



United Nations
**Sustainable
Transport
Conference**

14-16
OCTOBER
2021
Beijing



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the second Global Sustainable Transport Conference?

Recognizing the importance of transport in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement, the United Nations Secretary-General will convene the second Global Sustainable Transport Conference from 14-16 October 2021 in Beijing, China. The Conference will bring together leaders and experts from Governments, the transport industry, the UN system and other international organizations, the private sector, and civil society to chart a course toward sustainable transport. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Conference will be held in hybrid format with both virtual and in-person participation.

2. Who will attend?

The Conference will provide an opportunity for government officials, experts and leaders from the transport sector and the private sector, as well as from the UN system and other international organizations, and civil society to engage in a dialogue that emphasizes the critical role that sustainable transport can play in driving sustainable development and climate action worldwide. A maximum of 1000 participants is expected to participate in person while the rest will be following the Conference online via the dedicated Zoom platform and [UN WebTV](#)

3. How is the Conference structured?

The Conference will be a three-day meeting (14-16 October 2021) featuring an opening and closing ceremony, three plenary sessions, a Ministers' Forum, a Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Transport, a Forum on the Role of Business in advancing sustainable transport, as well as six thematic sessions. Side events sponsored by Member States, UN system entities and other eligible stakeholders on themes related to the Conference will be organized on the margins of the official meetings of the Conference.

4. What is the “hybrid” format? Who could attend in-person in Beijing?

The Conference will be held in a “hybrid” format with limited in-person participation in Beijing and virtual participation online. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the international travel restrictions in place, only those who are already present in China should apply for in-person participation, including diplomatic community, representatives of International Organizations and representatives of other stakeholders. All others are encouraged to participate in the Conference via the zoom platform, as well as [UN WebTV](#).

5. Is there substantive background information for the Conference?

The Conference will be informed by an inter-agency report, prepared by UNDESA, in close collaboration with other UN agencies, including ICAO, ILO, IMO, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNECE, UNEP, UNESCAP, UNESCWA, UN-Habitat, UNIDO, UN-OHRLS, UNWTO, WHO and the World Bank. All three Forums and the six thematic sessions will also be informed by concept notes. The full programme, concept notes and other background documentation are available on the Conference website:

<https://www.un.org/en/conferences/transport2021>. The inter-agency report is being finalized and will be made available shortly.

6. What does the Conference hope to achieve?

In addition to offering mutual learning and knowledge exchange, the Conference will provide a platform for identifying sustainable solutions and forging partnerships and launching initiatives to advance sustainable transport objectives. The UN Secretary-General would like to encourage Member States, UN system entities, civil society and the private sector to launch voluntary commitments, partnerships and initiatives that seek to raise ambition on sustainable transport and to share related information, including by registering them through the dedicated online platform on the Conference website:

<https://www.un.org/en/conferences/transport2021/commitments>. Registered initiatives, which can be entered ahead of, or during the Conference, will be an important outcome of the Conference.

7. What will be the outcomes of the Conference?

The Conference will result in a summary report, a list of voluntary commitments, and a concise, forward-looking, visionary statement calling for global action to further advance sustainable transport worldwide.

8. What will be discussed?

The key objective is to find pathways to achieve sustainable transport. This will involve all modes of transport—road, rail, aviation and waterborne—and how they can help promote economic recovery, job creation, improved health, poverty eradication, while addressing critical environmental concerns such as climate change. The Conference will address issues concerning green development, the role of science, technology, innovation and the private sector for sustainable transport, and sustainable transport for sustainable cities. There will be a particular focus on the

concerns of vulnerable groups, such as women, the youth, the elderly, persons with disabilities, and the poor, and of many developing countries, including least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

9. Will there be side events?

Side events sponsored by Member States, UN system entities and other eligible stakeholders on themes related to the Conference will be organized on the margins of the official meetings of the Conference. The side events will allow additional informal space for sharing experiences and provide alternative opportunities for dialogue. A full list of approved side events and their connection details will be made available on the Conference website.

10. Why is an international Conference on sustainable transport necessary?

Presently, transport contributes almost a quarter of all energy-related greenhouse gas emissions. And at the same time, more than a billion people still lack access to an all-weather road, and only about half the world's urban population have convenient access to public transport. Action is needed now to ensure that a balanced, environmentally sound, transport system works for all people.

The world is presently on the cusp of a transportation revolution—new technologies and innovations are coming to market that will dramatically change the energy mix needed to power our cars, trucks, trains, ships and planes. But this revolution risks missing people and communities, primarily in developing countries, that have yet to transition to modes and technologies of transport which would make systems truly sustainable. The world will not address climate change unless the transport sector is transformed in all countries.

Additionally, transport is about improving people's lives and livelihoods. A lack of transport options and mobility challenges frequently contribute to persistent poverty, inequality, and deprivations across the world increasing the risk of people being left behind.

In order to meet the increasing and changing transport demands while preserving the planet for current and future generations, we will have to change the way we plan, develop and use transport modes and systems, as well as the public space in which they operate, while taking into account the challenges and needs of vulnerable groups. Our response to the COVID-19 pandemic can provide valuable lessons in this regard. The Conference offers a unique opportunity for different stakeholders to discuss these issues and come up with innovative and viable solutions.

11. What is sustainable transport?

Sustainable transport enables the mobility of people and goods, enhancing economic growth and livelihoods while improving access to quality services, such as health, education and finance. It strengthens connectivity at all levels, helping

integrate economies, improving social equity, enhancing rural-urban linkages and building resilience. At the same time, it addresses the environmental, social and health impacts of transport.

According to the report of the former UN Secretary-General's High-level Advisory Group, sustainable transport seeks to alleviate these negative impacts while "advancing economic and social development to benefit today's and future generations—in a manner that is safe, affordable, accessible, efficient, and resilient".

12. What is the link between sustainable transport and the Sustainable Development Goals?

World leaders at the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20) unanimously agreed that transportation and mobility are central to sustainable development. While there is no single dedicated Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) for transport, transport is critical to achieving most, if not all, SDGs.

There are several explicit references to transport throughout the SDGs, such as in target 3.6 ('by 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents'), target 9.1 ('develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all') and target 11.2 ('by 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport while paying special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons'). For more information on the SDGs, please visit the website:

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>

13. What is the connection between sustainable transport and climate change?

Transport is a significant contributor to climate change, generating a quarter of energy - related GHG emissions and a sixth of total emissions. Its contribution is projected to grow to one third by 2050 unless decisive measures are taken to decarbonize the transport sector - with different modes of transportation requiring different solutions.

Climate change and extreme weather events pose significant risks to transport systems and related supply chains, disrupting services and damaging or destroying infrastructure, thus increasing vulnerability to economic disruption and human loss. As a result, there is an urgent need to enhance the resilience of transport systems to climate change impacts.

The transformation of the transport sector is critical for achieving the Paris Agreement. This transformation must go hand-in-hand with efforts to reduce inequality and poverty, with special attention to the needs of vulnerable groups and countries.

The upcoming COP26 in Glasgow will also feature the role of the transport sector (see: <https://ukcop26.org/transport/>). For more information on the Paris Agreement on climate change, please visit the website: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climatechange/>.