modes instead of car usage. In many developing countries, training of scientists and engineers in transport related disciplines, as well as institutional capacity building must be fostered.

Introducing biomass production for fuels should be based on sound studies which have to evaluate risks of competition with food production and potential effects on crop prizes.

Quite often urban transport planning seems to be playing a catching-up game related to providing sustainable solutions. By 2050, 2/3rds of the world population will live in urban areas. In many countries, the urban boundaries are expanding as peri-urban areas, which over time will evolve in new cities. It is thus important to develop now a sound scientific modelling approach in designing an integrated and inter-modal transport network, including a feasibility analysis. Making such an approach part of CSD policy recommendations and working with the Local Authorities would be useful for creating sustainability of the sector.

Policy dialogue at the national and local level should also focus on using all transport modes innovatively rather than creating unwarranted competition among the transport modes and different fuel used. Singapore, Hong Kong, London and New York are role models in this regard that could be followed where appropriate. In general, the transport sector lends itself to enhanced South-South cooperation, in particular as regards sharing of scientific knowledge, best practices and engineering solutions.

This brings me to my last point. The scientific, engineering and technological communities can play a key role in understanding the policy-implementation nexus, what has worked and what not. For instance, a number of well researched examples the world over of alternative fuel policies and the problems they faced in implementation can provide important information to be taken into account by those countries which are in the process of developing new policies in this domain. Such interdisciplinary socio-technical research should be strengthened.

Thank you.