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Statement

by

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at

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Open Ministerial Session

Accelerating the transition: Innovation for greener and more inclusive transport

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Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Colleagues,

Before I begin, I would like to thank His Excellency Hans Christian Schmidt, and Mr. José Viegas for inviting me to speak today.

In 2015, when UN Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda, they also recognized the relevance of transport for sustainable development. The same recognition came from this year's Inland Transport Committee (ITC). The 58 UN transport conventions and agreements that have been developed in the ITC to support transport on road, rail and rivers must be further used and developed to support the sustainable development goals, the climate agreement and, importantly, the technological revolution we see in the transport sector. IT changes everything, from the way we move and communicate to how we legislate transport and regulate vehicles.

If we do not shape this sustainable transport revolution together we will not be able to profit to the fullest extent from innovations such as automated vehicles, intelligent transport systems, or advanced systems for freight transport and logistics. We must work together to shape a regulatory framework that can handle everything from horse-driven carriages and bicycles to autonomous vehicles and drone supported transport systems. It is complex but it is urgent.

However, the benefit can be huge. Also when it comes to connectivity and mobility. Car, scooter, bike, ride-sharing initiatives and automated vehicles, are but the first steps of this revolution that can help to modernise urban transport in our still more crowded cities and that can also help guarantee accessibility for the entire population, including the elderly.

In the logistics sector we can increase competitiveness via smart infrastructure and vehicle innovations. This can enhance the efficiency of freight transport and reduce the cost of doing business across borders. New and important trading nations in Asia and the Middle East are now joining our TIR convention and push for the electronic TIR, eTIR that we are developing together with IRU. In cities, E-Commerce is an extremely fast-growing retail

market and the increasing numbers of home deliveries can dramatically alter distribution patterns and pose new logistics challenges for our cities. We need intelligent systems and smart regulation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

ITS innovations for the transport sector develop at such an accelerated pace that regulatory frameworks around the world have not been able to keep up. This is why we have formed a strong partnership with the International Telecommunication Union. But implementation remains fragmented and not interconnected. There is an urgent need to counter this by with an internationally harmonized framework that fosters innovation. At the same time, this framework must allow innovations to be compatible and “border-free”.

The strength of the UNECE ITC is that it has 70 years of experience in bringing experts and governments together to regulate transport. And our many UN conventions and agreements are available not only in this region but globally for all UN member States. As technological innovations continue to shape us, ITC will continue to be at the forefront of policy, technical and regulatory development, to help governments create the smartest and most sustainable transport systems for their citizens.

I would like to invite you to the 70th anniversary session of the ITC in February 2017 where I hope we can continue these fruitful discussions.

Thank you.
