

UN Environment Remarks: Benin Workshop - June 2017

- Road transport contributes a significant amount of small particles, especially in cities where transport is estimated to contribute more than 50 % of these particles.
- These small particles are dangerous when we breathe them, and are a leading cause of various diseases including heart attack and stroke, cancer, aggravated asthma and premature death.
- The World Health Organization estimated in 2012 that 7 million people die annually due to air pollution, with half of this number – 3.7 million people - attributed to these small particles.
- In Africa, an estimated 176,000 deaths per year (10% of premature deaths) are linked to these small particles.
- Another study prepared for the OECD Development Centre in 2016 estimated the economic cost of premature deaths from ambient particulate matter pollution at US\$ 215 billion in Africa alone in 2013.
- The same study estimated that roughly 2,300 premature deaths in Benin in 2013 were from these small particles, with the economic costs of these premature deaths at USD 522 million.
- This is still low when compared say to the findings of Nigeria that placed premature deaths from outdoor air pollution at 40,000 people and the economic cost at US\$ 42 billion. This just goes to show us that the time to act to reduce air pollution is now.
- The main causes of transport related emissions in many African countries, including Benin, is the use of high sulphur fuels and an aging vehicle fleet that lacks the state of art emission reduction technologies.
- In the world, today, we have slightly over 1 billion vehicles; with the vehicle population expected to hit 2.5 billion by 2050. The bulk of this vehicle increase will come from developing countries.
- No significant air pollution reduction strategy can work without reducing the sulphur content in the fuel to near-zero levels.
- At a high level sub-regional meeting that was held in Nigeria in December last year, Benin and the participating countries including Togo, Nigeria, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire committed to import low sulphur diesel – at 50 parts per million from July 2017 and upgrade refineries by 2020.
- I'm happy to inform you that Nigeria amended and adopted low sulphur fuel standards in March this year at 50 ppm diesel and 150 ppm petrol. These standards were also published in the local newspapers.
- Ghana also adopted low sulphur fuels - 50 ppm diesel and petrol in April and is expected to implement them in July. This month, Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe also are implementing 50 ppm diesel and petrol standards and will join the 5 East African countries, Morocco and Mauritius.
- The reason for this workshop is to follow through this commitment by Benin.
- It is our desire that Africa and indeed the world move to the cleanest possible fuels and vehicles. For conventional fuels, a 10 ppm fuel is ideal especially when combined with clean vehicle technologies (even Euro 6/VI).
- We will also be following a sub-regional approach, and will be partnering with the ECOWAS Commission to develop harmonised low sulphur fuel and cleaner vehicle roadmap for the region.
- I look forward to the outcomes of this workshop. **Thank you**