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Fuel economy can be improved by 50% by 2050

05/08/2009 13:05



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"Fuel economy can be improved by 50% by 2050" was a key message at the summit of global automotive engineering association, FISITA. However based on recent progress, Green-Car-Guide would hope that the industry could go further.

Senior executives from global vehicle manufacturers, suppliers and energy companies joined with experts from academia, scientific bodies, government and NGOs to discuss the most effective ways to achieve significant CO2 reduction in road transportation, in advance of December's United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP15) in Copenhagen.

The discussions focussed on the potential gains to be made in the areas of Fuels and Fuel Economy, Electrification and Traffic Management, each of which were examined through a series of presentations and workshop sessions.



In his opening remarks, FISITA President, Christoph Huss, called on engineers to get more directly involved in the debate around future energy, transport and environmental policy. "As engineers, we have the abilities – and also a special responsibility – to help clarify the technologies and solutions that politicians can draw on when they make decisions about our energy and mobility futures. That is our motivation behind organising this first ever FISITA World Automotive Summit".

Dr. Lew Fulton of the International Energy Agency gave the first presentation, in which he used World Energy Outlook projections to predict overall CO2 emissions in 2050 and highlighted the importance of reducing CO2 from transport in particular, arguing that greater fuel efficiency is the best way of doing so: "If we don't do anything about CO2 in transport, even with very deep reductions and decarbonisations in the other sectors, we can pretty much only level out reduction. About the smartest thing we can do to deal with this problem is to become more fuel efficient. Fuel economy improvement for all transport modes can be made more efficient than it is today in the order of 50%".

Dr. Fulton was followed by Dr. Lee Schipper, Senior Research Engineer at the Precourt Institute of Energy Efficiency at Stanford University, who stressed the range of the problem of sustainable mobility and highlighted the need to deal with both carbon and traffic safety. He stated: "Whatever the past for the car was, it will not and cannot be the same in the future. There are very great air pollution problems whose solutions in many cases help to solve the fuel and CO2 problem. In the case of the mature countries, we need to fix transport and fuels, but in the case of the countries that are still growing, which is most of the world, the biggest problem is the transport sector. If the transport sector gets fixed, that has an enormous downward impact on both fuel and CO2."

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The agenda then moved on to Electrification, with presentations from Dr. Alan Lloyd, President of the International Council on Clean Transportation and former Secretary of the California Environmental Protection Agency; and Prof. Ouyang Mingqiao, Director of China's State Key Laboratory of Automotive Safety and Energy, based within Tsinghua University.

Dr. Lloyd drew upon the experience of California's Zero Emissions Vehicle Mandate in the 1990s, telling participants that "Electric drive is capable of addressing urgent climate change, zero-emissions and energy security. Electric drive is feasible, but the challenges should not be underestimated. Hybridisation has however been a success. A long-term view will be necessary and policies will need to be put in place."

Prof. Ouyang, a top advisor to the Chinese government on vehicle technology, went on to present China's twin-track strategy to a) Optimise existing vehicle powertrains whilst b) developing new energy vehicles and EVs in particular.

Mr. Edgar Thielmann, Head of the Galileo Project from the European Commission and Russ Shields, Chair of Ygomi LLC, then led the presentations on Traffic Management, focussing on how ITS and vehicle communications can help lower CO2.

Mr. Thielmann told the Summit that, in addition to working on the efficiency of vehicles and the carbon intensity of the energy used to power them, there were significant CO2 reductions to be achieved from better transport demand / mode choice, improved traffic flow and changes in driver behaviour.

Most measures are still in the early stages of development, but some estimates predict up to 25% reduction if range of measures are implemented in a long-term concerted programme.

Russell Shields of Ygomi LLC then talked about the role of vehicle communications in CO2 reduction, specifically in electric vehicles. "Electric vehicles will happen, and will evolve reasonably rapidly during the course of the next decade. We know the issues that are being discussed – driving-range, battery cost, recharging etc. Vehicle communications is one of the key involvements in this area."

He explained how vehicle communications could be key to customer acceptance of EVs by providing data to help with range determination, remote battery and range monitoring, charging station location, battery swap station location, economical charge management and more. He went on to describe how communications can help drive greater fuel efficiency in all vehicles, by offering the opportunity to base fuel usage / emissions regulations on real-world data rather than laboratory tests.

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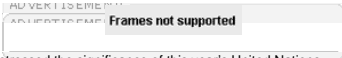
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Summing up a highly successful first World Automotive Summit, FISITA President, Christoph Huss said "Our discussions today have convinced me that we need to have an integrated approach which includes the development of vehicle technology, the supply of alternative fuels and a more efficient use of vehicles. In the end, this is the only way we can have CO2 mitigation efforts which are compatible with economic growth."

"All the stakeholders – automotive industry, fuel providers, energy companies, should identify their individual responsibilities and make their best efforts to carry them out, in a framework of mutual cooperation. Through events like this, FISITA can play a much needed role in bringing the parties together to identify our shared priorities and agree a way forward."



He stressed the significance of this year's United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP15), and said that FISITA would take this opportunity to send a message on behalf of the engineering profession, about the cooperative approach needed to meet the challenges of CO2 reduction from road transportation, and the support and clear framework required from governments in order for engineers to be successful in meeting this critical challenge.

Founded in Paris in 1948, FISITA (Fédération Internationale des Sociétés d'Ingenieurs des Techniques de l'Automobile) is the world body for automotive engineering.

FISITA represents 165,000 automotive engineers belonging to the national automotive engineering societies of 38 countries.

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