

Press Release
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Jack Short, Secretary General of the International Transport Forum, addressed the conference of Nordic and Baltic Ministers of Transport on climate change in Joensuu

Short says: “... both technology and behaviour change needed.”

“Developing technology and changes in behaviour are both essential if emissions of greenhouse gases are to be reduced”, stressed Jack Short, Secretary General of the International Transport Forum this week at a conference of Nordic and Baltic Ministers of Transport on climate change in the Finnish city of Joensuu. He encouraged Ministers to provide the incentives for people to drive more fuel efficient cars.

Short said that radical technological changes are not on the horizon. There are many long term possibilities including electric power trains, fuel cells and hydrogen, but of these only battery powered cars appear likely to be commercially viable before 2030. Nevertheless, the potential from improving existing technologies can deliver up to 30% reduction in CO₂ emissions.

Referring to a survey by his organisation of existing transport-sector green house gas reduction policies [*Cutting Transport CO₂ Emissions: What Progress? Paris, 2007 - ISBN 92-821-0382-X*] the Secretary General said that there are over 400 abatement policies introduced or under development within the member countries of the International Transport Forum. According to Short, the analysed measures might cut 700 million tonnes from annual CO₂ emissions in the International Transport Forum member countries by 2010, just over half the projected increase in emissions between 1990 and 2010. These measures include a CO₂ related fuel tax, CO₂ based vehicle taxes, incentives for alternative fuel vehicles, urban transport initiatives as well as biofuels promotion and traditional transport policies like modal shift policies, investment, better traffic management and safety measures to reduce speed.

In the short term the most cost-effective measures should be introduced. These include low-rolling resistance tyres, low-friction lubricants, fuel efficient lighting and air conditioning, as well as car instrumentation to provide feedback on fuel consumption and driver training for saving fuel. Each of these measures can cut a few percent off CO₂ emissions.

Changing behaviour of transport users is the most difficult challenge. Whether it is in changing to more fuel efficient modes, travelling less or using more efficient vehicles, experience and successes are limited. It is essential to share these experiences and learn from the successful examples there are. The Nordic Countries are among the leaders in these areas, for example in carbon taxes, fiscal incentives, cycling policy and urban charging.

The International Transport Forum is an intergovernmental organisation and part of the OECD. It consists of 51 member countries, 44 European and seven non-European industrialised countries.

If you would like further information, please contact itf.contact@oecd.org