

5th Regional EST Forum in Asia

Bangkok, Thailand

23-25 August 2010

Theme: “A New Decade in Sustainable Transport”

Concept Note and Provisional Programme

1. Background

The Asia-Pacific region has witnessed extraordinarily rapid urbanization in recent years. Currently, 1.6 billion people, or 40 per cent of Asians, live in urban areas. By 2030, the majority (about 2.7 billion) will live in cities and towns. This means adding a new town of about 150,000 people every day for the next 20 years. Urbanization levels in the Asia-Pacific region are also influencing mobility patterns and private vehicle usage.

Compared to other regions, Asia and the Pacific has the largest total number of motorized vehicles in the world. Without major efforts to address air pollution and green house gases (GHGs) from transportation sector, growing vehicle ownership and usage in developing countries, the trend of urbanization, and growing accidents, it would undermine human health, urban environmental quality, economic productivity, social equity, and all other aspects of sustainability. The transport sector is emerging as the fastest growing source of global greenhouse gas (GHG) and accounts for 13 % of GHG and 23 % of energy related CO₂ emissions.

The Asian Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) Initiative, which is a joint initiative of UNCRD and the Ministry of the Environment, Japan, aims to build a common understanding across Asia on the essential elements of EST and the need for an integrated approach at local and national level to deal with the multi-sectoral environment and transport issues, including GHG emission reduction. Currently, the participating countries include the member nations of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Japan, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Republic of Korea and Sri Lanka.

“Efforts to promote environmentally sustainable transport will result not only in the improvement of human health through the reduction of urban air pollution but will also have important complimentary benefits, including the reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, the reduction of deaths and injuries from road accidents, the reduction of harmful noise levels, and the reduction of traffic congestion levels (Aichi Statement, 2005).”

Transport services affect all aspects of sustainability - social, economic, and environmental - and that there is a need for safe, clean, and energy-efficient transport in order to achieve green growth through low-carbon transport in Asia (Seoul Statement, 2009).

Under the Initiative, the 1st Regional EST Forum, held in Aichi, Japan, in 2005, resulted in the **Aichi Statement**, which articulated a comprehensive list of sustainable transport objectives based on 12 major thematic areas. This Statement provides a basis for the participating countries to regularly report upon progress in reaching the objectives. Subsequently 44 Asian cities signed the **Kyoto Declaration** for the Promotion of Environmentally

Sustainable Transport in Cities endorsing the objectives underlined in the Aichi Statement. In 2009, the Initiative produced the **Seoul Statement - Towards the Promotion of Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) for a Low-Carbon Society and Green Growth in Asia**. This Statement particularly highlighted the need for regional efforts towards win-win solutions that capture co-benefit

considerations in addressing sustainable transport and climate change. (<http://www.uncrd.or.jp/env/est/>).

The 5th Regional EST Forum with the theme “A New Decade in Sustainable Transport” seeks to provide a strategic platform to discuss a range of issues in transport sector and develop a common understanding among participating countries on various sustainable policy options with a specific emphasis to developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The 5th Forum is expected to address a range of relevant issues and share practical cases under sustainable transport agenda such as - building partnership and funding mechanisms to make things happen, urban and regional rail development, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), fuel efficiency, and sustainable freight transport.

Also given that the issue of transport and sustainable development, among others, will be considered by the Commission on Sustainable Development (http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_csd18.shtml) in its fourth implementation cycle, which will take place in 2010 (CSD 18) and 2011 (CSD 19), the 5th Regional EST Forum is expected to enhance regional input to CSD-19 which will discuss and address various policy options on transport sector for sustainable development. The principal output will be a legally non-binding and goodwill “*Bangkok 2020 Declaration - Sustainable Transport Goals for 2010-2020*”, which will set forth quantifiable sustainable transport targets for the year 2020. The voluntary targets in the “*Bangkok 2020 Declaration*” will be then put forward as a contribution to the CSD-19.

2. Objectives

While the transport sector has been an important factor contributing to the remarkable economic growth in Asia, it is the third largest consumer of energy in Asia, and its energy consumption is growing faster than that of other sectors and other regions, which is driven by a rapid increase in motorization and strong transport demands from economic development. This has important repercussions not only in terms of energy security for the region, but also air pollution, GHG emissions, traffic congestion, injuries and fatalities due to traffic accidents, freight inefficiencies, greater rural to urban migration, and loss in economic productivity.

The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002 called upon governments and other stakeholders to implement transport strategies for sustainable development to improve the affordability, efficiency and convenience of transportation as well as urban air quality and health and reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including the development of better vehicle technologies that are more environmentally sound, affordable and socially acceptable as well as to promote investment and partnerships for the development of sustainable, energy efficient multi-modal transportation systems, including public mass transportation systems.

In line with the commitments made under the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), appropriate policy frameworks, institutional and governance structures, partnerships and financial mechanism are essential for achieving efficient, safe, and low-carbon transport system and services. There is a need for a wider-scale adoption of integrated transport measures without which the opportunity for a pro-active transformation of Asia’s transport may be lost over the coming decade. An integrated transport strategy includes both incentives for sustainable modes as well as disincentives for private motorized vehicles. An integrated approach also means that all facets of sustainable transport are developed as a complementary package, including the planning of non-motorized and public transport options in both urban and rural areas, infrastructure for intermodal freight systems, business models for financially viable operations and maintenance, communications and outreach messages to influence behavioural patterns, and clean technologies to achieve energy efficiency and low emissions.

In this regard, the 5th Regional EST Forum in Asia will have the following objectives:

- contribute towards improved understanding and strengthened regional consensus in terms of sustainable policy options, technological and institutional measures that promotes sustainable and low-carbon-transport;
- address and identify opportunities for collaborative actions and partnerships, including international financial mechanism, on implementing affordable, economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound transport systems in developing countries and countries with economies in transition;
- illustrate innovative initiatives, achievements and good practices in improving public transportation system (rail & BRT system), increasing fuel efficiency, and greening freight transport.
- facilitate international cooperation for capacity building activities, including wider-scale adoption and proliferation of various EST measures at local and national level; and
- enhance regional input to CSD-19 in terms of various policy options and recommendations on transport sector for sustainable development through the adoption of the *“Bangkok 2020 Declaration - Sustainable Transport Goals for 2010-2020”*.

3. Expected Outcomes

The 5th Regional EST Forum will have the following outcomes:

- enhanced awareness about sustainable transport options and measures (policy, technology, institutions and governance and finance mechanism, etc.) among the participating countries;
- comprehensive assessment of opportunities for collaborative actions and partnerships for sustainable transport development in Asia;
- innovative approaches and best practices at local and national level in the areas of partnerships, urban and regional rail, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), fuel efficiency, and freight transport are shared among participating countries and documented; and
- contribution towards enhanced regional input to CSD-19 through the *“Bangkok 2020 Declaration – Sustainable Transport Goals for 2010-2020”*.

As a side event of the Forum, GTZ and Pollution Control Department (PCD) of MONRE-Thailand will organize back-to-back a National Workshop on Clean Air for Smaller Cities on 26 August 2010 (Thursday) involving Thai cities and international experts. The side event is also expected to provide a potential venue to have the Kyoto Declaration on EST signed by participating Thai Mayors, thus highlighting the importance of addressing the synergy between EST measures and clean air for public health.

4. Co-Organizers

The 5th Regional EST Forum will be co-organized by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) of the Kingdom of Thailand, the Ministry of the Environment of the Government of Japan, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP), and the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), with supports from various international organizations and donor agencies.

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE (As of 7 Jul 2010)

It is a very opportune time to organize the Forum in Bangkok while the Government of Thailand is putting considerable efforts for the expansion and improvement of mass transit and public transportation system. Also the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration's Action Plan on Global Warming Mitigation aims at significant reduction in Bangkok's GHG emissions through expansion of mass transit and improvement in the traffic system. The offer of the Government of Thailand of hosting the 5th Forum will enable the participating countries to learn more about the initiative and measures that the Government of Thailand has taken up in the development and management of efficient urban public transport systems.

5. Participants

Participation in the Forum is by invitation only. It is expected that some 100~120 senior government representatives from Asian countries, international experts and resource persons, and others as listed below will attend the Forum:

- High level government representatives and policy makers from Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Urban Development, and Ministry of Health.
- Selected city government representatives and Mayors.
- Distinguished transport, environment and climate change experts and international resource persons
- Experts and representatives of relevant UN and international organizations, including international financial institutions and donor agencies
- Selected representatives of the private sector

Participation in the UN Forum is free of charge. A limited number of travel supports will be available for nominated government representatives from the developing countries and invited experts/international resource persons. Unless otherwise it is clearly indicated in the official invitation, rests of the participants are expected to cover their own travel and accommodation costs.

6. Contacts for Further Information

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7. Provisional Programme

See the attachment.