

THE PEP Steering Committee, 8<sup>th</sup> session  
Agenda item 1

**THE PEP 2010 SYMPOSIUM:  
Green and health-friendly investment and jobs in transport**

**Note by the secretariat**

*Background and mandate*

At its seventh session, the Committee considered a document describing the institutional set-up of THE PEP and discussed ways to stimulate participation and to more actively engage Member States and other stakeholders in a debate on relevant issues involving the three sectors (ECE/AC.21/SC/2009/7 - EUR/09/5088363/7, para. 8). The Committee agreed that, as of 2010 and beginning with its eighth session, a half-day in-depth discussion would be organized, including speakers from the private sector, academia, government and civil society.

Topics should be in line with the four priority goals adopted by the Third High Level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment (January 2009, Amsterdam). The Symposium would aim to address one goal per year of the Amsterdam Declaration over the coming four years (i.e. 2010-2013) (ECE/AC.21/SC/2009/8-EUR/09/5088363/8, paras. 45-46). This would allow the Committee to contribute to the assessment of progress made towards attaining the Amsterdam goals, leading up to the Fourth High-level Meeting in 2014.

THE PEP 2010 Symposium will consist of a panel discussion with speakers to share experience and raise awareness about the issues encompassed by Goal 1 of the Amsterdam Declaration: **“Contributing to sustainable economic development and stimulating job creation through investment in environment- and health-friendly transport”**.

Member States, civil society and other stakeholders are encouraged to participate actively in the Symposium by intervening from the floor, engaging in debate and proposing recommendations. A separate programme for the thematic session will be made available in advance of the meeting.

## **I. INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC**

1. The transportation sector is a cornerstone of modern economy and an important source of jobs. Characterized by a heavy reliance on cars and trucks and increasingly on airplanes, for both passenger and freight movement, transportation is a major consumer of fossil fuels, a significant source of urban air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions and thus a major contributor to climate change. According to the IPCC, the transport sector has the fastest-rising carbon emissions of any end-user sector.

### **A. The impact of transport on our health and environment**

2. The transport sector is one of the driving forces of our economies and contributes up to 10% of gross domestic product (GDP). It provides prosperity and jobs as well as mobility. However, transport has also negative environmental effects, including noise and air pollution, and landscape degradation, negative social effects stemming from traffic accidents and congestion as well as harmful health effects due to air pollution, noise, injuries (120,000 deaths per year and the leading cause of deaths among adolescents in the European region) and physical inactivity, particularly in urban areas. Transport is also responsible for 23% of world CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fossil fuel combustion, 3/4 of which is caused by road transport alone and this share is still on the rise. Also the sector is 95% dependent on oil and accounts for 60% of total oil consumption.

3. This calls for internationally harmonized regulatory, technical and behavioral measures and policies to ensure that our transport system provides for personal mobility and serves our communities and future generations. At the same time, transport must ensure the efficient and secure functioning of our economies and international trade which are the foundations of prosperity, without becoming a burden on humans and the environment.

### **B. What can be done?**

4. There exist a multitude of policies and measures that could contribute to the creation of green and health-friendly investment and jobs in transport. Effectiveness depends on the political, economic and social environment of the countries concerned. A few examples are provided below.

#### **1. Example: Modal shift**

5. Modal shift refers to measures aimed at shifting both freight and passenger traffic, wherever possible, from roads to railways and inland waterways to free up road capacity, to tackle congestion and to arrive at a better carbon foot print of land transport in general. Particularly rail, inland water and coastal shipping often, but not always, offer considerably better energy efficiency and a better carbon footprint than road freight transport (in the order of 2 (rail) and as much as 6 times (inland water)).

6. However, the potential for modal shift is limited, as for most transport operations lorries are indispensable to ensure terminal hauls and final distribution of goods, particularly for consumer products. Therefore, very often rail and inland waterway transport entail transshipment operations using containers and other intermodal transport units that can be shifted swiftly and safely from one mode to the other. Efficient and well coordinated terminal

operations are needed to ensure the competitiveness of such intermodal transport operations vis-à-vis pure road transport.

7. In order to ensure that intermodal transport solutions are viable along the entire logistics and transport chain, Governments have the responsibility to establish the necessary conditions to set a level playing field among all actors and modes of transport involved. This allows industry to establish and operate seamless intermodal transport operations that are economically viable and ecologically sustainable.

## **2. Example: Clean fuels and vehicles**

8. Leadership in pursuing fuel economy and cleaner cars is essential to the future viability and employment in the automobile industry. Car companies that lag behind run the risk that their vehicles will increasingly fall short of fuel economy standards and, as fuel prices rise, lose favor with consumers. The global employment implications of greener cars are difficult to estimate due to limited availability of relevant data and incompatible standards and reporting categories among different nations. Moreover, fuel efficiency is far from a static concept, and there are no unambiguous thresholds that separate gas sippers from gas guzzlers.

9. Buses, trams, and railways use far less energy per passenger- or freight-kilometer than cars. Jobs in manufacturing the requisite vehicles and equipment and in operating these systems are, in principle, green jobs. There are also substantial green employment opportunities in retrofitting older diesel buses and in manufacturing new buses that run on alternative fuels including compressed natural gas (CNG) or hybrid-electric buses. Similar retrofits are needed for the highly-polluting two-stroke engines that are ubiquitous in two- and three-wheelers in developing countries, particularly in Asia.

## **3. Example: Walking and cycling**

10. Half of our trips we make with our cars are shorter than 5 km and a third of our car trips are less than 3 km. Walking is often an alternative for distances up to 1 km or 10-15 minutes and cycling for distances up to 5 km or 20 minutes. It has to be recognized through transport, environment and health policies that walking and cycling is an integral part of transport and urban development, on par with public transport and car traffic. Walking and cycling contributes to individual fitness and public health by increasing physical activity levels and reducing noise, air pollution (leading to substantial reductions in risks for cardiovascular diseases, diabetes type 2, obesity and breast and colon cancer) and traffic accidents. Human-powered transport such as walking and cycling moreover reduce greenhouse gas emissions and congestion and increase the attractiveness of our city centers. Using methodologies and tools developed in the context of THE PEP have shown that reducing the health effects of transport activities leads to direct economic benefits. Walking and cycling can also be part of sustainable tourism initiatives which support local economies with low capital investment needs.

11. This requires an appropriate infrastructure, including seamless links with public transport, which is safe, accessible, convenient, comfortable and attractive to the user. New intelligent transport systems and electric bicycles are part of the solution. Public perception and awareness-raising are also important elements to be pursued by Governments, municipalities, schools and non-governmental organizations.

## II. PROPOSED FORMAT OF THE PEP 2010 SYMPOSIUM

### 1. Topic: Green and health-friendly investment and jobs in transport

12. The topic of THE PEP 2010 Symposium relates to priority Goal 1 of the Amsterdam Declaration: “Contributing to sustainable economic development and stimulating job creation through investment in environment- and health-friendly transport”.

13. In adopting this goal in January 2009, Governments were aware of the challenges posed by the global financial crisis. The situation called for a proactive and integrated policy approach that recognized the significant role of investment in environment- and health-friendly transport for the creation of economic and employment opportunities.

14. Questions to be answered and issues to be addressed at THE PEP 2010 Symposium may include the following:

- What are green and sustainable investments strategies?
- How can we estimate their potential and measure their effects?
- How, where and under which conditions are such investments possible?
- Who should do, who should stimulate it?
- What are the opportunities, what are the challenges?
- What is the return on investments?
- What can Governments, business and civil society do?
- Where do we have good examples and best practices?
- What remains to be done?
- Can the international community, can the United Nations (UNECE, WHO) assist?

### 2. Organization of THE PEP 2010 Symposium

15. The Symposium will be part of the eighth session of THE PEP Steering Committee (8-10 December 2010, Geneva, WHO). It will take place on 8 December 2010 from 15.00 to 18.00 hours.

16. The Symposium will be opened with a keynote address (around 20 minutes). Subsequently, a panel discussion with 4 to 5 speakers (7 minutes each) will take place, followed by a moderated question and answer session with all participants.

17. On 9 December 2010, the moderator will summarize the discussions. The Steering Committee will be invited to review the results of the Symposium and to consider possible follow-up actions in the context of THE PEP and its future work programme.

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