



STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE GROUP OF 77 AND CHINA BY DR. TAREK MUTAHAR, FIRST SECRETARY AT THE PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF YEMEN TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AT THE INTERACTIVE THEMATIC DISCUSSION ON TRANSPORT IN THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (New York, 4 May 2010)

Mr. Chairman,

1. It is my pleasure to address you during the thematic discussion on Transport in the 18th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD18) on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.
2. There is no development without transportation. Adequate and affordable transportation networks empower people to move, communicate and exchange goods and services. In order to achieve the internationally agreed development goals (IADGs) and eradicate poverty, it is necessary to expand transport infrastructure and transport services in developing countries.
3. In many rural areas in developing countries, lagging infrastructure and lack of access to transport services are factors that pose major obstacles to eradicating poverty. In urban areas, challenges include affordability, convenience and coping with the health impacts of emissions from transportation fuels.
4. Developing countries face considerable barriers and multiple challenges in the development of the transport sector: the global financial crisis, which has led to reduction of financing for infrastructure development in many developing countries; the demand for transport services has been negatively affected by the economic downturn; increased volatility in global energy markets, driven by speculation in the markets. To these challenges are added the need to respond to pollution and climate change and to respect local social and environmental conditions where transport projects are implemented.
5. In the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (JPOI), transport falls under the chapter on changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production. Paragraph 14 calls for all countries to promote sustainable patterns, with developed countries taking the lead and all countries benefiting from the process, taking into account the Rio Principles, including the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.
6. Policies should respond to national priorities and circumstances, aiming to ensure safe, affordable and efficient transportation, increasing energy efficiency, reducing pollution, congestion and adverse health effects and limit urban sprawl, as called for in the JPOI. Specific areas for action include:
 - the expansion of all-weather road networks in rural areas, since physical isolation is a strong contributor to poverty in rural communities;
 - the establishment and improvement of multi-modal transportation systems, taking advantage of different local conditions, to improve movement of people and trade;
 - improve coverage and affordability of public mass transit, such as bus rapid transit systems and, when feasible, rail, including high-speed rail;

- support to alternative modes such as cycling and pedestrianization;
- addressing concerns with reducing pollution, including reducing health-harming substances, and greenhouse gas emissions should inform decisions to improve fuel quality and foster the uptake of other fuel technology, such as natural gas and biofuels.

7. Very substantial investments in transport infrastructure are required, both in rural and urban areas in developing countries. Different countries will use different models for the development of their transport infrastructure, but common to all is the key role governments play in these processes.

Questions for panel:

How can support for domestic policies for the expansion of transport networks and services be strengthened?

In light of the financial and economic crisis, what role should governments play in developing the transport sector, particularly in what relates to investments?

How to improve the integrated consideration of economic, social and environmental concerns in planning and implementation of transport policies?

I thank you.