gTKP Report on pre-Better Air Quality Workshop event, "Transport, Air Quality and Climate Change" organised by gTKP Environment and Climate Change Theme in Bangkok, Thailand

1. Background

gTKP, represented by Sanjivi Sundar, Theme Champion for Environment and Climate Change, Divya Sharma and Charles Melhuish, gTKP's Technical Themes Leader hosted an event to bring together stakeholders interested in *Transport, Air Quality and Climate Change.* The event was held in Bangkok on 10 November prior to the Better Air Quality (BAQ) 2008 Workshop. The BAQ Workshop is an annual event to bring together policy-makers and stakeholders to discuss how to improve air quality management in Asian cities. Sanjivi Sundar chaired a session at the BAQ Workshop.

BAQ meetings are organised every two years by the Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities (CAI-Asia) to forge coordination and cooperation between like minded individuals and organisations from around the region and the world, all sharing a common vision of better air quality in cities in Asia. This year's theme was *Air Quality and Climate Change: Scaling up Win-Win Solutions for Asia.* The focus was on air quality management through combining local air quality issues and larger climate change issues in Asian cities.

gTKP's full-day pre-BAQ event was attended by more than 50 people from diverse organisations across throughout the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. It was intended to draw attention to transport in the climate change debate.

The pre-BAQ event was structured around four sessions and discussed major issues related to air quality and climate change in the transport sector. Several notable speakers, including policy makers, transport practitioners and researchers all delivered presentations. Presentations were followed by in-depth discussions and exchange of country and institutional experiences.

2. Recommendations

The recommendations resulting from presentations and discussions are as follows:

1. Country Experiences:

There is a strong consensus that stronger enforcement of emission standards for in–use vehicles is needed. The country case studies outlined the need for a vehicle database to facilitate decision making and also highlighted the fact that the lack of data has been one of the biggest constraints in implementing the vehicle inspection and maintenance action plans in several countries. In Beijing for example, the vehicle emission targets were only achieved by stricter

reinforcement and regulation, including retirement of older vehicles, introduction of an environmental protection sticker system and inspection and retrofitting of in-use vehicles. Individual country experiences also suggest that, in addition to technical measures for vehicle emission reduction and strong enforcement of regulations, it is important to focus on raising awareness of vehicle owners and operators on the role of vehicle emissions on local pollution and greenhouse gas mitigation. Another challenge that countries face cross the region is the high growth of personalised vehicles due to both rapid urbanisation and rising incomes throughout Asia. Several presenters suggested that there is a need to take a comprehensive approach to tackle the problem and this requires inter-institutional cooperation, effective co-ordination and good governance.

2. *Technological and Planning Measures:*

- It is possible to make use of simple technology, along with widely-available secondary and tertiary data, to measure the scale of the problem and keep track of developments in vehicle emissions mitigation and implementation of country specific action plans.

- It is vital that integrated land use and transport planning be adopted in order to reduce the need to travel and to enable implementation of public transport infrastructure and services including rail and bus public transport, cycling and walking.

- Investments in bus rapid transit (BRT) and non-motorised transport (NMT) can provide significant benefits by reducing overall vehicle kilometers travelled, thus reducing congestion, fuel and emissions. However, it is important to also introduce fuel efficiency measures for the vehicle fleet as such measures are the cheapest option available to reduce fuel use. Electric and hybrid vehicles are potentially good options but they require significant time and investment in order to develop the technology to a cost effective level.

- Measures to reduce vehicle growth through both fiscal and physical regulatory measures are required, along with major investment in mass transport systems.

3. *Policy/Legal/ Institutional Interventions:*

- Each mitigation measure calls for appropriate policies which need to transcend sectors and jurisdictional boundaries. There is a strong need for integration between sectors and tiers of government. Cities need to prepare comprehensive mobility plans to address their city-specific mobility needs.

- Incentives could be provided to facilitate mitigation, such as investment in public transport, use of clean fuels and alternative fuels, improved engine technologies and promotion of a full range of NMT option, including walking. The Singapore example, which includes measures such as a vehicle quota system, high registration fees for new vehicles, high rates of excise petrol duties and road tax and road pricing, supplemented by an efficient public transport system, provides a good case study for the way ahead.

3. Conclusions

The event was a good opportunity to bring transport issues to the fore, and to link better air quality with initiatives to combat climate change. It brought together the kinds of people that gTKP intends to target, and others who can also provide valuable contributions.

gTKP will take these recommendations and use them as a basis for continuing our knowledge-sharing and networking activities.