

## **Press Release**

Paris, 5 December 2008

# **Addressing recession through new transport strategies**

## **International Transport Forum Consults Industry Chiefs**

Top transport industry executives and experts met in London with the UK Secretary of State for Transport Geoff Hoon MP and International Transport Forum (ITF) Secretary General Jack Short this week to discuss the impact of global recession on the demand for transport services and examine possible policy response.

“These are exceptionally turbulent times for our sector hit by turmoil on international financial markets, volatile energy prices and the prospect of global economic recession”, Jack Short noted in his opening address to the ITF Advisory Board. “Tackling recession demands new transport strategies”.

“I am delighted that the UK had been asked to co-Chair the ITF Task Force on current challenges and opportunities for transport and globalisation” Geoff Hoon added. “It is invaluable to be given the views of senior representatives of business worldwide. This is an hour when governments and business need to work closely together”.

The Advisory Board took stock of important changes to the global economic environment and engaged in a collective exchange of experience on the downturn suffered across industries. At the same time, there was a powerful feeling that governments should not lose sight of transport sustainability targets and that the current crisis could create new opportunities for fast-tracked transition to green transport technologies through a combination of regulation, incentives and investment. Participants agreed that the opportunity should be seized to stimulate the transition towards an efficient, low carbon transport sector at a lower cost of action. They further stressed that policy responses to the current economic downturn should not seek to undo the benefits that liberalisation has brought, notably through protectionist measures.

The results of this high-level industry consultation constitute an essential input into the key thematic issues addressed at the next International Transport Forum “Transport for a global economy: new challenges and opportunities” which takes place in Leipzig, Germany, on 26-29 May 2009. On this occasion, Ministers of Transport of 52 Forum Countries and from invited countries will once again gather together with top leaders of industry, research and civil society to discuss the challenges of globalisation for the transport sector. The conclusions of the annual Forum meetings are expected to act as important signals to society at large.

**Footnote:**

*The International Transport Forum was established by the Transport Ministers of 52 countries to offer policy makers and private stakeholders a platform to work together on transport issues of global significance and foster a deeper understanding of the essential role played by transport in the economy and society.*

*The Advisory Board is the Forum's principal mechanism of high-level consultation with transport industries. It comprises a small number of individually nominated representatives of strategic transport modes who support the aims of the International Transport Forum.*

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