

Introduction

As part of its Regional Technical Assistance project to reduce motor vehicle air pollution, Asian Development Bank (ADB) organized a workshop on clean fuels in New Delhi, India on 2–4 May 2001. The *Cleaner Fuels Policy Guidelines* summarize the most important policy conclusions from the workshop regarding the critical role of fuels in determining vehicle emissions. The guidelines focus on (i) improvements that should be made to conventional fuels to reduce their negative impacts and (ii) the increasingly important role that can be played by alternative fuels.

Motor vehicles emit large quantities of carbon monoxide (CO), hydrocarbons (HC), nitrogen oxides (NO_x), and such toxic substances as fine particles and lead. Each of these, along with secondary by-products such as ozone, can cause serious health and environment problems. Growing vehicle populations and high vehicle emission rates have led to serious air pollution, and the resulting health problems have become increasingly common phenomena in modern life.¹

Over the course of the past 30 years, pollution control experts around the world have realized that cleaner fuels must be a critical component of any effective clean air strategy. In recent years, this understanding has strengthened and spread to most regions of the world. Fuel quality is now seen as not only necessary to reduce or eliminate certain pollutants directly (e.g., lead), but also as a precondition for the introduction of many important pollution control technologies (e.g., lead and sulfur). Further, one critical advantage of cleaner fuels has emerged—its rapid impact on both new and existing vehicles. For example, tighter new car standards can take ten or more years to be fully effective, whereas lowering lead levels in gasoline reduces lead emissions from all vehicles immediately.