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Events convened on Wednesday, 10 December 2003

Getting there: Tackling transport emissions

Presented by the UNFCCC



Werner Brög, Socialdata, notes the need to change negative perceptions regarding alternatives to cars.

Simon Upton, Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), emphasized that the transport sector is one of largest contributors to emissions growth and is a sector that should be prioritized in emission mitigation activities.

Addressing technological fixes to reduce transport emissions, Emil Frankel, US Department of Transportation, explained that people want the mobility and flexibility that automobiles provide. He highlighted the role of government intervention, especially in funding research and development.

Jonathan Pershing, World Resources Institute, noted the importance of fuel prices in considering transport emissions reductions, and stated that technologies to reduce transport emissions exist but are not being fully utilized.

Hermann Meyer, European Automobile Manufacturers Association, highlighted the technological potential for increasing fuel efficiency, and underscored the need to alter driving behavior to reduce emissions, and focus on fuel quality, alternative fuels such as hydrogen, and least-cost approaches.

Masayuki Sasamouchi, Toyota, noted that when developing new technologies, there is a need to balance between economic and ecological demands.

Noting the existence of technologies to reduce transport emissions, Charles Nicholson, British Petroleum, identified the need for political and societal acceptance of the technologies, and for incentives to implement them.

Wei Zhihong, Tsinghua University, noted that China lacks the capacity to produce compressed natural gas engines and therefore must import the engines. He stated that the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) is important for raising funds for developing clean fuel in China.

Prodipto Ghosh, Ministry of Environment and Forests of India, highlighted the importance of incentive-based policies in India. He recommended taking a holistic view, and suggested telecommuting and videoconferencing to reduce transport emissions.

Jeff Passmore, Iogen Energy, recommended considering energy conservation from a tax perspective, and examining vehicles and fuels in complementary ways in order to achieve greenhouse gas reductions.

Margot Wallström, Commissioner for the Environment of the European Commission, underscored the importance of financial and economic incentives to change lifestyles in a way that will reverse transport emissions trends.

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Getting there: Tackling transport emissions

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More information:

<http://www.wri.org/wri>
<http://www.acea.be>
<http://www.atag.org>
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<http://www.socialdata.de>
<http://www.wbcds.org>
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Martina Priebe, Air Transport Action Group, noted that operational measures such as satellite technology to address costs and delays in the transport sector can also reduce transport emissions.

Addressing lifestyle fixes, Werner Brög, Socialdata, explained the difference between "hard policies" which provide transportation alternatives and "soft policies" which aim to change individual's mindsets about transportation. He emphasized that soft policies are cheaper and faster to implement.

Magnus Nilsson, European Federation for Transport and Environment, underscored the importance of changing existing fiscal and legal frameworks to allow people to act in ways that would reduce transport emissions.

Björn Stigson, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, noted the challenges of influencing consumer behavior, since individuals often say they would prefer green products but do not necessarily buy them.

Petra Mollet, International Association of Public Transport, explained that the public transportation sector needs to make the transportation system more attractive and flexible so that people have better choices.

Edward Helme, Center for Clean Air Policy, underscored the need for people to have transportation options, and highlighted the importance of developing better land-use structures in cities.

Discussion: Participants discussed the importance of consumer demands when developing regulation, how competition among companies can be more effective than regulation, and how information technologies can reduce transport emissions.

Adaptation to climate change risks in Small Island States

Presented by the Delegation of Samoa and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

Barry Smit, University of Gueph, stressed the importance of supporting the implementation of adaptation activities in the Pacific and Caribbean regions.

Tuala Sale Tagaloa, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Samoa, noted that for Caribbean and Pacific regions, climate change issues relate to individuals' rights of existence and rights to livelihoods. He observed that further financial and technological assistance is needed to minimize impacts of climate change-related extreme events in the regions.

Asterio Takesy, South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), explained that SPREP was established in 1993 by Pacific Governments to ensure sustainable development for present and future generations, and protect and improve the islands' environment. He underscored the importance of initial vulnerability assessments for addressing adaptation measures in Pacific islands, and noted that climate-related disasters affect livelihoods and individuals' ability to generate income.

Ulric Trotz, CARICOM, described adaptation projects to address climate change risks in Caribbean small islands and low-lying coastal States, and said such projects focus on enhancing capacity building. He said that the Caribbean Planning for Adaptation to Global Climate Change (CPACC) project focuses on carrying out vulnerability assessments in three pilot countries, namely, Barbados, Grenada and Guyana. He noted that CPACC identified several "no-regrets" adaptation options, which take into account countries' sustainable development priorities.

Taito Nakalevu, SPREP, described a SPREP project on capacity building for the development of adaptation measures in Pacific island countries, which aims to improve resilience to climate-related risks at the national and local levels. He highlighted the need to mainstream climate change adaptation into national and sectoral planning and budgeting processes.

Ernest Bani, Vanuatu, described proposed actions to address vulnerability in the Tegua community, such as: relocating villages to higher grounds; improving the ability to capture and store water for daily use; and developing community early warning systems.

Violet Wulf, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Samoa, described Samoa's projects for identifying vulnerability risks and implementing adaptation measures. She said priorities identified by the communities include: building a seawall to protect schools and houses, rehabilitating coastal areas; restoring fresh water springs; installing a proper drainage system; and raising awareness on climate change and environmental issues.

Pasha Carruthers, International Environment Advisory Unit of the Cook Islands, outlined local communities' proposals to reduce vulnerability risks, such as: improving access to drinking water; banning salt mining; and preventing the destruction of coastal vegetation. She expressed hope that these proposals would be implemented soon.

Carlos Fuller, Belize, described Belize's challenges relating to vulnerability assessments, including lack of specific vulnerability assessment models and bathymetric and topographic data. He underscored the need for enhancing local capacities to use vulnerability assessment models.



Taito Nakalevu, SPREP, highlighted the need to identify communities' adaptive capacities.

More information:

<http://www.sprep.org.ws>
<http://www.caribbeanclimate.org>
<http://www.cpacc.org>
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European greenhouse gas budgets of the biosphere

Presented by the European Community

Riccardo Valentini, University of Tuscia, described CarboEurope, a cluster of projects that aim to quantify the carbon balance of Europe. He drew attention to an upcoming workshop on end-user requirements on spatial and temporal disaggregation of the greenhouse gas budget.

Ivan Janssens, University of Antwerp, noted that European forests are a net carbon sink because they are young, but there is considerable loss of carbon from arable soils due to land use and management changes. He recommended that climate change mitigation policies focus on preserving the current sink behavior of Europe's forests and reducing carbon losses from arable soils.

Pete Smith, University of Aberdeen, drew attention to the enormous amount of carbon lost by European croplands each year. He recommended management options for reducing cropland greenhouse gas fluxes, including more efficient use of animal manure and sewage sludge, and the use of surplus arable land to plant woodland and grow bio-fuels. Smith also noted methane and nitrous oxide emissions from croplands.

Wolfgang Cramer, Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, emphasized that ecosystems provide multiple services, are sensitive to climate and land use change, and can be assessed quantitatively through a multi-scenario approach. He said quantitative assessments are necessary for estimating damage and planning adaptive measures.

Günter Seufert, European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC), discussed the role of the JRC in improving EU reporting of terrestrial greenhouse gas inventories to the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol. He explained that the JRC focuses on the largest contributors to uncertainty, including forest and soil sinks, and methane and nitrous oxide sources and sinks in agriculture. He also noted JRC's work to harmonize and improve methodologies.

Discussion: Participants discussed the need for more information on full carbon accounting and uncertainty estimates, especially with regard to estimates of the net carbon balance for Europe. Participants also discussed the negative impact of climate change on the ability of European forests to sequester carbon.



Ivan Janssens, University of Antwerp, discusses the terrestrial carbon budget of individual European countries.

More information:

<http://www.bgc-jena.mpg.de/public/carboeur/>
<http://gaia.agraria.unitus.it/ceuroghg/ghg.html>
<http://www.jrc.cec.eu.int>

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Climate change in the Arctic: Human rights of Inuit interconnected with the world

Presented by the Centre for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

Donald Goldberg, CIEL, said that global warming already impacts the lives and cultures of the Inuit.

Sheila Watt-Cloutier, Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC), said that UNFCCC negotiations focus on technical issues rather than human right issues. She noted that Inuit's human rights are under threat due to climate change and that many Inuit will have to relocate in the near future. She said that Inuit will explore how to use tools available in international law to address their needs and human rights.

Watt-Cloutier noted that Inuit hunting practices are not for enjoyment but for providing food for their families. She said that Inuit hunters have observed that the weather has become less predictable and this has negatively influenced their navigation, resulting in lost lives. She observed that human-induced climate change is a dangerous reality and is destroying the ecosystems that Inuit depend upon.

Watt-Cloutier underscored that the Arctic is the barometer of global environmental health, and said that a report on the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment will be released in September 2004. She expressed concern for the future of Arctic communities and their options to adapt to global warming and other climate change-related negative impacts. She called for governments to develop their national economies taking into account the best technologies to prevent climate change and avoiding short-term destructive development approaches.



Sheila Watt-Cloutier, ICC, says Inuit communities want to maintain their culture.

More information:

<http://www.inuit.org>
<http://www.iisd.org/casl/projects/inuitobs.htm>

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Emissions trading: The financial sector perspective

Presented by the United Nations Environmental Programme Finance Initiative (UNEP FI) Climate Change Working Group



Thomas Loster, Munich Re Group, notes the high level of economic and insured losses from weather-related natural catastrophes.

More information:

<http://www.swissre.com>
<http://www.cdproject.net>
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Paul Clements-Hunt, UNEP FI, described his organization as a voluntary private-public partnership between UNEP and the private financial sector that aims to identify and disseminate best practices and focuses on sustainability issues.

Thomas Loster, Munich Re Group, highlighted the Climate Change Working Group's achievements for 2003, including: raising awareness; conducting dialogues such as the UNFCCC insurance workshops; and strengthening partnerships.

Werner Schnappauf, Minister of the Environment of Bavaria, said that the risk of natural disasters is rapidly increasing and stated that Bavaria welcomed emissions trading.

Sascha Lafeld, Dresdner Bank, said the international market for greenhouse gas emission certificates is highly fragmented and that a secondary market is emerging. He noted that risks resulting from emission trading schemes include those relating to cash flow, market perception and capital cost.

Mark Way, Swiss Re, explained that mitigation and adaptation measures for climate change require new products and applications, such as natural-perils covers, insurance and finance solutions for direct methods of reduction, and risk transfer solutions for "indirect" reduction methods.

Nigel Baker, Swiss Re, outlined Swiss Re's greenhouse gas risk solutions, including: asset management, including an eco-portfolio; reinsurance and insurance, such as risk management, delivery guarantees and credit guarantees; and project finance.

Andrew Dlugolecki, Andlug Consulting, highlighted the importance of the finance sector's activities to promote adaptation through actions including integrating climatic events with disaster management. He also underscored the need for bolder climate policy action and mitigation measures by the financial sector.

Discussion: Participants raised questions about harmonizing emission trading regulations and about the degree to which companies actually prioritize climate change in their business decisions.

Linking climate change responses and development planning: Challenges and opportunities

Presented by the OECD



Kiyo Akasaka, OECD, observes that the case studies provide "wake up calls for action."

More information:

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Kiyo Akasaka, OECD, introduced the Development and Climate Change Project, which was initiated by the OECD Environment and Development Cooperation Directorates. He drew attention to the Project's case studies in Bangladesh, Egypt, Fiji, Nepal, Tanzania and Uruguay.

Shardul Agrawala, OECD, explained that the Project aims to examine the synergies and trade-offs of mainstreaming climate change responses into development planning and assistance, and focuses on the links between climate change, natural resource management and economic development in developing countries, with a primary focus on adaptation.

Noting that climate change increases glacial lake-related hazards, John Reynolds, Reynolds Geo-Sciences, emphasized that vulnerability and/or hazards must be reduced to decrease risk. He stressed the need to consider glacial risk and water resource management together, and recommended a Pan-Himalayan strategy to achieve transnational cooperation.

Presenting the results of the Bangladesh case study, Ahsan Ahmed, Bangladesh Unnayan Parishad, outlined the country's key areas of vulnerability to climate change, particularly those relating to water resources, forest ecosystems, human health and agriculture. He said donor assistance strategies for Bangladesh tend to focus on natural hazards rather than climate risks.

Daniel Martino, Carbosur, noted that agriculture is responsible for 80% of Uruguay's greenhouse gas emissions. He identified the need for: a strong national CDM institutional and regulatory framework in Uruguay; promotion of renewable energy; and adoption of no tillage agricultural practices.

Maarten van Aalst, Utrecht University, outlined the results of a study showing that climate change-related risks are rarely integrated into national planning and donor strategies. He identified the need for increased attention from high-level policy makers in developing countries. He also recommended that donor agencies reduce sectoral segmentation and integrate climate risk management into development plans and projects.