



Opening remarks by Mr. Ján Kubiš

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151st session of the

World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29)

WP.29 Round Table on Climate Change and Transport

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Geneva, Palais des Nations, Room XX

starting at 2.30 p.m. and concluding at 6 p.m.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to address you at the opening session of the World Forum's Round Table on Climate Change and Transport.

Today the entire international community shares the concern of global warming. The risks of climate change cause global problems, thus needing a global solution. Global warming is a challenging area in which the United Nations is deeply involved. The Kyoto Protocol was set up by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Secretary-General has put **climate change** firmly at the top of the United Nations agenda. There is a clear consensus among scientists, policy-makers, experts and business leaders from the automotive and other industries that concerted action is needed to address climate change through the reduction of **greenhouse gas** emissions, especially of CO₂.

The UNECE is well-equipped to be a driving force addressing this challenge. It has a strong mandate and recognized expertise in areas which are crucial for **climate change adaptation and mitigation**, namely through environmental conventions, regulations on vehicle construction, policies towards sustainable transport development, and its work in the field of energy efficiency, housing, forestry and timber. More recently, it launched initiatives to promote green housing as well as to improve the indicators measuring natural capital and sustainable development.

The UNECE's extended experience spans more than six decades in the development of legal instruments in the field of transport and it has become the global **centre of multilateral agreements for inland transport**. Today it manages 57 international conventions and agreements in the area of transport infrastructure, border crossing, construction of vehicles, transport of dangerous goods and other specialized cargoes and road safety. These legal instruments are available to all UN member States.

The UNECE's mandate is to promote and facilitate economic development in the region and, in this respect, **transport is one of the key sectors**. It provides mobility and access to basic services, such as health and education for all. It is also vital to the well functioning of economies, to the production and distribution of goods as well as to trade and tourism. Transport is indispensable to open up and integrate countries and regions, particularly those that are peripheral or landlocked. The transport sector, including the vehicle manufacturing industry and their suppliers, accounts for a large share of the gross domestic product (GDP) in many countries.

However, transport is also linked to negative externalities that need to be dealt with: environmental pollution, accidents and extensive use of fossil fuels. There is now a shift from pure mobility objectives towards sustainable transport objectives. We must ensure that future transport systems provide **sustainable mobility and economic development** without reducing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

In this respect, I was very glad to hear about the World Forum's decision to organize today's **Round Table** on Climate Change and Transport.

The **World Forum will address**, during this important event, not only new fuel efficient and innovative vehicle technologies including Intelligent Transport Systems, but also inter-modal transport links and inter-sectoral links. In particular I expect that the Round Table will tackle the necessity of changes in the energy sector needed for shifting the road vehicle fleet from using fossil fuels to the use of electricity.

Further sustainable transport solutions and more energy **efficient transport means** are also promoted by the UNECE through the activities and partnerships in 'The Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme' (THE-PEP), for example by promoting human-powered mobility like cycling and walking as environmentally friendly modes of transport which reduce urban congestion and contribute to public health. THE PEP also launched projects to foster the introduction of eco-driving into professional driver training.

The main **objective of this Round Table** is to identify potential scenarios and the most needed activities to which the World Forum WP.29 could contribute, in its future work aimed at climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I wish you a successful and productive discussion this afternoon.

Background document:

ECE/TRANS/WP.29/2010/84 (tabled by the WP.29 secretariat) on the UNECE activities on the reduction of emissions of gaseous pollutants and greenhouse gases in the transport sector.

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