



**Celebration of the 7th UN Road Safety Week – 2023:
Rethinking Mobility**

**Speech by
H.E. Alemu Sime (Ph. D) Minister, FDRE, Ministry of
Transport and Logistics**

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Your Excellency Mr. Jean Todt, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety

Hon. Ministers from Kingdom of Morocco/ The Gambia/ Cameroon/ Kingdom of Eswatini

H.E. Amani Abou-Zeid, Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy of the African Union Commission

Your Excellency Mr. Antonio Pedro, Acting Executive Secretary of Economic Commission for Africa

Distinguished guests,

All protocol observed

Good Morning to you all,

I'm pleased to join you in this important session on the occasion of the Celebration of the 7th UN Road Safety Week 2023 under the theme: **Rethinking Mobility**.

I would like to also thank the organizers of this global event and for convenient all the important global actors in this sector. It is my belief that this discussion will bring tangible outcomes to improve road safety conditions and that the platform could raise awareness to stimulate and advance responses as appropriate.

As we all know, creating a safe and sustainable environment is the current critical agenda of our world. Especially in the transport sector, the world has given a due attention on safety and sustainability in different global initiatives. As a result, countries are introducing the issue of safe and sustainable mobility in their national policies and development plans.

We are witnessing that global economies are also committed on research and development to improve the safety of transport and to curb the fatality in the transport sector. Besides, more countries are investing in green mobility technologies that introduce carbon-free transport vehicles.

My country Ethiopia is among the pioneers in Africa in taking this initiative seriously and striving to make a difference. I am also pleased to share that we have ratified the UN road safety conventions and the African Road Safety Charter.

Our national sector policies; both the transport policy and the logistics policy considered the issue of safety and green mobility as strategic focus agendas. In our ten years perspective plan, we gave due attention towards addressing the challenges of road safety and decreasing the fatality rate by 70%; which is a decrease from 34.4 to 10 deaths per 10 thousand vehicles. Similarly, we are implementing our national road

safety strategy which is prepared in line with the United nations second decade of action targets.

We are also committed to bring change through strategic awareness creation programs . These initiatives are specially designed to change the attitude of drivers by letting them understand the importance of safe driving. Moreover, these initiatives urge drivers value their own and their families lives as well as the lives of others so that these precious lives should not be lost due to their reckless driving behavior.

Different efforts are also being made from the law enforcement perspective by revising the traffic fine regulation, enforcing speed limiter technology for vehicles, by enforcing third party liability insurance scheme, and also by modernizing and scaling up the standards of driver training institutes.

Currently, we have established a lead agency, Road Safety and Insurance Fund Service which is authorized to regulate, create awareness and coordinate the issues of road safety and third-party liability insurance.

As we are losing number of lives a day due to traffic accidents, the issue of safety in transport needs to be at the center of our attention. We believe that unless we build a well-informed society from the grass-root level, we can't change the attitude towards safe transport. For this, my ministry has introduced the road safety curriculum in the national education system, from primary to tertiary level, and it's already under implementation from the current academic year. In addition, we have also partnered with one of our renowned University, Addis Ababa University to provide second degree level studies on road safety.

Noting the importance of data driven planning and decision making my ministry is finalizing the establishing an automated Road Crash Data Management System. This creates a great opportunity to join the African Road Safety Observatory. This is critical in developing the right legal instruments. Without data, we would be developing policies and regulations that are not effective and will face many challenges to implement.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

In our transport policy, we indicated the expansion of mass transit to be our core area of focus especially in major regional cities. Our development plans are geared towards the promotion of mass transport options in which we have planned to increase the share of public transport in regional cities. To realize this vision, my government through its home grown economic reform agenda has made the public transport sector to be open for foreign investors by availing the necessary incentive instruments. We believe this policy reforms will bear fruits in the foreseeable future, as we are already receiving interest from foreign investors.

Additionally, we are striving to de-carbonize our transportation sector. We have made all the necessary incentive packages ready to encourage the mass adoption of electric mobility. We believe that transition to electric mobility is the best option for countries like Ethiopia who have abundant renewable energy sources. To date, we have more than 42,000 electric vehicles in our roads. Just the result of our incentive package in only 7 months. Public electric charging facilities are also in the making in Ethiopia, which will create an enabling environment for mass adoption. We believe this number will sharply increase as a number of electric Vehicles automotive assembly facilities are under construction. In parallel, we are discouraging the importation of older vehicles by introducing a stringent excise tax regulation. In which we have recorded a meaningful result so far.

I believe that de-carbonization of the Transport sector is the future of Africa.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are now living in a world which demands more active mobility that aims reducing dependency on vehicle transportation. Many cities and communities around the world are encouraging active mobility with a view to reducing emissions and ease traffic congestion.

Active mobility is not all about transition from one mode of transport to another only, it is rather considered as part and parcel of the economic, ecological and social transition agenda that intends to bring sustainable development.

Investing in walking and cycling is like investing our best way to save planet earth which has been in peril conditions due to carbon emissions and related climatic change effects.

Investing in active mobility is all about bringing efficient land utilization in our cities and bringing lively and vibrant neighborhoods. It is also meaning the reduction of transport costs and improvement of healthcare systems. Active mobility is all about the inclusion of the disadvantaged groups of the society, where the elderly, women and children could enjoy multiple of its benefits. And most importantly, investing in active mobility would heavily reduce the road safety challenges which we have been affected. And above all, investing in active mobility is an ideal and most preferable way of expressing solidarity to mankind to live in a decent and safe world that we all deserve to cherish.

To encourage the wide use of active mobility options, we have been witnessing regular walking and cycling days on the last Sunday of each month. This program has created better awareness and helped restore cycling culture in some regional cities in Ethiopia. In this regard, we are working on both the infrastructure and the awareness.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Our world is changing fast. Specially the environment we live in has suffered due to our irresponsible actions. Unless we wake up today and live in harmony with our environment, we may not be able to see the future. Therefore, we have to mainstream the agenda of safety and sustainability in our respective sectors. Green and safe mobility will take us to the cleaner and safer world of the future that we dream to achieve.

To realize this, our urban planning approach should be shifted from provision of spaces to vehicles to pedestrians and walking people. Roads should be designed and constructed for the majority of residents to walk and play. We need to shift from private motorized transportation to public and active transportation and greening of cities. We also need to shift from polluting transportation options to Electric Mobility.

Finally, I hope this panel will provide us an opportunity to share our experiences, learn from best practices, and network each other. And more importantly to make a collective commitment to work together for a better future.

Lets all join hands in investing on active mobility, de-carbonizing the transport sector and ensuring road safety and save the lives of our loved ones.

I wish you all a successful and fruitful event

I Thank you.