

**FOURTH UNECE REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION MEETING ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

GENEVA, 1-2 December 2009

Agenda item 5. Transport

Intervention by the World Society for the Protection of Animals¹

Thank you Madame Chair.

I'd like to input on question A and bring up a few points to complement on issues raised so far. Firstly, talking about non-motorized means of transport, it's not only bicycles and pedestrians, but especially in rural Eastern European and Central Asian regions it's animals that are still an important means of transport too. And this raises a lot of other issues like access to proper animal feed, water, animal health, animal welfare, the spread of zoonotic disease and awareness and education about these issues among the population. Working animals are social safety nets and thus if they are not in good health the livelihoods of people are significantly compromised. Policies should not ignore this.

Secondly, looking at transport is looking at infrastructure of roads, railways, ports, airports et cetera but we must not forget – and Sweden already touched upon this- that this potentially has major consequences for nature, plant and animal life, biodiversity and ecological functions that go with these. Roads can cut habitats in half, interfering with migration routes, increasing risks of road accidents involving wildlife and potentially destroying the habitat's caring capacity for species and ecosystems in the different territories. So if we look in an integral way at transportation policies, we should take those issues into account. To name a best practice in this respect, in the country I'm from, The Netherlands, the government has an impressive programme in place called the Ecological Main Structure, which connects the different bits of nature – forests, wetlands, grasslands et cetera – enabling animals and plants to travel and ensuring biodiversity and robust nature.

Thank you.

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¹ The text is presented as received from the author.