



PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Statement by

Ms. Tatiana Molcean

United Nations Under-Secretary-General

Executive Secretary

of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

at

High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

Side event:

Implementing the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport

New York, 11 July 2024

Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to speak today at this side event on implementing the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport and to present to you the key role of UNECE in facilitating resilient, responsive, inclusive, environmentally friendly and therefore sustainable inland transport. UNECE very much welcomes the General Assembly Resolution on Sustainable Transport and on the creation of relevant Decade. This issue is one of our core activities and personally very close to my heart.

Transport is an inseparable part of our interconnected world. It facilitates our trade, it brings us to work, it connects our cultures. There is nearly no aspect of our world that is untouched by transport.

And because transport connects so many pieces of our society, because it is so ubiquitous in our lives, its effect on our planet cannot be understated. So, when we make transport safer, when we make it more efficient, when we make it greener, we make it more sustainable. At the same time, we are increasing the sustainability of all these interconnected pieces of our lives, right down to our morning coffee, or our clothes, or our furniture, which all got to us via transport.

UNECE has a long history in increasing the sustainability of transport by creating legal instruments negotiated by governments, which become legally binding when States accede to them. These instruments work together to form a blueprint of rules, regulations, and practices that make transport more

sustainable.

Today, we oversee 61 legal instruments which address sustainable inland transport from multiple fronts and across all the regions of the UN.

For example, road safety is one of the core areas we work on. Today, more than one million people die on the roads every year. UNECE works to protect those lives by addressing everything from traffic rules to the construction and inspection of vehicles, to the creation of the infrastructure these vehicles drive on. Our legal instruments also establish rules about drive and rest times for professional drivers, or transporting dangerous goods safely across borders.

The legal instruments also help address climate change. Vehicle regulations do so by encouraging the adoption of innovative, cleaner vehicle technologies. Infrastructure Agreements provide systems for coupling improved transport infrastructure with Intelligent Transport Systems, in order to avoid traffic congestion as well and facilitate modal shift. Indeed, by fostering the use of intermodal and multimodal transport, seamlessly transitioning between road, rail and waterways, we reduce CO₂ emissions from the sector.

On this last point about emissions, the Inland Transport Committee of UNECE has just adopted its landmark global Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Inland Transport. The strategy aims to transform the way inland transport is approached globally, and to set a medium- and long-term course towards carbon neutrality by 2050, building on the 61 United Nations legal instruments under ITC's purview. We are constantly working to improve and

update these instruments. As new technology presents itself, we induct it into these instruments.

The Strategy draws from a broad decarbonization framework and hence incorporates avoid-shift-improve measures.

Avoiding inefficient transport, for example empty runs, or in optimizing transport through collaboration with other sectors, for example optimizing or sometimes avoiding transport through spatial planning.

Shifting to low- and zero-carbon modes of transport, especially by enhancing multi- and intermodality.

Finally, **improving** vehicles, infrastructure and operations to make them better and more efficient. For the latter ones, it also means to make them climate change resilient.

Implementation of these actions requires further improvements to the inland transport regulatory framework. It requires innovative policy instruments, guiding material and handbooks, as well as targeted, demand-driven technical assistance to enable behavioural change to low- and zero-carbon transport and mobility.

UNECE also supports the implementation of these legal instruments with capacity building initiatives, including the recently completed LearnITC. This is 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.

All these actions and activities put UNECE in a key position to work with UNDESA, our sister Regional Commissions and other partners in the drafting of the Implementation Plan for the UN Decade on Sustainable Transport. In this work I welcome the efforts of the Group of Friends of Sustainable Transport and the important leadership role of Turkmenistan as a key sponsor of the GA Resolution.

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 transport. Let us unite in our commitment to create a world where our transport system is not only efficient, but also environmentally friendly, resilient and safe, thus ensuring a better future for generations to come. We at UNECE work tirelessly on this because we see this work as vitally important. At UNECE every day is a Sustainable Transport Day.

Thank you.
