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Statement

by

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at

Informal briefing on the United Nations Decade on Sustainable Transport

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Excellencies, distinguished colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour for me to open today briefing on the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport and to present to you the key role that UNECE plays 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 a Decade focused on this issue which is one of our core activities and personally very close to my heart.

Understanding the Decade of Sustainable Transport is vital for Geneva missions, as it intersects with key priorities such as global trade, human rights, and public health. Sustainable transport enhances trade facilitation by streamlining logistics and border crossings, which are essential for economic growth and international cooperation. From a human rights perspective, accessible and reliable transport systems ensure equitable access to critical services such as education, healthcare, and employment, fostering inclusion and social equity. Furthermore, reducing emissions and pollution through sustainable transport also helps tackle public health challenges.

The United Nations General Assembly recognized these issues by designating the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport, beginning in 2026, a commitment toward transforming transport globally to serve people and the planet. This Decade presents us with a historic opportunity to shift from incremental progress to systemic change, and it calls on us to collaborate, innovate, and invest in ambitious action

At UNECE, sustainable transport is one of our key missions and has been so for many decades. This is because 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.

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.

The 61 legal instruments under our purview, work together to form a blueprint of rules, regulations, and practices that lead make transport more efficient and therefore more sustainable.

Let me illustrate it with some examples.

First, road safety. Many of these legal instruments work towards protecting users of the transport sector for example by addressing everything from traffic rules to the construction and inspection of vehicles, to the creation of the infrastructure these vehicles drive on.

In this area, the Special Envoy for Road Safety plays a crucial role in the broader sustainability agenda by addressing safety as a fundamental component. Safety is not only a moral imperative but also a key driver of sustainable development.

Efforts to reduce road accidents and fatalities align with the Decade of Action

for Road Safety, while also enhancing the resilience and inclusivity of transport systems. This aspect will be a key input into the wider Decade on Sustainable Transport.

Second, transport and climate change. In this context, I would like to highlight the Inland Transport Committee's (ITC) Decarbonization Strategy—a pioneering framework designed to reshape the future of inland transport. This strategy is not merely about reducing emissions; it sets a vision for a resilient, inclusive, and climate-friendly transport system that meets both current and future needs.

The strategy's **avoid-shift-improve** approach encourages avoiding unnecessary transport, shifting to low-emission modes, and improving the efficiency of vehicles, infrastructure, and operations to maximize resilience and reduce environmental impact. All this is done through a dedicated climate action plan.

We just recently returned from COP29 in Baku where transport was recognized as a cornerstone of mitigation efforts. In fact, for the first time ever UNECE, ICAO, and IMO joined forces in one event to present the ambitious decarbonization pathways inland, aviation, and maritime transport. This collaboration spotlighted innovative approaches to emissions reduction, such as promoting cleaner fuels and advanced technologies. These outcomes reaffirm the centrality of sustainable transport in achieving the Paris Agreement targets and a sustainable future.

Very importantly, UNECE also supports the implementation of these legal

instruments with capacity building initiatives including the only UN eLearning platform on sustainable transport and trade connectivity providing all interested stakeholders with multiple courses on sustainable transport - LearnITC. Now with over 1000 enrolments from 100 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 along with other activities.

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. I am very glad that the Mission of Turkmenistan was able to join us today to share the outcomes of the important events on the occasion of the Sustainable Transport Day in Ashgabat last week.

Further, I would like to acknowledge the leadership of Netherlands as the current Chair of the UNECE's Inland Transport Committee and welcome you, Madame Chair, at today's briefing.

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, hence truly sustainable, 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.

I look forward to working with all of you to make this Sustainable Transport Decade a success.

Thank you.
