SLOCAT
Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport

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New report: Radical action needed towards sustainable decarbonisation of the transport sector, the fastest growing source of global CO_2 emissions

The SLOCAT Partnership has released the second edition of its Transport and Climate Change Global Status Report, *Tracking Trends in a Time of Change: The Need for Radical Action Towards Sustainable Transport Decarbonisation*. The report and accompanying website (https://tcc-gsr.com) highlight recent trends in transport-related emissions and underscore the need for urgent local, national and global action towards the sustainable decarbonisation of the sector.

As the world continues to assess the impacts of the ongoing pandemic, it faces a unique opportunity to evaluate whether current patterns of global development – including trends in transport demand, infrastructure, access, and funding – are leading to a sustainable and just future, as outlined in the Paris Agreement on climate change and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions from the transport sector, leading to a temporary drop in emissions of 19.4% below 2019 levels. This is *roughly equal to the reductions needed from the transport sector annually to meet 2050 Paris Agreement targets*. However, overall emission trends in the sector point to serious ongoing challenges.

The transport sector continues to be the fastest growing source of global CO_2 emissions, with transport emissions rising more than 17% between 2010 and 2019. To reach the Paris Agreement target for 2050 – which aims to keep the increase in the average global temperature below 1.5 degrees Celsius to avoid the most severe impacts of climate change – the world must take immediate and radical action towards the sustainable decarbonisation of the sector.

"With emissions from the transport sector growing faster than those from any other major economic sector, action in transport is needed urgently to deliver on the sustainable, low carbon future outlined in the goals of the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," said Bronwen Thorton, Chair of the SLOCAT Board of Directors and CEO of Walk21. "We are in a critical moment to collectively reflect on the future that we want and how we can achieve it."

A better understanding of the specific sources of transport emissions and how to address them is critical. To address this knowledge gap, the SLOCAT *Transport and Climate Change Global Status Report – 2nd edition* tells the global and regional stories of where we are – and where we need to get to urgently – on climate action in the transport sector. With contributions from more than 150 world-class experts and organisations, it is a one-stop shop for the latest available data, targets and developments on transport demand, emissions, policies, and measures. The report highlights the imperative of accelerating radical action on sustainable transport and climate in this time of unprecedented global change.

The *SLOCAT Transport and Climate Change Global Status Report – 2nd edition* outlines the major trends contributing to the dramatic increase in transport emissions. These include:

- **Declining demand for public transport** spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to greater use of private vehicles for those able to afford the switch (public transport ridership fell 90% globally between March and August 2020 and remains well below 2019 levels).

- **Overall growth in the use of road vehicles** (both passenger and freight). Road transport is by far the largest driver of transport demand, accounting for 78% of the total in 2017.
- **A surge in aviation and shipping** over the past decade, with both sub-sectors recording double-digit growth in emissions between 2010 and 2019.
- **Rising preferences for larger personal vehicles.** Sport utility vehicles (SUVs) were the second largest source of new CO_2 emissions globally between 2010 and 2018, after the power industry.
- **Growing regional emissions, especially in Asia.** Asia experienced the highest increase in transport CO_2 emissions among global regions from 2010 to 2019, up 41%, followed by Africa (27%), and Oceania (13%).
- **Ongoing dominance of fossil fuels.** The transport sector remains 97% powered by fossil fuels and is the least diversified of all energy end-use sectors. Subsidies for fossil fuels continue to outpace renewable energy spending in transport by orders of magnitude.
- **Low ambition to reduce emissions.** Transport targets set in the latest round of Nationally Determined Contributions – submitted by countries in the framework of the Paris Agreement to outline their emission mitigation plans – would yield 2.6 degrees Celsius of warming by 2100, far exceeding Paris Agreement targets.
- **Significant financing gaps.** Investments totalling USD 40.5 trillion are required from 2016 to 2030 to achieve low carbon transport pathways, the majority to support emerging economies.
- **Barriers to accessing equitable, healthy, green and resilient mobility.** Still today, more than half of urban residents of the Global South must travel 60 minutes or more to access jobs and services.

The report also demonstrates that **rising emissions from the increase in transport demand are not inevitable and can be avoided through targeted planning, policies, and adequate funding**. Based on data-driven research and case studies of positive trends, the analysis in the report shows that:

- **The decoupling of economic prosperity and transport emissions is ongoing.** From 2010 to 2019, annual global growth in gross domestic product (GDP) was nearly a percentage point higher than growth in transport CO_2 emissions.
- **The first signs of "peak car" are appearing** for passenger car ownership in member countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). In these more economically prosperous countries, sales of new passenger cars fell 7% between 2017 and 2019.
- **More stringent regulations and ambitious targets are leading to emission reductions.** In Europe, such measures contributed to a 2% decrease in transport emissions between 2010 and 2019, even though global transport emissions rose.
- **Access to improved walking and cycling infrastructure are boosting interest in these zero-emission modes.** More than one-third of all trips globally are made on foot or by bicycle (many by necessity in the absence of other transport options). Walking and cycling rates surged early in the pandemic as governments allocated more road space to these socially distanced means of transport.

With a focus on trends from 2019 and 2020, the report shows that despite substantive challenges related to transport emissions, these years set the stage to transform the current time of uncertainty into a moment of

opportunity. However, pandemic recovery packages so far have proven a mixed bag for climate action in the transport sector. Radical action is needed to ensure that sustainable, low carbon transport and mobility is a vital component of an equitable, healthy, green and resilient recovery. Now is the time to use this opportunity to create a lasting positive transformation of transport and mobility for the benefit of people and the planet.

The *SLOCAT Transport and Climate Change Global Status Report – 2nd edition* points to the need for regular and improved data on transport trends, both globally and across regions. "One of the aims of the report is to leverage the collective knowledge of the sustainable, low carbon transport community," said Maruxa Cardama, Secretary General of the SLOCAT Partnership. "Data are important to provide a comprehensive picture of the status of this field, and in this time of change they are essential for policy and investment decision making. We hope that this report can be a useful resource for the SLOCAT Partnership and beyond and extend our warmest gratitude to all the entities and colleagues who have shaped this report."

Find out more on the dedicated interactive website (https://tcc-gsr.com), which includes:

- The full PDF report for download
- 31 country fact sheets
- The complete database and figures pack for all report statistics
- Press releases in Spanish and French

About the SLOCAT Partnership:

SLOCAT is the international multi-stakeholder partnership that enables collaborative knowledge and action for sustainable, low carbon transport and brings the voice of the movement into international climate change and sustainability processes. With a primary focus on land transport, and a geographic footprint targeted at the Global South; we deliver on our mission through 3 mutually reinforcing work streams; namely knowledge and policy analysis; advocacy and engagement, and dialogue and networking. Our Partnership engages a vibrant international, multi-stakeholder ecosystem of over 90 entities across transport sectors associations, knowledge and academia, governments, multilateral organisations, NGOs, philanthropy and industry; as well as a large community of world-class experts and change-makers. By going where others do not or cannot go individually, our inclusive, multi-stakeholder Partnership is leveraged to set ambitious global agendas and catalyse new thinking and solutions for the urgent transformation of mobility systems.

Time period for data: The *SLOCAT Transport and Climate Change Global Status Report – 2nd edition* strives to utilise the most recent publicly available data and information just prior to the time of edition (as of 31 May 2021). The figures in the report were developed between September and December 2020 using the most recent data available.

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