



THE CENTRAL ROLE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT DURING THE CLIMATE ACTION TALKS UITP AND UIC

Today (Monday 31 May 2021) the UN Climate Change Bureau begins a three-week programme of talks with negotiators in preparation for COP26 in Glasgow. These discussions will lay the groundwork for the congress in November, but to what extent will the role of public transport be discussed?

Rail and public transport are keeping society moving

As we look forward to a global recovery, we have an opportunity to build back better for a green and just recovery – but what can public transport do to help make that happen? The fact is that public transport has a lot to offer, delivering both on green job creation and sustainable economic development. Service improvements and access to public transport and rail mobility also facilitate the “levelling up” agenda, providing mobility for greater numbers of people so that they might access education or employment opportunities. We learned from the stimulus spending of the financial crash over ten years ago that public investment in public transport and rail infrastructure creates more value for society than merely improving road or aviation infrastructure.

Rail and public transport are key to a green and just recovery

The ITF Transport Outlook revealed last month that we can expect transport demand to double in the period during which we need to decarbonise. It is clear that today's challenges will not be met without clear priority being given to public transport and rail as a vital pillar for economic, social and environmental recovery both in the short and long term. Public transport and rail form the backbone of transformative climate action in transport. They are the fastest and most cost-efficient way to decarbonise daily mobility and logistics chains. Unleashing the full benefits of rail and public transport for decarbonisation will be key to achieving the objectives of the Paris Agreement. Investment in public transport will connect businesses, people and communities to economic and social opportunities, but will also create millions of decent, sustainable jobs and significantly cut emissions from the transport sector in line with the Paris Agreement.

Rail and public transport will raise levels of climate ambition

Applying the hierarchy of Avoid-Shift-Improve strategies with integrated, intermodal and balanced approaches is central to reaping the full benefits of transport decarbonisation in terms of emission reduction and equitable access to mobility. Cities will also become better places to live with a reduction in congestion and noise and by freeing up space. If we are to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement, we urgently need to leverage the full range of all the solutions available, as technology alone will not be enough. In the face of a changing transport landscape, providing more people with improved access to rail and public transport is the fastest and most cost-efficient way to decarbonise people's daily

mobility. It is ultimately behavioural change that will ensure the success of decarbonisation measures in the long term.

In the lead-up to COP26 in November, UITP and UIC will work together to continue making the case for climate action with public transport. Both associations agree that public transport must feature within the programme of talks over the next three weeks and during the congress as a vital pillar for delivering healthier cities and cleaner air.