

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

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**AT**

**THE GLOBAL FORUM ON ELECTRIC MOBILITY**

**ON**

***“PERSPECTIVES FOR ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION  
AT LOCAL, NATIONAL AND GLOBAL LEVELS”***

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A very warm welcome to all the participants who have joined us from various part of the globe at the Global Forum on Electric Mobility focusing on Greening Transport for Sustainable Development, being held as an associated event of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

The leaders from all over the world who are joining at this generational opportunity being held 20 years after the 1992 Earth Summit - which I had the pleasure of attending - have resolved “to work together for a prosperous, secure and sustainable future for our people and our planet”.

I extend my special welcome to the large number of participants from China and the host country Brazil as well as from other parts of the world and the UN system for their engaged presence and contribution to success of the Forum.

I am impressed by the collaborative spirit that has brought together so many partners in the organization of this event.

I thank the President of EletroBras Furnas for his contribution and the generous support in hosting this event in the vibrant city of Rio de Janeiro.

My deep appreciation to Secretary-General of the Global Forum on Human Settlements (GFHS) Lu Haifeng for the pro-active leadership in putting together this substantive contribution to Rio+20 deliberations.

My keynote presentation at today's Forum would focus on "Perspectives for Enhancing Sustainable Transport at Local, National and Global Levels" sharing a broader perspective of the sustainable transport agenda in both local and global settings.

At the outset, let me assert that the core of the wide-ranging objectives here in Rio is the essential concept of SUSTAINIBILITY. Centrality of sustainability in all our deliberations and their outcomes can not be denied. At the same I would underscore that "sustainability is not the same as corporate social responsibility (CSR), nor it is in achieving an acceptable balance across economic, social and environmental bottom lines". Instead, it is about the fundamental, intergenerational task of our societies' efforts which are just, equitable and inclusive for economic and social stability and growth that benefits all.

Our world is going through a very significant turning point in relation to human settlements and urbanization. Beginning in 2008, for the first time, half of humanity is now living in towns and cities. A new urban era is a reality. It is projected that globally urbanization levels will rise dramatically in the next 40 years to reach 70 percent by 2050 when the world population is expected to hit 9 billion.

The importance of cities as living space for people is growing. These are also the places where the ecological and social challenges of the 21st century are particularly pronounced. Part of these challenges is also the growing mobility and the accessibility of our cities.

A transport crisis of major proportions is looming on the horizon in many of the world's cities. Increasing motorization and air pollution threaten economic development as well as the environment. The importance of sustainable transportation in cities cannot be overstated. It is the backbone of any successful city and vital to building cities which are clean, equitable, accessible and economically viable.

The term sustainable transportation came into use as a logical follow-on from sustainable development, and is used to describe modes of transport, and systems of transport planning, which are consistent with wider concerns of sustainability.

There are many definitions of the sustainable transportation. One such well-articulated definition, from the European Union, defines a sustainable transportation system as one that:

- Allows the basic access and development needs of individuals, companies and society to be met safely and in a manner consistent with human and ecosystem health, and promotes equity within and between successive generations.
- Is affordable, operates fairly and efficiently, offers a choice of transport mode, and supports a competitive economy, as well as balanced regional development.
- Limits emissions and waste within the planet's ability to absorb them.

Transport systems are major emitters of greenhouse gases, responsible for nearly 25% of world energy-related GHG emissions, with about three quarters coming from road vehicles. Currently 95% of transport energy comes from petroleum. Energy is consumed in the manufacture as well as the use of vehicles, and is embodied in transport infrastructure including roads, bridges and railways. Cities around the world faced worsening traffic congestion, increased air pollution, and dangerous roads. Car travel increased steadily throughout the twentieth century. It is high time now that in the Rio+20 outcomes, sustainable transportation becomes an integral component of global, national and local development agenda.

Sustainable transport is fundamentally a broad spectrum movement, albeit one which is now recognized as of citywide, national and international significance. Whereas it started as a movement driven by environmental concerns, over these last years there has been increased emphasis on social equity and fairness issues, and in particular the need to ensure proper access and services for lower income groups and people with mobility limitations, including the fast growing population of older citizens. Many of the people exposed to

the most vehicle noise, pollution and safety risk have been those who do not own, or cannot drive cars.

Developing sustainable modes of transportation should be a key part of any development objective because environmental, social, health, and economic challenges are intertwined with our transit. The high economic, social and environmental costs associated with motor vehicle use, and market distortions that result in excessive automobile travel, are often presented as evidence that increased motor vehicle use is overall harmful to communities. Creating a more diversified transportation system is the most effective way to address these challenges. Pedestrian and cycling paths are considered as attractive and safe alternatives to cars.

It is crucially important that in the decision making processes for a sustainable transportation policy; we need to ensure public and private sector stakeholders coordinate their transportation planning, development and delivery activities. These transportation decisions should also be integrated with environment, health, energy and urban land-use decisions. It is equally important to make transportation-related decisions in an open and inclusive process.

The concept “electric mobility” or simply “E-mobility” has been gaining every day more importance in a world facing the environmental catastrophe and the limitations of fossil-based fuels. E-mobility provides a wide variety of sustainable alternatives, which are being developed and perfected on a daily basis.

From electric rapid transit systems to individual electric vehicles, there is an increasing realization that the future of mobility could lie in electric transport. Electric mobility is certainly not a “silver bullet” that could solve all of our transport problems, but it offers many new opportunities to improve mobility in a sustainable way. The economic feasibility and affordability of electric mobility will vary from country to country and from place to place. Much will depend on the pace of further technical progress and technology sharing. In Brazil, for example, electric mobility is certainly a low-carbon transport option.

Sustainable transport policies have their greatest impact at the city level. There are many opportunities to improve urban transportation: (i) we need to improve urban public transport services, they need to be more efficient, more affordable, safer, and more environmentally friendly; (ii) we need to make non-motorized transport more convenient and safer; (iii) we need to further improve fuel efficiency

and make modern transport technologies more accessible, and (iv) we need to plan our cities better.

Outside Western Europe, lead cities which have consistently included sustainability as a key consideration in transport and land use planning include Curitiba in Brazil and Bogota in Colombia in the southern hemisphere. New York City has an astonishing 6000 buses with over 2.70 million riders every weekday. City of Lansing on the other has 90 percent of their people riding in personal vehicles. One bus of people is six times more efficient than a car with one person in it. Taking public transit saves an average household over \$6,000 on automobile expenses per year.

In practice, we need to weigh the overall sustainability of green transport option. Green vehicles are more fuel-efficient, but only in comparison with standard vehicles, and they still contribute to traffic congestion and road accidents.

Also, the term green transport is often used as a greenwash marketing technique for products which are not proven to make a positive contribution to environmental sustainability.

Today's event will give us an opportunity to share information on many relevant aspects. I am pleased to see that the programme looks at all types of vehicles, including buses, passenger cars, fleet vehicles, bicycles, as well as the intermodal connections.

I believe electric mobility is an option not only for industrialized countries. I am looking forward to learn more about the various initiatives from developing countries, notably Brazil, China and India. Electric vehicle technology has the potential of reducing transportation CO2 emissions.

The Rio+20 summit outcome must include a sustainable transportation action agenda which makes human and environmental protection an urgent priority in order to help prevent millions of deaths, combat poverty, provide both mobility and accessibility and contain environmental degradation. Along with that, the Global Plan for the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety should be more widely and comprehensively implemented.

As the global population expands, we need to make sure that it does not happen at the cost of our environment, our health, and city dwellers' quality of life. Sustainable transportation not only makes

streets safer, cleaner, and less congested, it makes residents happier, healthier, and more productive.

Environmental degradation should not be viewed as a form of collateral damage – as the inevitable price of economic growth. This is precisely the type of anachronistic thinking that was challenged at the first Earth Summit back in 1992, and that Rio+20 must again challenge now.

It is therefore significant that since its establishment, the Global Forum on Human Settlements (GFHS) has been focusing on such challenges of sustainability at each of its annual conferences and other events. Today's Forum is another timely, relevant and appropriate initiative that is aimed at making the international community alert and proactive.

I thank you.

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