2021 ITF SUMMIT ON TRANSPORT INNOVATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:
RESHAPING MOBILITY IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SUMMIT PROGRAMME

► The International Transport Forum’s (ITF) Annual Summit is the world’s largest gathering of transport Ministers. Since 2008, this global transport policy event brings together ministers, heads of international organisations, business leaders, civil society, and academia, to discuss the future of transport and mobility through three days of interactive sessions and debates. More than 1300 participants from over 70 countries attend the Summit each year.

► Held under the Presidency of Ireland, the 2021 Summit Transport Innovation for Sustainable Development: Reshaping Mobility in the Wake of Covid-19 will explore how innovation in transport can contribute to enhancing sustainability of transport infrastructure and services, and what governance framework is required to enable this. The Summit programme will also examine the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on innovation in transport and mobility, and highlight options for the way forward towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

► Innovation is transforming transport and mobility at an unprecedented pace, removing barriers to the movement of people and goods and, changing how we live and work. Innovation is providing new ways of meeting transport-related global challenges, particularly with regard to shifts in global supply chains and trade routes, demographic changes, massive urbanisation and climate change.

► The scope of innovation as proposed for the Summit discussions is broad, and covers technological innovation (e.g., automation, big data, artificial intelligence, blockchain), electrification, new business models and innovative mobility services, and social innovation. The Summit programme will feature more than 20 sessions designed around five broad thematic pillars:
  o Connectivity and resilient infrastructure.
  o Universal access and social inclusion.
  o Environmental sustainability.
  o Safety and security.
  o Governance.

► As each year, the Summit programme includes three Ministers’ Roundtables (MRTs) which gather ministers and business leaders to discuss the most pressing topics related to transport and mobility. In 2021, these topics will include: transport and climate change; managing the transition to Mobility-as-a-Service; and regulatory challenges of automated and connected driving.

► The programme will feature the ITF Transport Outlook and ITF Decarbonising Transport Initiative. It will also include a session on Looking towards the 2022 Summit Transport for Inclusive Societies.

► The day before the Summit, in partnership with the transport research community, the ITF is planning to hold the fourth edition of a pre-Summit Research Day.
SUMMIT THEMATIC SCOPE: KEY SESSIONS

Innovation in transport: new horizons for the economy and society in the post-Covid-19 world

New technologies and services are transforming transport at an unprecedented pace. They are quickly removing barriers to the movement of people and goods, providing new opportunities and changing the way we live and travel. Innovation is also offering new ways of meeting transport-related global challenges, notably social inclusion, road safety and the sector’s significant impact on the climate. In order to achieve sustainability across its various dimensions, transport will have to change radically, and innovations across all dimensions will be evaluated for their potential to contribute to positive change. How can positive change be delivered in the post-Covid-19 world? What changes in mobility patterns caused by the Covid-19 crisis are likely to persist, and how should governments try to shape them? How is this transformation affecting our societies, our economies and the environment?

Future of the transport workforce

Many occupations in the transport sector, from bus drivers and traffic technicians, to insurance appraisers, will feel the unfolding transformation of innovation in transport. Automation is predicted to replace between 90% and 98% of jobs in these three professions alone. Some occupations will become obsolete, but many new fields will open up as new technologies and services spring up. Ensuring a smooth transition requires retraining programmes, and financial support for those adapting to the future of the transport world. Meanwhile, the Covid-19 pandemic has put immense pressure on transportation workers globally, exposing them to health and safety risks, unemployment, and uncertainty of the future of the workplace. Will Covid-19 have a lasting effect on what has already been done to prepare the transport workforce for the future? How can transport companies preserve jobs, maintain business continuity and build a stronger, resilient recovery in a new world of work?

Public transport in a world of new mobility

Cities have borne the brunt of Covid-19, with the pandemic exposing health and social inequalities and economic fragility. Public transport has endured the worst of Covid-19, with a drastic drop in transport users, and with many operators reducing their services by 50% or more. Covid-19 and its aftermath are bringing both threats and opportunities to public transport - from a massive return to the private car as a safety bubble to a better convergence of public transport and innovative mobility solutions. It is time to rethink the approach to public transport and new mobility, and ask how they could create a mobility system, which is more resilient and sustainable. Will Covid-19 fundamentally change urban mobility? What about access for rural areas? What is needed in terms of policy, investment, and infrastructure, to regain public trust and support public transport in the time of Covid-19 and beyond? How can different transport modes work together, to overcome sanitary and economic shocks?

Transformative governance: how can governments better foster innovation?

Innovation is rapidly changing the urban transport environment. New app-based mobility services are providing more transport options to more people and improving connectivity. Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) models may embed and expand these changes in travel habits. Automated vehicles have the potential to transform the transport landscape, but also present major challenges. New services create new regulatory challenges, particularly understanding both the nature and extent of the risks posed by new technologies, new business models, and developing policy to best address them. What regulatory principles and approaches could be adopted to manage the transition toward innovative mobility, and increase public trust in these technologies? How can regulatory governance help to better balance competing policy concerns in relation to innovative mobility, including safety, congestion, pollution, urban planning and public acceptability? How can policy makers help to restore consumer trust in all modes of transport in the wake of Covid-19?
In search of clarity in an increasingly complex mobility landscape

Automated decision-making is taking hold in areas from health care and housing to media and mobility. Our daily lives are increasingly being influenced by automated decision-making systems based on algorithms and data science. These systems run on code, produce prodigious amounts of data and run largely in the background – both of our consciousness and in regulatory oversight. In transport, algorithms are a core feature for services from public transport scheduling to routing apps, from bicycle sharing to self-driving technology, and from parcel delivery to the dispatching of ride services. Algorithmic decision-making has the potential to produce significant gains in efficiency, sustainability and equity – but poorly framed, it could erode all three. How will blockchain, open algorithms and other alternative approaches to data-sharing transform transport and mobility? What opportunities do these innovative solutions offer in terms of responses to the Covid-19 crisis and beyond?

Infrastructure for the new mobility landscape

Emerging transport innovations, particularly new forms of mobility enabled by automation, asset sharing, digital connectivity and electrification technologies, will have major implications for transport infrastructure. These new innovations must anticipate the infrastructure requirements in ways that address a range of aspects: safety and reliability, environmental and financial sustainability, affordability, accessibility and associated equity issues. How can the transition towards more resilient and sustainable infrastructure continue during the recovery from the Covid-19 crisis? What roles are appropriate for governments and industry in developing infrastructure for low-carbon fuels? How can strategic infrastructure planning better consider infrastructure for new mobility and electrification?

Aviation in the post-Covid-19 world: Towards a sustainable recovery?

With travel restrictions imposed on many international routes, few industries have been more severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic than the aviation sector. Uncertainty remains with respect to passenger numbers returning to their pre-crisis trajectory. Many governments now focus their policy efforts on ensuring that essential connectivity provided by air carriers is preserved. National support schemes have been launched to help airports, airlines, and their employees. At the same time, pre-Covid-19 climate concerns remain: before the crisis, air transport accounted for around 2.5% of global CO2 emissions and 13% of total CO2 emissions from transport. After the crisis, the ITF projections see air transport emissions increase by around 30% over the next thirty years. Has the Covid-19 crisis redefined priorities for innovation in aviation? How can governments support the industry in their recovery from the crisis including through successive stimulus packages while ensuring environmental outcomes are achieved?

Towards more resilient and innovative freight delivery

Mobility restrictions to contain Covid-19, shifting attitudes and economic crisis could reduce global freight transport by up to 36% by the end of 2020. Meanwhile, urban goods transport is more resilient, as increased online shopping adds deliveries. Railways and inland waterways also showed to be less affected than road freight. The disruption in freight transport has led to an increased focus on supply chain resilience and the opportunity for the rapid adoption of new technology. The Covid-19 crisis may accelerate implementation of intermodal freight solutions, which have long been seen as a way to make logistics more resilient and reduce freight CO2. However, the share of freight using alternate, integrated modes remains small, and is hindered by the fragmentation of markets and institutions, low flexibility and a lack of reliability. Innovation can help to overcome these shortcomings. Has the Covid-19 crisis opened opportunities for intermodal freight and faster adoption of technologies and procedures that foster intermodality, such as digitalisation? What successful initiatives have used data to improve intermodal transport?
Innovation for gender equality: user’s perspective

Most mobility systems do not take into account gender differences in travel behaviour, causing many women to be underserved. Women more than men tend to prefer flexible modes that facilitate trip chaining, and travel with children and other dependents. A digital gender gap further limits women’s access to innovative travel solutions, including smartphone-based mobility services: 326 million fewer women than men across the globe have a smartphone and internet access. The Covid-19 crisis has brought questions related to inclusion in transport to the fore. To improve accessibility, many companies have been providing their services free of charge. Will this lead to a change in travel behaviour and enhance use of innovative transport services by women? How do automated, electric, and shared mobility impact women’s mobility? How has Covid-19 affected women’s travel behaviour, with respect to the use of innovative mobility solutions? How can women be more engaged in designing and implementing transport innovations?

Modern travel and the digital divide: bridging the gap

Globally, digital technologies have improved access to mobility services, but segments of the underserved population - such as older and disabled people - are being left behind. Significant parts of the population have no internet access at home, nor possess a mobile device. Not least, most of the new services require a credit card or a bank account, putting them out of reach for many lower-income households, particularly in poorer countries. Meanwhile, the Covid-19 global pandemic has led to a new reliance on digital infrastructure and connectivity. As the pandemic highlights the significance of digital infrastructure to both business and society, it may be accentuating the global digital divide. What are the impacts of digitalisation of transport for underserved segments of the population? How can policy makers ensure that lower-income households and economies also benefit from digital mobility technologies? Which innovative ideas and creative solutions can bridge the digital divide?

Road safety and security in the age of new mobility

Over 1.3 million people are killed on the roads each year, and more than 35 million suffer life-changing injuries. Road traffic crashes are now the leading cause of death for children and young adults aged 5-29. In September 2020, the UN General Assembly adopted a new resolution on global road safety, proclaiming the period 2021-2030 as the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety with the ambitious goal to reduce road traffic deaths and injuries by at least 50% by 2030. The Covid-19 crisis has accelerated a trend towards more cycling and micromobility. New services and vehicle types are often seen as a threat to road safety; however, they open opportunities for safer and more sustainable travel. How can innovation contribute to delivering the UN road safety goals? What is the role of micromobility in post-Covid-19 urban mobility and its potential as a solution for safer travel? How can regulatory frameworks safeguard road safety in a fast changing mobility landscape?

Transport Innovation Talks: Inspiration from the cutting edge of 21st century mobility

Much of today’s innovation in the mobility sector is taking place in cities. Mobility is a hotbed of opportunity for entrepreneurs. With rapid technological developments and unprecedented levels of investment, start-ups are playing an ever-more important role in shaping transport. What are the new and breaking innovations for sustainability and inclusion to watch for in the urban mobility space as well as in rural areas? How is the current health crisis impacting innovations in the sector? How should public health aspects be integrated in future innovative transport? How should policymakers support innovations during the current crisis and in its aftermath?

More information about the Summit:

- About the Summit (website)
- Summit highlights (video)