

EVENT TITLE: Unlocking the potential of sustainable urban transport for more climate ambition

EVENT DATE: 19 November 2024

EVENT TIME: 10.45-11.45am

LOCATION: SDG Pavilion, hosted by UN-DESA

Session Background

As cities expand, populations grow and transport demand rises in the face of climate change, the world is confronted with a challenge that demands comprehensive solutions. One of the most promising strategies for cities is to invest in integrated public transport. However, the SDG data for indicator 11.2.1 reveals concerning gaps, with only 60% of the world's urban population accessing convenient public transport in 500 meters (low-capacity options such as bus, tram) or 1 kilometre (high-capacity options such as metro, ferry).

There is urgent need to better link land use and transport planning, while accelerating the implementation of multi-modal transport systems on the basis of public transit, walking, cycling, and rideshare. Evidence suggests that behavioural changes ("Avoid" and "Shift" measures) are needed to support transport decarbonisation, as emission reductions will not be achieved without critical shifts in transport modes. In urban areas, a shift of 20-50% of all car trips to public transport, ridesharing, walking and cycling is required. Experts indicate that car ownership can be reduced 35% by providing adequate public transport services and ridesharing schemes (SLOCAT, 2023¹). E-buses provide a unique opportunity to deliver public transport services with lower air pollution and GHG emissions.

Cities that invest in multimodal transport see not only reduced emissions but also enhanced public health outcomes. As cities rapidly urbanize and people's incomes rise, vehicle ownership is growing and more road space is being allocated to motorized transport, and thus more funding is required to maintain roads and vehicle infrastructure. Scaling up active mobility infrastructure provides cities in low-and-middle income countries (LMICs) a key opportunity to maintain low levels of motorization, and maximize investments in public transportation. Walking and cycling not only improve physical health but also promote road safety, and foster a sense of community and connection. By providing a variety of integrated transportation options, everyone - regardless of age or ability - can navigate the city with ease.

Implementing a successful multimodal transport system requires substantial investment and innovative thinking. One must break down the silos that exist between different modes of transport and encourage collaboration among various sectors and stakeholders - government agencies, transport operators, private sector players, and community organizations. Only through a united effort can we create an integrated transport network that meets the needs of all citizens, while positively impacting on climate change. Including clear and achievable transport decarbonisation targets in NDCs - incl. reference to better land use planning and multi-modal transport - can help countries enhance their NDC

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<https://tcc-gsr.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/SLOCAT-Transport-Climate-and-Sustainability-Global-Status-Report-%E2%80%93-3rd-Edition.pdf>

mitigation ambition for the updates to the National Climate Strategies (NDC 3.0) in 2025. Complementary, multi-modal transport also enhances the climate resilience of cities by providing flexible and adaptive modes of travel to ensure that transport services remain operational, even in emergencies or during disruptions.

Accelerating action towards multi-modal transport and making urban access a central component of NDCs would allow countries to simultaneously deliver against climate targets, while also delivering on various SDGs and the New Urban Agenda.

Tentative Session agenda

Time (60 mins)	Agenda
3 mins	Welcome and introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms. Angel Cortez, Project Officer - Analysis, Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT)
7 mins	Keynote Speech <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Manuel A. Alculete Lopes de Araújo, Mayor of Quelimane, Mozambique
45 mins	Panel Discussion “How to unlock the potential of sustainable urban transport for more climate ambition” (with integrated Q&A) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mr. Manuel A. Alculete Lopes de Araújo, Mayor of Quelimane, Mozambique - Mr. Philip Turner, Head of Sustainable Development, International Association of Public Transport (UITP) - Ms. Lucie Anderton, Head of Sustainability, International Union of Railways (UIC) - Mr. Nicolas Peltier-Thiberge, Global Director in the Transport Sector in the Infrastructure Practice Group of the World Bank - Ms. Froso Christofides, Director of Members & Networks, European Cyclists’ Federation (ECF)
5 mins	Wrap-up & Concluding Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms. Stefanie Holzwarth, Programme Management Officer, Urban Mobility, UN-Habitat