

## Ashgabat electric vehicle infrastructure

ASHGABAT, 27 November -- As the first ever Global Sustainable Transport Conference concluded today, representatives of more than 50 countries endorsed the Ashgabat Statement on Commitments and Policy Recommendations, with a view to supporting cleaner, greener transportation, from local transit systems to worldwide multimodal networks.

Rashid Meredov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, said the Conference had heard about successful projects and innovative ideas being developed. Recommendations would guide future efforts, he said.

"The Conference has reinforced the importance of sustainable transport and has shown it is a shared global task," said Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, at the closing ceremony. "Sustainable transport solutions are key to leaving no one behind, securing prosperity, enabling access to services and protecting the environment. Without sustainable transport, there will be no lasting progress on climate action and the Sustainable Development Goals."

Noting the many encouraging success stories delegates had shared at the two-day conference, he said more needed to be done, including mobilizing trillions of dollars in investments and implementing legal, regulatory and governance frameworks. Policy decisions needed to meet the needs of all in a low-carbon manner, requiring integrating transport modes and tapping into technological opportunities to bring the fundamental, transformative changes. He also underlined the need to continue and strengthen capacity-building to developing countries.

"We have identified areas for regional and international cooperation and shared far-reaching policy recommendations," he said. "We have, collectively and individually, identified concrete actions to move the world towards the new and essential paradigm of sustainable transport. Looking ahead, we must use our shared understanding to advance sustainable transport for all, by delivering on our commitments, forging new alliances and transforming our policies."

Also during the closing ceremony, Igor Runov, Under-Secretary-General and Head of the International Road Transport Union, presented the summary of the Transport Business Forum, which had been held earlier in the day.

During the Conference, Heads of State and Government, ministers, other high-level officials, more than 20 intergovernmental organizations and United Nations entities and 200 civil society and private sector representatives discussed ways to build greener, better transport systems that aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Panellists included ministers, experts and other stakeholders who presented solutions to pressing challenges and provided examples of innovative projects that were already having an impact on local populations. Among those ideas were bus vouchers for pregnant women making it possible for them to visit health centres to receive prenatal care.

Speakers also raised concerns, with some pointing out that lack of access to transport continued to cripple economies in rural areas and in countries in special situations. Others noted that transport must be safe for all, including for women and girls who used public transit. Delegates also emphasized that when developing transport systems, cooperation among public and private sectors could bring added benefits. Many stressed that international cooperation to create truly global sustainable transport systems was critical to achieving the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda.

Indeed, speakers pointed out that a number of Sustainable Development Goals and their targets were linked to transport. Among them, Goal 3 on health included a target on increased road safety and Goal 9 on resilient infrastructure and Goal 11 on sustainable cities extended access to transport and expanding public transportation.

Speakers also highlighted the importance of leaving no one behind when working towards achieving the 2030 Agenda vision. Some emphasized the need to expand access to transport to reach vulnerable populations, including older persons and people living in remote communities.

A common call that had echoed through the debates was that enhanced, sustainable transport carried widespread benefits, from the economy to the quality of life. Among them were increased access to markets, health care and basic services.

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