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Drop in global travel volume leads to cut in transport emissions But drivers for increased Greenhouse gas emissions from mobility remain

A drop in travel volumes in the wake of the global economic crisis has decreased Greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector in many countries. The long-term trend, however, continues to be towards an increase in CO₂ emissions from travel activity, according to a new report released by the International Transport Forum at the OECD for its annual global mobility summit on “Transport and Innovation” to be held in Leipzig, Germany, from May 26-28.

The report says that global CO₂ emissions from transport grew by 45% from 1990 to 2007. It concludes that from 2007 to 2030, transport emissions will continue to grow by approximately 40%. This is only slightly lower than pre-crisis estimates and already takes account of many planned efficiency improvements.

Road sector emissions dominate transport emissions, with light-duty vehicles accounting for the bulk of emissions globally. In some of the International Transport Forum’s 52 member countries, road freight accounts for up to 30% to 40% of road sector CO₂ emissions. Emissions from global aviation and international shipping respectively accounted for 2.5% and 3% of total CO₂ emissions in 2007 and are the fastest growing sources of transport CO₂ emissions.

Across the economy, the crisis of 2008 has contributed to the sharpest drop in emissions in the past 40 years, with estimates ranging from 3% to 10%. This could translate into a 5% to 8% decrease in 2020 emissions from their pre-crisis projected levels, depending on the strength of the economic recovery.

Despite countries gaining some breathing room due to the post-crisis drop in GHG emissions, fundamental drivers for increased transport sector CO₂ emissions remain and necessitate coordinated policies to limit future emissions. Some countries, notably France, Germany and Japan, have seen their road CO₂ emissions stabilised or decrease even before the recession of 2008-2009, despite economic and road freight growth over the same period.

For detailed country-by-country data please visit
www.internationaltransportforum.org/statistics/CO2/index.html.

If you would like to discuss the findings with an ITF expert, please contact Michael KLOTH, Head of Communications, at + 33 (0)1 45 24 95 96 or michael.kloth@oecd.org.

The International Transport Forum is a strategic think tank for the transport sector. Each year, it brings together Ministers from over 50 countries, along with leading decision-makers and actors from the private sector, civil society and research, to address transport issues of strategic importance. An intergovernmental organisation linked to the OECD, the Forum's goal is to help shape the transport policy agenda, and ensure that it contributes to economic growth, environmental protection, social inclusion and the preservation of human life and wellbeing. The 2010 International Transport Forum, to be held on 26-28 May in Leipzig, Germany, will focus on Transport and Innovation: Unleashing the Potential.