



Moving on from COVID-19 on the right track

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COVID-19 has unravelled our way of life. The recovery ask is daunting, ambitious and calls on us to invest far smarter than in the past. And we need to do so through the lens of climate change, which remains the existential threat facing the planet.

As we seek to rebuild our cities and connections with each other, clean, green and efficient public transport remains one of the smartest investments we can make. If we are to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 degree Celsius in line with our commitments to the Paris Agreement, we must cut global emissions by 7.6 per cent every year of the next decade. Cleaner, more efficient public transport that works with the natural world, alongside walking and cycling, is a big part of realising the climate puzzle.

Investing in clean public transport also means better health, with less pollution, critical for more than 90 percent of the world's population that currently live in areas where air pollution exceeds safe levels. While COVID-19 is by no means a victory lap for environmentalists, it is also time for us to seize on those moments of cleaner air and make them a non-negotiable part of our future. We cannot look to a cityscape of more than two-thirds of the world's population by 2050, without affordable, clean and green transport.

And the good news is that these are investments that make huge economic sense. Worldwide, about 13 million jobs are linked to public transport services and supply chains. If done right, some of these jobs can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, save energy, reduce road fatalities, alleviate congestion and thereby people's health. Public transport is also a catalyst for further economic growth. The economic benefits of public transport are five times higher than the money invested in it.¹

This year's World Environment Day calls for urgent action to protect biodiversity, the species that inhabit our planet, and the ecosystems on which human health is so dependant. It is a reminder that it is indeed time for nature. The way we live and travel matters greatly for nature and for us. By embracing clean, efficient and green public transport, we help to limit emissions, noise pollution, traffic accidents and our footprint on nature.

So as we seek to build back better, let's remember public transport can help us enjoy the natural world, and improve the health of both people and planet. We all need to be on board!

¹ International Association of Public Transport (UITP), *Public Transport Moving Europe Forward*.