

## REPORT:

### LIFE AFTER RIO+20

Public transport made a major breakthrough at the UN Sustainable Development Conference in June 2012, also known as Rio+20. The declarations acknowledged that public transport and sustainable mobility were part of the solution to the challenges facing cities worldwide today. It is the first time urban mobility sustainable transport is given such recognition at that level.

It is a significant development because at the last global sustainable development conference in Johannesburg 10 years earlier, transportation was absent from the agenda and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) agreed there.

Transportation is now poised to become a significant part of the forthcoming Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's), one of major outcomes from Rio+20. These would complement or succeed the MDG's which expire in 2015.

UITP played an active role in the build up at Rio+20 and below are a summary of the mayor activities and agreements made at the landmark international conference.

#### **Recognising public transport's contribution to sustainable development**

While some have expressed regret at the lack of commitments, Rio+20's outcome document, 'The Future We Want', contains two important paragraphs on sustainable transport (see box opposite). For the first time, sustainable transport has been officially recognized as an essential feature in the delivery of sustainable development.

Transport is also included in the document's sustainable cities chapter, recognising the link between urban development and transport and the role of walking and cycling as healthy, environmentally friendly methods of commuting. What the text lacks are specific commitments to implement sustainable transportation initiatives.

#132. We note that transportation and mobility are central to sustainable development. Sustainable transportation can enhance economic growth and improve accessibility. Sustainable transport achieves better integration of the economy while respecting the environment. We recognize the importance of the efficient movement of people and goods, and access to environmentally sound, safe and affordable transportation as a means to improve social equity, health, resilience of cities, urban-rural linkages and productivity of rural areas. In this regard, we take into account road safety as part of our efforts to achieve sustainable development.

#133. We support the development of sustainable transport systems, including energy efficient multi-modal transport systems, notably public mass transportation systems, clean fuels and vehicles, as well as improved transportation systems in rural areas. We recognize the need to promote an integrated approach to policymaking at the national, regional and local levels for transport services and systems to promote sustainable development. We also recognize that the special development needs of landlocked and transit developing countries need to be taken into account while establishing sustainable transit transport systems. We acknowledge the need for international support to developing countries in this regard.

- Further reading: ["The Future We Want"](#)



## Rio+20 encourages sustainability reporting

Paragraph 47 of the outcome document agreed at Rio+20 'encourages' companies to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle. The development was championed by Brazil, Denmark, France and South Africa, which formed a group to advance corporate sustainability reporting.

The group's vision is that corporate transparency and accountability are key elements to enhancing an organisation's contribution to sustainable development.

The Rio+20 outcomes encourage industries and sectors to develop models of best practice to facilitate sustainability reporting and capacity building. UITP's Charter on Sustainable Development recognises the public transport sector's commitment towards this important issue and helps public transport undertakings better monitor, measure and report on their sustainability performance. Signatories benefit from the exchange of knowledge and experience and to actively showcase their own best practices, which UITP uses for its international advocacy work.

#47. We acknowledge the importance of corporate sustainability reporting and encourage companies, where appropriate, especially publicly listed and large companies, to consider integrating sustainability information into their reporting cycle. We encourage industry, interested governments and relevant stakeholders with the support of the United Nations system, as appropriate, to develop models for best practice and facilitate action for the integration of sustainability reporting, taking into account experiences from already existing frameworks and paying particular attention to the needs of developing countries, including for capacity building.

## UITP: Sustainable transport in the cities of the future

The Rio+20 negotiations considered transport within the context of cities and urban development. Therefore UITP, UIC and UNIFE<sup>1</sup> developed a joint statement and a series of events on the theme "Sustainable Transport in the Cities of the Future."

In the statement, the three associations called on all parties at Rio+20 to encourage strong international actions to endorse a modal shift towards rail and public transport.

These messages were brought to decision makers at Rio+20 at a series of events jointly organised by the three associations:

- A side event at the Rio+20 conference venue with an audience of over 70 people representing national governments and UN institutions.
- A 1-day workshop at FETRANSPOR<sup>2</sup> to share expertise on developing sustainable rail and public transport systems which attracted around 100 participants.
- An evening reception to officially launch the joint statement, attended by key politicians and decision makers attending the Rio+20 conference.

At the evening event to officially launch the joint statement, the Brazilian Transport Minister – Paulo Sergio Passos – praised the three associations for their efforts in the build-up to Rio+20. Upon launching the joint statement, John English, Chair of UITP's Sustainable Development Commission, urged Rio+20 to encourage a more sustainable transport future: "We need

<sup>1</sup> International Union of Railway and the European Railway Industry Association

<sup>2</sup> The federation of bus passenger transport companies in the state of Rio de Janeiro



*Rio+20 to make sustainable transport a vital ingredient for the cities of the future. Public transport is critical in helping to address the problems caused by automobile dependence and building cities which are clean, equitable, accessible and economically viable”.*

- Further reading: Please see the UITP [press release](#) on Rio+20 and download the joint statement [here](#)

### **Voluntary Commitments at Rio+20 – financing sustainable transport**

UITP on behalf of the partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport (SLoCat); organised a side event to present to Rio+20 the sustainable transport community's voluntary commitments.

In total, 18 commitments were submitted for sustainable transport and they ranged from promoting environmentally sensitive forms of transportation to UITP's strategy to double the market share of public transport of public transport by 2025 (PTx2).

The event also saw eight largest Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) also announce that they will invest \$175 billion in sustainable transportation systems over the coming decade.

*“These unprecedented commitments have the promise to save hundreds of thousands of lives by cleaning the air and making roads safer; cutting congestion in hundreds of cities; and reducing the contribution of transportation to harmful climate change,”* said the Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Joan Clos. *“They will create more efficient passenger and freight transportation, spurring sustainable urban economic growth.”*

The pledge was made by the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank, the Latin American and African Development banks, and four other MDBs.

- Further reading: the [18 commitments](#)

### **G20: More than just Rio**

In the build up to Rio, the annual G20 meeting in Mexico recognised for the first time urban public transport. In the build up, UITP had reiterated its stance to the G20 that a commitment to, and investment in, public transport is crucial to achieve sustainable development.

The G20 declaration recognises the urbanisation challenge and in this context, it was decided to establish investment in infrastructure as one of the main pillars of the Development Working Group. It suggests that public policy should promote energy efficiency without compromising the population's needs regarding access and mobility, thus requiring coordinated action on comprehensive planning that can result in multiple benefits, for instance through public transport.

### **Rio+20 – the road ahead**

Over the remainder of the year, a high-level expert panel under the leadership of Ban Ki Moon will be established. This is an opportunity to follow up on the voluntary commitments, as well as include sustainable transport in the SDG's. Additionally, in the following months there is a need to work on principles, guidance, and indicators to ensure that the MDB commitments are measurable, transparent, and reliable.

