

Interventions by the Indian Delegation on the thematic area of Transport (CSD –18)

Distinguished Chair

Permit me to begin by thanking the Secretary General for the report on this subject. However, we would like to highlight few issues.

The report does not consider the equity and the scale dimension in transportation while emphasizing technological up-gradation to reduce CO₂ footprint and waste streams for sea transport. Marine freight is of high significance to developing countries as it has a direct bearing on their food and energy security, apart from its industrial production impacts. A technologically sophisticated vessel entails higher capital costs, which necessitates quoting higher freight rates. While large modern vessels are able to command higher freight rates, smaller vessels are not able to command freight rates on account of their low capacity. This in turn impacts the end prices of merchandise in developing countries that import food and fuel. As for the exports, the higher the freight, the greater is the disguised tariff on export commodities from developing countries and consequently the loss of competitive advantage. To remove this anomaly, the small and medium shipping companies from the developing world urgently need sufficient technical and financial backing to carry out modernization.

We also have some concerns with the blanket assertion that ‘intensified scrapping of older tonnage may pose further challenges for safety, health and environmental conditions in major ship-breaking nations’. Rather, it needs to be emphasized that scrapping must involve rigorous occupational safety standards and environmental management plans.

We also need to be cautious about replicating programmes that have worked well in specific circumstances. No one size fits all. It is true that area licensing, road pricing and parking charge schemes, such as those applied in Singapore, London and Paris, have proven effective in terms of reduction of urban vehicular traffic. However, cities in India have high density population in city centers and downtown areas. This precludes area licensing, road pricing and parking charge schemes from having positive impacts. In fact the socio-economic consequences may be adverse if the Singapore/London scheme is indiscriminately implemented. We believe that cities with high rate of suburbanization can be successful with area licensing, road pricing and parking charge schemes. But this may not be the suitable model for most of the cities in the developing world. Our emphasis, therefore, should be on mass rapid transport systems, non-motorized transport and enhanced traffic management.

Thank you.