

Proceedings of  
**Kathmandu Sustainable Urban Transport Forum**

**Hotel Himalaya, Kathmandu**  
**16 December 2011**



In Collaboration with



**Ministry of Physical Planning and Works**

Supported by



**Clean Air Initiative for Asian Cities**



**Fredskorpset Norway**



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## **Executive Summary**

Clean Energy Nepal (CEN) and Clean Air Network Nepal (CANN) in collaboration with Ministry of Physical Planning and Works (MoPPW) organized “Kathmandu Sustainable Urban Transport Forum” to inform and sensitize stakeholders on sustainable urban transportation, share approaches and initiatives, forge collaboration and enhance coordination among governmental, non- governmental and private sectors working on urban transportation. Around 55 stakeholders from different government agencies, non-governmental organizations, private sectors, transport associations, academia and media attended the program.

During the program, the presenters talked about the concept/elements of sustainable urban transportation, initiatives/programs/policies of government, best practices around the world and challenges to improve the urban transport in Kathmandu valley. The wider issues of the urban transport including necessitate, challenges and opportunities were discussed during the panel discussion. The forum participants stressed the need of continued dialogue and coordination among the stakeholders, and the initiation of small-scale interventions to leap forward to large-scale implementation. The program urged for a roadmap to SUT in Kathmandu through coordination of the entire stakeholder.

## **1. Preface**

### **1.1. Background**

The urban transportation system in Kathmandu valley is in very sorry state, posing adverse implication in sustainable functioning of the city. Air pollution, carbon emission and road safety are mainly associated with poor transport management in the valley. Traffic congestion is one of the chronic problems in urban core areas attributed to poor public transportation, limited transport infrastructures and rapid increase in the ownership of private vehicles with the increasing population. In other hand, the increasing usage of private motor vehicles is associated to poor public transport in the valley. And the situation is expected to worsen if there are no improvements in the existing transportation system.

In order to inform and sensitize stakeholders on sustainable urban transportation, share approaches and initiatives, forge collaboration and enhance coordination among various governmental, non-governmental and private sectors working on urban transportation, Clean Energy Nepal (CEN) and Clean Air Network Nepal (CANN) in collaboration with Ministry of Physical Planning and Works (MoPPW) organized “Kathmandu Sustainable Urban Transport Forum” on December 16, 2011. The transport forum supported by Fredskorpset Norway and CAI-Asia also aims to discuss the challenges and way ahead for improving urban transport system

The program was broadly divided into introductory session, keynote speech, technical session and panel discussion. There was good participation of diverse stakeholders: governmental officials from Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Physical Planning and Works, Ministry of Labor and Transport, and respective departments. The idea behind inviting government officials was to sensitize and, more specifically, to get the officials to interact with civil society representatives and members from academe and research institutions and discuss government initiatives/programmes related to sustainable urban transport system.

### **1.2. Objectives of the program**

The objectives of the program were to:

1. Inform and sensitize stakeholders on sustainable urban transport (SUT) and increasing air pollution & GHGs emission in Kathmandu valley
2. Share approaches and initiatives of governmental, non-governmental and private sectors on SUT in Kathmandu valley
3. Sensitize stakeholders the necessitate of SUT strategy/programmes and identify its co-benefits for cleaner air and climate change mitigation
4. Follow up of the previous efforts/outputs and seek way forward for collaboration and coordination to improve urban transport in the valley

### **1.3. Program Participants**

The forum was held on 16 December in Hotel Himalaya, Kathmandu. Around 55 participants from national and local governmental agencies, non-governmental agencies, developmental agencies, academia, research institutions and private sectors including transport entrepreneurs, bus operators and/or transport associations participated in the program. (Please see the List of Participants in Annexes)

The presenters, panelists and facilitator were from different organizations involved in urban transportation issues.

## **2. Forum Proceedings**

### **2.1. Introductory Session**

The introductory session began with a welcome address by Mr. Rajan Thapa of Clean Energy Nepal, and then followed by chairing of guests. The guests were Mr. Krishna Gyawali, Secretary, Ministry of Environment; Mr. Ganesh Shah, Former Minister, Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology; Mr. Bhushan Tuladhar, South Asia Regional Technical Advisor, UN-HABITAT and Board Member, Clean Energy Nepal and Mr. Kamal Raj Pande, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Physical Planning and Works. This followed a brief introduction of the participants of the program.

### **2.2. Keynote Speech**

#### **Mr. Krishna Gyawali, Secretary, Ministry of Environment**

Secretary Gyawali commended organizers for the forum and affirmed the need of organizing such a program to heighten the sustainable urban transport issue in his keynote speech. Mr. Gyawali lamented on the dire situation of transport system, especially in Kathmandu valley, pointing the death of veteran conservationist Dr. Pralhad Yonjan in cycle accident, and further emphasized the need to improve the urban transportation in the Kathmandu valley. "Urban transport issues have been sidelined by climate change", he said, emphasizing to establish clear-cut linkage between these two issues. He expressed that the learning experience of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system and other best practices in cities of nearby countries like India, China, Thailand and Indonesia would be useful, and Nepal can learn from the successful practices and experiences from those cities, he stressed. There is lot to do for SUT in Kathmandu valley but main difficulty in doing so is to find the starting point for improving transportation system, he said.

He also informed that the Ministry of Finance has agreed to release frozen fund raised from pollution tax to restore urban air quality. He emphasized on the need of synergetic and coordinated efforts among government bodies, civil society, and private sector in their respective capabilities to improve the



air quality and sustainable urban transport system in Nepal. He notified that the ministry has formed a task force to review Environment Protection Rule and is in the plan to renew Environment Protection Act. The program would bring forward concrete recommendations for the improvement of air quality and implementation of sustainable transport system, he concluded.

**Mr. Ganesh Shah, Former Minister, Ministry of Environment, Science and Technology**

He presented an overview of the increasing urbanization and transport challenges over last 20 years all over Nepal. He explained the lack of proper transport infrastructure, poor maintenance of existing infrastructures, behavior of passengers and drivers and the tendency of transport entrepreneurs to strike in petty matters as the major issues to tackle for the betterment of and to proceed towards sustainable urban transport system. He also stressed on the need to stop misuse of green stickers, enforcement of polluters pay principle and proper utilization of fund collected through pollution tax in working towards sustainable urban transport system.

**2.3. Technical Session**

The technical session covered six presentations on a wide range of topics that included CANN's strategy on sustainable transport system; best practices on SUT from Asia and around the world; present programs and situation of urban transport in Kathmandu valley; and the lessons learned by FK participants. Below are the highlights of the presentations in the technical session:

**Presentation I:**

**CANN's Strategy on SUT and Necessitate to Improve Urban Transport In Kathmandu Valley-** Anjila Manandhar, Network Coordinator, CANN

Ms. Manandhar's presentation was focused on CANN's activities in Nepal. She presented the existing scenario of urban transport and air quality situation in Kathmandu valley, research work conducted by CANN and CEN over a past couple of years and CANN's working strategy for the year 2011-2013. She concluded her presentation with the recommendation that, improving public transport system and enhancing non-motorized transport system are key to improve air quality in Nepal.

**Presentation II**

**Elements of SUT and Best Practices on SUT from Asia and the World-** Bhushan Tuladhar, South Asia Regional Technical Advisor, UN-HABITAT



Mr. Tuladhar talked about the concept and elements of SUT and best practices/initiatives from around the world. He also presented challenges and opportunities of sustainable urban transport in Kathmandu valley.

He pointed out that SUT focuses on Environmental Sustainability, Social Equity, Economic Sustainability and Good Governance. He suggested that SUT should incorporate equity, affordability, road safety, greenhouse gas reduction and land use issue. Mr. Tuladhar argued that the transport problem increases with economic growth unlike sanitation, education and other challenges. This is due to something that is fundamentally wrong in the existing transport system, so we therefore need a new model, he said.

Quoting Enrique Penalosa, former Mayor of Bogota, he said that the civilized is the one not with more highways but where children on tricycle is able to move everywhere with ease and safety.

Sharing the best practices on SUT, he gave examples of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in cities like Bogota, Curitiba, Ahmedabad, Jakarta, Quito and Los Angeles. He elaborated on the good examples of Bus Rapid Transport system in Curitiba Brazil and Bogota city of Columbia and how BRT implementation resulted in the decline of auto traffic. In response to the earlier remark by secretary Gyawali that climate change discourse has dominated other environmental agenda in the country and globally, Mr. Tuladhar showed that by implementing SUT system like BRT, Nepal can benefit from revenue generated by Clean Development Mechanism (CDM).

He also highlighted rapid and unplanned urban growth and private vehicles as major challenges to improve the urban transportation in Kathmandu valley. His presentation also reflected that Nepal has a long history of transport planning in Kathmandu starting from 1962. Town planning office was established in 1969, he added. Nepal has a good history of planning and preparing policy but what went wrong is the implementation, he pointed out.

He further explained the opportunity for SUT in Kathmandu valley as it is relatively small in size, its friendly topography for cycling and walking, good practice of public transport being operated by private sector and existing environmental friendly mode of transport among others. He pointed out that planning for people centric transport system not the vehicle centric transport system is a good entry point. He also emphasized that transport system should not be looked as merely the mode of transport rather be looked in a holistic approach.

### **Presentation III**

**Urban Transport in Kathmandu Valley-** Er. Kamal Raj Pande, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Physical Planning and Works

Mr. Kamal Pande's presentation was focused on present scenario of urban mobility in Kathmandu valley, existing transport policies, plans & research and challenges & barriers on improving transport system in Nepal. He re-emphasized that vision of transport system should be people centric not vehicle centric. He

discussed about the ongoing Kathmandu Sustainable Urban Transport (KSUT) project funded by ADB and GEF. The short-term vision of the project is to promote of public transport, pedestrianisation, improved traffic management, air quality and transport equity, and long-term vision of possible establishing Light Rail Transit System. He also described the pilot electric bus routes in two corridors of Kathmandu valley under KSUT project and announced that cycle lane would be built on 10-lane ring road to be constructed with aid from Chinese government.

He emphasized on coordination among stakeholders, awareness, equitable sharing of the road infrastructure, enforcement of standards, need for sustainable finance and the importance of embedding environmentally sustainable transport in other plans and policies.

**Q&A:** Participants of the program raised the concern on why the system is not functioning despite having a number of good plans and policies. Mr. Jagat Man Shrestha, Spokesperson of Metropolitan Traffic Police Division remarked coordination among line agencies, political will and commitment are the key concerns to manage transport system in Kathmandu. He further added that reward schemes for cycle users could be good example to discourage private vehicle usage.

Questions were raised on where the money raised from pollution tax and vehicle registration and renew tax going. In reply to these concerns, Mr. Bhushan Tuladhar, also a Climate Change Council member chaired by Prime Minister of Nepal, briefed about the recent decision by the council meeting to utilize the fund for the promotion of sustainable urban transport system in Nepal.

#### **Presentation IV**

##### **Complete Street, Traffic Safety and the Highway Noise- Mr. Laxman KC**

Mr. KC shared the concept of complete streets and his experience working in the transport system in United States of America as a researcher. Giving example of Sweden, he said that Nepal government should have vision to bring the road accidents to zero. He emphasized on the need on using information technology and intelligent transport system for transport management, detecting road accident, real time speed measurement, parking and reducing highway noise. He recommended preparing a master plan for complete street approach in Kathmandu valley to uphold the transport management.

#### **Presentation V**

##### **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system: Learning from TransJakarta- Prashanta Khanal, Clean Air Network Nepal/Clean Energy Nepal**

Mr. Prashanta presented on BRT system and its features, benefits and challenges. He mentioned that “BRT system is not just bus with dedicated lanes; it has better services and performances, excellent customer services, clean vehicle technologies, real time information displays and comfortable, clean bus



shelters to name some". He shared his learning experience from TransJakarta (BRT system in Jakarta) and its features, success story and challenges. He also talked about the BRT system in Ahmedabad, Guangzhou and Quito, and its contribution for sustainable urban transportation. He highlighted the land use and environmental benefits of BRT system. He emphasized to opt BRT system in developing cities like Kathmandu, as BRT system is more affordable and flexible; performs better and provides better service comparable to rail-based system in relatively lower price.

### Presentation VI

**Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) Strategy in Philippines-** Amita Thapa Magar, Clean Air Network Nepal/Clean Energy Nepal

She shared the components and frameworks of EST strategy in Philippines and its approaches and processes in her presentation. "It is important to develop Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) strategy and the component of EST should be reflected in comprehensive development plan, initiatives and projects of the country", she emphasized. She also informed that formulation of EST strategy in Nepal has been initiated.

### **2.4. Panel Discussion**

The technical session was followed by panel discussion. Following were the panelists: Er. Kamal Pande- Joint Secretary, MoPPW; Mr. Jagat Man Shrestha- spokesperson, Metropolitan Traffic Police Division; Mr. Devendra Dongol- Kathmandu Metropolitan City, Dr. Chandra Shrestha- Nepal Engineering College; Mr. Bijaya Man Sherchan- Nepal Electric Vehicle Industries and Mr. Bijaya Bahadur Suwal- Federation of Nepalese Transport Entrepreneurs.

The panel discussion was chaired by Mr. Krishna Gyawali, Secretary, MoEnv, and facilitated by Mr. Bhushan Tuladhar. The panelist first expressed their views on sustainable urban transportation which was followed by open discussion.

**Mr. Bijay Bahadur Suwal** discussed about the necessity of engaging transport entrepreneurs in formulating, planning and implementing policies and plans pertaining to transport system. For the improvement of transport system, he suggested, Government of Nepal should establish Ministry of Transport or at least a high-level transport council, as existing Ministry of Labor and Transport could not address the concerns of transport management.

**Mr. Devendra Dongol** discussed about the initiative taken by Kathmandu Metropolitan City on SUT. He talked about the plan of KMC, making the heritage site of Hanuman Dhoka to Thamel, a vehicle restricted zone and installing solar powered street lights as part of the integrated tourism promotion plan. He also shared the KMC's plan of urban renovation/redevelopment project for the safety of vulnerable urban core areas in Kathmandu.

**Mr. Bijay Man Sherchan** expressed his optimistic view about the role of KSUT project in promoting electric vehicles in Kathmandu. He also shared that Nepal has technical know-how for electric vehicle promotion and use. He stressed on the need for re-strengthening of now dysfunctional Electric Vehicle Association of Nepal (EVAN). Mr. Serchan said that the issue of battery disposal of Safa Tempos often raised by some critics is not a problem as all the batteries are collected and sent to India for recycling.

**Er. Kamal Raj Pande** lobbied for stepwise transport system development in Kathmandu. The first step is the improvement of existing infrastructure and system; the next step would be to make dedicated lanes for motor vehicles, bicycle lanes and pedestrianisation facility. After these measures are adopted Kathmandu can opt for Bus Rapid Transport system. He emphasized that government should engage with academia and research institutions for applying BRT system in Nepal as Metro Rail System is not affordable in the present context. "Reintroduction and expansion of trolley bus system is the area Kathmandu should work on", he added. He also shared his views regarding the working method of developing infrastructure by government and operation of public transport by private sector.

**Dr. Chandra Shrestha** argued for the diagnosis of why past plans did not work and to move ahead with reestablishing and expanding trolley bus system in Kathmandu. He also talked about the application of decentralization process for reducing population inflow in Kathmandu valley, relocating major trip generating points such as schools and hospitals from urban core areas to peri-urban areas.

**Mr. Jagat Man Shrestha** argued that the traffic problem in Kathmandu is manmade and not because of over population or the number of vehicles. Road encroachments, behavior of drivers, policy discrepancies (inadequate penalty for traffic rule violators etc.) among others are the main issues for traffic management in the valley, he said. He stressed on the 3E approach: Engineering, Education and Enforcement as the tool for yielding good result for transport management. He also raised the concern of inadequate parking spaces in high-rise buildings. He lobbied for formulating a legally powerful body to manage traffic in Kathmandu, as the roles and responsibility given to traffic police are inadequate.

### **Open Discussion**

After the panelists expressed their views, the floor was open for fishbowl session with the panelist. Participants raised questions and shared their insights.

Mr. Ramesh Prasad Dahal from Department of Transport Management shared that fragmentation of responsibilities among different agencies, absence of coordination and lack of government investment in public transport are the main factors for the mismanagement of transport system in the country. For this, he argued, establishment of Ministry of Transport to look at the transport sector solely would be the starting point for the solution.



Mr. Krishna Kunwar, Journalist at Ujjyalo FM who follows transport issues pointed out 3C (Convince, Corrupt and Confuse) policy of government agencies and blame game among them should be scrapped at first to make environment for improving the transport system.

Mr. Jeevnath Dhital from Nepal Economic Concern Society pointed to the red-tape as a hurdle for working on transport improvement suggested to address red-tape for increasing effectiveness in providing service to general public. He suggested strengthening public transport to reduce the usage of private vehicles. He also criticized the direction of parliamentary committee to remove vehicles older than 20 years that is to be done without checking the vehicular emission and conditions.

Mr. Anil Marsani asked if there has been any traffic impact assessment for BRT system as most of the experts were lobbying for it. Other participants also stressed the need for children, elderly and disabled friendly transport facilities. A few pointed out the need for behavior change as a starting point for the improvement of transport system in Nepal.

Mr. Manjeet Dhakal from Clean Energy Nepal urged all the stakeholders to coordinate and commit to improve dire situation of valley transportation.

Mr. Bhushan Tuladhar, the facilitator of the discussion informed participants on revamping Sajha Yatayat with new operation and management bodies. We already have source of funds to procure the buses and the system is a co-operative based bus service, he said. He also assured that the operation of Sajha Yatayat will ease the public transport problems for city dwellers.

The panel members responded to the queries raised by the participants and committed to work in synergy towards the improvement of existing transport system and implementing sustainable transport system in the long run.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Mr. Krishna Gyawali, chair of the panel discussion ended the discussion with his concluding remarks. He talked about the importance of focusing on overall national transport issues not only that of Kathmandu valley. Financing for implementation of sustainable transport system is not a big problem but effective mobilization is, he said. He also stressed on the application of indigenous technology and expertise for working towards sustainable transport system. He further added that there is individual capacity but transforming it into collective performance and institutionalization is the concern.

### **2.5. Vote of Thanks**

Prof. Rejina Maskey on behalf of CANN member delivered the vote of thanks and distributed Tokens of Appreciation to the presenters and panelists.

### 3. Conclusion

The program was successful in bringing around 55 stakeholders from different government agencies, non-governmental organizations, private sectors, transport entrepreneurs/associations, researchers/practitioners, media, academia and research institutions to same consortium for discussion on urban transport issues in Kathmandu valley and paving a consolidated block directing ahead for SUT.

The program helped to sensitize on SUT issues, inform best practices around the world and promote interaction among wider stakeholders. Because of the program and the active interaction, there was an enhanced understanding of the approaches of sustainable transport system and certain gaps been identified for the effective implementation of SUT. Among the issues that came to the forefront were the need of continued dialogue among the stakeholders, coordination and the initiation of small-scale interventions to leap forward to large-scale implementation.

Most participants shared that their understanding on issues/approaches of SUT, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system and its benefits is increased, as a result of participating in the program. They also expressed their individual and institutional commitment to work on this particular sector for improving urban transport in Nepal.

## Annexes

### Annex A List of Participants

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### Annex B Program Agenda

	Agenda	Resource Person	Remarks
9:00-9:15	<b>Registration &amp; Tea</b>		
9:15-9:35	<b>Opening/Keynote speech</b>	Mr. Tulasi Prasad Sitoula, Secretary, Ministry of Physical Planning and Works (MoPPW)  Mr. Krishna Gyawali, Secretary, Ministry of Environment (MoEnv)	
9:35-9:55	<b>Introduction to the program, CANN strategy on SUT, necessitate to improve urban transport in Kathmandu valley</b>	Ms. Anjila Manandhar- CEN/CANN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Objective and outline of program</li> <li>- Existing scenario of transportation, air pollution and GHGs emission in Kathmandu valley</li> <li>- Needs for improving urban transport in the valley.</li> <li>- Brief Introduction of CANN, its strategy and</li> </ul>

			activities/achievements
10:00-10:20	<b>Elements of SUT and Best Practices on SUT from Asia and around the world</b>	Mr. Bhushan Tuladhar, Regional Technical Advisor, South Asia- UN-HABITAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Concept or elements of sustainable urban transportation</li> <li>- Urban Transport issues in Kathmandu Valley</li> <li>- Best practices in Asia and from around the world and SUT initiatives relevant to Kathmandu valley</li> <li>- Way forward</li> </ul>
10:25-10:45	<b>Urban Transportation in Kathmandu Valley</b>	Er. Kamal Raj Pande, Joint Secretary, MoPPW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Existing scenario of transportation infrastructures and services</li> <li>- Past, present and planned programmes/projects</li> <li>- Transport management system; Policies, regulations and strategies in transport sector</li> <li>- Challenges and barriers on improving transport system</li> <li>- Kathmandu Sustainable Urban Transport Project and National Transport Policy</li> </ul>
10:50-11:00	<b>Complete Street, Traffic Safety &amp; Highway noise</b>	Laxman KC	Concept of complete street, traffic safety improvement
11:05-11:25	<b>Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in Jakarta “TransJakarta”: Learning for Kathmandu</b>	Mr. Prashanta Khanal-CEN/CANN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is BRT? Benefits of BRT</li> <li>- History/features of BRT system in Jakarta and success story</li> <li>- Socio-economic and environmental benefits</li> <li>- Management and Operating system</li> <li>- Challenges and barriers</li> <li>- Other BRTs around Asia</li> </ul>
11:30-11:45	<b>Environmentally Sustainable Transport Strategy in Philippines</b>	Ms. Amita Thapa Magar-CEN/CANN	Briefly highlight the features of EST strategy in Philippines and the necessitate of EST strategy in Nepal
11:45	<b>Tea Break</b>		
11:50-12:50	<b>Panel discussion/Fishbowl session</b>	Facilitated by Mr. Bhusan Tuladhar <b>5/6 panelists</b>	<p>Panelist discussion will be followed by fishbowl session with panelists.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MoPPW will express their views, activities, plans</li> </ul>

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Er. Kamal Raj Pande- MoPPW</li> <li>2. Mr. Ganesh Raj Rai- Metropolitan Traffic Police Division (MTPD)</li> <li>3. Mr. Devendra Dangol- Kathmandu Metropolitan City (KMC)</li> <li>4. Dr. Chandra Shrestha, MICE, CEng. - Nepal Transportation and Development Research Center (NTDRC)- Nepal Engineering College</li> <li>5. Mr. Bijya Man Sherchan- Electric vehicle expert/EVAN</li> <li>6. Nepal Yatayat Beawashahi Rastriya Mahasangha</li> </ol>	<p>and challenges in improving urban transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MTPD will highlight the road safety and traffic management issues in Kathmandu valley, recent activities/programs, challenges and planned programs for road safety and traffic management</li> <li>- KMC will present their activities, plans and challenges</li> <li>- NTRDC will present their research activities and outputs, recommendations for improving urban transportation.</li> <li>- EVAN will share the status of EVs in Nepal, its benefits/importance to SUT, challenges and policy recommendations to promote EVs</li> <li>- Nepal Yatayat Beawashahi Rastriya Mahasangha briefly highlight the existing scenario of public transport, operation and management system in the valley and their challenges</li> </ul>
12:50- 12:55	<b>Conclusion, closing remarks and way forward</b>		
13:00	<b>Lunch</b>		



Annex C Photos of the Program



Panel Discussion



Keynote Speech by Mr. Krishna Gyawali,  
Secretary, Ministry of Environment



Mr. Bhusan Tuladhar, UN-HABITAT giving presentation



Ms. Anjila Manandhar, CANN giving presentation



Er. Kamal Raj Pande, Joint Secretary, MoPPW delivering  
presentation



Participants of the Forum