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CSD-9 AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON TRANSPORT AND ATMOSPHERE HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 6 MARCH 2001

The CSD-9 Inter-sessional *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Transport and Atmosphere commenced its work on Tuesday at the UN Headquarters in New York and is expected to conclude its work on Friday, 9 March 2001. Delegates convened in a morning session and heard an opening statement, elected the Co-Chair of the Working Group and adopted the agenda. They considered the Secretary-General's report on transport and adjourned at 1:00 pm.

OPENING PLENARY

CSD-9 Vice-Chair Madina Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan) opened the meeting and addressed the election of officers. David Stuart (Australia) was elected as Co-Chair of the Working Group. Co-Chair Stuart introduced, and delegates adopted, the agenda (E/CN.17/ISWG.1/2001/1). He said the inter-sessional working groups should be recognized as preparatory meetings for the CSD-9 with a view to achieving tangible, action-oriented results. He announced that two documents would be produced, a Co-Chairs' summary of all statements and a compilation of elements for a draft decision on the issues of transport and atmosphere.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

JoAnne DiSano, Director of the UN Division for Sustainable Development, introduced the report of the Secretary-General on transport (E/CN.17/2001/3). She said that although the ability to transport goods and services is necessary for economic development, emissions pose a threat to health and the environment. She warned that meeting the rising demand for transport could involve high costs, and said that transport investment decisions can promote sustainable development, if undertaken with consideration to land-use regulations. She highlighted, *inter alia*, the successful promotion of non-motorized transport, the transport needs of the poor and the phasing out of leaded petrol.

IRAN, on behalf of the G-77/CHINA, described transport difficulties associated with urban populations, stating that low-income families are particularly affected. Noting that more efficient technologies are expensive, he said widespread efforts to transfer these technologies to developing countries have not been undertaken and that the process has to be preceded by capacity building. He emphasized the importance of taking a gender-sensitive approach, as women's travel tends to focus on household needs. He noted that international trade and foreign direct investment require an efficient international transport system, and warned against the costs of environmental standards and difficulties with applying economic incentives.

SWEDEN, on behalf of the EU, with HUNGARY and the CZECH REPUBLIC, stressed the need for more sustainable transportation trends, and called for a more integrative approach to transport planning. He emphasized that poor quality transport and lack of access constrain development in many countries, which is exacerbated by population growth and urbanization. He stated that price-based policies can give consumers and industries incentives to change unsustainable transport patterns, and drew attention to the European Commission's framework for fair pricing. He highlighted equitable access for women and people with special needs, the polluter-pays-principle, non-car transport and the removal of lead from petrol. He recognized the role of global and regional bodies in promoting more sustainable transport and emphasized the role of the business sector and NGOs.

Stressing the need for more sustainable transportation systems, SWITZERLAND said every effort must be made to influence corporate behavior, noting that ultimately it is consumer choice that can make a difference. He said governments should address, *inter alia*: the benefits of public transport; transport for long-distance freight traffic; the feasibility of air fuel taxation; and efficiency standards at the international level.

The US said the work undertaken by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) helps clarify and understand the local and regional effects of climate change. He highlighted actions undertaken by the US to tackle air pollution, including developing hybrid vehicles and supporting voluntary programmes for energy efficiency in homes. INDONESIA noted that lack of resources has prevented the develop-

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ment of sustainable transport facilities and reduced the benefits of transport on social and economic development. He highlighted the responsibility of producers and the need for the transfer of environmentally sound technologies. NIGERIA said local production is minimal and not affordable in developing countries and called for technology transfer. He noted private funds alone are not sufficient to support transport development in developing countries and called for capacity building and transfer of knowledge on emissions control.

CANADA underscored the importance of air transport for the provision of food to remote populations. He suggested evaluating the environmental impacts of actions and policies at all levels of decision making and when monitoring and analyzing transport data. He supported behavioral and technological changes and provision of awareness-raising programmes.

NORWAY underscored the need to integrate environmental issues in all decisions on transport. He supported the use of the polluter-pays-principle and suggested strengthening International Maritime Organization rules against pollution. CHINA commented on the need for developing countries to modernize their transport systems. He said current financial arrangements and technology transfer are conditional and frequently associated with high costs. He called for a decision on training programmes for local government personnel. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION outlined national and pan-European initiatives to provide sustainable and energy efficient transport and called for consideration of the needs of countries with economies in transition.

MEXICO said there is a need to: determine the relationship between mega-city transport and pollution; exchange technological information, especially on motor transportation; and to pay attention to port and maritime issues. Reiterating the centrality of transport in economic growth, INDIA highlighted its initiatives in the transport sector and underscored the need for international cooperation, technology transfer and financial resources. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA noted that governments have difficulty maintaining a balance with respect to sustainable development in the transport sector and called for, *inter alia*: attention to the transport section of Agenda 21; integrated consideration of transport; instruments to reduce transport demand; development of emission-reducing technology; private-public partnerships; comprehensive land-use policies; and technology transfer to developing countries. BRAZIL highlighted additional concerns for developing countries, including accessibility and affordability of transport, technology transfer, financial resource flows and capacity building. He also called for an exchange of experiences.

Citing its geographical location, CHILE expressed interest in issues relating to maritime transport, including potential environmental risks, the health risk to coastal populations and the sustainability of the Antarctic and sub-Antarctic ecosystems. He called for action on standards relating to transportation of dangerous materials, and expressed hope that measures, in the form of a legally-binding instrument, would be taken to fill the lacuna in existing legal instruments.

SAUDI ARABIA called for: an affordable transportation system for developing countries; low costs in international transport to enable developing countries to transport goods; new and additional resources; the elimination of subsidies in the nuclear and coal energy sectors in developed countries; and a halt to nuclear waste transportation to developing countries. AUSTRALIA outlined its planned strategies relating to transport and said capacity building is a practical tool for achieving a sustainable transportation system. She said Australia

supports the national and regional policy options outlined in the Secretary-General's report, as well as the Commission's flexible approach to realizing an efficient transport system. She called for a policy that is consistent with other CSD issues on atmosphere and energy.

Noting that Small Island Developing States face unique transport challenges, such as isolation from markets, susceptibility to natural disasters and lack of adequate infrastructure, NEW ZEALAND underscored the need to assist developing countries in implementing their transport strategies. With JAPAN, he said that an international comprehensive plan of action for transport and sustainable development is not the best way to achieve national and regional goals, and stressed that the work of existing fora and specialized agencies is adequate to enable countries to develop and implement their own strategies. JAPAN also noted that country circumstances and priorities vary and advocated the provision of demonstrated policy options. On the elements for a draft decision on transport, he underscored the need to improve the capacity in many countries to gather, compile and analyze data using modern information technologies. He highlighted national and regional policy options, including: incorporating sustainability criteria in infrastructure development decisions; educating the public on the local and global environmental effects of transportation mode choice; promoting the movement of goods that make use of more efficient modes of transportation; cooperating on improving data collection, compilation and analytical capabilities, and methodologies in the transport sector; and continuing and strengthening, where necessary, existing cooperation mechanisms in the transport sector, especially in maritime and air transport.

The NGO CAUCUS ON SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT said the fact that developed countries remain the greatest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions despite having the most advanced technologies indicates that a focus on transport technologies alone is unlikely to address the fundamental causes of rapidly growing transport sector emissions. He suggested discussing: measures to facilitate the internalization of social and environmental costs of transport services; mechanisms for facilitating the successful commercial acceptance of pre-existing, yet environmentally sustainable technologies in a developing country context; and road safety issues.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Transport and Atmosphere began Tuesday on what delegates referred to as "a constructive note." Several participants expressed their optimism for an easy week with the only issues that may prove to be difficult to resolve being whether existing or new and additional resources are needed to support the realization of sustainable transport goals. Others noted that the country statements clearly highlighted the usual diverging priorities between developed and developing countries – environmental versus social and economic growth -- and said it may be challenging to identify a middle way that relates to both.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Working Group will reconvene at 10:00 am in the ECOSOC Chamber to begin consideration of the Secretary-General's report on protection of the atmosphere (E/CN.17/2001/2) and results of relevant inter-sessional meetings. During the afternoon session, delegates will consider the Chair's summary on transport and elements for a draft decision. Both documents are likely to be circulated in the morning.