

DESA / Division for Sustainable Development

Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport Forum for Latin American Region (Foro de transporte sostenible - FTS)

Under the Sustainable Low Carbon Transport CSD registered partnership the Inter-American Development Bank, Asian Development Bank and many of the leading sustainable transport development agencies have been converging on the needs and opportunities for much more sustainable transport future. The successful Environmentally Sustainable Transport in Asia project was seen as an important step in the progress being made in Asia. It was executed through UNDESA/UNCRD and there were plans to replicate it in Latin America. To that effect UNDESA/UNCRD wrote a proposal which the IADB used to attract financing from the Korean International Cooperation Agency. UCRD have limited funds to work outside the Asia region in their current project but are contributing. Division for Sustainable Development wishes to contribute additional staff support and RPTC resources for developing country participants in the forum where they will learn from each other and from experts the principles and approaches to environmentally sustainable transport. The workshop responds to Agenda 21 para 9.15. “Governments at the appropriate level, with the cooperation of the relevant United Nations bodies and, as appropriate, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, and the private sector, should:(b) Facilitate...access to and the transfer of...transport technologies,...to the developing countries, including...training programmes; (f) Study, within the framework of the United Nations and its regional commissions, the feasibility of convening regional conferences on transport and the environment”. The workshop outcomes will be a follow-up to CSD19’s Transport theme, and the outcome communicated to the UNCSD 2012.

The three day meeting will be conducted for government representatives of 11 countries in Latin America on 22-24 June, 2011 in Bogota, Columbia. The Foro de transporte sostenible (FTS) will be jointly organized by the Ministry of Transport, Columbia, (MoT Columbia); the United Nations DESA Center for Regional Development (UNCRD Bogota); the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC); and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The FTS aims to set in motion a regional mechanism and consultative process to share best practices, policy instruments, transport technologies and to promote collaborative and participatory efforts towards addressing emerging and issues of common concern related to transport. The outcome of the first FTS will be the Bogota Declaration which will outline common goals on environmentally sustainable transport up to 2020 as agreed by the national representatives using knowledge they have gained from the meeting.

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I. Background

1. Transportation is essential to development, giving access to goods and services including social and economic benefits but as well, if poorly managed, creates drastic environmental, social and economic damage. UNDESA projects that the world population will reach 9 billion by 2075 and that by 2025 most people will live in cities. While this is already the case in industrialized countries, many developing countries are changing fast and need assistance to shift toward more sustainable development pathways. Health concerns and degrading living conditions caused by traffic congestion and pollution call for more sustainable, efficient, economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound transport systems and climate change is defining limits to fossil fuel resource use. In the context of the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the transport theme was included in Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation as a result of the World Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and was since then part of intergovernmental deliberations, among others highlighted in CSD 9 (2000) and CSD18 (2010). Transport will also be part of the negotiations at the CSD in 19 May 2011 and an important theme in the UNCSD in 2012.
2. Among the Multilateral Environmental Agreements in Rio in 1992, the UNFCCC process was initiated. In order to keep the global temperature increase below 2 degrees Celsius, as suggested in the Copenhagen Accord, developed countries will need to reduce emissions 25-40% below 1990 levels by 2020. In addition, developing countries would need to reduce GHG emissions of 15-30% below Business as Usual (BAU) by 2020. For the transport sector this would translate to 0.6-1.3 GtCO₂-eq/yr reduction by 2020. This will require concerted and coordinated action on the side of developing countries which combines domestic action with internationally supported actions through: (a) traditional development, including the multilateral development banks (MDBs), (b) special climate funds like GEF and CTF, as well as (c) dedicated climate mechanisms in the form of Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) and Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) which are a new climate mechanism under discussion.

II. Rationale

3. The rapid growth in Latin American cities during last three decades has led to significant addition demand for passenger and freight transport. Although the Latin American region has already a relatively high numbers of cars in comparison to its GDP, motorization is expected to increase further. Latin America is the most urbanized region in the developing world and therefore a large part of future motorization will take place in cities.
4. Motorization and transport in Latin America is characterized by:
 - Dependence on road transport for freight and logistics, limited importance of railways and inland waterways;
 - Decline in walking as mode-share, limited importance of cycling;
 - Continued reliance on imported vehicles (from USA, Japan and elsewhere) in some countries;
 - More limited role of motorized two wheelers than in Asia, however the share is growing;
 - Extensive use of bio-fuels in largest transport market (Brazil);
 - World-class BRT systems in some cities, e.g. Bogotá (Colombia), Curitiba (Brazil) and Mexico City (Mexico);
 - Emerging efforts to replicate and scale up successful efforts to improve transit backed up by financial mechanisms;
 - High contribution to GHG emissions from energy by road transport because of large use of hydro for electricity generation;

- Mixed track record in the formulation and implementation of a road map for cleaner fuels and vehicles;
 - High incidences of air pollution with transport a major contributor while air quality management systems differ also in terms of capacity and efficacy;
 - Growing numbers of people who are killed or injured in traffic accidents;
 - Increasing congestion in many of the cities;
 - Underinvestment in transport infrastructure and services;
 - Institutional structures and capacities which are not able to deal with the challenges of increased motorization and integrated transport planning and management.
5. As indicated above countries and cities in Latin America have started to act to address transport problems. So far this has been mostly to address local concerns such as: improved access, congestion, road safety and air pollution. Lately global environmental concerns about climate change are increasingly becoming a driver for change as well. A growing concern about the urgency to change the growth trajectory of GHG emissions, including those in the transport sector has given rise to the concept of transformational change. Under this concept the emphasis is no longer on projects as the main approach to change, instead this is being replaced by an emphasis on sector wide policies and investment approaches.
6. Most of the Latin American countries however do not yet have an integrated approach or strategy at the national level in dealing with transport and environment related issues. Also, the mandates of various responsible ministries or agencies for health, environment, transport, planning, infrastructure, energy, and traffic management are not well coordinated. There are considerable differences in the region in the level of authority for cities to take on transport and environment problems. While the institutional structures vary from country to country, as are the detailed efforts to improve transport, there is a collective need in the Latin American region to accelerate efforts to strengthen the sustainability of their transport systems to safeguard economic and social development while protecting local and global environment.
7. It would be to the advantage of the Latin American region to have an institutional forum where countries can present and discuss their efforts on sustainable transport while at the same time engage with a wider group of experts on sustainable transport. The proposed Regional Environmental Sustainable Transport Forum for Latin America, or the Foro Transporte Ambiental y Sostenible para América Latina (FTS) proposes to be this institutional forum.
8. The FTS is inspired by the EST Forum for Asia which has been in operation since 2004. (See box 1). The Asian EST Forum has made a significant contribution to shaping the regional policy discussion on Environmentally Sustainable Transport, in bringing together different national stakeholders on transport within individual Asian countries and enabling the formulation of new sustainable transport policies or strengthening the sustainability dimension of existing policies and strategies. The initial FTS will be funded by the Korea Fund for Technology and Innovation (KPK) and the Infrastructure Project Preparation Fund (InfraFund). Korea has made great progress in the development and implementation of environmentally sustainable transport policies and strategies and apart from the financial contribution by the KPK it is expected that Korean experience and expertise will be utilized in the upcoming FTS in Bogota, Columbia.

Box 1

United Nations Centre for Regional Development
Environmentally-Sustainable Transport (EST) Forum in Asia

With the support of the Ministry of Environment of the Government of Japan, the UNCRD initiated the EST project in 2004 to bring together government officials, experts, and other stakeholders in resolving transport and sustainable development. The signatory members to the EST project include the member nations of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Mongolia, China, Republic of Korea, and Japan.

In 2004 under this initiative, UNCRD and its partners developed the “Manila Policy Dialogue on Environment and Transport in the Asian Region”. In 2005, through support from a regional expert forum and the member states of the EST initiative, a comprehensive list of sustainable transport objectives were articulated within the “Aichi Statement”. The Aichi Statement is based upon the 12 major thematic areas identified as a focus of sustainable transport. This statement included provisions for member states to regularly report upon progress in reaching the objectives.

In 2006, mayors of 22 Asian cities signed the Kyoto Declaration on Environmentally Sustainable Transport which details how cities can implement the EST principles embodied in the Aichi statement. Subsequently 12 more mayors signed in 2008 and 10 more mayors in 2010.

In 2009, the EST project produced the “Seoul Statement Towards the Promotion of Environmentally-Sustainable Transport (EST) for a Low Carbon Society and Green Growth”. This statement particularly highlighted the need to regional efforts for win-win solutions that capture co-benefit considerations in addressing sustainable transport and climate change. The Bangkok 2020 Declaration which was adopted in July 2010 is the first joint declaration by Asian governments and other stakeholders in the Asian region with a clear time frame (2010-2020), a comprehensive set of goals on EST for this timeframe and a set of indicators to assess progress in the implementation of the declaration.

In support of the regional EST policy dialogue support has also been provided for the formulation of the National EST strategies in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Viet Nam, and Philippines. Support has also been extended for a range of training activities.

9. There is currently no process in place in Latin America like the EST Forum. There are several workshops and seminars on transport and environment. There have also been governmental meetings where transport and environment have been discussed. What these meetings lack is continuity. What makes the EST Forum concept unique is that governments will be asked to support a regional policy framework on environmentally sustainable transport and those countries are invited to share their efforts on sustainable transport in a semi-formalized manner with the common aim to develop national environmentally sustainable transport strategies.
10. The decisions reached at UNFCCC CoP 16 in Cancun in December 2010 provide a good insight in the possible structure of a post 2012 agreement on climate change and the instruments to be used in developing countries to implement such an agreement. The time has now come for more detailed discussions on concrete guidelines for these instruments, while NAMAs will have a crucial role to play for the transport sector and can increase its involvement in international climate mitigation efforts. A SLoCaT working group on Transport NAMAs is proposed, consisting of countries and organizations working on transport NAMAs that would document ongoing efforts on the development of transport NAMAs, and synthesize experiences with the aim to contribute to the process of formulating guidelines for NAMAs.
11. At UNCSD 2012, it is proposed that Transport have special attention where the EST-Asia and LAC FTS declarations could be presented and may be highly influential coming from developing country governments with expert capacity development support through the forum process.

Outcomes of the workshop

12. The FTS aims to set in motion a regional mechanism and consultative process to share best practices, policy instruments, transport technologies and to promote collaborative and participatory efforts towards addressing emerging and issues of common concern related to transport. The outcome of the first FTS will be the Bogota Declaration which will outline common goals on environmentally sustainable transport up to 2020 as agreed by the national representatives using knowledge they have gained from the meeting. The workshop will address social, economic and environmental aspects of transport in the context of co-benefits of low carbon transport systems. It will provide follow-up to the CSD 19 (May 2011) related to transport by providing regional member states and key stakeholders the opportunity to move forward on climate change and sustainable development and producing an outcome report which will be made available to UNCSD 2012. In the same manner, it will influence the UNFCCC process in South Africa December 2011 with regard to the inclusion of sustainable transport considerations in nationally appropriate mitigation actions (NAMAs). Finally it will influence the UNCSD outcome in relation to transport.
13. Subject to agreement by governments and availability of funding, the Forum will become a biannual event.