

UNEP-UNECE SIDE EVENT ON USED CARS FOR AFRICA
“SAFER AND CLEANER USED VEHICLES FOR AFRICA”

On the occasion of the Seventy-fifth Anniversary
of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee

CONCEPT NOTE

At the seventieth anniversary of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee in February 2017, UNECE together with UNEP organized a conference on "Ensuring Better Air Quality and Reduced Climate Emissions through Cleaner Used Vehicles". The conference identified a set of themes that should be considered and deliberated on by stakeholders in the continuing dialogue on cleaner used cars, which resulted inter alia in the UN Road Safety Fund financed project on "Safer and Cleaner Used Vehicles for Africa"

I. Introduction

1. The importance of motor vehicles in the transportation sector is crucial, due to their major economic, political, and social benefits, which are key when considered as a means of inclusion by providing access to work, health education and other public services. Therefore, it is important that vehicles are kept in environmentally friendly and safe conditions as they have a direct and indirect ability to affect different sectors of an economy.
2. Statistics show that, the global vehicle fleet is expected to triple by 2050 and with this increase, greenhouse gas emission will grow faster in the automotive industry than any other industry. Closely related to environmental impact of the growing vehicle fleet are safety features of vehicles and the impact they have on other road users. Many low-to-middle income countries rely heavily on the import of used vehicles to meet the growing mobility needs and these vehicles may not always meet the United Nation’s minimum environmental and safety standards. In Africa, the vehicle fleet is expected to grow four to five times by 2050 and 80-90% of these vehicles will come from imported used vehicles.
3. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Inland Transport Committee (ITC) and its subsidiary body, the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) have done extensive work on technologies improving vehicle safety while reducing the harmful effects of both diesel and petrol engines. WP.29 has also established an Informal Working Group (IWG) of experts to take an active role in the vehicle regulatory elements of a vehicle to identify minimum requirements necessary to meet basic safety and environmental standards that can be acceptable in the market at different levels of development.
4. UN Environment (UNEP) is leading several global partnerships supporting a shift to cleaner and more efficient vehicles, including the Global Fuel Economy Initiative, eMob –



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promoting electric mobility, and the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV). The PCFV is the leading global initiative to support countries in introducing cleaner vehicles standards, which includes introducing policies to promote the import of cleaner used vehicles. UNEP's report "Used Vehicle and the Environment" was an extensive global research to show the flow, scale, and regulation of Light duty vehicles and this revealed the loopholes in the regulation system affecting different countries and regions. This report further revealed that several low-to-middle income countries had very weak to no regulation in the trade of used vehicles.

5. Every year, an estimated 1.3 million people die in road traffic accidents worldwide, leaving between 20 and 50 million people with non-fatal injuries and this is the leading cause of death for young people aged 5-29 and the eighth leading cause of death globally. Ninety-three per cent (93%) of these deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries, although their vehicle fleet accounts for 54% of the worldwide vehicle fleet. Africa has the highest rate of road traffic fatality at 26.6 death per 100,000 population. These figures reveal that low-middle-income countries are the most affected and this may be due to lack of proper regulations in the quality of used vehicles imported into these regions.

6. Improving on the current regulatory climate for new and used vehicles in low-and-middle income countries, is a massive undertaking that cannot be achieved without coordinated efforts between exporting and importing regions and a harmonized approach internationally. While international regulatory frameworks play a key role, visible results will be established when countries' national policies and legislation are enforced by the appropriate country authorities. As an example, an importing country may issue penalties or fines to autocar dealers in the country when they do not adhere to the minimum requirement or in extreme cases revoke their right to import used vehicle for a specified time frame. The importing countries may also accord the similar penalties to exporters who may default.

II. Benefits of Proper Regulation

7. Proper vehicle regulation will lead to an improved vehicle fleet which will have major safety, environmental, and economic benefits globally. Vehicle emission contributes substantially to climate change therefore, improving the vehicle emission in a region will have a positive impact on the future socio-economic and environmental growth of a country. There is a relationship that exist between air pollution and a range of health-related problems such as pulmonary disease, lung cancer, aggravated asthmas, respiratory infections etc. Vehicles that are designed to be more fuel efficient and emit fewer greenhouse gases fall into the category of cleaner vehicles and can reduce the healthcare services that will be incurred by a government when the quality of its vehicle fleet are clean. Importation of safer vehicles that are equipped with the approved UN basic safety features will most likely reduce the number of vehicle related deaths and reduce the cost associated with loss of life and injuries.

8. Considering the activities of the project, two regions in Africa the East Africa Community (EAC) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had taken the initiative to address the issue of weak regulation within their regions. They have both adopted minimum United Nations standards for emission and placed an age limit on the

importation of used vehicles. Though, more activities are still on-going in these regions to improve the quality of vehicles coming into their States, the first step of harmonizing and adopting these standards have been established and the resultant effect should be seen in future.

III. Challenges

9. While the project of “Safer and Cleaner Used Vehicles for Africa” will develop and harmonize minimum requirements for used vehicles at an international level, enforcing these regulations will have to take place Nationally. There are already some regulatory activities going on at the regional level in some African countries, however, the final implementation of these regulations and their enforcement needs to be carried out Nationally by effectively passing this regulation into their national legislation. When countries in the same region, actively enforce these policies, these regions are quick to see results and countries within this region will benefit from the cooperative results, but this can only be possible when National regulations are enforced and active.

IV. Decade of Action for Road Safety

10. Having safer and cleaner used vehicles in our roads will play a key role in the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030. With an ambitious target to reduce road traffic death and injuries by at least 50% amongst other activities, some focus needs to be on low-and -middle income countries and the regulatory framework in within these regions. The project of “Safer and Cleaner Used Vehicles” seeks to address the issue poor regulation with a focus on low-and-middle income countries and develop and harmonize vehicle regulatory elements for environmental and safety needs that can be accepted and applied to different countries with different levels of development.

V. Areas of discussions

11. This year's event will take stock of the developments since the first Conference on "Ensuring Better Air Quality and Reduced Climate Emissions through Cleaner Used Vehicles", informed by the activities of the UN Road Safety Fund project on Safer and Cleaner Used Vehicles for Africa and legislative developments within African regions as well as in the European Union. UNECE will provide information on the newly established Informal Working Group on New and Used Vehicles relevant for the acceptance on the market of countries with different levels of development.
