

New UN group seeks solutions for harnessing rising investments in transport while reducing harmful pollutants for sustainable future

Solutions needed as air pollutants from transport kill seven million people annually and greenhouse gas emissions from transport keep rising

New York, 18 November 2014 – With trillions of dollars expected to be invested in transport infrastructure and air pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions rising, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon tasked his High-level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport with finding viable solutions to promote public health and safety, environmental protection and economic growth through sustainable transport.

Comprised of Government, civil society and private sector leaders, the Advisory Group will work with Governments, transport providers, businesses, financial institutions, civil society and others to promote and accelerate the implementation of sustainable transport.

“The opportunities for sustainable transport are profound and we must take action,” Mr. Ban said as he met with a number of the Group’s members. “Transport is vital for everyone, and with the right mix of solutions sustainable transport will help us to realize a better future by helping to reduce poverty while protecting the planet and driving economic growth.”

Mr. Ban requested that the Group ensure the close alignment of transport with inclusive and equitable growth, social development, and environmental protection.

The establishment of the Group reflects the importance of sustainable transport for addressing major global challenges. Transport accounts for more than one-quarter of greenhouse gas emissions, and is projected to grow to one-third by 2050. Transport is the main source of air pollutants, which lead to seven million premature deaths every year.

Population growth and urbanization are projected to add 2.5 billion people to the world's urban population by 2050, with nearly 90 per cent of the increase concentrated in Asia and Africa. Poor and vulnerable groups need transport accessibility to get to jobs, schools, health care facilities and other public services. The Group aims to make sure that the transport dimension is recognized when Governments devise strategies on fighting poverty.

Safe and efficient maritime transport is the backbone of world trade, with 90 per cent of goods shipped by sea routes. Moreover, transport is one of the few growth sectors, estimated to attract trillions of US dollars in infrastructure investment in the coming decades. Exploring how these investments can result in sustainable infrastructure is one of the issues that will be discussed by the Group.

The Advisory Group held its first meeting on 17 November, and agreed to its priority areas and work plan for its three-year term. Among other things, the Group will look for practical ways to unlock the potential of sustainable transport to contribute to poverty alleviation,

sustainable growth and sustainable urbanization. It was noted that to realize this goal, all modes of transport must be considered, including aviation, marine, ferry, rail and road.

The Group agreed to address a whole range of issues essential to transport, including access, accessibility, affordability, efficiency, climate and environmental impacts, public health and safety. It also decided to look at cross-cutting issues such as education, gender, finance, technology transfer, and capacity building.

To accomplish its goals, the Group will provide a global message and recommendations on sustainable transport. It will launch a “Global Transport Outlook Report” by July 2016 to provide analytical support for these recommendations and help mobilize action and initiatives in support of sustainable transport on the global, regional, local and sector levels, with a particular focus on urbanization.

The Group will support the organization of the Global Sustainable Transport Conference that will be convened by the Secretary-General towards the end of 2016. It will promote the integration of sustainable transport in relevant intergovernmental processes, including by making recommendations on the formulation and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda.

Members of the Secretary-General’s High-Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport

- Olof Persson (Sweden), Chief Executive Officer of the Volvo Group, Co-Chair
- Carolina Tohá (Chile), Mayor of Santiago, Chile, Co-Chair
- Frank Appel (Germany), Chief Executive Officer of Deutsche Post DHL.
- Milica Bajic-Brkovic (Serbia), President of the International Society of City and Regional Planners.
- Morten Engelstoft (Denmark), CEO of Services & Other Shipping
- Alain Flausch (Belgium), Secretary-General of the International Association of Public Transport (UITP)
- Maty Mint Hamady (Mauritania), Mayor of Nouakchott
- Patrick Ho (Hong Kong, China), Deputy Chairman and Secretary-General of China Energy Fund Committee
- Victor Kiryanov (Russian Federation), Deputy Minister of Interior of the Russian Federation.
- Jean Pierre Loubinoux (France), Director-General of the International Union of Railways
- Tanya Müller García (Mexico), Secretary of Environment of Mexico City and Vice-President of the World Green Infrastructure Network
- Len Roueche (Canada), Chief Executive Officer of Interferry

For more information see: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1843>

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