



UNECE 81st Inland Transport Committee

ITC High- Level Policy Segment

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Address by

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Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The International Road Federation wishes to extend its congratulations to the UNECE Inland Transport Committee for the organization of this high-level policy discussion and for giving us the opportunity to share our views on the important and pressing issue that is Automation in transport.

We at the IRF believe that **Sustainable Mobility is a fundamental part of the quality of life of people** beside being the backbone of the economy of any country in the world. To mark our commitment, some six years ago we decided to expand the mandate of our Federation to embrace mobility at large and the mission to promote roads and road networks that enable access and sustainable mobility for All. (Helping delivering safe and sustainable journeys to everyone independently of where they live or what is their social status has been part of our own journey for the past 70 years).

Since 1948 the International Road Federation – an independent, not-for-profit organization with members from the public and the private sector in nearly 90 countries of the world - has been acting as a global platform fostering cooperation between governments, the private sector and other key actors. It has done so by **raising awareness**, by **building capacity** at all levels and by **inspiring innovation**. Of course, we have not done all this alone. We have always strongly believed in the power of **collaborations**. The partnership we have built with UNECE over the past 50 years is a



testimony of that spirit of collaboration and so is the work we are actually carrying out in India with the government - Niti Aayog - and the private sector and that has led to the creation of an ITS National Committee and the development of an ITS strategy and action plan for India.

Technology is set to transform transportation and impact society and the environment in ways we cannot fully predict **but must be prepared to manage**. In addition to coping with a technological revolution, we also face hard questions about how to reduce transportation GHG emissions, make it more resilient, safe, efficient and equitable; and find adequate financial resources to do so.

These revolutionary technologies could potentially deliver the outcomes we expect in terms of efficiency, pollution, equity, safety. **But do not guarantee them**. We have only started measuring the impact that these technologies have and will have. How do we determine and guide the direction of these changes? The answers to these and other questions are critically important.

Public funding for research and education has never been more important, nor more uncertain. Public spending on **transportation research is declining**. **Sustained funding mechanisms have to be put in place to support research, development and demonstration on automation**. We applaud and acknowledge the contribution that the EU is giving to research and innovation via the Horizon2020 programme. But more is needed and the private sector can and is ready to play its part.

How the future unfolds depends on which technologies and services the consumers and businesses embrace and how policy makers respond. What policies would best help harvest the benefits of connected and automated vehicles and of transformative transportation services? The answers to these and other questions are critical. And it is in forums like this one that we need to look for those answers.

The development of a comprehensive global/regional policy framework on automation in transport is of critical importance to guide national and local authorities in



addressing these issues. **High-level dialogue with industry and academia** is equally important in this process. We believe that UNECE is well placed to foster the collaboration needed for the development of long-term, people-oriented transport outcomes.

We need to put people back at the centre in planning for our mobility systems. Access and affordability are two key issues and so is people's engagement in decision making processes.

We look to the future with optimism, despite the many challenges. IRF **stands ready to play its part**. We stand ready to work hand in hand with others as we have done for the past 70 years.

Thank you