Transformative mobility solutions to Implement Nationally Determined Contributions in Asia-Pacific

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Summary Notes

The Thematic Block on Transport was coordinated by the Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT) under the Paris Process on Mobility and Climate, with the support from CDP Worldwide, Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and World Resources Institute (WRI).

Asia’s ability to meet Paris Agreement targets will depend to a large extent on whether low carbon, sustainable transport is rapidly and broadly implemented. The region has registered some of the strongest transport mitigation responses of any region, leading global growth in areas such as urban public transport (especially metro and bus rapid transit), high speed rail, fuel economy standards and (chiefly dockless) bikesharing. Asia is poised to set the pace for sustainable transport paradigms that can be replicated across both global North and South.

More than 60 representatives from national and local governments, development agencies, international transport organisations, the private sector, and civil society attended the session. Under the theme, ‘Transformative mobility solutions to implement Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in Asia-Pacific’, the thematic block aimed to:

- Highlight the critical role of transport to climate change mitigation and the next generation of NDCs in 2020;
- Review three particular topics in low carbon transport solutions (urban mobility, electric mobility, and low emission urban freight) and their contribution to accelerate the uptake of low carbon passenger and freight transport measures in the region;
- Engage stakeholders in a dialogue to discuss the current challenges and opportunities in implementing these solutions;
- Provide recommendations to stakeholders to scale up implementation and support the upcoming UNSG Climate Action Summit.

Mr. Madan Bandhu Regmi informed the audience that there has been unprecedented growth of transport sector GHG in the Asia-Pacific, led by growth of transport demand and motorization due to economic development. He further elaborated that Asia Pacific countries are implementing innovative transport policies and strategies such as improving public transport, promoting electric mobility, developing infrastructure for walking and cycling, shifting to renewable energy, biofuel, CNG, LPG as well improving efficiency of transport to reduce carbon emissions. However, these efforts are not enough to curb carbon emissions required to limit the temperature rise. Therefore, countries and cities need to scale up implementation of transport policies and strategies. The need to address the issues of urban mobility in Asian cities was stressed. The result of assessment of urban transport systems using the Sustainable Urban Transport Index (SUTI) in Asian cities was presented that informed cities to prioritize actions to enhance overall sustainability of urban mobility. He, at the end, stressed the need for an integrated approach, linking NDCs to SDGs and other global commitments, increasing carbon financing portfolio of transport projects, developing new partnerships, and strengthening the role of transport ministries to contribute next round of NDCs.

Mr. Ahmed Zabri Mohammed Sarajudin briefed the audience about the ongoing strategy that the Seberang Perai Municipal has implemented to contribute to Malaysia’s NDC attainment. He explained that the majority of the CO2 emission came from building construction and transport sector. With the goal of 50% emission reduction, the local government is focusing on the city’s transit-oriented development with the aim to reduce car usage and stimulate non-motorized transport usage. First and last-mile connectivity has been one of the key focus. Several initiatives have been implemented including the successful negotiation with bus operator to allocate bicycle space on buses to allow cyclists to commute door-to-door and the requirement for land developers to incorporate non-motorized transport infrastructure such as bicycle lanes into their development plans. He further informed the audience of the city’s aim to become cycle-friendly city by 2020. He also elaborated on the commendable commitment of the city mayor who lead by example through using a bicycle to commute to work.

Mr. Mir Reza Ozgen stressed that Pakistan is among the top 10 most climate-affected countries and the country’s related climate expenditure is high and rising. Given the importance of climate issues, various initiatives to curb climate change have been implemented including the plantation of one billion trees in the last 5 years and the new campaign to plant 10 million trees, the reduction of electric vehicle taxes, the plan to shift to electric and hybrid buses by 2030, and the reduction of import taxes of solar panels. Furthermore, he informed the audience of the implementation of the pink bus project in Pakistan. The project aims to provide safe and affordable public transport services to three groups of women; working women, female students, and women who travel for household purposes. 14 pink buses are in operations and carry around 2,000 women per day. The fee is subsidized by the government to provide option which otherwise is quite limited to women to help reduce their transport cost. The project improves woman empowerment which contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals through safe, affordable and accessible public transport.
Ms. Maria Golda Hilario introduced the Jeepney project as part of the initiative to help the Philippines’ government to achieve NDC target on transport. The project was first introduced in Mekati, the city center of Manila in partnership with the city government. It later expanded to Tacloban in 2014 after the city being hit by Typhoon Haiyan. The implementation of Jeepney project was part of the city’s recovery plan to rebuild the areas devastated by the disaster with the fleets being powered by solar energy. In more recent years, the institute saw the expansion of these solar-powered fleets being operated by private companies through micro-finance scheme. Ms. Hilario also shared with the audience a number of lessons learnt including the needs to look beyond the financing issue. She also stressed the importance of system thinking, collaboration and shared aspiration to advance climate policies.

Mr. Sumit Pokhrel introduced the ADB’s green freight programme in Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) and pinpointed the fact that while the logistics performances of GMS countries have improved, the logistic cost remained high. He also highlighted that freight transport brought significant environmental and social externalities and that urban freight, in particular, has caused environmental and social challenges in GMS countries. Since 2010, green freight gradually formed part of national transport strategy in GMS countries. He introduced various solutions to enhance green freight such as aerodynamic device, efficient tyres, eco-driving training, new vehicle technology, replacing old trucks. He further highlighted most solutions implemented in GMS countries focused more on 'improve' and there is a need to expand on 'avoid' and 'shift' strategy. Most of the solutions implemented are those that are considered low-hanging fruit. Very little transformative changes have been seen. Finally, Mr. Pokhrel stressed the need to scale up green freight agenda through higher involvement and commitment of the private sector and integrated approach combining policy support, capacity building and investment.

Reporting Back from Breakout:

Urban Mobility
Focus should be on moving people, not vehicles - overarching mobility policy frameworks (sustainable urban mobility plans, or SUMPs) that are people-centred and planet sensitive. Collaboration and partnerships and the views of state and non-state actors are necessary to provide input for the next round of NDCs. Civil society consultation is crucial in the process. There is also need to improve non-motorised infrastructure- walking and cycling. These planning should also consider planting trees along the sidewalks and cycle tracks in order to improve the quality of using motorised transport. There is need to reduce private vehicles, using the example of Singapore which has introduced a no-new-car registration policy.

Electric Mobility
The transition to e-mobility must take into consideration the need for comprehensive and complementary policies, especially around tax incentives, availability of technology, the overall energy infrastructure, freight vehicles, etc. The transition time must be considered - industry needs time to prepare from switching from internal combustion vehicles to electric-gradual transition time. Also, e-mobility development must consider both passenger and freight vehicles and other issues including charging stations, battery technology, registration of electric vehicles, and market mechanisms.

Urban Freight
Urban freight should not be treated as a separate policy issue but should be integrated with the power sector’s development strategy. Tackling issues related to the decarbonisation of urban freight requires a
holistic approach, in which coherent policies produced through engagement with the private sector and other stakeholders, are rolled out to begin the transition to more sustainable modes.

Mr. Christopher Dekki provided a brief overview of the Action Towards Climate-friendly Transport (ACT) initiative to be discussed at the United Nations Secretary General Climate Action Summit next month under transport sub-track of the 'Infrastructure, Cities and Local Action' track of the Summit. He further elaborated on the four major components of the ACT initiatives which are: connecting innovative approaches with integrated long-term planning and policy-making processes; enabling architecture for a mass rollout of electric buses and electric 2-3 wheelers; creating a mass-market for zero-emission freight vehicles, and setting-up global dialogue arenas with the private sector. Mr. Dekki also invited the audience to support the initiative by signing the declaration of intent.

Session Focal Points
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