



Sustainable Transport Day at the SDG Pavilion

**2024 United Nations Climate Change Conference
19 November 2024, Baku, Azerbaijan**

Preparing for the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport

Concept Note

1. Introduction

While there is no single dedicated Sustainable Development Goal for transport, it is reflected in several SDG targets and recognized as an enabler for achieving many of the goals. Both the political appreciation of sustainable transport as well as our scientific understanding of transport's linkages, both synergies and trade-offs, with issues such as resilient infrastructure development, food security, economic growth, trade, global supply chains, promotion of health, and energy efficiency.

The linkages between transport and climate change are also clear and gaining more much deserved attention. Energy use in transport remains dominated by fossil fuels, and transport is still the sector with the lowest share of renewable energy use. Nearly a quarter of global greenhouse gas emissions come from transport and these emissions are projected to grow significantly in the years to come, if business as usual models prevail. In addition, impacts of climate change can cause devastating loss, destruction and degradation of transport infrastructure, lead to disruptions in transport sector and further significantly slow down communities' recovery from climate disasters.

The importance of sustainable transport has also been highlighted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2023. The General Assembly resolution A/78/148 titled "Strengthening the links between all modes of transport to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals" called, among others, for closer UN cooperation, declared a UN Decade of Sustainable Transport to start in 2026, and invited the Secretary-General to organize the Third UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference.

The Member States also requested the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) to develop an Implementation Plan for the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport, in collaboration with the UN Regional Commissions and in consultation with the Member States, the United Nations system and all other relevant stakeholders. DESA is organizing a series of events to raise awareness about the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport and to seek inputs to the Implementation Plan, and a global call has been opened to request stakeholder inputs online: <https://sdgs.un.org/un-decade-sustainable-transport-2026-2035>. The UN Regional Commissions are also contributing to the process, including through dedicated regional activities: https://sdgs.un.org/un-decade-sustainable-transport-2026-2035#regional_consultations.

2. Rationale and key questions

The United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport will be an opportunity to further raise awareness of transport's crucial role in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals and to gather and rally new solutions, resources and partnerships to advance sustainable transport globally.

The associated Implementation Plan will be a critical tool in steering global efforts towards sustainable, inclusive, and resilient transportation systems. By fostering collaboration, mobilizing resources, and ensuring effective monitoring, the plan can shine a light on the critical importance of sustainable transport and also its linkages with other topics.

The Implementation Plan should address in a balanced manner all modes of transport – maritime, inland transport and aviation – but it should also consider transport in the wider framework for the SDGs. The Implementation Plan, and the activities conducted during the Decade, will be an opportunity to find policy options in the transport sector that simultaneously advance climate action and poverty reduction while accelerating progress in all other SDG areas, and minimizing the trade-offs.

While the Sustainable Development Goals have a target year of 2030, sustainable transport decisions made today will have much farther-reaching impacts. Identifying policies that will result in sustainable transportation systems is a major challenge for policy makers since the planning process involves a high level of complexity in designing policy packages combined with significant infrastructure investments, which span years or even decades from inception, to operation, to financial returns. Climate change and transport research has provided robust scenario analysis and modelling that can contribute to the forward-looking policy-guidance of the Implementation Plan of the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport and to SDG implementation at large.

The event will provide ideas and inputs to the Implementation Plan and for the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport by responding to the following guiding questions:

- What would a fully sustainable, climate-friendly transport system look like in the future?
- In what ways can the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport boost our efforts towards more sustainable transport, SDG implementation and effective climate action in an integrated manner?
- How should climate change be addressed in the Implementation Plan of the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport? How can the plan avoid thematic silos while highlighting priority action areas?
- In what ways can the Implementation Plan benefit from foresight and scenario modelling to ensure forward-looking policy guidance?

3. *Format*

The event will consist of an opening and two focused panel discussions, with multi-stakeholder representation. The panel discussions will be followed by a dedicated Q&A session to seek the views, comments and questions from the audience.

The event will be streamlined to provide the opportunity for a global audience to follow the discussions. The event will be conducted only in English with no interpretation.