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**Co-Chair intervention**

**by**

**Ms. Olga Algayerova**

**Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe**

**at**

**2nd United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference  
Beijing, 14-16 October 2021**

**Thematic session 6: Sustainable transport and sustainable cities  
16 October 2021, 1pm Geneva time (7pm Beijing time)**

(5-7 minutes)

***Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,***

It is my great pleasure to co-chair this thematic session on “sustainable transport and sustainable cities”. The interlinkages between sustainable transport and sustainable cities are an important area of work for UNECE. Therefore I hope that at the outset, you will allow me to make some observations based on our experience.

This Conference is being held at a historical moment for global development: The recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic has created a pivotal role for sustainable transport solutions. These can fundamentally alter how economies function and interact. However, to reach these sustainable outcomes, we need to recognize the contribution of all modes of transport to making our cities more sustainable. No city can survive on one mode alone. A combined public transport, composed of rail, tram, bus, and trucks, needs to coexist in symbiosis with private mobility, including car, bicycles, micro-mobility, and walking.

Transport is one of the major contributors to CO2 emissions. However, sustainable urban transport is not only about environmental protection. It is also about the following factors: accessibility, affordability, efficiency, security and safety.

1. **Accessibility:** Wide public transport coverage in a city, comfortable travel for users, simple ticketing solutions, and safe boarding and use for all citizens are key to making cities more accessible via public transport. Many of these characteristics are identified in our recent publication: Handbook on Sustainable Urban Mobility and Urban Planning, which also highlights links between urban mobility, planning and SDG 11 on cities.
2. **Affordability:** UNECE’s recent Recommendations on Green and Healthy Sustainable Transport highlight the importance of affordability for the user, but also for the public authority funding it.
3. **Efficiency:** Efficient movement of passengers and cargo within and outside cities, and across borders, is fundamental to reduce congestion and transport costs. The UN Conventions on inland transport including the TIR and CMR, as well as their more recent electronic siblings, eTIR and eCMR, provide for increased efficiency at an international level. This remains important for urban transport as well, as it makes the entire journey more effective and limits the time that heavy goods transit through

urban environments.

4. **Security:** This means providing appropriate lighting, secure rest and waiting areas, and support staff to make the transport system more secure for all. These factors are necessary to bring people back to public transport post-pandemic.
5. **Safety.** Every year, 1.35 million people die in road crashes. We know what is needed to improve this situation: Awareness raising and education, political commitment, financing, and strong legal and regulatory frameworks. UNECE is proud to offer such frameworks to member States. Road safety is one of our key activities. The UNECE Inland Transport Committee – ITC for short – hosts several UN Conventions on traffic rules, road signs and signals, vehicle construction regulations, periodic vehicle inspections, driving and rest times, and transport of dangerous goods. These Conventions are open to all countries and they also cover sustainable inland transport and mobility in addition to road safety. Today, 151 countries are contracting parties to at least one of the 59 conventions and agreements serviced by UNECE. In its resolutions on improving road safety, the UN General Assembly has encouraged Member States to consider becoming contracting parties to the UN conventions on road safety and, beyond accession, to apply, implement and promote their provisions or safety regulations.

UNECE also assists member States in building capacity for formulating policies, developing regulatory frameworks, identifying gaps, initiating measures, and implementing the Conventions. We adopted our landmark Recommendations on Enhancing National Road Safety Systems in April 2020. For the first time, this provides a full picture of national road safety systems, and the most comprehensive and fundamental solutions to addressing the current road safety crisis.

6. My sixth and final key factor is the **cross-sectoral nature of sustainable urban transport**. Sustainable urban transport must preserve the environment and citizens' health. To address these interlinkages, the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division, UNECE Environment Division and WHO/Europe jointly administer the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme - THE PEP, for short. By bringing together transport, health and environment policy makers, it promotes exchange of experience and sustainable, healthy and green transport solutions for cities such as cycling and walking. The fifth High-level Ministerial meeting of THE PEP, in May this year, adopted the Vienna Declaration for “building forward better”,

introducing:

- i. the first Cycling Promotion Masterplan;
- ii. Key policy recommendations to make transport greener and healthier; and
- iii. Guidelines on how to make driving styles more eco-friendly, to name a few.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

UNECE will continue to provide Member States with best practices as refined through its UN conventions and agreements, tools and guidelines, support to innovations and new technologies, and technical assistance. We are ready to work closely with member States and all development partners to help achieve sustainable transport and sustainable cities.

Thank you for your attention. I now pass the floor to the moderator.

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