

**Check against delivery**



**Statement**

**by**

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**for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing  
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**at the IRU General Assembly**

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**President Janus Lackny of IRU,**

**Members of the presidential executive,**

**SG of IRU,**

**Distinguished delegates,**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to address this important meeting of the IRU General Assembly.

I wish to extend my gratitude to the International Road Transport Union, in particular, President Janusz LACNY, and Secretary General Mr. Umberto de Pretto, for the excellent work that is being done to support development of efficient transit transport systems around the world. I am proud of the good and sustained cooperation that my Office has established with IRU that spans several years now, in promoting safe and efficient transport in various parts of the world. With the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding, our partnership has further strengthened to realize our collective objectives.

It is undeniable that the road transport is the lifeblood of economy and societies. Mobility has been the hallmark of human progress since ancient times. Not only did innovation, infrastructure and skill in development of transport provide a strong foundation of great civilizations in the past, even today, road transport keeps the globalisation process going with a verve, transforming the lives of the people in every nook and corner of the world. And it will continue to do so in the future as well.

The reasons are obvious. Access to goods and services through efficient means of transport and connectivity is essential for poverty eradication, economic growth and building resilience from the community to the national and international levels. Ensuring better market access and movement for rural communities through improved transport services enhances farmer's lives and sustainable livelihoods.

Similarly, better facilitated trade and passenger services between the cities and countries has been and continues to be a strong engine of global growth, while also helping promote deeper understanding, mutual prosperity and a better life for all.

Improved regional connectivity will also offer important development opportunities to the least developed, landlocked and small island developing countries.

I commend efforts undertaken by IRU to support countries to take full advantage of the extended and integrated networks, markets and production chains to achieve overall progress. I am glad to note that IRU is a strong proponent of efficient road transport services not only through TIR but also through policy coherence, sustainability, transparency, capacity building, technology integration and multistakeholder partnerships, which constitute a strong foundation for trade and sustainable development. I particularly appreciate your consistent and committed promotion of Public-Private Partnerships and the road safety issues.

Distinguished delegates,

Your General Assembly is taking place at a critical time in the life of the United Nations family.

In September this year, in New York, the world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Over 150 heads of state or government were present. They expressed their commitment to a transformative agenda that puts a premium on an integrated approach and aims to leave no-one behind – including the world's least developed, land locked and small island countries. The Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity in a coherent manner that also seeks to strengthen universal peace in larger freedom. The 17 Goals of the Agenda will certainly stimulate far reaching actions over the next fifteen years in key areas for humanity and planet.

The Goal number 9 has a particular relevance here, as it calls for building resilient infrastructure, promoting ISID and fostering innovation. Under goal 9, there is a

special focus on facilitating sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in all developing countries through enhanced financial, technical and technological support while also giving due priority to LDCs, LLDCs, SIDS and African countries. There is also a special focus on development of quality, reliable and sustainable regional and transborder infrastructure under it.

We cannot expect to achieve many of the sustainable development goals without an efficient, modern and sustainable road transport. A lot therefore hinges on goal 9. And that is a day-to-day reality for all, irrespective of the level of development and the location of the country.

My Office also seized the opportunity of the high-level gathering in New York to organize a High-Level Forum on landlocked developing countries on the theme of: “Linking Landlocked Developing Countries to Global Opportunities: Challenges and Opportunities”. Heads of State or Government and High-Level Officials of landlocked developing countries, transit countries and development partners participated in the event.

The Declaration that was adopted at the forum reaffirmed the commitment of member countries to address in a holistic manner the special challenges and needs of landlocked developing countries, and mainstream the Vienna Programme of Action into national strategies and development plans.

In July this year, world leaders gathered in Addis Ababa, for the Third International Conference for Financing for Development, and affirmed their strong political commitment to address the challenges of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity. The focus on infrastructure, as called for by many of the countries of my constituencies, was obvious. The global infrastructure initiatives and facilities of various global and regional financial institutions received a big boost at the conference together with the creation of a global infrastructure forum.

Also, in December, world trade ministers will gather in Nairobi, Kenya to give further impetus to international trade, while reinforcing its development dimension. They have also an important issue of moving forward the implementation of the trade facilitation agreement, besides their work on DDA. This agreement is very much in line with what IRU has been engaged in doing: reducing the cost of trade, harmonization of standards and making trade work for everyone.

Next month, in December, in Paris, governments will reach a universal and meaningful climate change agreement, which will effectively ensure an inseparable linkage between climate change impacts, global progress and poverty. And a sustainable transport system will have to make a strong contribution to its success as well. UN Secretary General has called for strong global commitment to the success of the climate change summit after the successful organization of financing for development and 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, as they all reinforce each other.

The commitments at these UN conferences are manifestation of a strong global consensus to address global development challenges in a holistic manner and in partnership. This is very important, as we all live in an ever integrated and globalized world. The level of interconnectedness today is all pervasive and indeed unprecedented.

Last year, in Vienna, representatives of landlocked developing countries, together with transit developing countries and development partners, adopted the Vienna Programme of Action, an ambitious, far-reaching and results-oriented programme, aiming at addressing special challenges and needs of landlocked developing countries for the decade 2014-2024. The Programme is indeed an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as it seeks to achieve structural transformation and sustainable economic growth and development of more than 450 million people, and turn landlocked countries into land-linked countries by

promoting seamless transit and trade corridors and regional integration between them.

Development partners, including the United Nations system, are committed to support the implementation of the programme. These countries need support for resource generation, improve capacity, strengthen governance and forge meaningful and inclusive partnerships. This will enable them to build and maintain efficient transport infrastructure, increase trade and become better integrated into global markets.

I would like to applaud the efforts that IRU, working together with UN institutions, regional development banks and all the other stakeholders, has deployed to support landlocked developing countries, transit countries and all its member countries with a view to removing physical and non-physical barriers to land transport transit operation. I also recognise some of the great initiatives being supported or implemented such as the Silk Road, the New Eurasian Land Transport Initiative, the Black Sea Ring Highway Caravan, Capacity Building for border management, use of the single window concept, one stop border controls, modernization and the increased use of ICTs for customs clearance, establishment of dry ports and inter-modal transit transport systems, and enhancing the reliability of logistics and supply chains - to mention just a few.

Distinguished delegates,

Investing in sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including transport, energy, water and sanitation for all, is a pre-requisite to achieving many of development goals. World leaders decided to bridge the global infrastructure gap, to facilitate development of sustainable, accessible and resilient quality infrastructure in developing countries through enhanced financial and technical support.

This is long overdue. And the fact that it has now received due importance and support at the global level augurs well for translating these visions into regional, national, sub-national and community level achievements. But the road ahead is

critical for us. Implementation is key to fulfilling all these interconnected and mutually reinforcing global visions and pronouncements.

I would like to assure you that my Office will continue to strengthen our partnership with IRU, as well as many other institutions, to promote transport and transit development in a holistic manner. Because we know that it has great untapped potential to transform our lives for better and attain many of SDGs.

Your motto of working together for a better future perfectly reflects the need of the hour. This is a time of great expectations and opportunities. Power to change is in our hands. As we embark on this transformative global journey, let us all commit ourselves to contribute to achieving these noble goals with a sense of collective responsibility. I wish the General Assembly Meeting a great success.

I thank you for your kind attention.