Strengthening an Evidence-Based Policy Framework for Sustainable Transport

<u>Welcome Address</u> – Mr Prabir Sengupta, Distinguished Fellow, TERI

<u>Keynote Address</u> – Mr Mohd. Jamshed, Member, Traffic Railway Board and Secretary to Government of India

<u>Special Address-</u> Prof. Yoshitsugu Hayashi, Professor of Chubu University, Emeritus Professor of Nagoya University, Japan

<u>Vote of Thanks-</u> Mr T P Sankar, Fellow, Knowledge Management, TERI

Chair Mr Shri Prakash, Distinguished Fellow, TERI

Panellists

Mr Arvind Kumar, Adviser, TERI [formerly Senior Adviser-Transport Research, Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India

Mr Mario Barreto, International Transport Forum/OECD, Paris

Prof. Dinesh Mohan, Emeritus Fellow, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi

Ms Ruchi Varma, Programme Manager-Urban Development, Open Cities Institute

Ms Palak Thakur, Research Associate, Centre for Sustainable Mobility, TERI

With a focus on good quality, reliable, and timely release of data, at regular intervals, on India's transport sector, the thematic track, "Strengthening an Evidence-Based Policy Framework for Sustainable Transport", was organized on February 15, 2018, as part of WSDS 2018. The deliberations during the panel discussion emphasized on the strong and urgent need for a single data platform for India's transportation sector, covering all the varied modes, which could be of immense help to both the policy makers and the academia. Mr Prabir Sengupta, in his opening address, highlighted the need for efficiency in use of energy in the transport sector which roughly amounts to 7% share of India's gross domestic product (GDP), as it will help minimize both the cost and emissions in the transport sector. He was also of the opinion that policy formulation in case of transport sector becomes difficult without adequate data. Shri Mohd. Jamshed gave a broad overview of the rail mode of transportation and drew attention towards the inherent advantages enjoyed by the rail mode in terms of resource use and cost vis-à-vis the road transport sector in particular. Prof. Yoshitsugu Hayashi opined that transport modes should not be viewed in isolation but as integrated and interrelated components to reap the economic benefits arising out of inter-modality in the transport sector. He highlighted the

fact that India should learn from the experience of other large economies, such as Japan who tried to formulate a policy framework for sustainable transport. In making policy choices, the two basic tenets of transport policy, namely inclusiveness-access to all and integrativeness amongst various modes of transport, must be considered. While delivering the vote of thanks, Mr T P Sankar highlighted how the discussions will broaden the understanding and aid in constructing an evidence-based policy framework for sustainable transport.

Emphasizing on the need for a holistic approach in the transport sector, Mr Shri Prakash observed that in spite of availability of sufficient data on road transport, the same is fragmented and scattered and not easily accessible to researchers and policy makers. In his view, forecasting traffic requires a scientific and dispassionate analysis of the nature and character of flows, besides including intermodal issues within its ambit. Shri Arvind Kumar, in his address, brought to the fore the decisive importance of transportation costs in shaping a country's competitiveness. Mr Mario Barreto gave a lucid presentation on ITF's work in the area of data collection and practices and standardization of definitions and concepts in the transport sector which could be adapted by countries to upgrade their transport statistics. He also elaborated on the role of the ITF as an inter-governmental organization consisting of 57 member countries and devoted to assessing and addressing transport issues at a global level. He observed how lack of good quality data makes policy making a challenge and mentioned about the *Glossary of Transport Statistics*, published by ITF, to promote use of consistent and harmonized definitions.

Prof. Dinesh Mohan called for strengthening and expanding institutes engaged in research in the transport sector given the size of the Indian economy. He expressed concern about a few qualified professionals engaged in compilation, supervision, and analysis of transport data and lack of dedicated institutes for transport research, compared with big economies, such as China and the US. To assess and suggest measures to curb vehicular pollution, there was a need to develop a database in terms of "vehicles-in-use" rather than the prevalent norm of using "number of registered vehicles. The use of number of registered vehicles for estimating emission or passenger/freight flows gives a rather distorted picture. Also, in India, the lack of vehicle inspection makes it difficult to assess the condition and age of vehicles on a regular basis as is the case in many other countries of the world. He also spoke of certain challenges in road accident data, pertaining, in particular, to injuries on account of severe underestimation bias and requires correction. Ms Ruchi Verma and Ms Palak Thakur, through their presentations, gave a brief account of methodologies and approaches which could be used for planning and assessing sustainability issues for cities. Ms Ruchi Varma presented key data driven strategies for strengthening evidence-based planning in order to provide 'Mobility for All and achieve the sustainable development goals (SDGs). She demonstrated the applicability of data-based approach to plan for sustainable mobility in cities and ensure accessibility to all.

Emphasizing on the need for synergy amongst human beings, vehicles, and the infrastructure to achieve a sustainable transport system, she explained in detail the 5 Ps or pillars of sustainable transport development, such as people, prosperity, peace, partnership, and planet. It is important for data, as a power tool, to be more communicative and participative on a real-time basis in order to harness socio-economic development of any region. Ms Palak Thakur's presentation on 'Data Challenges in urban transport' focussed on the base level data collected in urban transport through formulation of the comprehensive mobility plan which captured the travel pattern and mode choice within the city. She emphasized the types of data available like the demand based data, supply based data, performance based data and Impact based data to clearly help in formulating a policy framework for urban transport. She felt the absence of Big Data as a limitation in making a good policy framework. Mr Shri Prakash, concluded by saying that the future looks good for sustainable transport and more and more policies will be formulated and implemented like the electronic bill, RFID tag, etc.

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