

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) Implementation Plan of the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport

CONCEPT NOTE

1. Introduction

While there is no single dedicated Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) for transport, the sector is reflected across several SDG targets and is widely recognized as an enabler for achieving multiple goals. Over recent years, both the political recognition of sustainable transport and the scientific understanding of its linkages — including synergies and trade-offs — with issues such as resilient infrastructure development, food security, economic growth, trade, global supply chains, public health, energy efficiency, and climate change have significantly improved.

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 other elements, for closer UN cooperation, the establishment of a United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport (2026–2035), the convening of a Third UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference, and the celebration of the World Sustainable Transport Day on 26 November 2024. Member States also requested the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) to develop an Implementation Plan for the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport, in collaboration with the UN Regional Commissions and in consultation with Member States, the United Nations system, and other relevant stakeholders.

The Implementation Plan for the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport will serve as a critical tool to guide global efforts towards sustainable, inclusive, and resilient transport systems. By fostering collaboration, mobilizing resources, and ensuring effective monitoring, the Plan can highlight the strategic importance of sustainable transport, advance its implementation, and accelerate progress towards several SDGs.

2. Objectives

The Implementation Plan of the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport is expected to serve as a strategic framework to coordinate actions, mobilize resources, and monitor progress towards sustainable transport worldwide. It will be global and non-binding in nature, enabling the formulation of more detailed regional, national, and local plans, strategies, and forms of collaboration, as appropriate.

Ideally, the Implementation Plan can:

- Provide a **roadmap** for accelerating action towards sustainable transport during the Decade;
- **Enhance coordination** and **collaboration** among Member States and stakeholders;

- **Mobilize resources** for sustainable transport projects at all levels;
- And **increase awareness and capacity-building** on sustainable transport practices.

The Plan can also help raise the global visibility of sustainable transport in SDG discussions and facilitate monitoring and evaluation of progress both towards sustainable transport objectives and transport's contributions to the SDGs.

While the SDGs have a target year of 2030, decisions made today in sustainable transport will have long-term impacts well beyond that horizon. Identifying policies that lead to sustainable transport systems remains a major challenge for policymakers, as planning requires designing complex policy packages and making long-term infrastructure investments that often span years or even decades, from inception and construction to operation and financial returns. Since the timeline of the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport extends beyond 2030, it offers an opportunity to ensure continuity and strengthen global visibility for collective action on sustainable transport.

Recent global crises have demonstrated that the future will not necessarily mirror the past. With escalating climate extremes, rapid technological advances, and evolving societal dynamics, the world faces multiple possible, probable, and preferable futures that must be anticipated, envisioned, and shaped. The Implementation Plan can therefore support long-term planning and policy foresight for more sustainable transport pathways.

The development process of the Implementation Plan also presents an opportunity to bring together all relevant UN entities working on sustainable transport, and to strengthen collaboration and coordination with international organizations, non-governmental organizations, development banks, think tanks, and other key actors.

3. Agenda

9:00 – 9:10	Opening Remarks Keiji Inoue , Officer-in-Charge of the International Trade and Integration Division, ECLAC.
9:10 – 9:30	Towards Sustainable Transport in Latin America and the Caribbean: Challenges and Opportunities in the Decade 2026–2035 Miryam Saade Hazin , Officer-in-Charge of the Infrastructure Services Unit, ECLAC.
9:30 – 11:45	Open Participation Session with Member States: Building the Future of Sustainable Transport in Latin America and the Caribbean
11:45– 12:00	Conclusions and Next Steps Miryam Saade Hazin , Officer-in-Charge of the Infrastructure Services Unit, ECLAC.

4. Consultation outcomes

The Regional Consultation of Latin American and Caribbean Member States on the Implementation Plan for the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport was held virtually on 27 March 2025. The event brought together 22 participants from 10 countries in the region and provided a platform to share national commitments, ongoing initiatives, and key challenges in advancing sustainable transport policies. The main points discussed are summarized below.

The transition to electric transport was identified as a critical step toward reducing emissions. Countries highlighted efforts to expand electric bus networks, integrate real-time information systems, and improve public transport accessibility. Participants emphasized that infrastructure development beyond major urban centers remains a priority to ensure equitable access to sustainable transport solutions.

Road safety was also recognized as an essential component of transport planning. Strategies include integrating safety measures into national transport policies, promoting walking and cycling infrastructure, and ensuring that public transport systems are both sustainable and secure. A comprehensive approach requires collaboration among multiple stakeholders to design and implement effective solutions.

Financial constraints continue to pose challenges to the implementation of sustainable mobility plans. Participants underscored the need for targeted investments in alternative mobility solutions, such as cycling and micro-mobility, and for strengthening public transport systems to provide a viable alternative to private vehicle use. Ensuring financial sustainability and long-term planning is considered critical to achieving national and regional transport goals. Electrification initiatives extend beyond public transport to include smaller vehicles, such as motorcycles, as part of broader decarbonization strategies. Legislative measures are being explored to establish dedicated financing mechanisms and regulatory frameworks that facilitate the transition to cleaner transport technologies.

Strengthening governance structures was highlighted as a priority for improving urban transport systems. Challenges include fragmented institutional responsibilities and the need for integrated policies. Efforts are being made to centralize coordination and enhance regulatory frameworks to support sustainable transport initiatives. Participants stressed that transport policies must prioritize safe and inclusive urban mobility, with programs focused on safe school zones, improved pedestrian infrastructure, and enhanced public transport connectivity playing a critical role in promoting safer environments. Incentive-based approaches are being implemented to encourage compliance and support effective policy implementation.

Participants reaffirmed their commitment to promoting sustainable transport solutions in line with the objectives of the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport (2026–2035). The consultation underscored the need for integrated governance, financial sustainability, and a multi-stakeholder approach to achieve meaningful progress. A questionnaire was circulated to gather additional input, with responses due by 3 April 2025.

Responses to the questionnaire identified several key challenges to achieving sustainable transport in Latin America and the Caribbean. The most frequently cited barriers included the lack of financing and investment, insufficient infrastructure for sustainable transport, and capacity and governance gaps at the local and national levels. Respondents also emphasized the importance of addressing unequal access to public transport, safety concerns—particularly for

women and girls—and the limited economic competitiveness of sustainable transport modes. These findings underscore the need for integrated approaches that combine urban planning, public investment, and multi-stakeholder partnerships.

Participants also proposed concrete actions and recommendations that could contribute to the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport. These included educational programs on safe mobility, national sustainable urban transport programs, and the promotion of inclusive and equitable public policies. Respondent institutions were recognized as having a key role in policy advocacy, public awareness and education, and technical capacity building. Overall, the contributions reflected a shared vision of the urgency of adopting coordinated and participatory measures to transform urban and regional mobility in support of sustainable development.