Enhancing the role of the private sector in the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Side Event: 2017 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development follow-up

Tuesday, 23 May 2017, 1:15pm -2:30pm

Conference Room 12

Keynote speech of Mr Christian Labrot, IRU President

H.E. Ambassador Lazarous Kapambwe, Permanent Representative of Zambia to the United Nations and Global Chair of the Group of LLDCs

Excellencies,

Distinguished Representatives of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the International Trade Centre (ITC), and the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island States (UNOHRLLS)

Mr Moderator,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

IRU is honoured by the opportunity to co-organise this important meeting with the Permanent Mission of Zambia to the United Nations, the IFC, the ITC and UNOHRLLS, and I am pleased to share the IRU’s experience in engaging with international stakeholders on the sustainable transport dimension of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development generally, and in promoting the objectives of the Vienna Programme of Action in particular.

The IRU is the world road transport organisation, which upholds the interests of road transport operators worldwide. Our efforts contribute to making the road transport industry sustainable in all respects to drive economic growth and prosperity through the sustainable mobility of people and goods around the globe.

With a truly global vision, the IRU acts effectively at international and national and even local level through its network of national road transport associations that represent truck, bus, coach and taxi operators in more than 100 countries across all five continents.
The strength of the IRU lies in the manner in which we deploy our vision and mission through a true Public Private Partnership with the United Nations, notably in implementing the UN Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention), and in other key UN trade facilitation instruments, such as the Harmonization, CMR, ADR, ATP, and CVR Conventions, to efficiently and effectively facilitate the movement of persons and goods. The efforts of our Members drive economic growth and prosperity; promote job creation to combat poverty and exclusion, and facilitate access to essential goods and services.

The mission, purpose and actions of the IRU resonate particularly strongly in the context of the six priority areas of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries, which include:

1. Fundamental transit Policy Issues
2. Structural Economic Transformation
3. Infrastructure Development
4. International Trade and Trade Facilitation
5. Regional Integration
6. Means of Implementation

Since its creation in 1948, IRU has evolved into a global operation that works to achieve many of the objectives outlined in the Vienna Programme of Action. We work with governments, public authorities and businesses, big and small, to promote sound policies, and to promote more sustainable road transport. We equip and inform transport operators with vital information to allow them to circulate safely, and to avert costly delays, which in some regions is reported to account for close to 60% of drivers’ times en route. We monitor industry developments closely – whether it’s legislation, policies, events or other developments that affect their work and movements. We reflect on challenges facing the industry and events that impact the future of our world and our industry. We cooperate with decision makers in intergovernmental bodies, international organisations, and all stakeholders – including the general public. We make sure that the voices of road transport stakeholders are heard in policy decisions; and we encourage public-private partnerships – the most notable of which is the UN TIR Convention, which counts 70 signatory countries – including China, which acceded in 2016 and sees TIR as a cornerstone of President Xi’s Belt and Road Initiative. We also have other partnerships such as the Smart Move High Level
Groups, which are now operational in four regions, including East Africa, Europe, the CIS, and in India, which aims to double the use of bus and coach transport as the safest, most environmentally friendly and most efficient mode to move people.

Indeed, the IRU, through its advocacy, technical and capacity-building efforts contributes significantly to accelerating progress in meeting the objectives of the six priority areas of the Vienna Programme of Action. Our track record in helping countries in the Eurasia region in particular, has demonstrated that IRU Members and the road transport industry at large has served as an effective champion in promoting each of the six aforementioned priority areas. We have effectively helped landlocked countries in Central Asia to integrate into regional and global markets. We have promoted structural economic transformation of countries by facilitating access to markets for goods. We have promoted regional and international cooperation and the exchange of knowledge by connecting societies to one another. And, we work tirelessly to help introduce new, more efficient and innovative technologies to facilitate transit and mobility.

Ladies and Gentlemen, IRU acknowledges that economic growth and development in LDCs must be driven by greater investments in infrastructure, energy and innovation and by accompanied institutional developments, such as the implementation of the key UN trade facilitation instruments, in order to implement sound trade policies and effectively achieve harmonised global trade standards and procedures. We are persuaded that to overcome existing physical barriers to trade and geographical constraints that LLDCs face, it is imperative for LLDCs to effectively implement tried and tested UN facilitation instruments, such as TIR.

It is therefore IRU’s objective to continue our fruitful collaboration with UNOHRLLS to bring to bear our experiences to help LLDCs to overcome the challenges they face in order that they may become increasingly interlinked with regional and global economies, to diversify their trade and become more competitive. It is only through such improvements that LLDCs can achieve the SDG targets and achieve transformative change in today’s increasingly complex global economy.

There is huge potential to increase regional integration, increase economic growth, reduce poverty and enhance current efforts on regional integration in LLDCs, notably Africa and Asia, through such measures as accession to TIR, as well as training and capacity-building through The IRU Academy.

IRU remains committed to its partnership with the UN system to achieve our common economic, social and environmental objectives.
I would like to thank UNOHRLLS once again for inviting IRU to join as a co-organiser of this event, and we look forward to our continued constructive collaboration. I take this opportunity to congratulate Ms Fekitamoeloa Katoa High Representative and Under Secretary General for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. IRU wishes her success in her new functions and gives our full commitment to assist her and her team.

Thank you.

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