

CitiesAreListening: Increasing quality of life for people and for planet via sustainable urban mobility

Virtual event on the occasion of the United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Summit

News-piece

Local and regional governments are playing a crucial role in ensuring the global agendas become a reality. The current situation shows that local public service provision, including sustainable mobility supported by public transport as the backbone, is vital to ensuring that all people and the planet are duly protected and has played a frontline role before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mobility plays a key role in our daily lives and is essential to the achievement of the global agendas, linked to 13 out of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Public transport is the backbone of cities and territories allowing for people to move. During the pandemic, local and regional governments, the public transport sector and the distribution of goods have stepped up to the plate ensuring that service provision could continue to work as if unaffected by the sanitary and social emergency.

The #CitiesAreListening experience "Increasing quality of life for people and for planet via sustainable urban mobility" took place within the framework of the 2nd UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference and addressed the linkages between mobility and achieving sustainable development in the recovery with a special focus on the ecological transition and climate change, and social inclusion and equitable access to opportunities. It was organized within the framework of the UCLG & UITP partnership as part of the #CitiesAreListening Experiences in collaboration with UN Habitat and Metropolis.

The outcomes of the session will feed the process towards the development of the **Pact for the Future** that our organization was mandated to develop. By addressing the challenges that mobility faces and co-creating solutions, we will feed into the renewal of the social contract for people, planet, and government.

The Mayor of Xian, and Co-President of UCLG, Li Mingyuan, introduced the spirit of the CitiesAreListening, by stating the importance of mobility to the livelihood and prosperity of people and the planet. He stressed that *"Local governments have always pioneered in developing sustainable transport. We should facilitate smooth, efficient, and smart transport to provide better public services to all"*.

These remarks were echoed by **Alfonso Sánchez, CEO of EMT Madrid, and Vice-President of UITP** who highlighted that public transport is a public good and that it is key to promoting social cohesion and sustainability. He highlighted that "we have to invest in a recovery that puts public transport at the center of protection plans. In this way, we will be able to ensure our air is cleaner, our cities are more accessible, and people feel at the center".

The panel discussion moderated by **Stefanie Holzwarth, Mobility Specialist, UN-Habitat** counted on the experiences of how local and regional governments have been contributing to sustainable urban mobility. During the panel, **Luis Fernando Lozano, International Development Director, Mobility ADO Group**, and **Alfonso Gil, Councillor of Mobility and Sustainability of the Bilbao City Council and President of the Transport, Sustainable Mobility and Road Safety Commission of the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP)** highlighted the key role that public transport plays in the realization of the SDGs and that we need to build public confidence in it again to ensure we are moving on the right path.

Laura Ziliani, Advisor to the Director of Strategic Planning, Buenos Aires and **Khadim Cisse, Studies and Strategy Director, CETUD, Dakar** stressed the importance of planning public transport strategies that respond to the needs of people and territories highlighting in particular the importance of gender equality and public transport. **Shantanu Mukherjee, Chief, Integrated Policy and Analysis Branch, Division for Sustainable Development Goals (DSDG), UN DESA** and **Daniel Okia, Chief Officer Eng., Transport Department, Kisumu** on the other hand emphasized the importance of collaboration in ensuring mobility is sustainable and inclusive. Shantanu brought this to light within the context of the UN Global Sustainable Transport Conference and the initiative UN-DESA is leading with regard to the sustainable transport commitment platform and how it can facilitate collaboration while Daniel stressed the importance of collaboration in realizing key infrastructure projects that would bring us closer to sustainable mobility and the realization of the SDGs.

Massimo Perrino, Policy Officer, UCLG World Secretariat and **Dionisio Gonzalez, Senior Adviser - Advocacy & Outreach**, wrapped up the session by recalling the importance of achieving sustainable mobility to the global agendas and highlighting the work that UCLG, through its Town Hall Process and Pact for the Future, and UITP's advocacy and communication campaigns, will continue to feed into international policy processes and ensure that local and regional governments have a voice within them.

Access to mobility is essential to ensure access to other local public services and is directly interlinked with sustainable development through universal access to opportunities and services, through the important effect it can have on air pollution, health and quality of life, the mitigation and adaptation of climate change, access to education, road safety, etc. In the COVID-19 recovery, guaranteeing the maintenance and strengthening of local public service provision will be key to ensure that the world continues towards the achievement of the global agendas in the UN Decade of Action.

Related links:

- <https://www.beyondtheoutbreak.uclg.org/mobility>
- <https://www.uitp.org/news/looking-to-the-future-the-2nd-united-nations-global-sustainable-transport-conference/>
- <https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/2nd-transport-conference/register>