Taking Stock of the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV) in Asia

Notes from the 10th Global Partners Meeting of the PCFV

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Regarded as one of the most successful multi-stakeholder collaborations for sustainable transport to date, the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV) continues to provide impetus for countries to attain low-carbon transport and thus improve air quality.

The global drive toward cleaner fuels and more efficient vehicles continues to be the central theme of the PCFV, as demonstrated by key players of the partnership present at the 10th Global Partners Meeting, held May 13–14, 2014, at the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) office in Paris. The members focused their efforts on two specific campaigns: global lead phase-out and the reduction of sulfur levels in diesel fuel. The UNEP serves as the Secretariat for PCFV. In turn, Clean Air Asia serves as the strategic partner of UNEP for the implementation roll-out of the campaign in the Asia region.

Global Lead Phase-Out Campaign

More than 10 years ago, a multi-stakeholder initiative was established with a singular objective: the global phasing out of lead in gasoline. The campaign was created to address the adverse health impacts of lead. The process of dialogues and information-sharing engaged a broad range of sectors led by governments and supported by development agencies, businesses, and civil society. This diverse group of stakeholders would later become officially known as the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV).

Through the efforts of the PCFV, the vast majority of countries worldwide have acceded to the campaign to phase-out lead in gasoline. The three remaining countries that have yet to ban lead in gasoline are Afghanistan, Myanmar, and North Korea. Intensified efforts are underway in a bid to reach out to these countries. Particularly, discussions are expected to begin in Myanmar this year around...
the topic of total lead phase-out, the process of which is being supported by both UNEP (as PCFV Secretariat) and the Asian Clean Fuels Association.

**Low-Sulfur Diesel Fuel Campaign**

Diesel fuel is now a confirmed carcinogenic. In a report released in April 2014, the World Health Organization also confirmed that outdoor air pollution causes 7 million premature deaths worldwide. These serious impacts on health and well-being are a direct effect of emissions from motor vehicles, which continue to grow rapidly, especially in Asia.

At the re-launch of the PCFV alliance in October 2012, the members unanimously decided to focus their efforts in facilitating the introduction of 50-parts per million (ppm; or lower) sulfur diesel fuel in national policies. The campaign for low-sulfur diesel fuels was created to enable support for the development and implementation of national policies and bolster regional cooperation where possible. Low-sulfur fuel is needed in order to optimize the performance of pollution control devices in motor vehicles, especially in the reduction of particulate matter, which from a health standpoint is crucial. In addition, tightening standards for diesel fuel also help reduce carbon dioxide and black carbon emissions.

Low-sulfur fuel also necessitates the adoption of stricter vehicle emissions standards, as in the case of China (see Figure 1). The PCFV, through Clean Air Asia, cooperates with the Vehicle Emissions Control Center of the Ministry of Environment Protection on policy dialogues around the national roadmap for low-sulfur fuels, as outlined by China’s State Council in its Action Plan for Air Pollution Prevention and Control. A product of this cooperation is a publication on the *Handbook on Low Sulfur Fuels in China*, which is used to facilitate discussions among stakeholders, such as the International Workshop on Motor Vehicle Fuel Desulfurization held last December 2013 in Beijing. China currently implements 50-ppm sulfur levels (Euro 4-equivalent) for both gasoline and diesel fuels nationwide. Key cities such as Beijing and Shanghai are early adopters moving to 10-ppm (Euro 5-equivalent) diesel fuels by 2014 to be followed by China 5 vehicle emission standards enforced by 2015. Nationwide implementation of 10-ppm gasoline and diesel sulfur levels is expected to be rolled out by 2017.

The policy pathway for sulfur in diesel fuel and emission standards for light-duty vehicles in most countries in Asia clearly shows a gradual progression toward Euro 4 or Euro 5-equivalent standards. After China, the second largest motor vehicle fleet in Asia is found in the Association of
Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) Region. Discussions are underway on the possible adoption of harmonized standards for the ASEAN Region on both fuel quality and vehicle emissions standards. Thailand already enforced Euro 4-equivalent standards in 2012, and the other larger countries in the ASEAN Region are posed to move to Euro 4-equivalent fuels with clear timelines, namely Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam.

An informal platform to provide ASEAN governments an opportunity to discuss the possibility of a regional policy roadmap was inaugurated in November 2013 in Singapore. The 1st Clean Fuels and Vehicles Forum in the ASEAN Region enabled policy-makers to identify specific action points for bringing the discussions of moving to low-sulfur fuels and higher vehicle emission standards into the official working group meetings of the ASEAN.

The Way Forward
In the South Asia region, countries are starting to develop national roadmaps to achieve cleaner fuels and vehicles. Through the support of the PCFV, the process for national roadmaps for Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have been initiated and expected to be adopted by governments by end of 2014.

Heavy-duty vehicles may be small in the total vehicle population in Asia, but diesel trucks are a major source of particulate matter and black carbon emissions. Through the collaboration between the PCFV and the new government-led initiative called Climate and Clean Air Coalition, the policy process for greening the freight sector is also being supported.

The aging population of Asia’s motor vehicle fleet is another area that requires attention. The introduction of stricter standards for new vehicles must be complemented by an intensified inspection and maintenance program for polluting in-use vehicles, especially for light-duty vehicles.

The motorization rate in Asia is expected to continue to rise. It is thus imperative that the PCFV also continue to work with national governments to put fuel policy and vehicle emissions standards in place to mitigate the impacts of transport to health and environment.