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MAINSTREAMING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

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teri THE ENERGY AND
RESOURCES INSTITUTE

Urban Public Transportation Aiding Net-Zero Emission Target

February 23, 2023 | 14:00 PM – 15:30 IST | Tamarind Hall, India Habitat Centre

Background

Urban mobility has a significant role in the overall city development, where cities are considered vertices of economic growth. With rapid urbanization, an increased demand for mobility services has arisen and so has the pressure on urban transport infrastructure and services. In India, more than one-third of the population resides in urban centres¹. However, only a handful of cities have formal bus and rail-based public transport system. Additionally, in almost every city in the country, urban mobility is dependent on walking and non-motorized transport or intermediate public transport. However, disproportionate focus is diverted towards expansion of roads, with limited attention to general mass of people using public transport, walking, or cycling. Even in cities where public transport is available; services are often inadequate and unreliable, which has created dependence on personal vehicles and intermediate transport services. The unprecedented increase in usage of personal vehicle requires urgent measures to deal with the negative externalities such as congestion, air pollution, and rising stress levels.

As per the updated *Nationally Determined Contributions* (NDC), India has committed to reduce emissions intensity of its GDP by 45% by 2030 from 2005 level. With the transport sector being the second largest contributor to emissions, it will play a major role in the achievement of NDC targets as well as India's Net Zero Emission target by 2070. Encouraging greater use of public transport complemented by active and non-motorized transportation modes could be the most effective strategy to ensure adoption of environment-friendly lifestyles as mentioned by Hon'ble Prime Minister under the *Lifestyle for Environment* (LiFE) movement. Under India's G20 Presidency, Urban 20 (U20) engagement group focuses on encouraging environmentally responsible behaviours as one the global agenda for equitable and inclusive local-level

¹ <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/managing-india-urban-transition-2021/>

interventions in achieving Sustainable Development Goals. Further, India's *Long-Term Low-Carbon Development Strategy*, submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Studies last year, and acknowledges that *maximum potential CO₂ emissions reduction can be achieved through efficient modes of transport and a focus on expanding public transport*. It is important that the public transport services should ensure service delivery that matches urban mobility demands, which can be ensured by integration of different modes of transportation. A multi-modal transport integration, overcoming the challenge of first/last mile services, is essential.

With this background, TERI is organizing a thematic session on ***Urban Public Transportation Aiding Net-Zero Emission Target*** at the WSDS 2023. It will focus on multi-modal integration across all public transit modes. The mobility data can be the basis of 'Mobility as a Service' to provide commuters with a seamless connectivity.

Panellists for the thematic track will include experts, including key stakeholders from government and non-governmental organizations, academia, business, and private sectors. The key issues for discussion during the thematic track will be structured around experiences, challenges, and solutions from experts in the public transport sector, role of active transportation, and multi-modal integration.

Guiding Questions

1. What governance mechanisms can support multi-modal integration for urban mobility?
2. What improvements in urban public transport can aid national net zero emission target?
3. What policy recommendations and infrastructure developments can enhance last mile connectivity to compliment the public transportation?
4. What are financing-related challenges and solutions for the provision of public transport that should be considered by Centre, State, and Cities? What are the roles played by multi-lateral agencies?
5. How can transport strategies be developed for equity for all in terms of gender and socioeconomic strata?
6. What are the steps that local governments should take/taken for mitigation of climate change and its impact on urban transport?

About the World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS)

The World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) is the annual flagship Track II initiative organized by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). Instituted in 2001, the Summit series has a legacy of over two decades for making 'sustainable development' a globally shared goal. The only independently convened international Summit on sustainable development and environment, based in the Global South, WSDS strives to provide long-term solutions for the benefit of global communities by assembling the world's most enlightened leaders and thinkers on a single platform. The 22nd edition of the annual flagship event is being held from 22-24 February 2023 in New Delhi. The Summit deliberations will focus on the umbrella theme: Mainstreaming Sustainable Development and Climate Resilience for Collective Action.