

Statement by the Hon. Michael Lashley, M.P.,
Minister of Transport and Works of Barbados,
to United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
Inland Transport Committee Panel on
“The benefits of internationally harmonized
regulatory governance for inland transport”
Geneva, Switzerland
February 21, 2017

Moderator, Ms. Eva Molnar,

Colleagues Ministers and representatives of Ministries of Transport,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is truly a pleasure for Barbados to be present at this meeting commemorating the 70th anniversary of establishment of the Inland Transport Committee. This is an auspicious achievement for which we offer our warmest congratulations.

The Government of Barbados recognizes the importance of the 58 UN Transport Conventions which are under the purview of the Inland Transport Committee. Barbados is a Contracting Party to a small number of the agreements, including one of the core road safety conventions. We are fully supportive of the desirability of having a substantive international regulatory framework governing

inland transport, especially in the areas of road safety and transport security. It is of critical importance that the policy stipulations and the technical regulations governing any harmonized global regime continue to be formulated and adopted within the multilateral arena.

Barbados sees a strong linkage between the UN Transport Conventions and the international goals of relevance to the transport sector as outlined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Decade for Action for Road Safety. We consider that together these instruments create an enabling environment and set excellent standards for the governance of the inland transport sector at the international, regional and national levels.

In addition, as a small island developing state, Barbados accords highest priority to the consideration of climate variability and the impact of climate change in the need to ensure sustainability and resiliency in addressing requirements related to transport infrastructure, accessibility, mobility, connectivity and the integration of multiple transport modes.

Barbados fully recognizes the link between transportation and climate change, in particular the high consumption of fossil fuel in the transport sector. As a result, despite our limited financial resources and negligible contribution to greenhouse gas emissions on a global scale, Barbados has made ambitious commitments in the context of the international climate change negotiations.

At the core of Barbados' national sustainable development agenda is the pursuit of a pathway to building a green economy which will involve all of the country's key productive sectors, including the transport sector. These measures were recently the subject of a debate in the Parliament of Barbados, where they were endorsed and gained the approval of both chambers.

My Ministry is in the process of reviewing and refining our strategic plans in the areas of road safety, transport services and national infrastructure. One of the areas in which we are hoping to see early results is in the transformation of the domestic transport sector by providing efficient public transport alternatives to the usage of private automobiles. We are also interested in creating an enabling environment for the increased use of electric vehicles. In addition, we are committed to increasing road safety and reducing traffic fatalities and injuries. I take this opportunity to call on the international community to re-commit its efforts to achieving the goals of the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety. We have less than 4 years to the end of the Decade, and the consequences of failure will be counted in lives lost.

Barbados is doing its best to meet the goals and objectives of the Decade's Plan of Action in all the pillars of activity. We have made progress in reducing the number of fatalities. In 2015 we had recorded 21 deaths; in 2016 this was reduced to 8 deaths. Although 2017 has unfortunately started with a vehicular crash which claimed multiple lives, Barbados still has the lowest fatality rate in the Caribbean. We continue to work with private sector and civil society partners to

conduct sensitization programmes in schools; we are strengthening the legislative provisions governing road safety through the introduction of alcohol and drug testing; and we have had a safety assessment carried out on our roads by the International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP).

Barbados' Ministry of Transport has the five strategic goals of ensuring safety, a state of good condition, economic competitiveness, environmental sustainability and organizational excellence. One of our stated objectives is to provide "a sustainable road transport system that serves the economic, social and environmental needs of Barbados". We are intent on pursuing this objective, but we require the collaboration of our partners.

In this regard, I wish to highlight the need for continued and increased interaction within the United Nations system, and between countries, aimed at sharing best practices on transport issues as well as pursuing substantive capacity-building, technical cooperation, infrastructural support and the exchange of technology and innovations.

In closing, I wish to reiterate Barbados' conviction that existing international agreements and instruments create an enabling environment and a regulatory framework for the governance of the inland transport sector at the international, regional and national levels. Our tasks have been set and our duty is clear; it is now for us not to tarry in the achievement of our goals!

Thank you.

