

UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety  
Remarks

83<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Inland Transport Committee  
High Level Policy Segment  
23 February 2021, 11:00

**“Back to a sustainable future: achieving resilient connectivity for post-COVID-19 sustained recovery and economic growth”**

**Opening Remarks**

Thank you, Chair, Mr. Kristof Schockaert,

Dear Executive Secretary of UNECE, dear Olga Algayerova

Dear Yuwei Li,

Distinguished guests,

Dear friends,

I am pleased to join you today for the 83<sup>rd</sup> Inland Transport Committee meeting in my capacity as the Special Envoy for Road Safety.

When preparing for this very important meeting, two figures caught my attention.

The latest figures on traffic fatalities before the pandemic hit, were 1.35 million, with countless families and communities suffering the impacts of injury and pain from death and disabilities due to road accidents.

Since the pandemic hit, in a span of a bit more than a year, 2.45 million deaths have been attributed to COVID-19. Again, countless lives and communities suffered the devastating impacts of the pandemic, not only in terms of fatalities but also of debilitating effects for those who survived. The economic impacts and disruptions, as you will surely discuss here today, are beyond comprehension.

The parallels between the two scourges are obvious.

Yet, here today are Transport Leaders from around the world – more than 80 UN Member States represented, gathering virtually for the annual session of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC). The ITC is the UN platform for inland transport, aiming to find long-term solutions for the sector that will fortify it against such pandemics or other emergencies, by addressing systemic weaknesses.

The Ministerial Resolution you will be endorsing later today is hope for the transport community and beyond, that shows how political will and concerted action will help propel regional and global solutions to counter a common threat and a shared emergency.

Your leadership and political will is an inspiration for all of us.

On Friday, later this week, we will gather for an important discussion together with Member States and key stakeholders. This conversation will be the first of its kind after last year's landmark developments for Road Safety that culminated with the General Assembly Resolution that pronounced the start of the Second Decade of action for Road Safety.

During the ITC Roundtable on Road Safety, we will have an open debate on how we should go about tackling the Road Safety crisis. The pandemic determined the opening gambit for the Second Decade of Action but its effects are, as of yet, not fully clear.

What is clear however, is that if we are going to get it right this time, we will have to use wisely, and in concerted ways, all the tools in our unique toolkit. This starts with the Road Safety Fund and the Global Framework Plan of Action.

The agreements you forge here today will be an inspiration for our discussions at the end of the week, which hopefully will pave the way for longer-term transformations with lasting systemic impacts.

Thank you