2017 HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM:
LIMITED FOCUS ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF TRANSPORT TOWARD REALIZING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport

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List of Abbreviations

A-S-I	Avoid-Shift-Improve
BRT	Bus Rapid Transit
DSD	Division for Sustainable Development
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
GMR	Global Mobility Report
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
ITS	Intelligent Transport Systems
LEZ	Low Emission Zones
MGoS	Major Groups and other Stakeholders
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
NUA	New Urban Agenda
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SLoCaT	Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport
SuM4All	Sustainable Mobility for All Initiative
TCC-GSR	Transport and Climate Change Global Status Report
TOD	Transport-Oriented Development
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
VNR	Voluntary National Review


>> Thank you. Chair, thank you. Chair of the CSW, Ambassador, Antonio Guterres,ment of ECOSOC

I. Background

On 1 January 2016, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development officially came into force. The 2030 Agenda is a set of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by world leaders in September 2015 and aimed at stimulating actions to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path (Figure 1). A complementary set of 169 targets has also been adopted to track the progress made towards achieving the SDGs. As the most important roadmap to guide policy actions for sustainable development in the next 15 years, the 2030 Agenda mobilizes efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequality and tackle climate change, while ensuring that "no one is left behind." [1]

The High-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development (HLPF) is the United Nations' central platform for the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda. From its inception in 2016, the HLPF provides an annual platform to provide policy guidance and recommendations on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and offers opportunities for countries to share how implementation of various SDGs have been integrated in their national policies, strategies, and development plans to date.

The HLPF in 2017, is held from 10 to 19 July 2017, focusing on the theme, "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world." SDGs under review at HLPF 2017 include SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) and SDG 14 (Life below Water). A key reporting mechanism within the HLPF is the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process, as further described in Box 1:

Box 1: Voluntary National Reviews

As part of its follow-up and review mechanisms, the 2030 Agenda encourages member states to "conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels, which are country-led and country-driven."[2] This mechanism, known as the Voluntary National Review (VNR), is expected to serve as a basis for the regular reviews by the HLPF, meeting under the auspices of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). These regular reviews by the HLPF are to be voluntary, state-led, undertaken by both developed and developing countries, and involve multiple stakeholders.[3]

The VNRs aim to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The VNRs also seek to strengthen policies and institutions of governments and to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs.

An online VNR platform has been set up at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/.

FIGURE 1. 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda

1 United Nations. 2015. Transforming our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. http://bit.ly/1Epf648
2 Paragraph 79, Transforming our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. http://bit.ly/1Epf648
3 Paragraph 84, Transforming our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. http://bit.ly/1Epf648

A. Transport and Sustainable Development Goals

Although sustainable transport is not represented by a standalone SDG in the 2030 Agenda, it is mainstreamed in a direct or indirect manner into several SDGs, especially those related to poverty alleviation; food security; access to health services, clean water, education, and employment; gender equality; energy; infrastructure; cities and human settlements; energy and food consumption, and climate change. Transport services and infrastructure are therefore essential to achieving most, if not all, SDGs.

Targets being reviewed in HLPF 2017 with direct relevance to transport include Target 3.6 on road safety (plus Indicator 3.6.1 on death rate due to road traffic injuries) and Target 9.1 on sustainable infrastructure (plus Indicator 9.1.1 on proportion of the rural population within 2 km of an all-season road, Indicator 9.1.2 on passenger and freight volumes, by mode of transport). Other indirect transport targets under review in HLPF 2017 include Target 1.2 on poverty alleviation, Target 2.3 on agricultural productivity, and Target 3.9 on air pollution.

B. Assessment Objectives

The Partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport (SLoCaT) represents over 90 international organizations that are actively working to promote sustainable transport in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Advocacy to raise the profile of sustainable transport in the 2030 Agenda and its subsequent SDG review process at the HLPF is one of the key priorities of the mandate of SLoCaT.

An initial analysis on the treatment of transport in the 22 VNRs submitted in 2016 shows that while 64% of the 2016 VNRs made direct reference to the transport sector, there was much greater potential to raise the profile of sustainable transport in this process. SLoCaT continues to track the references to transport in the VNRs submitted to HLPF 2017[4] as more information is made available by member states, and this assessment analyses the second round of VNRs through the following questions:

1. Do countries refer in their VNRs to progress achieved in the transport sector?
2. Do countries link transport development with sustainable development impacts, such as poverty alleviation, food security, social inclusion and equity, road safety, and cleaner environment?
3. What good practices and policy measures for sustainable transport are identified in the VNRs? Is there a pattern to which types of transport policy measures are most commonly adopted by countries?

The Sustainable Mobility for All (SuM4All) Initiative was established in 2017 as a multi-stakeholder platform to advance policies on sustainable mobility at global, national, and local levels. SuM4All aims to facilitate the delivery of four primary objectives of sustainable transport, which include Universal Access, Efficiency, Safety, and Green Mobility. This analysis also explores how the four SuM4All objectives are reflected in the 2017 VNRs.

To assess the above-mentioned objectives, SLoCaT has developed a binary assessment[5] on countries' references to two transport modes, seven transport sub-sectors, and 21 transport policy measures in the VNRs,[6] based on the Avoid-Shift-Improve framework.[7] The assessment also considers whether these transport references are made in relations to nine different sustainability-related impacts, including poverty alleviation, food security, social inclusion and equity, urban access, rural access, regional connectivity, road safety, congestion reduction, and air pollution/ public health. In addition, a binary assessment is also made on the references to the SuM4All objectives.

Lastly, SLoCaT has considered the treatment of sustainable transport in the recently-released 2017 SDG Progress Report, the HLPF Ministerial Declaration, and the thematic papers submitted by the 14 Major Groups and other Stakeholders.

4 43 VNRs have been submitted to the HLPF 2017: Afghanistan, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Monaco, Nepal, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Panama, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, Slovenia, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Uruguay, Zimbabwe. Iran was originally on the list of countries submitting VNRs in 2017, but did not ultimately present at HLPF 2017.

5 The analysis presented here is documented in a matrix which is available on the SLoCaT website at http://www.slocat.net/news/1862.

6 Refer to Annex I for all the transport modes, sub-sectors, and policy measures reviewed in the assessment.

7 The Avoid-Shift-Improve (A-S-I) framework is an alternative approach to define sustainable mobility solutions in the context of GHG emission reduction, reduced energy consumption, less congestion, and more livable cities: "Avoid" measures seek to improve the efficiency of the transport system as a whole through integrated land-use planning and transport-demand management to reduce the need to travel and length of trips; "Shift" measures seek to improve trip efficiency by increasing modal shift from the most energy consuming transport modes (e.g. private motorized vehicles) to more environmentally friendly modes (e.g. public transport and non-motorized transport); "Improve" measures focus on vehicle and fuel efficiency as well as on the optimization of transport infrastructure through related technology and alternative energy use. For more information, please see: http://bit.ly/1ZAUq56

II. References to Transport in VNRs

References to the transport sector have been included in 42 of the 43 VNRs (or 98% of the total) submitted to ECOSOC (i.e. with greater than a rating of '1').[8] 14 VNRs (33%) give considerable information on the transport sector with examples, case studies or specific data (i.e. with a rating of '5'), and 12 countries (28%) include some information on transport development with one or two specific examples (i.e. rating of '4'). Seven countries (16%) give brief statements on transport development with no specific examples or measures identified (i.e. rating of '3'), and transport is only mentioned briefly with other sectors (i.e. rating of '2') in the VNRs of nine countries (21%) (Figure 2):

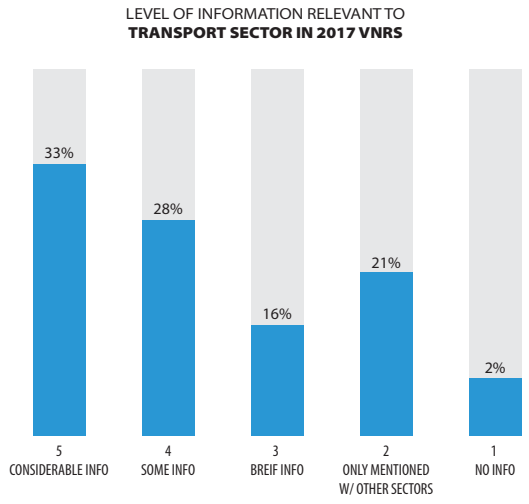

FIGURE 2. Level of Information Relevant to Transport Sector in 2017 VNRs[9]

16 countries (37%) have specifically indicated that additional investments have been allocated to the transport sector. For example, India refers to 75 publicly-funded highway projects of total value USD 5.6 billion to finance the construction of 2,700 km of roads, and Luxembourg has indicated that two-thirds of its public investment in transport is now allocated to public transport infrastructure, versus one third for road infrastructure.

Rail transport and aviation are the sub-sectors that has been mentioned by the greatest number of countries (33%), followed by water transport (port facilities and maritime trade) (28%) (Figure 3). More low-carbon mobility options, such as urban transport and walking and cycling are only mentioned by 28% and 16% of VNRs, respectively. Rural transport, although a key contributor to the major development issues of poverty, food security, and social inclusion, is only mentioned by five countries (Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Nepal, and Uruguay), or 12% of total submissions. Development of high-speed rail is only mentioned in Ethiopia and Thailands' VNRs (5%).

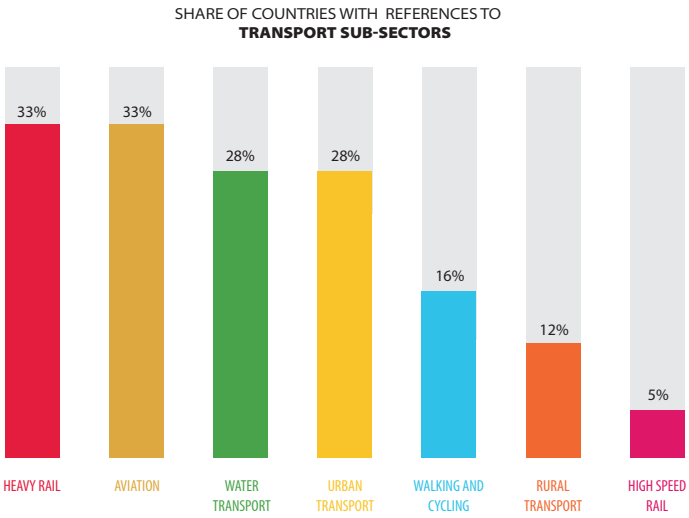

FIGURE 3. Share of Countries with References to Transport Sub-sectors

Passenger transport is the predominant transport mode discussed in VNRs, mentioned in 22 submissions (51%), while freight transport is mentioned in 12 VNRs (28%).

III. References to Sustainable Transport

Adequate, efficient, affordable, safe, low-carbon and climate resilient transport services and infrastructures are important enabling conditions to address the key issues of sustainability, including urban and rural access, regional connectivity, road safety, air pollution and public health, and congestion. Transport also plays a critical role in achieving the overarching goals of the 2030 Agenda to alleviate poverty, enhance food security, and ensure social inclusion and equity. Thus, it is crucial that countries in their VNRs do not merely list actions taken to grow the transport sector, but rather that countries link these transport measures with their respective development benefits to amplify the impact of the transport sector in implementing the SDGs.

A. References to transport and sustainability

Information on transport provided in the VNRs is not always synonymous with sustainable transport. For example, a number of countries give ample information on transport in the context of economic development (e.g. expansion of road

8 https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/

9 The rating scale is measured based on the number and degree of references to the transport sector:
5 = considerable information on the transport sector with a lot of specific policy examples and cases
4 = some information on the transport sector with one or two specific policy examples
3 = limited information on the transport sector with no specific policy examples
2 = minimal information on transport (e.g. mentioned briefly along with other sectors)
1 = no information on the transport sector

infrastructure and port facilities) but make little connection to how transport addresses sustainability issues (e.g. road safety, poverty alleviation, green mobility). In total, only 15 countries (35%) offer considerable information on transport in the context of sustainable development benefits and impacts (Figure 4).

Among these, five (12%) countries have linked their progress on transport development with SDG 1 on poverty alleviation. While the provision of reliable and affordable transport infrastructure and services is key to increasing agricultural production and food security (SDG 2), Afghanistan, Indonesia, and Togo are the three countries (7%) that makes this linkage in their VNRs. The contribution of transport to SDG target 3.6 on road safety has been highlighted by 10 (23%) countries. Although transport is widely known as one of the largest GHG-emitting sectors, only Belize and Cyprus (5%) refers to developing low-emission vehicles for reducing pollution (SDG 3).

10 countries (23%) have specifically identified transport measures for the purpose of enhancing social inclusion and equity, including improving access to transport for women, girls, elderly, people with disabilities, and other socially vulnerable groups, which covers both SDG 5 on gender equality SDG 11 on access to sustainable transport. Congestion reduction, which is another important impact related to sustainable transport systems (SDG 11), is mentioned by four countries (9%).

The contribution of transport to enhancing urban access (SDG indicator 9.1.2) is addressed by eight VNRs (19%). Regional connectivity, which has a heavy focus on trade and economic development, is also addressed by eight countries (19%). Contribution of transport to enhancing rural access, which has a direct link to SDG indicator 9.1.1, is only mentioned by six (14%) countries. It is clear that the VNRs are not sufficiently and consistently demonstrating how transport addresses major sustainability issues.

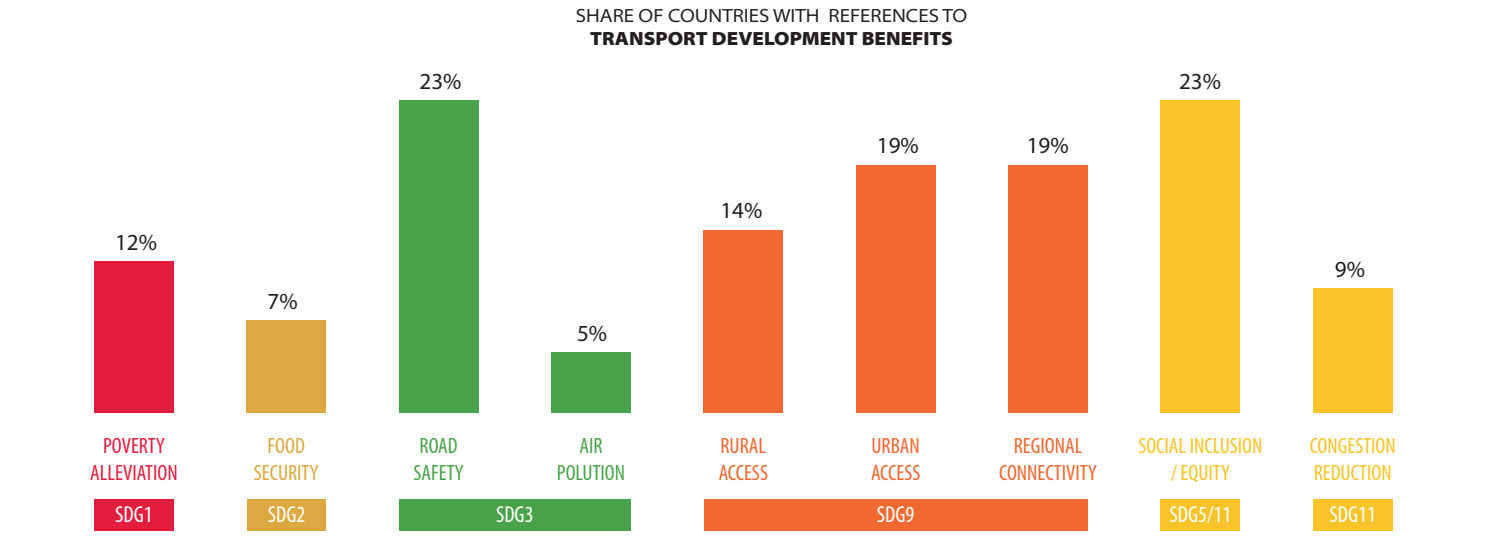

FIGURE 4. Share of Countries with References to Transport Development Benefits

Transport SDG Indicator	Countries reporting data on transport SDG indicators
3.6.1 Death rate due to road traffic injuries	• **Belgium:** Figures on death rates due to traffic accidents (2015 and 2016) • **Belize:** Figures on death rate due to road traffic injuries (averages) • **Ethiopia:** Figures on accidents per ten thousand vehicles (2014-2015); death rate due to traffic accidents (2014-2015) • **Peru:** Data on deaths due to road traffic accidents (2011-2015) • **Uruguay:** Data on deaths due to road traffic accidents (2011-2015); broken down by gender
9.1.1 Proportion of the rural population who live within 2 km of an all-season road	• **Ethiopia:** Historical data on areas that are 5 Km further away from all-weather roads (%) (2014-2015) • **Nepal:** Figures on road infrastructure and % of population with access to paved roads (2015) • **Uruguay:** Figures on proportion of rural population with access to all-season roads (2011 only)
9.1.2 Passenger and freight volumes, by mode of transport	• **Belgium:** Data on passenger transport by car 2000-2015 • **Benin:** Figures on air freight, rail freight, and freight transport by port (2015 only) • **Cyprus:** Historical data on freight transport volume (2010-2015) • **Denmark:** Data on road, rail, air, maritime transport volume (passenger and freight) (2005, 2010, 2015) • **Ethiopia:** Figures on air freight and passenger volume (2014-2015); historical data on supply of passenger seats per flight distance and construction of railway (2014-2015) • **Guatemala:** Historical data on air passenger volume, air freight, and sea freight (2012-2015) • **Nepal:** Figures on air transport, rail infrastructure and investment in transport • **Nigeria:** Figures on air transport and maritime transport (passenger and freight) (2016 only) • **Peru:** Data on transport volume of freight and passenger (combined) (2009 – 2015) • **Uruguay:** Historical data on passenger transport volume (disaggregated by air, maritime, and rail(2011-2015/ 2016)
11.2.1 Proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	No data provided
12.c.1 Number of fossil-fuel subsidies per unit of GDP (production and consumption) and as a proportion of total national expenditure on fossil fuels	• **Peru:** Historical data from 2009-2015

TABLE 1. Countries Reporting Data on Transport SDG Sectors

B. Data to show progress based on transport SDG indicators

Data to illustrate progress on the transport-related SDGs are provided by 11 (26%) countries, generally with inconsistent formats and levels of detail. For example, some countries, such as Belgium, Ethiopia, Peru, and Uruguay, include detailed data profiles for each SDG (although detailed information may not be provided for all SDGs); while other countries, such as Belize, Benin and Nigeria, only cite figures for certain SDGs as part of the narrative of the report (Table 1).

Only five countries (Belgium, Belize, Ethiopia, Peru, and Uruguay) (12%) have provided data on road safety and death rates resulting from traffic accidents (SDG indicator 3.6.1). Rural access has been a neglected subject in most of the submitted VNRs and only three countries (Ethiopia and Uruguay) (7%) has included some (non-historical) figures on the proportion of rural population that have access to all-season roads (SDG indicator 9.1.1). Nepal attempts to capture the data on rural access, although the indicator that it uses is on access to paved road and is not consistent with the SDG indicator framework.

SDG indicator 9.1.2, which reports on passenger and freight transport volumes, has been included in 10 VNRs (23%), although not all have broken the data down by transport modes, and not all are historical data.

Data on SDG indicator 11.2.1 (access to public transport) has not been included in any of the submitted VNRs, and data on the elimination of fossil fuel subsidies (indicator 12.c.1) has only been included in Peru's (3%)VNR. The absence of data for these indicators could also be because SDG 11 and 12 are not under review at HLPF 2017.

While the countries in Table 1 set examples on providing data to demonstrate their progress in implementing different SDGs, there remain inconsistencies in the formats, units, and time-series of the limited data sets provided in these VNRs.

Eight countries(19%) include targets for sustainable transport development (with Thailand setting five targets and Luxembourg setting three targets) (Table 2):

Country	Transport target (original quote)
Belgium	• **Road Safety (SDG 3):** Achieve the objective of an absolute number of maximum 420 deaths from traffic accidents by 2020
Cyprus	• **Energy consumption of transport sector (SDG 7):** The 2013 National Renewables Law sets a mandatory national target for 2020 of 13% as the overall share of energy from renewable energy sources in the gross final consumption and the share of energy from renewable sources to 10% of the final energy consumption in transport. Regarding the 10% target of RES in transport, Cyprus has reached 2.43% in 2015.
Denmark	• **Modal share of public transport (SDG 11):** To be on a path to reach the long-term goal of 50% of collective transport [public transport], this indicator should reach 65% in 2030.
Luxembourg	• **Modal shift to soft mobility:** A 25/75 modal share for soft mobility[10] as well as 25% of motorized journeys by 2020. • **E-mobility (SDG 7):** 800 public charging stations [each] with two outlets for electric cars in 2020 for a territory of 2.586 km^2. • **E-mobility (SDG 7):** By combining information technologies, renewable energies and intelligent transport networks, the aim is to transform mobility into a "mobility-as-a-service" approach using a fleet of 100% electric vehicles by 2050, whether they are public transport or individual vehicles.
The Netherlands	• **Electric mobility:** The Electric Transport Green Deal for 2016-2020 sets the target for 2020 at 10% of newly purchased car.
Portugal	• **GHG emission reduction (SDG 3):** (The National Climate Change Programme 2020-2030) reduction of national emissions of greenhouse gases, ensuring compliance with the commitments of national mitigation in stages: -18% to -23% (2020) and -30% to -40% (2030) in relation to 2005. The programme sets sectorial targets for reducing emissions and identifies the set of policy options and future measures together with the relevant policy sectors such as transport, energy, agriculture and forestry.
Slovenia	• **Renewable energy in transport:** A mandatory percentage of 10% for renewable energy in transport that all European Union Member States should achieve by 2020. • **GHG emission reduction:** Halt the fast growth of emissions in transport so that they will not increase by more than 18% by 2030 compared to 2005 (meaning that they will decrease by 15% by 2030 compared to 2008) with the aim of reducing the emissions by 90% by 2050.
Thailand	• **GHG emission reduction (target from Paris Agreement):** Reduce GHG emissions by 20-25% from the projected business-as-usual level by 2030, 5.58% of which is to be cut from the transport sector. • **GHG emissions in shipping:** Reduce GHG emissions in the shipping sector by no less than 7% • **Shipping and transport cost:** reduce shipping and transport costs on the GDP from 7.4 to 6.9% • **Road Safety:** Reduce the number of road-related fatalities and injuries by no less than 50% by 2020. Reduce the rate of fatal accidents from 6.34% to 4.07%. • **Rail freight:** Increasing the ratio of rail shipping volume to overall shipping volume from 1.4 to 4.0%.

TABLE 2. Transport Targets in 2017 VNRS

10 Soft mobility includes any non-motorized transport (human powered mobility). According to this, soft mobility refers to pedestrian, bicycle, roller skate and skateboard transfers. It could be indented as "zero impact" mobility too (Rocca 2009).

C. References to transport policy measures (Avoid-Shift-Improve)

The Avoid-Shift-Improve (A-S-I) framework is an alternative approach to define sustainable mobility solutions in the context of GHG emission reduction, reduced energy consumption, less congestion, and more livable cities:

- **"Avoid"** measures seek to improve the efficiency of the transport system as a whole through integrated land-use planning and transport-demand management to reduce the need to travel and the length of transport trips.
- **"Shift"** measures seek to improve trip efficiency by increasing modal shift from the most energy consuming transport modes (e.g. private motorized vehicles) to more environmentally friendly modes (e.g. public transport, cycling and walking).
- **"Improve"** measures focus on vehicle and fuel efficiency as well as on the optimization of transport infrastructure through related technology and alternative energy use.

Countries have been more inclined to identify transport "Shift" measures over "Improve" measures in their VNRs, with "Avoid" measures receiving the least attention. Countries should, however, utilize all three types of measures in order to address transport sustainability issues in a comprehensive manner.

As noted above, "Avoid" measures have not been referenced by many countries; these include land use and transport-oriented development (TOD), vehicle restriction policies (especially tax reduction for clean/ e-vehicles), and mobility management policies. For example, Portugal introduced taxation policies on private cars in order to promote the use of plug-in hybrid cars. Luxembourg also introduced a new allowance for zero-emission passenger cars. One country (2%) reference measures to relieve congestion, and no countries have mentioned any parking policies to discourage motorized trips in their VNRs. Notably, fossil fuel subsidies (SDG target 12.c.) are not mentioned in any VNRs, perhaps due to the fact that SDG 12 is not being reviewed in this year's HLPF.

"Shift" measures are included in the greatest number of countries. 11 countries (26%) and have included references to bus-based public transport. For example, Bangladesh planned to construct two Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines in its Strategic Transport Plan for 2015-2035. Costa Rica is also in the process of modernizing its public transport bus services. 10 countries (23%) referred to rail-based public transport, such as the development of a "Quick Passenger Train" viaduct in Costa Rica. Eight countries (19%) cited their experiences on measures for cycling and bus-based public transport. For example, Thailand has been promoting cycling as a daily commute option and is currently accelerating the construction of safe bicycle routes in all regions. Only two countries (5%) included measures on walking.

For "Improve" measures, 11 countries (26%) presented their plans and progress in promoting electric mobility, and eight countries (19%) referred to other measures to increase transport efficiency (e.g. Belgium increased ship efficiency through capacity building program; Kenya discussed modal shift from road freight to rail freight). Use of renewable energy and alternative fuels is only mentioned by six countries (14%). Measures for vehicle emission standards have been included in two VNRS (5%). Thailand is the only country (2%) that made reference to actions and targets on green freight.

Road infrastructure is a primary example of transport sector expansion for 47% of countries, but most of these references are economic and not linked to sustainability issues. Application of intelligent transport systems is mentioned by five countries (12%), with Belgium mentioning its use in relation to enhanced road safety. Two countries (Costa Rica and Cyprus) (5%) include policies to improve data collection to enhance transport system performance.

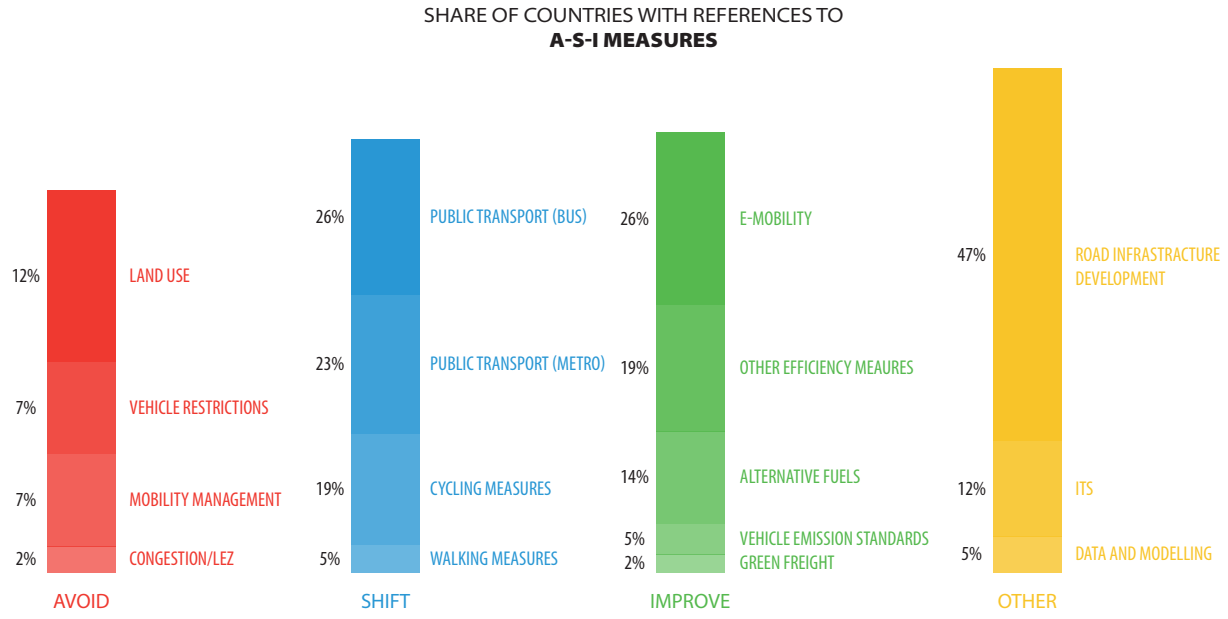

FIGURE 5. Share of Countries with References to A-S-I Transport Measures

D. References to transport adaptation measures

Although the 2030 Agenda focuses on sustainable development issues, its linkages to climate change mitigation and adaptation are significant. In the context of transport, SDG Target 9.1 calls for the development of low carbon and resilient transport infrastructure, which also closely ties to achieving SDG Goal 13 on climate actions. Climate adaptation in the transport sector is necessary for both developed and developing countries, as transport systems worldwide are vulnerable to the increasing impacts of extreme weather, and rapid motorization increase the potential for catastrophic impacts. Crucially, sustainable transport systems must adapt to climate change to maintain reliability to enable transport's role in economic and social development. Many sustainable transport solutions can combine increased mitigation potential and resilience as mutual benefits (e.g. during the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, high-speed rail proved to be more resilient than conventional rail transport infrastructure). In short, adaptation in transport sector is a crucial pre-condition to provide universal access, increase and maintain efficiency of transport system, ensure safety of road users, and contribute to sustainable, resilient mobility for all.

In the submitted VNRs in 2017, ample examples have been made to transport policy measures related to the Avoid-Shift-Improve framework, which has a strong orientation on climate change mitigation and decarbonization in the transport sector. References to transport adaptation are, however, very limited. Some countries submitting VNRs in 2017 have indicated significant challenges to implementing the SDGs due to adverse impacts of climate change and natural disasters (e.g. Bangladesh, Maldives, Nigeria), but none of their VNRs include any measures to develop climate resilient transport infrastructure. Kenya is the only country (2%) that includes measures to mainstreaming climate change adaptation into the development of port facilities, roads, railways and bridges to address rising sea levels and the increased occurrence of extreme weather events and flooding.

E. References to "Sustainable Mobility for All" objectives

As mentioned in previous sections, impacts of transport development to address sustainable development issues (and climate change) are not well reflected in the majority of submitted VNRs.

The Global Mobility Report (GMR) being developed under SuM4All (as described in Section I), articulates a vision for sustainable mobility around four global objectives (Universal Access, Efficiency, Safety, and Green Mobility); yet, among these four objectives, there is none for which a majority of VNRs makes specific reference. Universal Access is mentioned in the greatest number of VNRs (42%), followed by Green Mobility (35%), Safety (23%), and Efficiency (16%), as described further below (Figure 6).

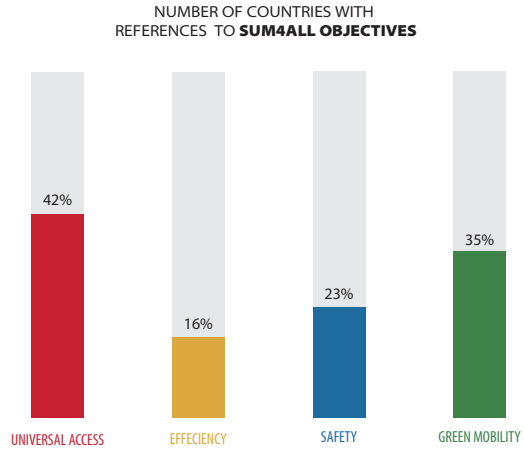

FIGURE 6. Share of Countries with References to Sum4all Objectives

In addition to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a number of agreements on the global level have been adopted in recent years with the same purpose to move the world towards a more sustainable and resilient future.[11] These global processes, with strong calls for concrete actions at the regional and national level, will steer the developmental directions for sustainable development and climate change actions of countries in the world in the next decades. Adequate, efficient, affordable, safe, low-carbon and climate resilient transport services and infrastructures are important enabling conditions to achieve the goals committed under these global processes.

Despite the ample common ground among these global processes, there is currently no common methodological framework to monitor progress in these processes globally, and thus the four objectives developed under the SuM4All initiative is an important step to account for transport sector impacts, not only relevant to the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda, but to the other global processes.

- **Universal Access:** This objective ensures that all people are provided transport that meets their basic needs—their own travel and the shipment of goods upon which they place a high priority-such as, commuting to work, and access to schools, medical care, and commerce. Inclusivity is at the heart of this objective. Pursuing this global objective will ensure that access is provided across income groups, gender, age, and disability status in both urban and rural areas. It will ensure that women and children, seniors and disabled people, the poor, those living in remote areas, and other vulnerable groups have appropriate access to safe and affordable transport.

  18 (42%) countries[12] have reported on various measures to enhance universal access. Of these, Bangladesh, India, and Uruguay include the provisions of road networks and transport infrastructure to improve rural access; the Czech Republic is working to provide free transport to all eligible disabled children who do not attend neighboring schools; Maldives discusses the capacity of ferry services to improve accessibility among its islands, which helps to increase mobility and improve the overall well-being of communities across the country. In Thailand, the government has applied Universal Design[13] in developing the public transport system's infrastructure and public transport vehicles to enhance equal access to public transport for the disabled, senior citizens, children and women.

- **Efficiency:** This objective will ensure that transport demand is met effectively and at reasonable cost across geographic areas. It captures concepts such as regional connectivity and logistics to support trade, resource efficiency (i.e. energy, land use) to minimize waste, and spatial efficiency to ensure that the transport system is organized in a manner that fosters economic densities and provides the most appropriate modes of transport for seamless inter-modality.

  Seven (16%) countries[14] have reported on policy measures to enhance efficiency of their respective transport systems. Some examples of efficiency measures include Belgium improving maritime efficiency through capacity building activities for its naval staff, port authorities and energy administration; Japan promoting the implementation of "Network-based Compact City" which aims to induce urban facilities and dwellings around hubs and networks of public transportation, as well as to promote the development of efficient public transport networks; and Nigeria investing in installation of more traffic signal lights to ease traffic flow.

- **Safety:** This objective relates to avoiding crashes, injuries, and fatalities due to road transport. Typical road users affected by road safety include pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, vehicle passengers, and passengers of on-road public transport. Approaches to enhance road safety cover a range of practices, such as safer road infrastructure (e.g. dedicated lanes for cyclists), vehicle maintenance and standards, stronger road safety culture among drivers and road users, and effective post-crash response systems.

  10 (23%) countries[15] have reported on policy measures to improve road safety. For example, Brazil has introduced a Life in Traffic Program which aims to reduce accidents through educational campaigns, intervention in risk factors, and improvement of information systems on accidents, injuries and fatalities. Cyprus has developed a National Strategy for the Prevention of Road Traffic Injuries and an Action Plan on Childhood Injuries Prevention to improve response mechanisms to road traffic accidents. Portugal has targeted road safety measures through its Project Bebés, Crianças & Jovens em Segurança (Keeping Babies, Children & Youth Safe) to improve literacy in children's road safety and to encourage safe driving behavior by pregnant women, parents and families. Thailand has worked to improve road safety in school zones through the use of road signs, warning lights and road surface markings as well as rolling out road safety outreach campaigns to at least 717 schools, or the program to develop dedicated bicycle paths.

- **Green Mobility:** This objective relates to reducing climate change impacts (through mitigation and adaptation) and air and noise pollution. These dimensions are typically thought of as externalities of the transportation system

10 These global agreements include the Paris Agreement (2015), the New Urban Agenda (NUA) (2016), the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development (2015), the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and the Nairobi Mandate (2016).
12 Argentina, Bangladesh, Belgium, Chile, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Ethiopia, India, Japan, Maldives, Nepal, Panama, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, and Uruguay
13 Known as "inclusive design," universal design refers to ideas of making things, such as facilities and environments, safer, easier, and more convenient for disabled persons, older persons, sick people, war veterans, children, and pregnant women. http://idea.ap.buffalo.edu/udny/Section1.htm
14 Belgium, Czech Republic, Japan, Kenya, Nigeria, Slovenia, and Thailand
15 Belgium, Belize, Brazil, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, Thailand, and Uruguay

and often not taken sufficiently into consideration in policy making on transport or by individuals in making travel choices. While it may not be possible to completely eliminate emissions and pollution because of cost and efficiency trade-offs, these externalities must be reduced to a societally optimal amount.

11 (35%) countries have reported policy measures on green mobility. For example, Cyprus is developing a national action framework to promote alternative fuels, environmentally-friendly technologies and supporting infrastructure; India has planned to construct a total length of 8,000 km of sidewalks and cycle tracks in 106 cities over the course of the next 5 years to promote active transport and reduce its carbon footprint. In the Netherlands, the Government will invest in enabling legislation, infrastructure for electric cars and the sustainability of its own vehicle fleet under the Electric Transport Green Deal for 2016-2020. In Portugal, the government is decarbonizing the transport sector by introducing tax reforms on cars and encourage the use of plug-in hybrid and electric mobility. Car-sharing and bike-sharing are also green mobility options prioritized in its reform. In Sweden, the Klimaträtt project has developed an app for mobile devices to give users automatic weekly feedback on the climate footprint of their transport trips and other purchases in order to encourage people to shift to use green mobility options.

16 Belgium, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czech Republic, India, Luxembourg, Monaco, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, and Thailand

IV. Conclusions

The analysis described in the previous sections makes it clear that there is considerable scope for improvement in the treatment of sustainable transport in the VNR process, and linked to this in the related SDG progress report and Ministerial Declaration from HLPF 2017.

A. Despite a slight improvement from 2016, gaps remain in reporting on transport and its contribution to sustainable development in VNRs

In comparison to a similar analysis that SLoCaT has conducted on the VNRs submitted in 2016, there is indeed general improvement in the profile of transport in this reporting process in 2017. Only 64% of the 22 VNRs submitted in 2016 contained references to transport, with not all references sustainability-specific. The case to support the contribution of transport to the overarching theme of the 2030 Agenda to alleviate poverty, enhance food security, ensure social equity, and "leaving no one behind" within the VNRs in 2016 was very weak, with almost no reference to these themes.

In 2017, 98% of submitted VNRs have some degree of reference to the transport sector, with 35% of submission giving specific examples to link transport with sustainable development impacts. Some topics that were weak or missing among the VNRs in 2016, such as rural transport and road safety, have also received some increased attention in the 2017 submissions but overall remain weak. An area of progress is that eight countries have set specific transport targets and 11 countries have provided data and figures to report on progress made in the transport sector to achieve specific SDGs. This is an important step towards a more structured review of progress in the transport sector in implementing the SDGs. However, inconsistent data reporting on transport-relevant SDG indicators across the VNRs also shows that the current VNR mechanism lacks the proper structure and framework to guide countries to report in a comparable and coherent manner.

Despite the slight progress made in 2017, it is clear that there is still much greater potential to raise the profile of sustainable transport within the VNR process. There remains a tendency in many VNRs to merely report on outputs (e.g. kilometers of highways built or kilometers of rail constructed) without demonstrating linkages to broader development goals. At the same time, there is ample evidence of sustainable transport policies and measures in the 2017 VNR countries. It is not fully clear why this progress is not reported in a more substantive manner.

The VNR process was set up to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The VNRs are also expected to support the strengthening of policies and institutions and to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the SDGs. VNRs deal with this guidance mostly in a fairly general manner and sector related information, including for the transport sector, is often present in a cursory and qualitative manner. This very much limits the use of VNRs as a tool to inspire and guide other countries in taking greater sector-based action in support of the targets set by the SDGs.

B. The 2017 SDG Progress Report fails to provide a structured framework to measure progress in sustainable transport

The 2017 SDG Progress Report was released by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) Statistics Division in June 2017. The report provides the second account of where the world stands at the beginning of implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It gives an overview of all 17 SDGs using data currently available to highlight the most significant gaps and challenges. The data presented are based on the global SDG indicator framework and are produced by national statistical systems.

Statistics on global status on air pollution from traffic, road safety, energy consumption, employment opportunities and economic development driven by the transport sector presented in the progress report are shown in Table 3.

Compared to the first SDG progress report, the second progress report has expanded its references to transport and built some linkages between transport and several SDG targets, such as SDG 3.6 (road safety), SDG 3.9 (public health), SDG 7.3 (sustainable energy consumption), and SDG 9.1 (economic development). However, it has not included any information on several key transport-related SDG indicators, such as SDG 9.1.1 (rural access), SDG 11.2.1 (access to public transport), and SDG 12.c.1 (fossil fuel subsidies).

The use of aviation data to measure progress on Target 9.1 (universal access) present an incomplete representation of the progress made by the transport sector. The indicator developed under this target must include other sustainable transport modes, such as public transport, rail transport, walking and cycling, in order to capture the contribution of sustainable transport to improve access and to reduce environmental impacts.

The SDG progress reports from both 2016 and 2017 have demonstrated effort from the sustainable development process to capture the progress made towards achieving the SDGs. However, it is clear that these reports have yet to measure progress in a structured and coherent manner, particularly in the transport sector.

The process for development of the annual SDG progress report is not clear and it is apparent that better linkages with organizations and groups (UN, development organizations,

SDG	Reference (Excerpt)
SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being)	Globally in 2012…ambient air pollution from traffic, industrial sources, waste burning or residential fuel combustion resulted in an estimated 3 million deaths.
SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being)	In 2013, about 1.25 million people died from road traffic injuries, the leading cause of death among males between 15 and 29 years of age. Road traffic deaths have increased by about 13 per cent globally since 2000.
SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy)	From 2012 to 2014, three quarters of the world's 20 largest energy-consuming countries had reduced their energy intensity — the ratio of energy used per unit of GDP. The reduction was driven mainly by greater efficiencies in the industry and transport sectors. However, that progress is still not sufficient to meet the target of doubling the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency.
SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure)	Efficient transportation services generate employment and wealth and drive economic development. In 2015, the estimated global economic impact (both direct and indirect) of air transport was $2.7 trillion, equivalent to 3.5 per cent of global GDP. The least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states represent far less air travel and freight volumes, with each country group accounting for only 1 per cent to 2.7 per cent of the global total.

TABLE 3. References to Transport in the 2nd SDG Progress Report 2017

academe) collecting relevant data on transport and SDGs could have improved the coverage of transport in the progress report . For now, it appears that the VNRs and SDG progress reports are two separate processes. This is in part caused by the timing of the VNRs. The SDG progress report is prepared before the VNRs have been submitted.

C. Thematic papers by Major Groups and other Stakeholders provide incidental references to sustainable transport

Major Groups and other Stakeholders (MGoS) were established through the 1992 Earth Summit under the recognition that achieving sustainable development would require the active participation of all sectors of society and all types of people. 12 sectors of society,[18] also officially called "Major Groups," were organized as the main channels for broad participation facilitated in UN activities related to sustainable development.

All of the MGoS have submitted sectoral position papers to the UN Division for Sustainable Development (DSD) to outline actions that should be taken to achieve the SDGs and enhance well-being of their respective sectors.[19] In addition, the Asia-Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism[20] and Together 2030,[21] which are civil society initiatives under the HLPF process, also submitted thematic papers. Out of the 14 thematic papers, only six have included references mostly to sustainable transport.

The Women, Persons with Disabilities, and Together 2030 groups emphasize that access to safe and accessible roads is key to improving access to essential services and infrastructure. The Business and Industry group indicates that universal access to financial services and infrastructure is facilitated by the provision of physical transport assets (e.g. roads and bridges), and that investment in transport, logistics and mobility is key to achieving the SDGs and reducing poverty. The Non-Governmental Organizations group indicates that sustainable and affordable transport and road networks are essential for the functioning of an inclusive and resilient society and for the improvement of well-being.

Both the Persons with Disabilities and Local Authorities groups link transport with food security. The former indicates that persons with disabilities suffer from a lack of access to food and that transport is a prerequisite to enable them to live independently and participate in economic activities. The Local Authorities group indicates that improvement in transport infrastructure is key to strengthening local food chains, urban-rural linkages, and access to markets. The group also notes that waste reduction and food security is enhanced by the effective transport and storage of food.

Local Authorities is the only group that mentions road safety and transport-related air pollution in its thematic paper, indicating that urban and territorial planning and public transport development are key to reducing air pollution, fostering health lifestyle and reducing death rates due to road traffic accidents.

Although transport is mentioned in six of the 14 thematic papers, it is clear that these references are to a large extent ad hoc and are not part of a structured, consistent linkage between transport and SDGs.

17 Examples include the Global Status Report on Road Safety by the World Health Organization, the Logistics Performance Index developed by the World Bank, and the UNCTAD stat database on Maritime Transport, developed by the United Nations Conference and Trade and Development.
18 The 12 sectoral groups are: Women, Children and Youth, Indigenous Peoples, Non-Governmental Organizations, Local Authorities, Workers and Trade Unions, Business and Industry, Scientific and Technological Community, Education and Academia Stakeholder Group, Persons with Disabilities, Volunteer Groups, Older Persons.
19 The thematic paper were posted on the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform but were not presented during the HLPF meetings.
20 http://asiapacificrcem.org/
21 http://www.together2030.org/

D. The HLPF Ministerial Declaration has yet to include meaningful references and recommendations to scale up actions on sustainable transport

In conjunction with the HLPF 2017, a three-day ministerial meeting was held from 17-19 July 2017. A ministerial declaration outlining the commitments of the ministers and high-level representatives from UN member states to implement the 2030 Agenda is adopted towards the end of the meeting.

The Ministerial Declaration of the 2017 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development[22] gives very brief references to transport's role in providing access and the importance of maritime transport and trade. The draft Declaration points out that poor access to infrastructure, including transport and other sectors, remains "a major impediment to development, diversification, and value addition, as well as sustainable urbanization" throughout the world. It also indicates that the oceans are special resources for the Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States through maritime trade and transport. However, these brief references to transport do not effectively outline the critical role of transport in addressing the overarching themes of the 2030 Agenda on poverty alleviation, food security, and leaving no one behind. Nor do they provide any guidance to governments on how to take action in the transport sector for the specific SDGs under discussion in the 2017 HLPF.

E. There is a need for other sectoral stakeholders to develop reporting frameworks for sustainable transport

It is clear that there substantial progress in sustainable transport development is being made in many of the countries in the world; yet, the SDG progress report lacks the necessary structure and framework to report such progress. This gap underscores the need for actors in the transport sector to develop complementary status reports.

The SLoCaT Partnership is leading the development of a Transport and Climate Change Global Status Report (TCC-GSR),[23] which aims to provide a resource for national and sub-national policy-makers to measure progress on transport mitigation and adaptation and increase transport ambition in their country reporting to global processes, especially the NDCs and long-term plans. The report will provide a central data repository for monitoring transport and climate-relevant indices in global agreements (e.g. Paris Agreement, SDGs, the New Urban Agenda (NUA), and related processes).

Another framework to measure progress in sustainable transport is the Global Mobility Report (GMR) being developed under SuM4All, as described earlier in this report. The GMR is built around three components: a vision for sustainable mobility articulated around four global objectives (Universal Access, Efficiency, Safety, and Green Mobility); global targets drawn from international agreements; and transport-relevant indicators supported by country data and agreed methodologies.

The development of these various tracking frameworks can help to create a more comprehensive picture of the status of sustainable transport on global, regional, and local levels; however, these individual reporting initiatives are currently independent from the HLPF process and current VNR reporting structure. It is thus important that the TCC-GSR, the SuM4All framework and other relevant transport reporting mechanisms be integrated more fully into policy discussions around the formulation of VNRs leading up to and during HLPFs in 2018 and beyond.

22 United Nations Economic and Social Council. 2017. Ministerial declaration of the 2017 high-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, on the theme "Eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world". http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/HLPF/2017/L.2&Lang=E

23 The TCC-GSR is scheduled to be released in May 2018. For more information, please contact Cornie Huizenga at cornie.huizenga@slocatpartnership.org.

Annex I: List of transport typologies used in VNR 2017 Analysis

The list of transport modes, sub-sectors, policy measures (avoid-shift-improve), and other typologies are being used to assess the treatment of transport in the submitted VNRs in 2017.

Transport Modes	Passenger Transport
	Freight Transport
Transport Sub-sectors	Heavy Rail
	Water transport
	Aviation
	Walking and Cycling
	Urban Transport
	Rural Transport
	High Speed Rail
Transport Measures (Avoid)	Land Use
	Vehicle Restrictions
	Mobility Management
	Congestion / Low emission zone
Transport Measures (Shift)	Cycling Measures
	Public Transport (Bus)
	Public Transport (Metro)
	Walking Measures
Transport Measures (Improve)	E- mobility
	Other Efficiency Measures
	Alternative Fuels
	Vehicle Emission Standards
	Green Freight
Transport Measures (Other)	Road Infrastructure Development
	Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS)
	Data and Modelling
Transport Development Benefits	Poverty Alleviation
	Food Security
	Road Safety
	Air Pollution
	Rural Access
	Urban Access
	Regional Connectivity
	Social Inclusion/Equity
	Congestion Reduction
SuM4All Objectives	Universal Access
	Efficiency
	Safety
	Green Mobility


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