



PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Statement at the Opening Plenary of ITF Summit

by

Ms. Tatiana Molcean

United Nations Under-Secretary-General

Executive Secretary

of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Leipzig, 22 May 2024

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to speak today at the Opening Plenary and to introduce to you all the activities of UNECE in facilitating resilient, inclusive and sustainable transport. Indeed, my organization has a long history of developing legal instruments which form a blueprint of rules, regulations, and practices in this domain – I can proudly say that as of this year, 152 UN Member States are contracting parties to at least one of the 61 UN transport conventions that UNECE hosts. These instruments cover core areas such as road safety, transport of dangerous goods, vehicle regulations, transport infrastructure and border crossing facilitation.

The Covid-19 pandemic heavily impacted the transport sector, exposed the fragility of global supply chains, and highlighted the importance of digitalization. UNECE has developed a new generation of legal instruments supporting the digitalization of transport and border crossing-procedures, such as eTIR and eCMR, which ensure paperless, seamless and contactless border crossing operations. UNECE instruments also play a key role in ensuring safe transportation of hazardous and flammable substances – necessary for example during the pandemic with the increased volume of oxygen being transported to hospitals.

These legal instruments also help address climate change:

- i. They encourage the adoption of innovative, cleaner vehicle technologies;
 - ii. They provide systems for using improved transport infrastructure together with Intelligent Transport Systems, in order to avoid traffic
-

congestion;

- iii. They foster the use of intermodal and multimodal transport.

The landmark global Decarbonization Strategy, recently adopted by the Inland Transport Committee of UNECE, builds on these legal instruments and aims to set a medium- and long-term course towards carbon neutrality by 2050.

As we gather here today, I appeal to everyone to join hands in this endeavour. Only through concerted efforts and collaborative initiatives can we truly achieve a paradigm shift toward sustainable and resilient transport. We at UNECE work tirelessly on this. At UNECE every day is a Sustainable, Resilient and Green Transport Day.

At UNECE we work tirelessly - importantly through partnerships - to improve and update the inland transport legal framework, assist in establishing innovative policy instruments, and support the transition zero-carbon transport. And this work is done through multilateral collaboration, within our Inland Transport Committee which provides a forum for collaboration for governments, but also the private sector and other stakeholders.

On improving the resilience of transport networks, we help member States in the use of digital technologies and dedicated mapping to identify high-risk spots where natural disasters can have the most impact on transport operations. Here, the exchange of best practices and shared capacity building are fundamental to develop optimal solutions and ensure their efficient implementation. For example, the International Transport Infrastructure Observatory (ITIO), an

initiative of UNECE and the Islamic Development Bank, provides a web-based GIS platform for data on transport infrastructure networks and nodes.

UNECE is further working on harmonized provisions for all transport modes on the carriage of batteries during their whole life cycle, and for the use of battery electric vehicles and hydrogen fuel cell vehicles for the transport of dangerous goods.

Building on these capacity development elements, UNECE set up LearnITC, the only UN eLearning platform on sustainable transport and trade connectivity providing all interested stakeholders with multiple courses on sustainable transport. Now with over 700 enrolments from over 90 countries, this multilateral training tool is providing an entry point into our capacity building activities. It is also opening the door to a better understanding of the inland transport regulatory environment.

And finally, a resilient transport system is one where Road Safety is a top priority. Safer transport systems allow people to travel securely, foster connected communities, and minimize economic losses. We advocate for the Safe System Approach, which places people at the centre, contributes to resilient transport systems by considering human fallibility and vulnerability. It emphasizes forgiving system design and operation, reduces risks, and promotes safety for all road users. UNECE is proud to host the secretariat of the UN Road Safety Fund, which since 2018 has funded 44 high-impact projects in low- and middle-income countries that aim to build government capacity and contribute to achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.6: halving road deaths and injuries by 2030. The 4th Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety in

Morocco in February 2025 will mark a milestone for member States to take stock and assess their progress on road safety. I hope to see all governments represented there at high level.

Thank you.
