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Note to the Secretary-General

Update on the Secretary-General's Global Sustainable Transport Conference

Preparations for the Secretary-General's Global Sustainable Transport Conference (Ashgabat, 26-27 November 2016) are under way. There is growing interest among Member States, UN system and other international organizations, business and other stakeholders in this first ever global conference focusing on sustainable transport and its critical role in advancing climate action and the 2030 Agenda.

An inter-departmental team has twice visited Ashgabat on technical planning missions to discuss logistical preparations for the Conference, including meeting facilities, information and communication technology requirements, media, security, and protocol arrangements, among others. While several technical issues are yet to be solved, the inter-departmental team feels confident that the Government of Turkmenistan is committed and ready to host this Conference.

In the meantime, the Department has consulted both UN system organizations and Host Government on a draft programme of the Conference, which is attached herewith for consideration by the Executive Office of the Secretary-General. The Department is of the view that the draft programme is ready to be shared with Member States for information and feedback. The programme will be revised and updated, with speakers and panellists included, in early November, for approval by the Secretary-General.

The Department further recommends that the Secretary-General invite UN system entities to take the lead in, or contribute to, the preparation of thematic sessions and to consider launching partnership initiatives and commitments with Member States, business and other stakeholders in advancing sustainable transport and the SDGs. Together with the summary of the Conference, this Statement of Commitments and Partnerships, to be announced in Ashgabat, will be part of the action-oriented and forward-looking outcomes of the Conference. The Department will be ready to follow up on this proposal upon the endorsement of the Secretary-General.

The Department will keep the Executive Office of the Secretary-General updated of the preparation of the Conference.



WU Hongbo
8 September 2016

cc: Deputy Secretary-General

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United Nations Nations Unies

Secretary-General's Global Sustainable Transport Conference
Hosted by the Government of Turkmenistan

Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
26 – 27 November 2016

Draft Programme

Saturday, 26 November 2016	
10:00-11:00	Opening ceremony
11:00-13:00	Plenary session with statements of commitment and ambition
15:00-16:30	<p>Parallel thematic discussions</p> <p><i>Sustainable transport at the heart of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)</i></p> <p>Description</p> <p>Sustainable transport drives poverty eradication and sustainable development. There are a number of SDG targets directly linked to transport, including SDG 3 on health (increased road safety), SDG 7 on energy, SDG 8 on decent work and economic growth, SDG 9 on resilient infrastructure, SDG 11 on sustainable cities (access to transport and expanded public transport), SDG 12 on sustainable consumption and production (ending fossil fuel subsidies) and SDG 14 on oceans, seas and marine resources. In addition, sustainable transport will enable the implementation of nearly <i>all</i> the SDGs through inter-linkage impacts. Access to sustainable transport for all should be at the forefront, including for vulnerable groups such as women, children, persons with disabilities and the elderly.</p>
	<p><i>Reaching the most remote: rural transport challenges and opportunities</i></p> <p>Description</p> <p>Transport is a key enabler of rural development, allowing farmers, including women and small-holder farmers, to access markets, employment, health services, social interaction and the world beyond their village or local community. However, sustainable transport priorities for rural areas must go beyond simply building more all-weather roads. Achieving the 2030 Agenda in the rural context will require a holistic approach to transport: infrastructure improvements, technology transfer and innovation, emphasis on health and safety,</p>

	focus on active mobility, and local economic and social development. Opportunities for a green path to development must be maximized.
16:30-18:00	Parallel thematic discussions
	<i>Sustainable transport solutions to the climate crisis</i> Description While transport plays a critical role in economic and social development, the transport sector, as one of the top consumers of fossil fuels, is a major contributor to air pollution and generates a variety of emissions that impact the climate. Climate change has in turn impacts on critical transport infrastructure worldwide. Given the potential for climate related damage, disruption and delay to transport across closely interconnected global supply chains, enhancing the climate resilience of critical transport infrastructure is of strategic importance. Finding sustainable transport solutions, including adequate climate change mitigation and adaptation measures, will therefore be central to meeting the ambitious goals outlined in the Paris Agreement. Technology and innovation, inter-modal links and systems, and a robust commitment to public transport will all be vital components of a low-carbon transport future.
	<i>Sustainable urban transport solutions</i> Description Urban transport systems cannot be planned in isolation from other aspects of city governance—city planners, health departments, social services, civil society, private business and other stakeholders must participate in decision making. The goal is a city that promotes well-being, allows for the safe movement of people and goods, preferably relying on mass public transport, while minimizing air pollution and congestion and maximizing economic, social and environmental development. Accordingly, the draft New Urban Agenda, to be adopted at the Habitat III Conference in Quito, Ecuador in October 2016, envisages “cities and human settlements that” “promote...investment for sustainable, safe and accessible urban mobility and resource efficient transport systems for passengers and freight effectively linking people, places, goods, services, and economic opportunities”.
Sunday, 27 November 2016	
10:00-11:30	Plenary session with statements of commitment and ambition
11:30-13:00	Parallel thematic discussions
	<i>Public transport in the 21st century: moving passengers and freight in a sustainable manner</i> Description Safe, accessible, convenient and green transport systems will be crucial

	<p>to achieving sustainable development. The improvement and expansion of sustainable public transport systems, including bus rapid transit, metro, light rail systems and ferries, should be at the forefront. Short and long-range mobility solutions that harness the potential of information and communication technology, and incorporate active mobility as well as the new options stemming from the "share economy" will allow for passengers to fulfill their need for movement and for goods to be transported in a more sustainable way while minimizing the role of private vehicles and reducing energy consumption and climate impact.</p> <p><i>Sustainable transport and transit solutions in countries in special situations</i></p> <p>Description</p> <p>Sustainable transport is a challenge for all countries, but countries in special situations, including least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, and small island developing states, face particular obstacles. High transport cost, restricted access to the sea, limited air service for passengers and cargo, and difficulties securing investments and partnerships are among the challenges that must be addressed in order to achieve sustainable development in these countries. Evidence suggests that a significant share of the high trade transaction costs faced by many countries is attributable to transit-related challenges. Addressing these challenges, including through simplified, harmonized and standardized transport and transit procedures, intermodal connectivity, will go a long way in boosting economic development, sustainable tourism, and trade, while building regional and global value chains and promoting sustainable development.</p>
15:00-16:00	<p>Parallel thematic discussions</p> <p><i>Energy and transport</i></p> <p>Description</p> <p>Transport decisions—at the national and municipal levels, but also globally—must go hand in hand with energy decisions if sustainable development is to be achieved and should include a shift towards high-efficiency and low-carbon modes of transport. Sustainable energy will, by definition, serve as a precondition for and ultimately further sustainable transport. However, in the short-term developed and developing countries alike will be looking to strike the right balance between assuring access to energy and transport for this generation and preserving the planet for the next.</p>

	<p><i>Multi-modal sustainable transport and transit solutions: connecting rail, maritime, road and air</i></p> <p>Description</p> <p>Integrated multi-modal transport and transit systems that optimize the comparative advantages of each mode of transport are crucial in order to achieve sustainable transport of passengers and freight within and between countries. Road, rail, maritime, ferry and air transport, as well as non-motorized transport such as walking and cycling, need to be taken into account and emphasis should be placed on low-carbon-based energy modes of transport and an increased reliance on public transport systems. Sustainable multimodal transport and transit systems can provide an array of options for passenger and freight transport and successfully connect citizens and countries while supporting economic growth, social development and global trade. Transporting goods across national borders and over "the last mile" to their final destination in a safe, efficient and effective way is an ongoing challenge. Solutions will require collaboration between governments and across modes, and regional initiatives will be important to harmonize legal and policy frameworks.</p>
16:00-17:30	<p>Parallel thematic discussions</p> <p><i>Financing sustainable transport: domestic resource mobilization, international cooperation and public-private partnerships</i></p> <p>Description</p> <p>The foreseen population growth and related rising demand for transport will necessitate massive investment in new transport and infrastructure projects and the adequate maintenance of those already in place. Already today, transport investment needs are estimated to be between one and two trillion dollars per year. Of the current total annual investments worldwide, less than 40% is received by developing countries, where the needs, but also opportunities are the greatest. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, adopted in 2015, elaborates on the many approaches that will be needed to implement the 2030 Agenda, including traditional official development assistance, domestic resource mobilization, and a wide array of partnership models. The same diversity of approaches will be needed to finance sustainable transport in the 21st century.</p>
	<p><i>Global Vision Zero: reaching a new era in road safety</i></p> <p>Description</p> <p>With 1.3 million people killed and up to 50 million people injured every year in road accidents, road safety has to be a top priority for the global community. The establishment of adequate legal frameworks, the expansion of safe public transport systems, the transport of freight by</p>

	modes that are less harmful to humans, and the creation of national road safety strategies and plans will be of critical importance in the coming decades.
17:30-18:00	Closing ceremony

PARALLEL ACTIVITIES

Type of activity	Date
Transport Treaty Event	Date tbc [in parallel to official programme]
Business forum	27 November [in parallel to official programme]
Side-events	<p>Deadline for registration: 19 September 2016</p> <p>Please visit the Global Sustainable Transport Conference website for guidelines and request form: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/Global-Sustainable-Transport-Conference-2016 </p>