

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT (GPST)

Side Event at the 2nd UN Conference on LLDCs
Vienna, Austria, 5 November 2014
at 8:15-09:45 in Room M4 of the Vienna International Centre (VIC)

General background

Transport and mobility are essential elements and preconditions for sustainable development in a globalized economy. Adequate transport infrastructure and affordable transport services are still widely lacking in many developing countries, in particular in rural areas, hampering economic growth and poverty reduction efforts.

At the same time, continuing population growth, and increased urbanization and motorization with inadequate transport infrastructure have resulted in unprecedented congestion, wasteful energy use, increased motor vehicle emissions and deteriorating urban air quality in many cities in both industrialized and developing countries, with serious negative impacts on public health, living conditions and climate change.

Appropriate policy interventions are urgently needed to support the establishment of affordable, economically viable, socially acceptable and environmentally sound transport systems. Policy incentives and investments need to be targeted at improving and expanding existing transport infrastructure, and at establishing integrated public transport systems, including bus rapid transit and light rail, in particular within and between urban areas, and facilitating mobility in rural areas.

As stated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, translating policy recommendation into action plans and their implementation is key to enhancing progress towards sustainable development. In this spirit the International Road Transport Union (IRU) was to initiate the formation of a new **Global Partnership for Sustainable Transport (GPST)**.

This new initiative is expected to complement and support existing partnerships and initiatives by bringing together a large number and a great variety of relevant additional international stakeholders with a view to enhance collaborative action towards the envisaged common sustainable transport development objectives.

The Partnership Vision: A more sustainable transport future for all

Halving, by 2030, the number of people living in rural areas of developing countries without access to all weather roads and adequate transport services;

Significantly increasing the number of people using urban and inter-city public transport systems, including light rail, buses and coaches;

Striving for further continuous improvements in fuel efficiency in all modes of transport with a view to enhance global fuel economy and reduce carbon foot prints in transportation;

Significantly increasing the share of least developed, landlocked and small island developing states in global trade through better, more efficient and lower cost transport;

Enhancing transport safety for all modes of transport, including motorized and non-motorized land transport, inland coastal and ocean shipping, ferries and aviation;

Enhanced technology development, technology cooperation and technology transfer for global sustainable transport development.

Objectives

The overall objective of the GPST is to provide an international platform and a framework for multilateral dialogue on policy options and possible measures to enhance sustainable transport systems, in particular in developing countries.

Like other global partnerships, the GPST will also encourage its members, as well as other transport development stakeholders, to announce and implement commitments on sustainable transport development. Such commitments are expected to include country or government actions, business actions, actions of financial institutions or foundations, as well as actions by civil society groups and non-governmental organizations.

In this manner, the GPST and its activities will promote economic, social and environmental objectives of sustainable development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the Post 2015 Development Agenda.

The GPST will focus on development needs and opportunities of the transport sector and its contribution to sustainable development in developing countries, in particular in the least developed countries, countries with economies in transition, land-locked developing countries, and small island developing states.

Furthermore, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Transport (GPST) will function as a high level platform under the United Nations auspices for the promotion of sustainable development of all modes of transport in the interests of global inclusive socio-economic development, facilitation of international trade and regional integration.

The work of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Transport (GPST) will aim at:

- addressing transport, trade and tourism related concerns of developing countries around the world, especially LDCs and LLDCs, as well as SIDS, which continue to face major challenges and connectivity gaps. Low efficiency of logistics and supply chains,

remoteness and high transit or transportation costs continue to impose serious constraints on their development;

- facilitating information exchange between GPST partners and other entities on relevant sustainable transport policy or technology options;
- improving transport and overall economic productivity, road safety, ecological protection and social equity;
- facilitating trade and tourism through harmonization and simplification of regulations related to international transport and custom formalities;
- encouraging international capacity building as well as sharing of advanced transport planning and transport technologies.

Main results

The side event on 5 November 2014 featured a key-note presentation of Mr Igor Runov, IRU Under Secretary General, who provided overall review of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Transport initiative, its main tasks and objectives. In a follow up discussion participants from the UN bodies, international organisations, NGOs and private sector expressed their full support of this new Partnership.

Representatives of Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan expressed their support of the GPST and underlined its possible contribution to revitalizing ancient Silk Road, promotion of regional connectivity and economic integration among Central Asian LLDCs.

Representatives of the UN-OHRLLS and the UN Global Compact underlined relevance of the GPST from Post-2015 Development Agenda – as a global platform, which might establish certain guidelines for achieving sustainable development goals in the transportation sector.

Representatives of the regional international organisations (OSCE, TRACECA) focused on the regional and multimodal promotion effect of the GPST and expressed hope that it would lead to more coordinated efforts between different modes of transport. Trade facilitation element was emphasized in addition to GPST contribution to global development corridors.

Representative of ICC underlined the role of transport in Post-2015 Global Development Agenda and expressed the need for better coordination and policy making at global, regional and national levels, where GPST could play a valuable role.

World Bank representative welcomed recent attempts to promote partnerships in transportation sector (including GPST) and suggested better coordination of current initiatives in order to avoid duplication.

Representatives of road transport and business associations from Romania, Bhutan, Lao and Nepal expressed their whole heart support of the GPST and their interest to joint its practical activities in near future.

Summing up, according to the opinion expressed by 13 speakers and shared by most participants, the GPST is perceived as a very timely and needed initiative, which already gained support from the leading UN bodies, international and regional organisations, private sector and UN Member States. Based on this initial positive results, the IRU will undertake in the near future additional measures to consolidate support of this initiative at international, regional and national levels and among interested stakeholders representing different modes of transport, businesses and sovereign states.