



Global Sustainable Transportation Conference

Thematic session 1: Sustainable transport, poverty eradication, livelihoods and economic recovery

Organisers; UNEP, World Bicycle Relief, Bridges to Prosperity, Riders for Health, Helvetas

Title: Models for Systemic Change: Accelerating Rural Access to Sustainable Transport in Africa

Session Summary: Nearly one billion rural people risk being left behind because they live in communities where jobs, education, healthcare and other critical services needed to end the poverty cycle, are out of reach, including 450 million rural Africans. There is clear evidence that closing the transport access gap can significantly increase impacts related to poverty reduction and inclusive economic growth. There is an urgent need to expand rural access to achieve the SDGs. UNEP, World Bicycle Relief, Africa Network for Walking & Cycling (ANWAC), Rural Opportunities for Universal Transport Equity (ROUTE), and Catalyst 2030 shared collaborative models for systems change to address the scale of this challenge. Ghana Bamboo Bikes provided the rural community perspective. Participant discussion included the need for further work to document the business case for investors, and the importance of demonstration projects. There is a need for a phased approach to focus on basic (low cost) access for the most remote communities first, with integration between modes (walking, cycling, trails, trail bridges) key so non-motorized transport doesn't need to reach urban centers. Expanding financial inclusion is essential to increasing accessibility to mobility for the marginalized rural poor. There was widespread consensus of the critical need to change social norms, particularly to address gender barriers facing women and girls, including the essential role of the transport sector to promote this effort.

Recommendations:

1. **UN and Governments:** Join ROUTE, ANWAC and/or Catalyst2030's Transport and Mobility Alliance as key stakeholders in the global voice for rural access
 - UN: Recognise the need to deliver accessibility to services and opportunities **for all**, thereby going beyond developing infrastructures (SDG Target 9.1), as does the translation of the Energy SDG as access to energy services.
 - UN: Ask the committee that monitors the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women to assess and report back on mobility as relates to gender.
2. **Global Financial Institution, Funders and Governments:** Prioritize and increase investment in rural transport infrastructure and maintenance as a key strategy for all rural development/access programs, particularly targeting health, education, agriculture, livelihoods, gender equality, especially for marginalized populations in the last mile.

- Funders provide patient capital required for systems change to take place
- Governments, reduce import duties on bicycles targeting rural consumers.
- Critical to integrate rural access by non-motorised means and motorised means of transport
- Importance of the combination of goods and passenger transport, especially to address rural mobility for women and girls; measures required to develop rural mobility to deal with head/other loads

3. **NGOs:** View rural transport as an integral part of all rural access initiatives including in the agriculture, livelihoods, health, education, gender, and environment sectors.

4. **All:** Take Human-Centered approach to rural mobility

Next Steps:

- ROUTE, Africa Network for Walking & Cycling (ANWAC) and Catalyst2030 coalitions invite participants to join global coalitions to advocate for the call to action.
- ANWAC rural mobility working group to refine its workplan integrating stakeholder input