

Concept Note
**Technical Working Group Meeting on the
Convening of Transport Stakeholders
to Develop and Take Action on Recommendations
for more Sustainable Transport Systems**

Hosted by UN DESA

7-8 June, New York, USA

A. Background

In January 2012, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon recently indicated that the post-2015 framework for sustainable development will be an important priority in the Action Agenda for his second term. Transport was listed as one of six building blocks for sustainable development.¹ The Action Agenda indicates that the Secretary General “*plans to convene aviation, marine, ferry, rail, road and urban public transport providers, along with Governments and investors, to develop and take action on recommendations for more sustainable transport systems that can address rising congestion and pollution worldwide, particularly in urban areas*”.

The Secretary General elaborated his vision on the process for the post 2015 framework on sustainable development in a briefing at the informal meeting of the General Assembly, 9 May, in New York.² The Secretary General announced: “*after the Rio Conference, I will appoint a high-level panel of eminent persons to advise on the post-2015 way forward. Today, I am pleased to announce that the following leaders have accepted my invitation to serve as Co-Chairs of this high-level panel: President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono of Indonesia; President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia; and Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom.*”

As the negotiations for the Rio+20 conference are unfolding it is becoming increasingly more likely that the post-2015 framework for sustainable development process mentioned will play an important role in the further development of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are being proposed as an important outcome of the Rio+20 conference.³

B. Transport Working Group

As a first step UN-DESA, which has been tasked with the preparation of convening the stakeholders, intends to establish a Working Group, which will make detailed suggestions on the scope of the consultations to be undertaken by the SG as well as who the participants could be in a high level dialog process under consideration to be convened by the SG. UN-DESA, which is also hosting the Partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT) is

¹ See <http://www.slocat.net/news/609>

² See <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2012/sgsm14277.doc.htm>

³ See <http://www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/enb2735e.pdf> for a summary of the April 25 – May 4, 2012 second round of informal negotiations which in pages 10 and 11 make reference to the involvement of UNGA and the Secretary General in the SDG process.

coordinating closely with SLoCaT in the establishment of the WG and the preparation of the Action Plan on Sustainable Transport.

The Working Group will make as much as possible use of previous intergovernmental agreements including the outcomes of regional environmentally sustainable transport forums in Asia, Europe and Latin America, CSD 9 decisions, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, relevant agreements reached under UNFCCC, and the CSD Sustainable Low Carbon Transport Partnership.

The Working Group will also consider the anticipated outcomes of the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in its discussions. This applies amongst others to the Sustainable Development Goals as well as possible Voluntary Commitments on Sustainable Transport.

C. Key Issues Expected to be Discussed

There is a range of key issues to be considered by the Working Group, including but not limited to:

1. The role of transport in sustainable development

There are differences in the manner in which transport is included in the discussion on sustainable development and the green economy. In most of the Rio+20 related processes transport has not been identified as a separate topic or priority. Only after the initial round of commenting on the Zero Draft Outcome Document was conducted has sustainable transport been identified as a priority theme in the draft outcome document for Rio+20.⁴ Transport is not yet listed as a SDG in most of the documents discussing SDGs⁵ but, is considered a key sector in a series of recent documents describing the implementation of green growth by important developmental organizations, including UN-ESCAP, UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank.⁶ The role of transport in the context of the Green Economy is also described in the joint UN-DESA – Partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport Rio+20 issues brief.⁷

As mentioned before transport is listed as one six building blocks for sustainable development in the post-2015 framework for sustainable development of the Secretary General.

2. The Scope of Sustainable Transport

A large part of recent literature on sustainable transport focuses on the energy use of transport and thereby the associated Greenhouse Gas emissions from transport. It is clear however that while discussing sustainable transport other topics can be included such as transport's developmental role by providing access to goods and services. In terms of negative externalities

⁴ See <http://www.iisd.ca/download/pdf/enb2735e.pdf>. Page 8.

⁵ See: Sustainable Development Goals: Building the Foundations for an Inclusive Process by Jeannet Lingán, Jack Cornforth and Robert Pollard, Stakeholder Forum. (<http://www.progressio.org.uk/sites/progressio.org.uk/files/SDGs%20Report%20final.pdf>)

⁶ See (a) the 2012 ESCAP report: Low Carbon Green Growth Roadmap for Asia and the Pacific. (<http://www.unescap.org/esd/environment/lcgg/documents/roadmap/Roadmap/Roadmap.pdf>) (b) UNDP 2012 Asia-Pacific Human Development Report: One Planet to Share, Sustaining human Progress in a Changing Climate http://asiapacific-hdr.aprc.undp.org/sites/default/files/files/UNDP%20%28Book%29_Low%20resolution.pdf (c) the World Bank 2012 report: Inclusive Green Growth: The Pathway to Sustainable development. http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTSDNET/Resources/Inclusive_Green_Growth_May_2012.pdf

⁷ See: <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/index.php?page=view&type=400&nr=297&menu=45>

it is important to consider whether to discuss as well air pollution, congestion, and road safety issues.

In terms of economic sustainability of transport it is important to discuss fuel subsidies which on the hand encourage additional and sometimes unnecessary driving and which take funding away from other developmental functions, e.g. health and education.

3. Definition of Sustainable Transport, indicators and targets for sustainable transport.

The time has come to agree on (i) a common definition of sustainable transport, (ii) a set of sustainability indicators and (iii) targets and milestones towards reaching the targets. A common definition and appropriate indicators are necessary to evaluate the degree to which investment programs and policies contribute to sustainable transport. Without specific targets and milestones it is hard to promote sustainable transport.

A multi-stakeholder working group has been set up by the Partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport to make proposals for a definition, indicators and targets related to sustainable transport. Several organizations represented in the SLoCaT working group are also invited to the Working Group preparing for the SG Advisory panel on sustainable transport.

4. Linkage with other transport related intergovernmental agreements.

Through the Bangkok 2020 Declaration⁸ (August 2010) and the Bogota Declaration⁹ (June 2011) 32 countries in Asia and Latin America have expressed their support for a growth path that emphasizes environmental, social and economic sustainability of the transport sector. The development and adoption of the these two declarations was facilitated by the Environmentally Sustainable Transport Forum (EST), which since 2004 has regularly convened authorities from Ministries of Health, Transport, Environment and Urban Management in 23 Asian countries to discuss the adoption and implementation of balanced social economic and environmental goals for transport, and in 2011 initiated a similar intergovernmental forum in Latin America that includes nine Latin American countries. In Europe, the UNECE hosts the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP), with 36 countries in Europe, Central Asia, and the United States (also a member of UNECE) agreeing to the Amsterdam Declaration¹⁰ (January 2009).

5. Review institutional structures for promoting sustainable transport.

Implementing the recommendations of a possible SG Advisory Panel on Sustainable Transport will require a closer review of current institutional structures for sustainable transport within the UN system as well as between UN system and other groups, including Multilateral Development Banks, bilateral development organizations, civil society, research community and the business sector.

As part of such a review it is important to look at possible overlap or complementarity with other formal UN initiatives especially UN-Energy, the Sustainable Energy 4 All campaign.

D. Envisaged Deliverables of the Working Group Process

⁸ http://www.uncrd.or.jp/env/5th-regional-est-forum/doc/bangkok_declaration.pdf

⁹ <http://www.uncrdlac.org/fts/BogotaDeclaration.pdf>

¹⁰ See <http://www.unece.org/thepep/en/welcome.html>

It is planned that the Working Group will have 2 meetings in 2012; one before the Rio+20 meeting and one in autumn after the Rio+20 meeting. Following the two meetings planned for 2012, it is expected that the Working Group can provide recommendations on:

- a) Scope and duration of the UN Secretary's General Panel on Sustainable Transport and its proposed outcomes;
- b) Structure and initial Membership of the UN Secretary's General Panel on Sustainable Transport;
- c) Linkages of the proposed UN Secretary's General Panel on Sustainable Transport to the overall post-2015 framework for sustainable development as well as the to-be-established high level panel of eminent persons on the post-2015 way forward;
- d) Technical support to be provided to the UN Secretary's General Panel on Sustainable Transport and how this best be organized;
- e) Role of the Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport in supporting the activities of the UN Secretary's General Panel on Sustainable Transport;
- f) Institutional arrangements for sustainable transport in the UN system as well as between the UN system and other developmental stakeholders.

E. Implementation Arrangements for the Working Group.

The Secretariat for the Working Group will be with the Sustainable Development Division of UN-DESA. UN-DESA has secured the services of a consultant to help facilitate the functioning of the Working Group.

UN-DESA will work actively with the Partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport (www.slocat.net) which is also hosted by UN-DESA and which includes over 60 organizations working on the promotion and implementation of sustainable, low carbon transport.

It is expected that selected members of the Working Group, on a voluntary basis, will also get involved in the drafting of the Working Group recommendations. This will be after the first Working Group meeting on 7-8 June.

F. Potential Participants

The proposed membership of the Working Group includes representatives from:

- a) Development organizations: Asian Development Bank; Inter-American Development Bank; World Bank, German International Cooperation
- b) Private sector: Green Freight Network Asia; World Business Council on Sustainable Development; International Association for Public Transport; International Railway Association; Veolia/Transdev.
- c) National Government Organizations: Ministry of Transport (Colombia); Ministry of Transport (Indonesia); MoE (Japan); Korea Transport Institute (Republic of Korea); Ministry of Environment and Infrastructure (Netherlands); Ministry of Transport (South Africa); Ministry of Transport, (Thailand); US-EPA (USA);
- d) Supra-national Organization: DG MOVE (European Commission)
- e) United Nations – Intergovernmental Organizations: ICAO; IMO; IEA, ITF; Regional Commissions Focal Point; UNCRD; UNDESA; UN-HABITAT; UNEP; WHO
- f) NGOs: CAI-Asia; CAI-LAC; Dutch Cycling Embassy; EMBARQ; FIA Foundation; ICCT; ITDP; TRF

- g) Research Organizations: Health Effects Institute; TRB – Developing Countries Committee; UC-Davis

Members will be able to participate by attending the 2 meetings which will be held in New York on 7-8 June and a t.b.d. date in Autumn 2012 or by providing inputs by email.

There will be a possibility to add additional members to the Working Group following the first 7-8 June meeting if this is recommended by the meeting.

G. Logistical Information, 7-8 June Meeting

Date: Thursday, 7 June 2012, and Friday 8 June 2012
Time: Thursday, 7 June: 09.00 – 17.00, Friday 8 June: 09.00 – 13.00¹¹.
Venue: To be announced (UN headquarters or a nearby facility)

Please note that WG members will be participating at their own expense in the 7-8 June Working Group meeting unless specific arrangements have been made by UN-DESA.

H. Programme of the 7-8 June Meeting

The Meeting will be conducted in a participatory and interactive manner. A short working paper will be disseminated prior to the meeting, prepared under the responsibility of UN-DESA, to help guide the discussions.

The program will have the following blocks:

Thursday 7 June

- Welcome – Introductions
- Positive Expectations and Fears concerning the Working Group Meeting
- Stakeholder identification and analysis concerning SG Advisory Panel on Sustainable Transport
- Alternatives analysis concerning scope and outputs SG Advisory Panel on Sustainable Transport
- Mapping of SG Advisory Panel on Sustainable Transport and its institutional context – implications for membership

Friday 8 June

- Summary day 1 of discussions
- Goal – Objectives SG Advisory Panel on Sustainable Transport
- Impact analysis of SG Advisory Panel on Sustainable Transport
- Identification of next steps (up to second meeting in Autumn 2012) including possible additional members for the Working Group

¹¹ This will allow the participants of the meeting to take part in the Bike ride with Ban Ki-Moon which is scheduled for June 8, 16.30 pm. For more details see: <http://www.slocat.net/event/635>.

Contacts:

Thomas Hamlin, Adviser on Energy and Transport, Division for Sustainable Development, UNDESA
Hamlin@un.org

Cornie Huizenga, Consultant to UNDESA for the SG Working Group
Cornie.Huizenga@SLoCaTpartnership.org

List of agencies invited to first working group

Green Freight Network Asia (CAI-Asia)

WBCSD - transport commission

UITP

UIC

Veolia

WB

ADB

IDB

GIZ

USA (EPA)

Japan (MoE-J)

Korea (KOTI)

Indonesia (MoT)

EC (DG Move)

Colombia V-M Transport

Netherlands

South Africa Mo Transport Environment Div

DESA/UNCRD

UN Habitat

Regional Commissions Office NY

UNEP

UNDP

WHO

ECLAC

ECE

ESCAP

ITF

IEA

ITDP

EMBARQ

CAI-LAC

CAI-Asia

FIA Foundation

ICCT

TRF

Dutch Cycling Embassy

HEI

UC - Davis

TRB - Developing Countries Committee