



Promoting Sustainable Urban Mobility in the Context of Sustainable Urbanisation

Policy and
Strategy Note
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FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE

The Strategy in Brief

Functioning transportation networks are a key element for cities and towns across the Globe and a precondition for economic activity and social participation. At the same time, economic and social benefits of urban mobility are frequently accompanied by congestion, social exclusion, accidents, air pollution and energy consumption.

In the face of a rising global population, continuing urbanization and the emergence of megacities, there is heightened urgency to implement new models in the urban transport sector that contribute to sustainable urban development and comprehensive responses to the impacts and causes of global warming while enabling mobility for the population. Sustainable transportation policies have to consider the multiple social, economic and environmental dimensions of urban transport and formulate effective policies and investment strategies to reconcile competing interests between different modes of transport and societal groups.

As the United Nations agency for housing and urban development, UN-Habitat promotes policies and models to achieve sustainable urban transportation systems across the Globe. Set against the overall mission of the organisation to promote socially, environmentally and economically sustainable human settlements development, the practical work places particular emphasis on promoting effective answers to the challenges of the rapid urbanization process in developing countries and the needs of the urban poor. At the same time, urban transport policy all over the world has to substantially contribute to solutions addressing global warming.

UN-Habitat's activities in urban transport are guided by the overall mandate of the organisation, particularly the transport-related provisions of the Habitat Agenda, the *Declaration of Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium* and more recently the Governing Council Resolution GC 22/8 on *Guidelines on access to basic services for all* as well as the MTSIP Focus Area 4.

The central task is to encourage transport policies and investments that contribute to improved urban productivity, living and working conditions for urban residents by catering for their mobility needs in an economically efficient, environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive manner. The work focuses on the following five thematic areas:

1. Promote human settlements development strategies that better integrate land use planning, Information technologies and urban transport;
2. Promote improvements in public transport and non-motorized transport;
3. Increase the technological efficiency of existing transport operations of all modes;
4. Improve mobility levels and access to opportunities for the urban poor;
5. Decentralize urban transport infrastructure investment decision-making.

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1. Background

Functioning transportation networks are a key element for cities and towns across the globe and are a precondition for economic activity and social participation. In addition to its importance as an urban service in terms of moving people and goods, the transport infrastructure and service sector itself is a significant generator of wealth and employment.

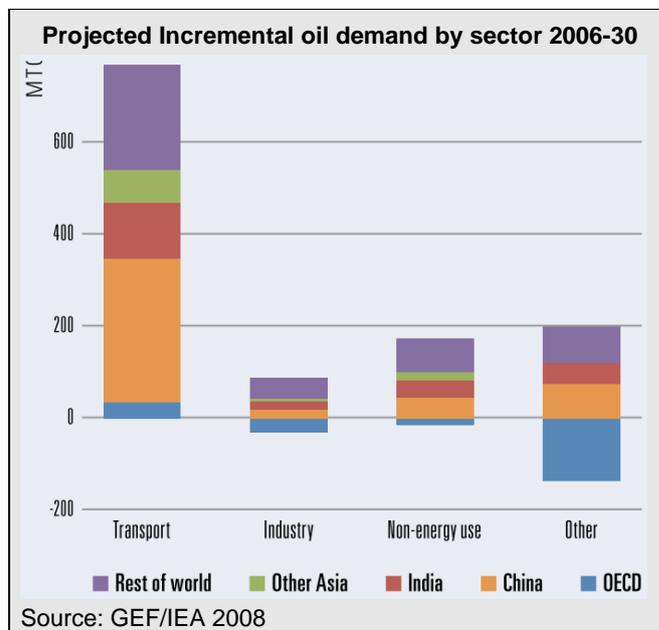
However, the economic and social benefits of urban transport are frequently accompanied by negative side effects such as congestion, social exclusion, accidents, air pollution and energy consumption.

Since the mid-20th century, the negative side-effects of urban transportation have particularly become apparent in the metropolitan areas of developed countries. Rising car traffic volumes are increasingly causing lost economic productivity, environmental degradation and affect quality of life overall. In developing countries, rapid urbanization and motorization in recent decades in combination with insufficient investment in infrastructure have led to similar problems, often exacerbated by urban poverty and social exclusion.

In the face of a rising global population, continuing urbanization and the emergence of megacities, there is heightened urgency to apply solutions in the urban transport sector that contribute to sustainable urban development approaches and comprehensive responses to the impacts and causes of global warming.

Regardless differences in terms of financing new solutions and specific technologies applied, there is strong convergence in the fundamental policy options and conceptual responses to be pursued in cities of the North and the South. Across the globe, sustainable transportation policies have to consider the multiple social, economic and environmental dimensions of urban transport and governments have to apply effective policies and investment strategies to reconcile competing interests between different modes of transport and societal groups.

Particularly in terms of climate change mitigation, there is the common goal to reduce or prevent increases of emissions from the transport sector. The main variation is merely the point of departure. While the main task in developed countries and partially in emerging economies is reverse transport trends of the past through alternative infrastructure investments, technologies, changing urban patterns and behavioral changes, the key issues in developing countries is to apply environmentally friendly



technologies and design cities and infrastructure in a way that enables economic and social development without the detrimental side-effects that occurred in established economies during the last century. A similar convergence can be identified in terms of initiating measures to adapt to negative implications of climate change.

To work towards sustainable urban transport systems, five key thematic areas can be identified

- Linking transportation to urban planning to reduce motorized trips
- Non-motorized transport infrastructure
- Public transport systems
- Car traffic demand management
- Vehicle and fuel technologies and efficiency

At the same time, both in developed and developing countries there are multiple constraints for the implementation of new models that are more socially inclusive, environmentally friendly and economically efficient than current approaches. The barriers are frequently not necessarily financial or technical in nature, but there is a wide range of political, social and institutional factors preventing progress in the urban transport field towards sustainability.

2. UN-Habitat mandate and focus in urban transport

The United Nations Human Settlements Programme, UN-HABITAT, is the United Nations agency for human settlements. It is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially, economically and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all.

Key documents outlining the mandate of the organization are the Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements, Habitat Agenda, Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements, the Declaration on Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium, and General Assembly Resolution 56/206.

With resolution S-25/2 of 9 June 2001, the UN General Assembly adopted the *Declaration of Cities and Other Human Settlements in the New Millennium*, by which the Assembly resolved to promote access to safe drinking water for all and to facilitate the provision of basic infrastructure and urban services, including adequate sanitation, waste management and sustainable transport, through transparent and accountable management of public services as well as partnerships with the private sector and non-profit organizations for the delivery of those services.

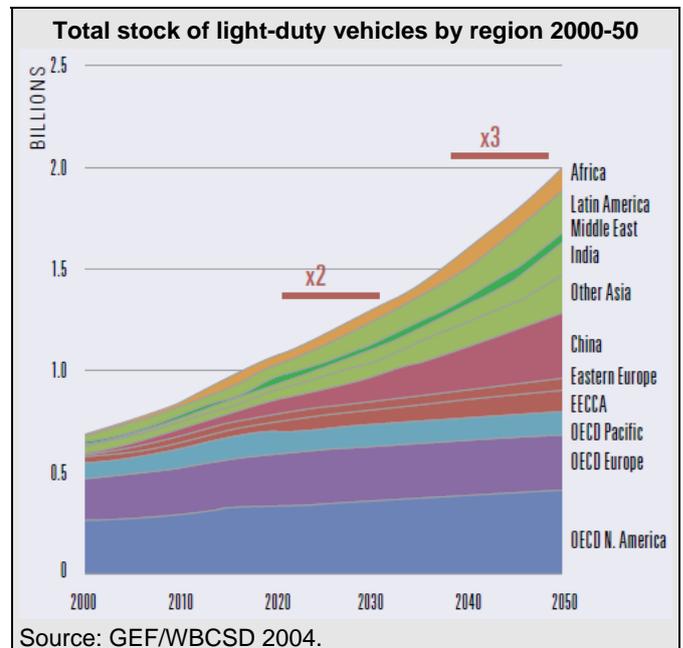
Most recently, UN-Habitat's 22nd Governing Council in April 2009 adopted resolution GC 22/8 on *Guidelines on access to basic services for all* and emphasized the need to promote environmental sustainability in the delivery of basic services for all, including sustainable urban planning, risk reduction, early warning systems and appropriate response to natural disasters.

UN-Habitat's Medium-term Strategic and Institutional Plan (MTSIP) for the period 2008 to 2013, which was adopted by its Governing Council in 2007 (HSP/GC21/5/Add.1), outlines the current strategic framework for the work in urban transport.

Among the 6 six focus areas (FAs) defined for implementing the MTSIP, Focus Area 4 on *Environmentally Sound Basic Urban Infrastructure and Services* explicitly refers to urban transport. FA 4 aims to expand access to environmentally sound basic urban infrastructure services with a special focus on the unserved and underserved populations. Specific expected accomplishments (EA) are:

- Enabling policy and institutional frameworks that promote expanded access to basic infrastructure and services
- Increased institutional efficiency and effectiveness in the provision of basic urban infrastructure and services
- Enhanced consumer demand for efficient and environmentally sustainable basic urban infrastructure and services

Within the MTSIP framework, sustainable mobility is particularly relevant as a facilitating factor for FA 3 *Access to Land and Housing for*



All. At the same time, from an operational perspective, achieving these material, sector-specific objectives in partner countries will also depend on accomplishments under other focus areas, which focus on internal and external processes and financial resources:

- FA 1: Effective Advocacy, Monitoring and Partnerships for sustainable urbanization
- FA 2: Participatory Planning, Management and Governance
- FA 5: Improved access to sustainable financing for affordable housing and infrastructure
- FA 6: Excellence in Management

On the basis of this mandate, UN-Habitat advocates for policies and models to achieve sustainable urban transportation systems across the globe, set in the context of an overall mission to promote sustainable development of human settlements and the achievement of adequate shelter for all.

The practical work of UN-Habitat places particular emphasis on the challenges of the rapid urbanization process in developing countries and the needs of the urban poor. The central task is to find ways to promote policies and investments that contribute to improved urban productivity and living and working conditions for urban populations by meeting urban transport needs in an economically efficient, environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive manner. Special attention is paid to the needs of the youth and women since these groups of society are usually the ones most dependent on effective systems for non-motorized and public means of transport.

3. Towards a strategy for promoting sustainable urban mobility

The transport provisions of the Habitat Agenda provide clear guidance for the activities UN-Habitat should undertake in the context of sustainable urbanisation, in particular:

- Promoting human settlements development strategies that better integrate land use planning, environmental quality and transport to minimize trip distances and reduce negative development impacts;
- Promote public transport and non-motorized transport as either a substitute, or complementary mode for travel, to the private car;
- Increase the efficiency of existing transport operations through improved planning and management of all modes of transport;
- Improve mobility levels for the urban poor through promotion of affordable urban transport plans, programmes and technologies;
- Decentralize urban transport infrastructure investment decision-making, planning and management to the local level.

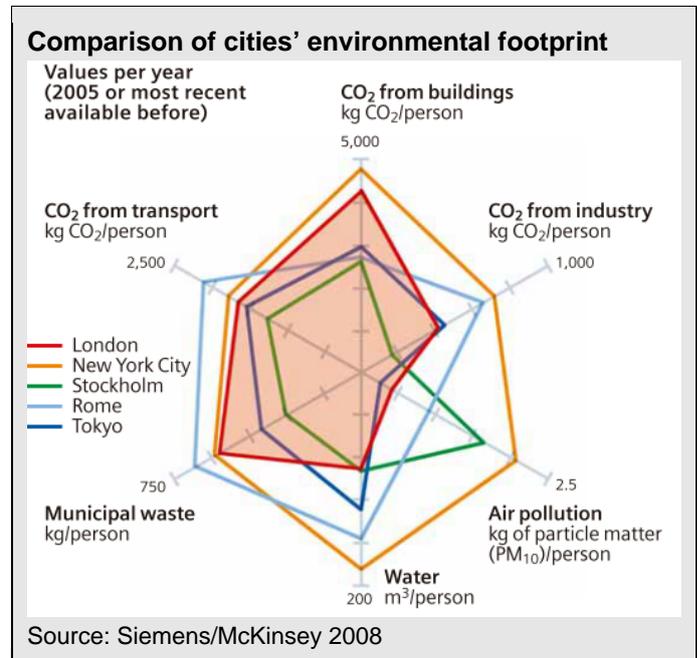
Modes of engagements and assistance tools

To work towards these objectives, UN-Habitat engages with clients and partners both at the normative-policy level as well as through demonstration projects and direct technical assistance. As a global organisation in the context of the United Nations system, the primary focus of the organisation is on setting universal norms and communicating guidelines for establishing sustainable transport systems.

The range of normative activities in this field covers representation at the UN General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the UN-Habitat Governing Council as well as involvement in other bodies such as the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) and other dialogues such as the World Urban Forum.

Another key normative aspect is the documentation of global best practices in urban development and transportation, reinforced through the current global campaign for sustainable urbanization, complemented by the bi-annual Global Report on Human Settlements and the State of the Cities Report.

At the same time, in an effort to link theory and practice and test potential solutions in practice,



UN-Habitat is also engaging in a limited number of select demonstration projects in partner countries. In response to the requests of national and local governments or other Habitat Agenda partners such as communities or the private sector, the agency implements such projects in the countries to develop and apply new tools and instruments to initiate the implementation of prescribed solutions at a larger scale.

Linking the global normative task and the need to demonstrate new solutions, UN-Habitat's engagement also envisages direct technical assistance to support national and local governments in the political and institutional process necessary to implement proposed policies and practical models. At the same time, urban transport considerations are being integrated into the work of other sectors such as urban planning, housing or water and sanitation both within UN-Habitat, other UN bodies in the context of "ONE UN" and other partner organisations.

Partnerships for implementation

For successful implementation of policy and operational activities, external partnerships with other institutions as well as internal cooperation within UN-Habitat and the UN systems are crucial.

Due to the comprehensive nature of the urban transportation field and the convergence of social, economic and environmental challenges in a wide range of actors will be addressed through UN-Habitat's partnership approach in sustainable urban transport. The following types of partners can be identified:

- Clients in UN-Habitat partner countries: national and local governments, transport

operators and other providers of transport infrastructure and services, communities

- Implementation partners in the countries: private businesses, public institutions, communities and businesses
- Financial and technical support partners: bilateral or multilateral development partners, foundations and private sector
- Knowledge Partners and networks: research institutes and think-tanks on the North and the South

With the wide range of expertise represented in UN-Habitat in relation to the different aspects of urban development and the inclusive nature of domestic partnerships with national and local governments, the private sector and civil society, the agency has a distinctive advantage for developing comprehensive perspectives towards sustainable urban transport policy.

4. Focus of activities in 2010

For the year 2010, a combination of normative and operational activities is planned to promote sustainable transport across the globe. The work plan envisages the continuation of existing activities as well as the start of new engagements, particularly at the normative level. Interventions cover both sector-specific interventions as well as integration of transport components in UN-Habitat initiatives related to Cities and Climate Change, Water, Sanitation and Waste Management.

4.1 Normative and policy engagements

World Urban Forum 5 (WUF 5) in March 2010

A key policy event in 2010 will be the upcoming 5th session of the World Urban Forum, which will take place in March 2010 in Brazil under the motto "The Right to the City: Bridging the Urban Divide". Urban transport policy will be an important topic since severe disparities exist in cities worldwide in terms of the availability of transport infrastructure and services for different societal groups. As a result, there are substantial inequalities and disadvantages in the access to employment opportunities, housing and basic services.

This inequity is the focus of an *Urban Researchers Roundtable*, which will be organized by UN-Habitat in partnership with the National Association of Public Transportation in Brazil (ANTP), the International Union of Public Transport (UITP) and the Institute for

National and local policy instruments to influence urban transport

- a) Transport Sector policies
 - Direct Public Infrastructure Investments and Services
 - Transport Regulation
 - Economic incentives/disincentives
 - Information, Education and Marketing
- b) Other Sectors
 - Spatial policies and investments influencing urban development patterns
 - Economic and social policies

Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP). The Roundtable on *Bridging the Urban Transport Divide* will be a forum to explore the state of the current urban transport divide in both developing and developed countries and discuss effective policies to bridge this gap.

In the context of an electronic dialogue among prospective WUF5 participants, which was implemented in late 2009 in preparation of the forum, several participants highlighted the importance of bridging the "urban transportation divide", particularly in cities of developing countries. In particular, the following inequalities in the urban transport sphere will be addressed;

- a) The transportation access divide for different groups and locations in urban areas
- b) The environmental divide: positive and negative implications of urban transport for global climate and health in cities are unevenly distributed across neighborhoods, cities and countries
- c) The economic divide: the contribution of efficient transportation systems for employment opportunities and poverty reduction is unevenly distributed spatially and socially.

At the center of the discussion will be the question how successful models and approaches that have been demonstrated across the world that overcome these transportation divides can be applied and politically communicated at a universal scale. Widening access to transport facilities for the poor is particularly important for addressing the unmet demand for affordable quality housing options, which is expressed by the proliferation of slums in developing countries with one billion inhabitants. The goal of the roundtable is to provide solutions how cities and countries can address a major challenge 21st century cities face: meeting the transport and mobility needs of their residents in an economically efficient, environmentally and socially sustainable manner.

UN General Assembly Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) -18th session

Within the framework of the CSD multi-year programme of work, urban transport will be discussed at the 18th session in 2010. In addition to formal thematic inputs to the meeting, UN-Habitat plans to organize a side event in collaboration with UITP.

Knowledge and Tool Dissemination Activities

To strengthen the substantive profile of UN-Habitat in urban transport, several knowledge dissemination activities are being planned:

- Develop a web-based resource list of landmark publications and materials in successful sustainable urban transport policies and practices
- Develop a web-based resource list of strategic partners for funding or implementation of joint advocacy and technical assistance activities, dissemination of knowledge and application tools
- Develop a “policy-makers” brochure on sustainable transport and the dissemination and political implementation of new models
- Develop and disseminate exemplary model sustainable local transport strategies that outline the range of transport-related public policy instruments addressing non-motorized modes, public transport, traffic demand management, urban planning as well as other urban development activities
- A booklet will be developed to disseminate the results of a seminar on “Sustainable Public Transport for Africa”, which was co-organized with UITP in November 2009.

4.2 Operational activities and projects

UN-Habitat is currently involved in several demonstration projects in developing countries that specifically focus on sustainable transport.

Sustainable Transport Solutions for East Africa

Through funding by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) in the context of efforts to address climate change, UN-Habitat is currently initiating a model initiative to increase awareness of and support for the implementation of sustainable transport solutions amongst policy makers, stakeholders and the general public in East Africa and beyond.

The UN-HABITAT-based *Sustainable Transport Action Network for Africa* (SUSTRAN) will serve as a foundation for implementing the project, which focuses on technical assistance and institutional support for the design and implementation of inter-related sustainable

Areas of UN-Habitat urban transport engagement

- Global Advocacy: Raising the importance of sustainable urban transport at the global and regional level and advance integration into other plans and frameworks such as national climate plans or country development strategies
- Knowledge dissemination: compiling and documenting successful approaches towards sustainable mobility applied all over the world.
- Assisting national governments in the development of national policy frameworks and investment strategies for enabling sustainable urban mobility
- Strengthening the pre-investment capacity of Local Governments to plan, attract finance and implement improvements in urban transportation systems
- Development and application of new instruments for sustainable urban transport through model projects and initiatives.

transport projects in the three capital cities of Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda.

The initiative will be implemented in partnership with ITDP-US, TRL, UITP, GTZ, the respective national governments and the City Councils of Addis Ababa, Nairobi and Kampala. Close cooperation will be established with existing GEF-funded projects and other initiatives that focus on improvements in bus systems and NMT options such as the on-going UNEP GEF BRT/NMT project in Dar-es-Salaam.

Global Energy and Transport Network for Poor Urban Settlements (GENUS)

GENUS is a new partnership between multiple institutions and stakeholders involved in urban energy and transport issues. The network supports the design and implementation of energy and transportation access programmes for the urban poor worldwide through exchange and dissemination of best practices and technologies, awareness creation, advocacy, tools development, knowledge management and capacity building. GENUS is a global programme structured geographically to operate in Asia, Latin America and Africa and focuses on three key themes of energy and mobility access for the urban poor: (i) Improved urban mobility for the poor; (ii) Slum electrification; and (iii) Energy from waste.

4.3 Integrating urban transport into other activities of UN-Habitat

Urban Transport and Climate Change

With urban transport being a major contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions, promoting

policy solutions for reducing the number and length of motorized trips and towards lower energy consumption will be a key element of UN-Habitat's new initiative on "Cities and Climate Change".

Access to affordable housing and employment

Furthermore, transport considerations will be integrated into UN-Habitat efforts to expand affordable housing and employment options in urban areas. Access to mobility is crucial for enabling low-income residents to actually be able to benefit from these opportunities.

Urban transport and urban planning

With the recent Global Report on Human Settlements 2009 on *Planning Sustainable Cities*, UN-Habitat has refocused global attention to the importance of urban planning and the relevance of coordinated investments in housing, infrastructure and urban services for socially, environmentally and economically sustainable cities. With spatial location and infrastructure decisions being the crucial drivers for urban travel trends, incorporating transport considerations into normative and operational activities of UN-Habitat in urban planning is crucial for achieving sustainable mobility goals.

NMT for solid waste management

The ongoing "Kibera and Mirera Karagita non-motorized transport project for solid waste management", implemented through the NGO Worldbike, will be scaled up by replication in other informal settlements in Kenya. The "Cargo Bike Mobility & Access Programme" aims to establish non-motorized transport as an alternative and efficient tool for achieving comprehensive, sustainable and cost-effective urban mobility, and for improving the water and solid waste management conditions for residents in informal settlements. There are also considerations to link these efforts to the ongoing "Improving solid waste management programme in Nairobi" jointly developed by UNEP and the Nairobi City Council.

4.4 Strategic Partnerships

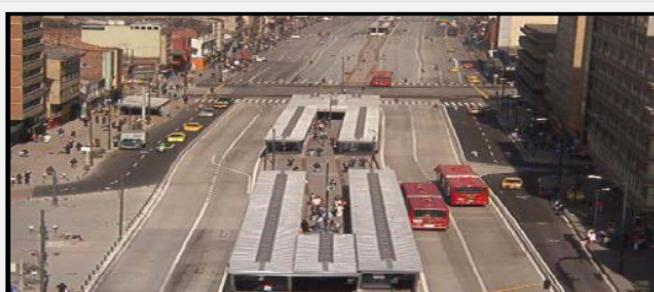
Maintaining and expanding partnerships both within and outside the UN system is a central element of UN-Habitat's urban transport strategy with relevance for the implementation of both normative and operational activities.

Under the provisions of the UNEP/UN-Habitat Partnership Framework, UNEPs Transport Unit and UN-Habitat Transport and Energy Policy Section will carry out joint activities during the 2010-2011 biennial period. In the area of public transport, a viable cooperation exists with the International Association of Public Transport (UITP) and the German Technical Development Cooperation (GTZ). A Cooperation of Agreement will further be signed with ITDP-US and TRL to jointly implement the GEF programme. In the field of urban transport and climate change, cooperation with global private sector companies engaged in urban transport infrastructure provision, vehicle technology, IT systems and telematics will be explored. Further potential partners include research institutions such as the Wuppertal Institute or Columbia University.

Global Alliance for EcoMobility

The Global Alliance for EcoMobility is a cross-sectoral partnership for the integrated promotion of walking, cycling and wheeling with interfaces to public transport, private car, housing & service sector, to reduce citizens' dependency on the private car. The Alliance was launched at the 2007 United Nations Climate Conference in Bali, Indonesia. The focus of the initiative is to assist local governments in developing adequate infrastructure for sustainable urban transport, including non-motorized transport, road safety, and alternative energy sources. As founding members of the Alliance, both UNEP and UN-Habitat will promote investment in pedestrian walkways and bicycle lanes in developing country cities as part of a global "10% campaign", which aims to achieve designated funding commitments for non-motorized transport modes.

Bogota Before versus After TransMillenio



Source: ESMAP Energy Efficient Cities Initiative - Bogota Case Study