Global Green Freight leaders pledge to reduce emissions from goods transport at COP21

Paris, December 3, 2015: Countries and multinational companies published an open letter to the citizens of the world today, highlighting their commitment to green freight and outlining the steps they were going take to reduce emissions from the global freight sector.

The letter from policy makers, business leaders and representatives of civil society and intergovernmental organizations broadly committed to a vision of Green Freight, saying, “we believe it is essential that collective and creative strategies be developed that accelerate emissions reductions in key sectors, such as freight and logistics. Our economies depend on freight operations to deliver the goods, materials and food that sustain our societies. However, freight activity generates greenhouse gases, short-lived climate pollutants such as black carbon, and other air pollutants, which contribute to climate change and negatively affect public health.”

The freight sector is rapidly growing and will soon overtake passenger transport. Structural change, re-thinking infrastructure and moving to alternative forms of fuels are some of the actions necessary to de-carbonize the sector, delegates were told at a meeting on transport as part of the Lima Paris Action Agenda at COP21.

The freight transport sector is a substantial and rapidly growing source of emissions of both CO2 and air pollutants such as black carbon and particulate matter. It is time to put these commitments into action, locally and across borders. Greening freight transport is an important initiative of the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC), which is working to reduce freight emissions through its Green Freight Action Plan. Launched just over a year ago at the September 2014 UN Climate Summit, it has the support from 50 organizations to lead the transition of the global freight sector into a more efficient and sustainable one.

Support for Green Freight is growing, and Ahmed Aboutaleb, Mayor of Rotterdam, outlined the steps his city is taking to Green Freight transport moving in and out of the city.

“Rotterdam city owns 70% of the port and we have a strategy and philosophy work toward a green port. We are providing electric hook ups to ships to use when they are docked so they can turn off their engines, and we are moving barges and other vessels to natural gas,” Mr Aboutaleb said. We are also providing financial incentives for eco-friendly ships coming into our ports. Every percentage of pollution that we don’t emit is one that counts.”
Aside from the growing number of governments and organizations that have committed to implement the Action Plan, strong progress is seen in the ongoing green freight activities at the national level in Bangladesh, Brazil, Mexico and Vietnam. The Global Logistics Emissions Council (GLEC) released their draft framework for harmonized carbon accounting across all freight modes, which will help companies in making realistic and obtainable greenhouse gas reduction targets and support their efforts towards freight efficiency to reduce both emissions and costs.

Maria Amparo Martinez Arroyo, General Director of Mexico’s National Institute of Ecology and Climate Change, said that Mexico’s climate change law prioritizes efforts with the highest mitigation potential with the lowest cost and pointed to Green Freight as a way to reduce emissions of black carbon.

Tomorrow, at the Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (SLCP) Focus Day at COP21, the Action Plan’s official website (http://www.globalgreenfreight.org/) will be launched by the CCAC. This website will serve as a portal and information resource for organizations interested in developing or enhancing a green freight program. It will also serve as a clearing house of information for private sector and civil society stakeholders who are looking to engage in and support global Green Freight efforts and programs.

The Action Plan will serve as a roadmap to ramp up Green Freight activities during the next year. New activities include:

- Four regional workshops to be held next year in Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa to explore the status and opportunities for harmonization of regional green freight programs.
- Further development of a methodology to account for black carbon and CO2
- Conducting a quantitative assessment of a green, multimodal, international supply chain
- Essential technology verification programs will be developed to ensure confidence that efficiency technologies will work for their applications.

New activities are being developed all the time and new partners are taking the opportunity to highlight their ongoing work, updates will be reported on periodically throughout the year.

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