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Statement

by

Ms. Olga Algayerova

United Nations Under-Secretary-General

Executive Secretary

of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

at

FIA event: “The Impact of the 4th Industrial Revolution on Urban Transportation”

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Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends,

It is my pleasure to be here today at this event hosted by Mr. Jean Todt, who is a much-valued partner of our organization in his capacity as the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) was founded in 1947 to promote economic integration in the pan-European region. We have 56 member States stretching from Canada and the United States to all of Europe as well as Turkey, Israel and the countries of the former Soviet Union. We are a technical organization that creates norms, standards and guidelines in various fields pertaining to sustainable development, including transport, road safety and urban development. Of course, all of these areas are significantly affected, indeed improved, by technological progress. But such improvements can only occur if new technologies are deployed in a safe manner. It is our belief that strong legal and regulatory frameworks are keys to doing so. And another important factor is accurate and reliable data and indicators, which allow us to measure the impact these technologies are having and adjust our policies if needed.

Let me expand a bit upon these two factors.

In terms of legal and regulatory frameworks, our Inland Transport Committee (ITC) has actually worked on this topic for 72 years, and is also at the forefront of integrating the innovations arising out of the 4th Industrial Revolution into such frameworks. The ITC is the only body in the United Nations focused on inland transport, namely road, railway, inland waterway and intermodal

transport. It provides an intergovernmental forum where UN Member States come together to forge tools for economic cooperation, and negotiate and adopt international conventions on inland transport. These 59 conventions are considered indispensable for developing safe, efficient and sustainable inland transport systems. Accession to these conventions improves mobility, transit and connectivity. We also work on regulatory issues related to road safety and transport infrastructure. Given the advances in digitalization in vehicles, this work has expanded to cover Intelligent Transport Systems in the past few years. These technologies are revolutionary and can have enormous benefits to our lives, but they also create safety issues and regulatory challenges – for example, relating to liability and insurance. UNECE works to facilitate a safe deployment of these technologies and enhance their contribution to improving road safety, employment, urban development and environmental protection and reducing emissions. Of course, much of the relevant regulatory work is technical in nature. In that context, we bring together governments, vehicle manufacturers, ICT industries, insurances, consumers and academia at our UNECE World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicles Regulations. The Forum shapes the technical regulations for conventional and automated/autonomous/connected vehicles, and ensures the safe introduction of future AI and Machine Learning technologies. We also host the Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (WP.1), which helps develop traffic rules to regulate the use of vehicles, including automated vehicles.

All the endeavours I've mentioned thus far focus on transport in a general context. However I'd also like to mention a few of our initiatives which provide guidance for legal and regulatory developments specifically in the field of

urban transport.

One of these is the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme, THE PEP for short. A joint programme of UNECE and WHO/Europe. It has been working on the creation of green and healthy jobs in transport (a recent THE PEP study showed that the number of cycling-related jobs in the UNECE region could increase by 435,000 in selected major cities if they increased their cycling share to that of Copenhagen), studies on the effects on jobs of the electrification of private car transport and increased public transport investment; the promotion of eco-driving solutions; incentivising the use of Managed Mobility Schemes; and a Handbook on Sustainable Urban Mobility and Spatial Planning.

We have also prepared a publication on a key theme for the 4th Industrial Revolution in this sector – a study on Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS). By providing trip planning and one-stop fare purchase for the user through a single platform, it integrates mobility services. MaaS is enabled by advances in intelligent systems, the internet of things, cloud technology and big data management.

All of these will feed into the Fifth High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment (26-27 November 2020) in Vienna which will set the scene for future developments and innovation in this area. You are all cordially invited to attend this landmark event in promoting sustainable transport.

In short, many of the activities pursued by UNECE are driving the 4th Industrial Revolution in Urban Transport. We assist member States to gain the most from innovation in the sector, and through setting the required regulatory framework to ensure that when innovations (and revolutions) occur, they ensure safety and accessibility for all users.

The second key factor I mentioned earlier is the importance of data and indicators in monitoring our progress. In this context, I would like to highlight the United for Smart Sustainable Cities (U4SSC) initiative, a joint endeavor of 17 UN agencies with UNECE and ITU acting as a secretariat. Under this framework, the UNECE/ITU key performance indicators (KPIs) for smart sustainable cities have been developed. These establish the criteria to evaluate the contributions of ICTs to making cities smarter and more sustainable, and to provide cities with the means for self-assessment. They also include indicators on urban transport. The KPIs are free international standards. They fully reflect the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and therefore help cities to evaluate their economic, environmental and socio-cultural performance and assess their progress towards the SDG targets. We are happy to work with cities around the world to help use them and subsequently develop city action plans and provide guidance on implementing these plans.

Before I conclude, I would like to mention one relevant upcoming UNECE event this year, where you can join us to discuss urban transport with local authorities. This is our Forum of Mayors. This event will respond to the needs

of a new multilateralism, where local actors have a crucial role to play, and provide a voice to mayors to share practices and engage in focused dialogues with national governments within the United Nations. In the context of the Forum of Mayors, cities and countries will have an open discussion about further actions needed to realize SDGs of the 2030 Agenda. We are now looking forward to hosting the first UNECE-led Forum of Mayors on the 6th of October 2020 in Geneva. We would like to invite you to join us for this event and in our quest to improve sustainable urban development in UNECE region and beyond.

Thank you.
