



— GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE —
TRANSPORT CONFERENCE
— ASHGABAT, 26-27 NOVEMBER 2016 —



Thematic discussion 6: Sustainable transport and transit solutions in countries in special situations

Sunday, 27 November, 11:30 A.M. – 1:00 P.M.

Lead UN entity: UN-OHRLLS

Sustainable transport is a key development enabler for all the dimensions of sustainable development. In every country around the world, transport is needed to connect people and communities to jobs, schools and health care and for the delivery of services to rural and urban communities. It is necessary for the movement of goods, expansion of markets and growth of trade required for spurring economic development and structural transformation. The transport sector also makes a significant contribution to national GDP as transport related businesses directly or indirectly employ a large portion of the workforce. Transport businesses also generate significant contributions to local and national tax revenues. Transport systems need to be sustainable and be able to provide services in a manner that is safe, affordable, accessible, efficient and resilient while minimizing carbon and other emissions and environmental impacts.

Despite the potential that sustainable transport has for development, the most vulnerable countries including Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) face major challenges in providing adequate access to affordable transport services. Adequate transport is currently unavailable to most people particularly in rural areas. They face inadequate transport infrastructure characterized by missing links. LLDCs, in particular, face high transport costs attributed, primarily, to the long distances to the sea, inadequate transit transport infrastructure, burdensome border procedures, particularly during transit, as well as high transaction costs. It is interesting to note that about 44 out of 193 Member States of the UN are landlocked and 20 out of 54 low-income economies are landlocked. Concerning SIDS, due to their remoteness and small size, they are often underserved by transport providers, and their vulnerabilities are exacerbated by the growing impacts of climate change.

At present, problems of traffic-related air pollution and road fatalities are serious in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS and require solutions that integrate a range of initiatives relating to non-motorized transport, public transport, climate change, air pollution and road safety. LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS have difficulties securing the necessary investments and partnerships for successfully gearing towards sustainable transport.

Borders are the entry point to trade and tourism. As a consequence, efficient borders are an important development objective. By improving border management countries are likely to increase tax revenues, improve the local offer for products and transport services and strengthen regional cooperation. This is especially significant for landlocked developing countries, where signing of regional or multilateral conventions aiming at ensuring freedom of transit and regional transport infrastructure is very important. Addressing these challenges, including through simplified, harmonized and standardized transport and transit procedures as well as intermodal connectivity, will go a long way towards boosting economic development, sustainable tourism, and trade, while building regional and global value-chains and promoting sustainable development.

LLDCs and SIDS face particular challenges in intermodal interfaces. For LLDCs, dry ports—inland facilities where multimodal shipping containers brought in from a seaport by road or rail can be processed and their contents shipped on to their final destinations—are one mechanism to increase efficiency. For SIDS, often far away from major shipping routes, regional or sub regional hub ports can reduce freight costs that are often otherwise prohibitive. They are also highly dependent on food and energy imports, and often relying heavily on tourism for revenue and livelihoods, so transport is critical for them. With their remoteness and small size, these island states are often underserved by transport providers, and their vulnerabilities are exacerbated by the growing impacts of climate change.

In September 2015, world leaders committed themselves to promoting an equitable and inclusive global development framework, in which no one is left behind, by adopting the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda acknowledges that vulnerable countries deserve special attention. Sustainable transport is crucial for the achievement of all the SDGs. The transport-related SDG targets include: target 3.6 which aims to, by 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents; target 9.1, which aims to develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and trans-border infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all; and target 11.2, which aims to provide, by 2030, access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, such as women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda also recognizes the special needs of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS in these areas.

The Paris Agreement calls for cleaner air and significant lowering of greenhouse gas emissions. The Sendai Framework calls for enhancing the resilience of new and existing critical infrastructure, including transportation infrastructure and adequate, sustainable and timely provision of support, including through finance, technology transfer and capacity-building to countries facing specific disaster risk challenges.

The Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for the LDCs, the Vienna Programme of Action for the LLDCs and the SAMOA Pathway for the SIDS underscore the important role of transport in the sustainable development of the LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS. The IPoA, for example, recognized the critical importance of reliable and affordable transport for building productive capacities in LDCs. The 2030 Agenda recognizes that these programmes are integral to the new Agenda. Leaving no one behind is especially important for these vulnerable countries.

To translate these international goals on sustainable transport to action on the ground for the LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS, both national leadership and a multi-stakeholder approach are needed. Sharing of

best practices on policy development and implementation, improving access to financing, building of an enabling environment, strengthening regional cooperation, and technological innovation are all crucial steps in moving forward. It is important for countries in special situations to scale-up and speed-up initiatives to foster rapid transition to clean fuels and technologies, to foster increased access and to close the rural urban transport gap. It is also important to foster transit solutions that can enable the LLDCs to be better integrated into the international market.

To complement their national efforts and regional collaboration, there is need for enhanced and strengthened global partnership. Sustainable transport requires huge investment, innovation, new technologies and capacity building. Countries in special situations cannot achieve sustainable transport related objectives and by extension, Sustainable Development Goals without dedicated support and mechanisms at the global and regional levels. There is a great opportunity to ensure a transformative change in these vulnerable countries through strengthened global support from both north-south as well as south-south cooperation.

Possible questions for discussion:

1. What have been the key achievements in developing sustainable transport in countries in special situations such as LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS? What have been the major challenges? How can regional infrastructure corridors be strengthened in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS?
2. Which government policies, reforms and initiatives have proven particularly successful in increasing sustainable transport in these countries and how can national development plans strategically address multimodal transport such as railways, roads, waterways, warehouses and port facilities?
3. What are the key recommendations to strengthen financing for supporting sustainable transport in the vulnerable countries? (including the role of domestic resources mobilization, private sector, ODA, Financial Institutions and other sources) and what kind of partnerships (national, regional and international, public-private) have been successful in supporting sustainable transport and what are the key reasons for their success?