

Plenary: Transport as an enabler of sustainable economies, peace and stability in time of crisis

24 May 2023, 14:00-15:30 | [Session outline](#)

How can transport policy makers and private stakeholders promote sustainable transport while addressing the economic, geopolitical and health crises their societies face? In this plenary session, a distinguished panel of high-level policy makers and private-sector leaders unpacked this multifaceted and pressing question.

Transport as a means to an end

Mark Harper (UK Secretary of State for Transport) argued that transport should be considered a critical economic growth driver. The UK Government expects its package of capital investments in transportation to contribute to domestic economic development. Hee-Ryong Won (Minister of Land, Infrastructure, and Transport, Korea) shared this view: Korea has invested in innovations that it expects to create new jobs. By bringing people together and easing domestic and international interactions, transport can also contribute to improving productivity.

Carlos Monje, Jr (US Under Secretary of Transportation for Policy) concurred: for the Biden administration, thinking of climate should imply thinking of "jobs, jobs, jobs". Monje highlighted that the sustainable transport projects launched by US DOT have helped create new jobs and supported citizens' social mobility.

Transport also plays a crucial role in crises. Maintaining transport systems in Ukraine is a prerequisite to supporting Ukrainian exports and delivering aid. For Olga Algayerova (Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe), "Transport diplomacy is part of peace diplomacy". She aptly summarised this first part of the discussion: "Transport is a means to an end, and that end is: people, planet, prosperity and peace".

The need for a co-operative approach

Panel participants all stressed the importance of co-operation between governments, financial institutions and the private sector. For Kris Peeters (Vice-President, European Investment Bank), the role of financial institutions is to support governments in their efforts to fund the transition towards green transport. Only through this collaborative effort can the necessary resources be leveraged. Mark Harper concurred: "I agree we need to invest more, but governments cannot do everything. So, what we do is set a very clear direction on policies so that the private sector aligns its investments accordingly".

Jeong Joon Yu (Vice Chairman, SK Group) argued that strong policy goals are needed for the private sector to invest in a sustainable transition confidently. He said: "We have a strong confidence, based on each government's policy announcements, that carbon emissions are no longer free. They will be getting more expensive, not only economically but also socially". This acts as a guarantee that cleaner technologies will be competitive in the long run. Melissa Williams (President, Shell Marine) stated that policy goals should be set at the intergovernmental level, especially for global issues, as is the case in the shipping sector.