

Formulation of a National Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) Strategy for the Philippines

National Stakeholders Conference
Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila, Ortigas Center
April 22, 2009

Post Conference Report

The National Stakeholders Conference for the Formulation of the National EST Strategy was conducted on April 22, 2009 at the Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila, Ortigas Center. The Opening Remarks were delivered by the Hon. Anneli R. Lontoc, DOTC Undersecretary for Road Transport. In her speech, she reiterated DOTC's commitment to EST, recognizing transport's critical role in nation-building including ensuring the quality of life of Filipinos. She cited the potential and current contributions of the transport sector in curbing the detrimental impacts of climate change, and stressed the need for a common vision to realize sustainable transport in the Philippines. She also mentioned the need to revisit policies and mandates that govern the transport sector, recognizing that a new paradigm emphasizing EST must be put in place. Finally, Usec. Lontoc called on the stakeholders to continue in their active participate in the consultations to come up with the Final Draft of the National EST Strategy.

Two presentations followed, the first by Dr. Ricardo G. Sigua, Professor at the UP College of Engineering and part of the NCTS Study Team, and the second by Dr. Jose Regin F. Regidor, Director of NCTS. Dr. Sigua presented on the definitions of EST, particularly the conventional definition formulated by OECD. He explained that while these formal definitions are existing and often stressed sustainability, these are not automatically applicable to developing countries like the Philippines. He discussed the concept of survival vs. sustainability as a very real struggle for developing countries and presented the position of the Philippines with respect to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the Human Development Index (HDI) is concerned.

Dr. Regidor presented the draft strategies from the context of the pillars of sustainable development: environment, economy and society, as well as the provisions of AO 254 that mandates the DOTC to formulate the National EST Strategy. The draft strategies were linked with descriptors – visions representing aspirations for the future (i.e., what we want to achieve). The DOTC's Green Transport Strategy was also presented along with the overall strategy that stressed the need for capability building, legal instruments, infrastructure, mobility management, alliances, technology and empowerment to be able to realize sustainable transport in the Philippines. Dr. Regidor also presented the proposed indicators for the draft strategies and showed examples of current efforts in mainstreaming EST, particularly at DOTC.

Participants were given the chance to comment on the draft strategies during the Open Forum that followed the presentations. Among the important comments/recommendations made were on the need to identify opportunities and barriers for implementing EST; the need for detailed timelines and responsible agencies corresponding to each strategy; and the need to come up with a reward system for local government units already implementing EST, much like the Galing Pook Award. The representative from NEDA

articulated the need for DOTC to institutionalize EST as an integral part of its inputs for the Medium Term Development Plan that is currently being formulated, in part as a preparatory activity for the next administration. CAI-Asia emphasized that given the various initiatives currently undertaken by national and local government agencies, there is a need to have a paradigm shift – where priority is given to planning transport for people and not for vehicles.

The concluding remarks were given by Dr. Regidor in lieu of the Hon. Teresita S. Castillo, DENR Undersecretary for Special Concerns, who had to attend to urgent matters for her Department due to parallel Earth Day activities. In the remarks, Dr. Regidor thanked the participants for their inputs and encouraged them to continue in contributing to the drafting of the EST strategy, while mentioning the next round of consultations to be undertaken in key cities in the Philippines.

Attachments to this brief report include:

- Presentation slides on Defining EST for the Philippines
- Presentation slides on EST Strategies per thematic area
- Presentation slides on EST Indicators per thematic area
- List of Participants