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AFFAIRS

Closing Remarks
Second UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference

Beijing, 16 October 2021

Your Excellency Minister LI,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

As the Conference Secretary-General, it is my privilege to address you at the closing of the Second United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference.

Three days of intense activity now draw to a close.

We have been joined in person by 940 participants, including 230 delegates from Member States, representing 133 countries. Thousands more have joined online.

We have heard directly from seven Heads of State and Government, 57 ministers and other high-level representatives. Many more from the worlds of:

- **business,**
- **academia,**
- **civil society,**
- **the UN and other international organizations, have also joined.**

The programme of this Conference included opening and closing ceremonies, three high-level plenaries, and a Ministers' Forum, for national interventions.

Six thematic sessions, one forum on Science Technology and Innovation, and another on business in the context of sustainable transport, enabled 90 stakeholders – from across the world – to share their experiences and recommendations, covering all the dimensions of sustainable transport.

Our deliberations have been further enriched by the 27 side events organized by Member States, the United Nations system, and other key stakeholders related to the theme of the Conference “Sustainable Transport, Sustainable Development”.

The collective expertise of the entire UN system has supported this Conference, through an inter-agency report, and guidance notes for the sessions.

I thank you all for your active engagement.

Your coming together in such numbers – even under the shadow of a global pandemic – is proof of your commitment.

I wish to extend my profound gratitude and congratulations to President Xi and the Government of the People’s Republic of China, for hosting a very successful Conference.

I also extend my deep appreciation to United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, for his overall guidance, vision and dedicated participation in the Opening Ceremony and First Plenary of this Conference.

And I commend all colleagues, whose hard work and preparation, culminated in this fruitful event.

Excellencies,

Distinguished participants,

We have entered a new world since 2020, shaped by the pandemic and the increasing impacts of climate change. As we face up to its realities, it has become more urgent than ever, to accelerate the transformation to sustainable transport.

This means decarbonizing transport systems, even as we:

- ensure universal access,**
- improve safety,**
- enhance resilience and greater efficiency, and**
- lower pollution.**

The milestones ahead of us are clear.

We have heard inspiring examples of progress, but also learned about the daunting challenges that many face.

It is glaringly evident that we must, collectively, step up the pace, while leaving no one behind.

It is only then that we will be able to achieve, jointly, goals such as:

- ending poverty,**
- empowering women,**
- fighting climate change, and**
- restoring the balance with nature.**

Distinguished Delegates,

The UN Secretary-General Guterres has given high priority to sustainable transport. In his opening statement at this Conference, Secretary-General Guterres highlighted that transport is fundamental to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement. He stated that “Transport, which accounts for more than one quarter of global greenhouse gases, is key to getting on track” to mitigate climate change. He emphasized that, I quote:

“We must decarbonize all means of transport, in order to get to net-zero emissions by 2050.” Unquote.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I invite all of us gathered here – as well as the wider communities we are all part of – to strengthen our commitment, ramp up our efforts, and work together cohesively.

To further increase awareness and promote global action on sustainable transport, the United Nations has created an online repository. It will contain information about both ongoing, and new commitments, and efforts by Member States and all other actors in support of sustainable transport. Through this practical online tool, we hope to shine the spotlight on efforts already underway, and to inspire others to join and take action. This online database will remain open to capture sustainable transport-related commitments made in other fora, as well. We encourage you all to put this tool to good use.

As this conference draws to a close, let me assure you that the United Nations will continue to work with you in taking forward its outcomes.

Let us be determined and focused. Let us continue on this journey that started in Ashgabat, accelerated in Beijing, and must now gather speed to deliver on the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

I now declare the second United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference closed.

I thank you.
