

AFRICAN UNION

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UNION AFRICAINE

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7th Celebration of UN Global Road Safety Week

15th May 2023

Technical workshop

1h-3h PM Addis Ababa time

OPENING REMARKS BY

Dr Kazaura Kamugisha

Director Infrastructure and Energy

May 2022

Mr. Antonio Pedro, Acting Executive Secretary of UNECA

Hon. Ministers in charge of Transport

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

Mr Mike Salawou. Ag Director at African Development Bank

Mr Robert Lisinge, Ag Director Private Sector Development and Finance

Representatives from partner Institutions (World Bank/SSATP, European Commission, UNECA, International Automobile Federation, WHO, UNEP)

Distinguished participants

All protocol observed

1. It is truly an honour and pleasure to be able to deliver my remarks on behalf of the African Union Commission. First, I would like to recognize and commend the work and effort put into kick-starting the 7th UN Global Road Safety Week, from today, May 15–21, with a theme of sustainable transport, specifically the need for our governments to facilitate a shift to walking, cycling, and using public transport in the framework of the 2nd Decade Plan of Action for Road Safety. This is the clear and urgent choice that we face here at the dawn of what must be a decisive new decade of hope for us, and that will quite literally determine our futures. And, at AUC, we believe safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable public transport, including walking and cycling facilities, solves many of our society's transport problems, which in turn contributes to residents' health and makes our cities sustainable and societies equitable.
2. I will not need to emphasize how serious the issue of road safety is in Africa; the crash numbers we hear or read each day on the continent speak for themselves! While many efforts to address road safety in the African context emphasize awareness and enforcement, it is equally important to give attention to the critical role of physical road design in encouraging safe user and driver behavior. Despite the growing recognition of the important role of non-motorized transport (NMT) in the urban transport system, infrastructure projects neglect to construct adequate, accessible facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. Often, the practice on the continent is that road designs seek to maximize speeds for private cars, often at the expense of safety, accessibility, and

convenience for the majority of road users who rely on walking, cycling, and public transport for their daily commutes.

3. Urgent actions must be taken to improve the safety of all road users, especially the most vulnerable, in our major and secondary cities. To redress this and rethink mobility with the most at risk in mind, our efforts should aim to incorporate safety and urban mobility needs into the transport planning and design process by *enabling policies and strategies* that lay out street design principles and financing priorities to help foster a supportive policy environment; *reforming our design standards* to adopt city-specific guidelines for the design of safe urban streets, and streamlining the entire design process to ensure the development of contextually appropriate and consistent quality infrastructure through audit and inspection; *Improving the quality of public transport, including paratransit services*, and carving out a dedicated right-of-way for high-capacity systems such as bus rapid transit (**BRT**) along high-demand corridors with features such as enclosed stations, pre-board payment with smart cards, rapid boarding, and dedicated infrastructure for non-motorized transport; and finally, *enhancing the knowledge and capacity* of our officers responsible for implementing road infrastructure to ensure that they have the ability to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities they may encounter and implement safer streets is paramount.
4. With regard to the work of AUC in the road safety sector, I would like to draw your attention to the need to accelerate the signing and ratification of the African Charter on Road Safety, which is provisionally in force due to a shortage of instruments of ratification (as of today 11 MS only ratified & deposited), which is required for the full operationalization of one of the flagship programs in this area, the African Road Safety Observatory (**ARSO**), which is a formal network of government representatives to share and exchange road safety data and experience in order to reduce traffic crashes across AU member countries, through an accessibility-based urban mobility work plan to reduce fatalities and injuries.
5. In closing, I thank you again for this opportunity and look forward to a very productive workshop.