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Mr. Nikhil Seth
Division for Sustainable Development
UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs
Room 2-2620, UN Secretariat, NYC, NY 10017

Brussels, 25th September 2013

Dear Mr. Nikhil Seth,

Decision Makers Consultation on Implementing Sustainable Transport in the post-2015 Development Agenda, 26-27 September 2013

I would like to thank you for inviting me to the Decision Makers consultation on implementing sustainable transport but regretfully I am unable to attend. However, I would like to take this opportunity to raise some thoughts with you so this can feed into the consultation process.

UITP fully supports the efforts to have sustainable transport as a separate standalone sustainable development goal (SDG). The proposal by the Slocat partnership to have a credible results framework in place that can be used to track progress in implementation will strengthen the case for this. However, if sustainable transport is not a goal in its own right, sustainable transport objectives and indicators need to be an integral part of other relevant SDGs as it will be a vital component in delivering the post 2015 development agenda.

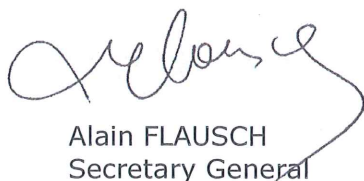
The proposed SDG for sustainable transport emerging from discussions rightly looks at the issue of access but access alone is not enough as quality of mobility services is just as important if we are to help improve the livelihoods of the urban poor. The SDG should also take into account the relative merit of different transportation modes in terms of sustainability, as reflected in the Rio+20 outcome document.

With regards to the supporting targets for sustainable transport, what is important is 'affordable mobility' as this will encourage compact, mixed, multi-modal development and support the development and maintenance of the mobility needs of the poor, who mostly use public transport, walk or cycle.

One final area for consideration is the issue of cities and urban mobility. Whether 'cities' should have their own SDG is perhaps contentious but worth considering. Last week, 90 towns, regions and industry members took part in UITP's worldwide 'Grow with Public Transport' campaign to show that public transport makes cities better places to live and is an essential component of economic growth. It is perhaps the economic case that makes it most compelling to include an urban SDG with a sustainable transport element.

Annexed to this paper are more detailed comments on the points raised. I wish you all the success for your event and I look forward to hearing the outcomes of the discussions.

Yours sincerely,



Alain FLAUSCH
Secretary General



Annex - Detailed UITP Comments for the Decision Makers Consultation on Implementing Sustainable Transport in the post-2015 Development Agenda

UITP fully supports the efforts to have sustainable transport as a separate standalone SDG. When transport is subsumed under say energy policy, key elements like traffic safety get left aside.

If sustainable transport is not a goal in its own right, sustainable transport objectives and indicators need to be an integral part of other SDGs, enabling better targeted transport spending by national and local governments and Multilateral Development Banks. For instance, health is a right and a goal in its own right, as well as a means of measuring success across the whole sustainable development agenda. It encompasses broad well-being, not merely the absence of disease. Trips that include walking, cycling and public transport provide much-needed physical exercise. Facilitating and encouraging public transport use is therefore a vital component of public health policy. By ditching the car and combining walking, cycling and public transport, daily mobility alone can provide the 30 minutes of physical exercise recommended by the World Health Organization¹. This can help reduce the risk of obesity, heart disease and other conditions associated with lack of physical exercise. At regional or national level, encouraging the use of sustainable mobility options can therefore have a major impact on public health bills. In addition, per passenger-mile, the traffic fatality rate for public transport is approximately one tenth that of automobile travel. Encouraging a more balanced mobility mix could therefore generate a significant reduction in urban traffic fatalities. It will therefore be important that sustainable transport is reflected in multiple SDGs where relevant as it will be a vital component in delivering the post 2015 development agenda.

Sustainable Development Goal for transport

The Aide Memoire proposes the following goal on sustainable transport: "*access to goods and services through clean, safe, reliable, affordable transport, and land use planning*". Transport services make a significant contribution to the livelihood strategies of the urban poor. Access to employment and income generation opportunities, education, health, and social networks (such as extended families) can help in securing income and necessary goods and services. However, access alone is not enough as quality of mobility services is just as important if we are to help improve the livelihoods of the urban poor. Furthermore, by focusing on transport it is not clear what we are looking at when talking about the relative merit of different transportation modes in terms of sustainability. The Future We Want (para 133) states: "*We support the development of sustainable transport systems, including energy efficient multi-modal transport systems, notably public mass transportation systems, clean fuels and vehicles, as well as improved transportation systems in rural areas*". UITP therefore suggests that the link to sustainable transport systems is made explicit in the headline goal.

¹ This can be achieved by doubling the market share of public transport and having 70 per cent of all trips made by walking, cycling and public transport.

Supporting targets on sustainable transport

The Aide Memoire includes four sub-targets for transport, the first of which talks about access to good, jobs and services by quality and affordable public transport and/or walking and cycling infrastructure. By looking at affordability of public transport, it focuses the attention very much on public transport fare levels rather than the link between mobility and income. Public transport guarantees everyone - not just car drivers - the basic right to move around freely. Strategies intended to increase automobile affordability may reduce overall affordability if they shift costs or reduce affordable transport options. Strategies that improve affordable modes (walking, cycling and public transport) tend to provide co-benefits and so tend to maximize overall benefits and sustainability - this enhances everyone's quality of life. As such, what this target should focus on is 'affordable mobility' as this will encourage compact, mixed, multi-modal development and support the development and maintenance of the mobility needs of the poor, who mostly use public transport, walk or cycle.

Sustainable Development Goal for cities

One final area for consideration but not addressed by the Aide Memoire is the issue of cities and urban mobility. As the world's largest consumers and producers, the battle for sustainable development will be won or lost in our cities. Whether 'cities' should have their own SDG is perhaps contentious but worth considering as what is clear is that when cities set targets, they meet them. If there would be an SDG on sustainable cities it would be the first goal to be met.

A SDG for cities could maximise the potential for the dynamics of global urbanization to be directed towards sustainable development solutions for pressing urban problems such as urban congestion. *The Future We Want* recognised the importance of transport in building sustainable cities and recognises the link between urban development and transport and the role of public transport, walking and cycling as healthy, environmentally friendly methods of commuting. The outcome document also recognised that effective urban planning also presents a powerful tool for implementing effective governance and bringing about sustainable change via effective land use.

Last week, 90 towns, regions and industry members took part in UITP's worldwide 'Grow with Public Transport' campaign to show that public transport makes cities better places to live and is an essential component of economic growth. Good public transport infrastructure and services will help city economies to thrive while at the same time delivering sustainable development. Cities with under-performing or inadequate transport systems will struggle to deliver on green growth and poverty alleviation, which is exactly what Rio+20 sought to achieve.

An efficient public transport system is a major factor in attracting businesses, and thus wealth, to a city or region. Efficient mobility in cities creates economic opportunities, enables trade, and facilitates access to markets and services. Public transport is also a major contributor to national and local economies through the jobs it provides directly. The wider public transport industry offers skilled, high-tech jobs throughout the entire supply chain worldwide. In 2009, the public transport sector provided 13 million green, local jobs around the world. Public transport operators could create green jobs for a further 7 million people if the market share of public transport were to double by 2025. This could be achieved alongside improved labour productivity.

By transporting large numbers of people efficiently, public transport has a major role to play in alleviating congestion and improving traffic flow. However, as more people worldwide turn to private vehicles to get from A to B, rising levels of congestion on urban roads will present a serious threat to economic growth. Every year nearly 100 billion Euros, or one per cent of the EU's GDP, are lost to the European economy as a result of congestion. In cities with a high share of public transport, walking and cycling, the cost of transport for the community can be as much as 50 per cent lower than in cities where the private car dominates. Capital investment in public transport projects also sparks a chain reaction in business activity and generates value that can be 3 to 4 times higher than the initial investment, according to some estimates. While large-scale public transport projects are costly, the cost of improving urban mobility is actually significantly lower than the direct cost of congestion. If the external costs and social impacts of congestion are factored in, it becomes even clearer that investing in public transport represents good value for money. So it is perhaps the economic case that makes it more compelling to include sustainable transport in an urban SDG. It would help deliver the transformational change envisaged by the sustainable transport community and accomplish sustainable urban development.