



UN Decade of Sustainable Transport (2026-2035) A Multi-stakeholder Webinar on the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport

26 November 2024, 9:30 – 10:45 AM (EST)

Summary

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On 26 November 2024, UNDESA organized a [Multi-stakeholder webinar on the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport \(2026-2035\)](#). The webinar brought together key stakeholders to discuss the upcoming [UN Decade of Sustainable Transport](#) and its associated implementation plan. Speakers highlighted the importance of coordinated efforts across sectors, with a focus on enhancing accessibility, affordability, and sustainability. Key messages included the need for better data collection, integrating transport with other sectors like health and energy, and creating multi-modal transport systems to address urban and rural mobility needs. Speakers also emphasized the role of local and regional governments in co-creating mobility solutions, the importance of private and public investment in low- and middle-income countries, and fostering inclusive systems for marginalized groups. The discussion also highlighted the significance of multilateral cooperation and knowledge-sharing to implement innovative and inclusive transport strategies. It underscored the need for long-term planning, inclusive governance, and investment in transport to ensure a sustainable, equitable future for all.

Welcome Remarks and Agenda Review

Ms. Astra Bonini (Chief, Integrated Policy Analysis Branch, DSDG, DESA) started by welcoming everyone to the webinar and celebrating the Second World Sustainable Transport Day. She highlighted two general UN resolutions ([A/78/148](#) and [A/RES/77/286](#)) that were adopted last year and have energized the work on sustainable transport at the UN.

Mr. Dmitry Mariyasin (Deputy Executive Secretary, UN Economic Commission for Europe) spoke on behalf of all the UN Regional Commissions. He stressed that the Regional Commissions could play a key role in the implementation plan process particularly in three ways: bringing forth their technical expertise; supporting effective stakeholder consultations; and ensuring broad

partnerships within their regions. Mr. Mariyasin highlighted the respective entry points of each Regional Commission within the implementation process and the broader context of sustainable transport, including regional connectivity in the Asia-Pacific region (ESCAP), developing efficient transport markets to support value chains of critical minerals (ECA), cross-border transport connectivity for sustainable development (ESCWA), and prioritizing multimodal transport such as rail, ferry, and aviation (ECLAC). Finally, UN ECE, which hosts key regulations on inland transport, recently launched the [Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Inland Transport](#) which outlines a vision to decarbonize road, rail, and intermodal transport.

Video Message on the World Sustainable Transport Day by the Secretary-General’s Special Envoy on Road Safety

Mr. Jean Todt (UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy on Road Safety) highlighted the unequal burden of traffic accident deaths. Low- and middle-income countries and cyclists and pedestrians are disproportionately burdened by road traffic deaths. Rural areas also lag behind in accessibility and safety. He also highlighted the key linkages between sustainable transportation and road safety. To address these asymmetries, Mr. Todt suggested three key approaches including urban multi-modal transport with safe active mobility infrastructure, sharing regional good practices such as the [UNEP Pan-African Action Plan for Active Mobility](#), and investments in rural transport and connectivity.

Message from the High-level meeting on Sustainable Transport

Ms. Asha DeSuza (Team Leader for Sustainable Development and Financing for Development, Office of the President of the General Assembly) highlighted four key messages conveyed during the High-level meeting on Sustainable Transport on 17 April 2024. This included a call by Member States to enhance access to multimodal transport, an interconnected network to ensure food security of supply chains, promoting economic growth and development, and prioritizing safety in transport policies. Key transformation measures promoted during the High-level meeting include maximizing accessibility, minimizing environmental impact, and strengthening rural-urban connections. Ms. DeSuza also called for prioritizing public transport, efficient freight systems, and resilient transport investments. She highlighted the necessity of ensuring equal access to sustainable transport for vulnerable populations, particularly in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

The UN Decade of Sustainable Transport – overview of the process

Ms. Astra Bonini (Chief, Integrated Policy Analysis Branch, DSDG, DESA) provided an overview of the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport process, outlining its [foundational resolution](#), which calls

for coordination across the UN system and international organizations to address critical transport challenges. The implementation plan for the Decade is a global policy document developed collaboratively with various stakeholders, including UN system entities, regional commissions, Member States, and intergovernmental organizations. The plan focuses on leveraging existing resources, as no dedicated funding is available, and emphasizes awareness-raising and consultations to ensure inclusivity. Key workstreams have been launched, including consultations with Member States, [a global online stakeholder consultation which remains open till 10 January 2025](#), and engagement with financial organizations like the World Bank and OECD to integrate the financial sector into the dialogue.

Stakeholder inputs to the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport

Moderated by **Ms. Naiara Costa**, Senior Sustainable Development Officer, Outreach and Partnerships Branch, Division for SDGs, DESA

Ms. Maruxa Cardama (Secretary General of the SLOCAT Partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport) outlined SLOCAT's priorities for the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport, focusing on broad engagement, connecting customers, service providers and communities, and generating open data for evidence-based policymaking. She emphasized the need to integrate transport with sectors like health and energy for holistic solutions and improve interagency coordination by involving key stakeholders. Ms. Cardama also highlighted six focus areas at the regional level, including ensuring the right to safe, affordable, and clean mobility, supporting jobs and livelihoods within the green economy, and building institutional capacity. SLOCAT's role includes leveraging its broad network across sectors, facilitating multi-stakeholder initiatives, and assisting with knowledge products such as the global status report on transport and climate sustainability.

Mr. Mohammed Ali Loutfy (Director for Capacity Building and Advocacy, G3ict, Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs), stressed the importance of a human-centric approach to sustainable transport, particularly for marginalized groups like individuals with disabilities and the elderly. He stressed that transport policies should address broader social impacts, including education, healthcare, and rural development. Mr. Loutfy advocated for universal design principles and early community engagement in planning. He highlighted the role of sustainable procurement and digitization in enhancing accessibility, including digital kiosks for road safety. Mr. Loutfy called for training stakeholders to ensure inclusivity and referenced the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as a guiding framework.

Ms. Clare Hart (Vice-President for International Affairs and European Cooperation, Municipal Councilor for International Relations, Montpellier, France) stressed the need to rethink public transport as a tool for community empowerment and climate resilience. She advocated for transport systems that serve all people, especially marginalized groups, and emphasized the critical role of local and regional governments in co-creating mobility solutions. Ms. Hart

highlighted the importance of multi-level governance for sustainable, inclusive transport systems and called for a new template for international transport cooperation that involves local governments in shaping global solutions aligned with the SDGs.

Mr. Habib Turki (Chief Development Officer, Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile, FIA) discussed the organization's role in shaping sustainable transport through motorsport, which serves as a "lab" for testing technologies that save lives, preserve resources, and boost performance. He emphasized the need for a global framework to govern sustainable transport, overcoming barriers like regulatory frameworks and access to safe, sustainable transport. Mr. Turki highlighted FIA's user-centric solutions, such as the AI-powered Smart Driving Challenge app, whose top user was able to reduce emissions by 32%, and Euro NCAP, which ensures sustainable vehicle standards.

Ms. Maria Lehman (GHD's Infrastructure Market Leader for the US) stressed the importance of addressing both business and environmental health in infrastructure sustainability. She emphasized the need for a "systems of systems" approach, where the failure of one part can impact the entire system. Highlighting transportation as the "connective tissue" of infrastructure, she noted that it must be developed sustainably for resilience. Ms. Lehman discussed the ASCE's role in creating global standards, including the ASCE 722 standard for habitable buildings. She also outlined GHD's sustainability strategy, which focuses on performance, sustainability, water, energy, and future communities, and urged the UN to adopt [ASCE 73/23](#)

Q&A

During the Q&A session, the speakers shared valuable insights on sustainable transport. **Ms. Maruxa Cardama** emphasized the importance of focusing on accessibility in public transport at a broader, system-wide level and ensuring the correct allocation of funds by incorporating sustainability, health, and development into economic investment appraisals. **Mr. Mohammed Ali Loutfy** highlighted the value of leveraging best practices and civil society resources, countering concerns about costs by showing that accessibility benefits society, enabling more people to access education and employment. **Ms. Clare Hart** stressed the need to work with all sectors of civil society, considering the needs of vulnerable populations and protecting biodiversity through low-carbon transport modes. **Mr. Habib Turki** underscored the vital role of transport in global trade, tourism, and people movement, emphasizing that multilateral cooperation is crucial for implementing innovative solutions. **Ms. Maria Lehman** shared a good practice from Los Angeles, where adding sidewalks in under-resourced communities led to a decrease in diabetes rates by promoting active transport, showing that improving one aspect of a community can positively impact others.

Concluding

Remarks

In her concluding remarks, Ms. Astra Bonini reflected on the key call from the 2023 SDG Summit to transform transport systems, emphasizing the importance of supporting Member States and stakeholders in this endeavor. She highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach to implementation, incorporating finance, science, technology, innovation (STI), and behavior change. Ms. Bonini stressed that transport is not just about moving from point A to B but involves multiple interconnected pillars, including social patterns shaped by the transport system. She emphasized the necessity of long-term planning and investment in the transport sector, with a focus on ensuring accessibility, sustainability, and affordability for all.

Relevant Links

- [A Multi-stakeholder Webinar on the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport \(2026 - 2035\)](#)
- [World Sustainable Transport Day](#)
- [UN Decade of Sustainable Transport \(2026-2035\)](#)
- [Global Online Stakeholder Consultation on the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport \(2026 - 2035\) \(deadline 10 January 2025\)](#)
- [Join our Mailing List!](#)