

UN 2nd Sustainable Transport Conference Outcomes of the MobiliseYourCity Side Event

Title: Integrating informal transport for a just transition to sustainable mobility in the Global South

Date: 15th October

Time: 3:30pm CEST

Speakers



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Objectives of the session:

- Raise awareness of the topic of paratransit and its relevance to sustainable development and sustainable urban transport
- Formulate key messages and recommendations for the donor community and international development organizations on action that we can take to support the integration of paratransit in mobility planning

Key messages

- Informal transport is an important source of jobs and income for low-wage workers, who are often young and low-skilled
- Informal transport provides accessible and affordable transportation to many segments of society, enabling access to economic, social and cultural activities
- Informal transport is most effective when it complements public transport services.
- Informal transport is highly flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances.
- Informal transport usually relies on very old and polluting vehicles, causing health and environment damaging pollution
- Paratransit workers often endure extreme and inhuman working conditions with almost no access to social safety provisions, endangering themselves and their passengers
- The accessibility and ubiquity of paratransit usually comes at the expense of service quality and safety for both passengers and operators.
- Paratransit services will continue to coexist with formal services and play a pivotal role, especially for transportation-disadvantaged residents

Recommendations

1. Before attempting to reform the sector, decision-makers need a thorough and precise understanding of paratransit in their city
2. If there is neither an adequate level of funding nor institutional capacity, it may be better not to attempt a complete reform within a relatively short time horizon (two–three years)
3. Negotiating with incumbent operators (and sometimes powerful bus companies) is a delicate and challenging process, and

governments must be ready to compensate the incumbents

4. Policymakers must carefully examine the potential pathways for reform and calibrate realistic expectations
5. Fiscal and financial instruments, like targeted tax breaks and subsidized loans to paratransit operators, should be more widely deployed to help them to improve their vehicles
6. Policy makers and planners should recognize and find ways to maximize the adaptive potential of informal transportation systems as an asset for a well-functioning and resilient transport system
7. Social-safety nets should be expanded to millions of people whose livelihoods depend on providing paratransit services

