Sustainable Development in action
United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development
PRESS RELEASE | APRIL 2007

Cleaner Air through Cleaner Vehicles

The Partnership: Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV)

The Goal: Reduce air pollution in developing countries by eliminating lead in gasoline, reducing sulfur in fuels, and encouraging the adoption of cleaner vehicle technologies.

The Result: All 49 Sub-Saharan African countries stopped refining and importing leaded gasoline by the end of 2005. Mexico City adopted ultra-low sulfur fuel standards in January 2006, reducing particulate emissions by more than 90 percent.

How they did it: Starting in 2002, the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles supported the transfer of technical expertise, the organization of stakeholder workshops, public outreach, training of gas-station attendants, and blood-lead-level studies in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa to achieve a complete phase-out of leaded gasoline in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In Mexico City, under the umbrella of the partnership, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, in cooperation with the World Resources Institute and the U.S. Agency for International Development, initiated a Diesel Retrofit Project in June 2004. Newer public buses were retrofitted and ran on ultra-low sulfur fuel. The project was designed to demonstrate how the combined use of low-sulfur fuels and diesel retrofit technologies can improve air quality and reduce effects on human health.

Outlook: The partnership has developed action plans to eliminate lead in gasoline in the remaining 22 countries worldwide by the end of 2008. Regarding the sulfur phase-down, the Mexico City project is serving as a model for projects in other areas of the world, including in Beijing, China; Pune, India; Santiago, Chile; and Bangkok, Thailand.

Background: Air pollution in many cities in the developing world is reaching crisis proportions. According to the World Health Organisation, only 15 percent of the largest cities in developing countries have acceptable air quality. Vehicles, both gasoline and diesel, emit significant quantities of nitrogen oxides, sulfur oxides, particles, carbon monoxide, and hydrocarbons. These pollutants can be reduced by using lower-sulfur and lead-free fuels and by introducing new vehicle technologies and emission control devices.

The Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles was launched at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, in September 2002. Today it includes more than 90 international partners from governments, international organizations, industry, and non-governmental organizations.

For more information:
www.unep.org/pcfv

http://webapps01.un.org/dsd/partnerships/public/partnerships/178.html

PARTNERSHIPS for SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

United Nations