

## **100 Days to go to Rio+20: 100 Days to Avoid that Sustainable Transport falls by the Wayside in Rio in June.**

Today, it is 100 days before the world community will gather again in Rio de Janeiro to discuss, and hopefully agree on, an effective strategy to make development in the world more sustainable. The meeting is called Rio+20 because it was 20 years ago that the world community met in Rio to discuss environment and development. Two main themes have been selected for Rio+20: the Green Economy and the Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development.

What to expect from Rio+ 20? And more specifically what can the sustainable transport community expect from Rio+20? This should become clearer after 19-27 March when the development community will meet in New York for the second round of discussions on the Zero Draft Outcome Document of the Rio+20 Conference. This draft outcome document of 19 pages was drawn up by the Rio+20 Secretariat based on over 11.000 pages of submissions by 677 parties. While transport was mentioned over 1000 times in the compilation document it was mentioned only once in the Zero draft document. In comparison energy is mentioned 15 times.

The imminent danger is that the Rio+20 process will turn out to be a non-event for the sustainable transport community; an event they cannot use to draw inspiration from in the promotion of sustainable transport. Ignoring the role transport and mobility in providing access to markets, goods and services will make it hard, if not impossible, to realize poverty eradication and sustainable development which are the two ultimate goals of developing a Green Economy.

It is regrettable that the Rio+20 process almost completely ignores transport after having acknowledged it as an important key sector in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992 and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in 2002; the predecessors of the Rio+20 Conference.

Much progress has been made in 20 years since the UNCED conference in (a) awareness raising on the importance of sustainable transport and linked to that the understanding that current motorization patterns as they are unfolding in emerging and developing economies are not sustainable from social, environmental, and economic perspectives ; and (b) development of a new paradigm to guide the development of transport sector: *Avoid* the need for unnecessary travel of goods and services, *Shift* travel to the most efficient mode and *Improve* the technologies used in transport. Not only have all the elements of the Avoid-Shift-Improve approach been tested at scale, they are also increasingly being integrated in policy and

investment frameworks. Quick and full implementation of these policy and investment frameworks is required to help developing countries to provide transport services to its growing population, especially in the urban areas, without eating away at the development these transport services are contributing towards through additional congestion, road accidents, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

Policy making and planning for sustainable development is a mixture of cross sectorial concepts – e.g. sustainable infrastructure or sustainable urban development and sector specific policies and plans for – e.g. the power sector, water supply and sanitation sector, or the transport sector. It is important to realize that institutional mandates, structures and budgets are still largely dominated by the sectorial approach; this is especially true in emerging and developing economies. It is important therefore that these sectorial structures including the transport sector are guided in their further development.

So, what can be done so that the Rio+20 conference will still live up to its potential to give guidance to the further sustainable development of transport infrastructure and services in emerging and developing economies?

The Partnership for Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT) a multi-stakeholder partnership of over 65 members, including development banks, UN organizations, NGOs, research organizations and business sector representatives, is implementing an outreach campaign to explain why it is important to better integrate sustainable mobility in the Rio+20 campaign. Also, it is working with its members and other stakeholders in developing ideas and proposals on how to integrate sustainable mobility into the outcomes of Rio+20. SLoCaT is conducting its outreach campaign with assistance of the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy as well as other members. For details of the SLoCaT Rio+20 Sustainable Mobility Campaign see <http://www.slocat.net/rio-plus-20>.

SLoCaT would like to see that the Rio+20 process includes sustainable mobility as a priority topic for the Green Economy and that it is added as a possible subject area to be covered by a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG). The adoption of SDGs is still a topic of discussion but it is intended that SDGs should complement and strengthen the Millennium Development Goals in the development agenda for the post-2015 period, with a view to establishing a set of goals in 2015 which are part of the post-2015 UN Development Agenda.

If sustainable mobility were integrated in the outcomes of the Rio+20 conference, the SLoCaT partnership and its members would be able to take on an active role in the implementation of Rio+20 agenda, in the following areas:

- a) Knowledge management, including taking a lead role on the transport part of the international knowledge-sharing platform called for in the Zero Draft Outcome

Document to facilitate countries' green economy policy design and implementation;

- b) Capacity building, including the transport part of a capacity development scheme to provide country-specific advice and, where appropriate, region and sector-specific advice to all interested countries
- c) Setting up partnerships between organizations, countries and regions with an interest in sustainable mobility
- d) Setting goals, indicators and target on sustainable mobility as part of the Green Economy and contribute to their monitoring
- e) Prioritize sustainable development options within financial and technical cooperation on transport with developing countries

Members of the SLoCaT partnership annually fund over 100 transport projects in developing countries with a value of well over US \$ 10 billion. In addition, a large part of all technical assistance and capacity building assistance on sustainable mobility delivered to developing and emerging economies is provided by members of the SLoCaT partnership.

The integration of sustainable mobility in the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference Incorporating sustainable mobility in the Rio+20 process would bring it in line with the sectorial priorities for a post-2015 sustainable development framework outlined by Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon in his Action Agenda for his second term. Transport is listed as one of five building blocks for the post 2015 sustainable development framework; the others being energy, food and nutrition, water, and oceans.

Making sustainable mobility part of the outcomes of Rio+20 will require the support from countries who are the ultimate negotiating parties in Rio in June of this year. However, countries can be expected to be more accommodating to the requests of the sustainable mobility community if the countries understand why we are asking this and if they know what contribution we can make to the implementation of sustainable mobility as a contribution to realizing a Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication. This will require an active involvement of the entire sustainable transport community.

Cornie Huizenga  
Joint Convenor  
Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport  
[www.slocat.net](http://www.slocat.net)  
Cornie.huizenga@slocatpartnership.org