

**Statement of Dr. Thiago Herick de Sa, World Health Organization (WHO), Technical Officer, Urban Health, Transport and Health, in the UN DESA Webinar on “Sustainable Transport and COVID-19: Response and Recovery”**

**1 July 2020 8:30 AM -10:00 AM (EDT, NEW YORK TIME)**

Ladies & Gentlemen, dear colleagues,

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to be part of this discussion. I speak from the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Health of the WHO’s headquarters. I will focus my intervention on two of the three aspects that we were asked to address as much has been said on the adjustments transport systems will need to make to recover and respond to COVID-19.

What we have witnessed in this crisis in many countries and cities is that sustainable transport systems – systems with strong walking and cycling infrastructure and culture, strong public transport, little reliance on private vehicles, less polluting fleet and good travel demand management – are not only healthier, based on the existing evidence, but also requires less adjustments to respond and recover much more efficiently from the pandemics, while also being more resilient to the economic stress related to this crisis.

This highlights the opportunity but at the same time the urgent need for all the different stakeholders involved in the transport arena, including the health sector, to better incorporate health and wellbeing considerations while developing, running, monitoring and financing transport systems. This is relevant not only to account for externalities related to transport activities, such as air pollution, road traffic injuries, noise, to name a few, but also to account for the benefits that sustainable transport systems can provide, from responding and recovering to pandemics like the one we face today with COVID-19 but also to many other health challenges, such as the pandemics of noncommunicable diseases. We should also stress here the fundamental role of transport systems in addressing health equity and achieving universal health coverage.

A call for sustainable and healthy transport systems is an integral part of the recently published WHO Manifesto for a Healthy Recovery from COVID-19, which I invite you all to look at. The Manifesto will be followed by a series of actions that cities and countries can take to recover from COVID-19, including in transport, while paving the way to a healthier future for all (link to the Manifesto: <https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/who-manifesto-for-a-healthy-recovery-from-covid-19>).

Once again, thank you very much.