

## **ROUND TABLE: ENHANCING ACCESS TO SUSTAINABLE URBAN AND RURAL TRANSPORT**

**19<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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**(By Dr. Rajneesh Dube, Joint Secretary)**

### **Mr. Chairperson**

I am grateful for giving me the floor. The transport sector is fundamental to economic growth as well as attainment of Millennium Development Goals in the developing countries. India is expanding its road connectivity, particularly all-weather road penetration in rural areas, to facilitate access to markets on one hand and to goods and services on the other, thereby enhancing livelihoods security. We have taken a major initiative in terms of Prime Minister's Rural Road Programme, which has transformed rural accessibility. In addition, the National Highway Development Project, includes the 'Golden Quadrilateral' providing highway connectivity of international standards between the four metropolises, and the 'North-South & East-West Corridors' crisscrossing the country. The Delhi-Mumbai rail-road stretch is a vital part of the proposed dedicated freight corridor linking industrial production clusters with export and import hubs.

### **Mr. Chairperson**

Developing countries face huge but surmountable challenges in this direction. I will flag three important issues for your consideration.

The first issue is that how do we ensure all-weather road connectivity in the rural areas coupled with safe and affordable transport? Achievement of such kind of connectivity in rural areas entails huge financial implications for the developing countries. Also related issues of technological support,

R&D and capacity building need to be addressed. In addition, mechanisms to sustain subsidized and reasonably priced travel on not-so-profitable routes need to be devised at the national level.

### **Mr. Chairperson**

The second issue is how do we overcome the technological and financial barriers for greater usage of cleaner fuels? The need of the hour is to promote alternate fuels like CNG, LPG and to promote enabling infrastructure like development of gas highways. India has taken some concrete steps in this direction. For example, the Delhi Transport Corporation operates today the world's largest fleet of CNG buses.

Cleaner fuels and related technologies are capital intensive which developing countries find hard to afford. India has introduced Euro-IV equivalent auto fuels in select cities and Euro-III equivalent in the rest, and our refineries have invested INR 350 billion for this roll over. For universalizing Euro-IV equivalent fuels in the next phase, massive investment of financial resources is required to build appropriate refining capacities. This exemplifies the magnitude of the challenge.

### **Mr. Chairperson**

The third issue is how do we augment mass transportation in urban areas and forge seamless modal integration? A fully integrated network of public transport systems supported by ICT and GIS/GPS technologies shall not only solve the crisis of urban mobility but also improve the urban air quality and reduce the Green House Gas emissions.

The implementation of Bus Rapid Transport System involves structural as well technological changes. A vibrant system would necessitate its integration with urban land use planning process, establishment of Unified Metropolitan Transport Authorities, right fiscal policies and robust transport management with feeder buses and promotion of pedestrianism. Institution building at national level and international cooperation are important instruments in achieving these objectives.

To conclude, a holistic approach at national level to address various issues of mobility along with international commitments for flow of greater resources and technological support is the way forward. I hope this meeting will come up with practical solutions for the same.

**Thank you Mr. Chairperson.**