

Sustainable transport supporting COVID-19 recovery strategies in the MENA region

A Think Tank Session co-organised by the Islamic Development Bank and the SLOCAT Partnership on Sustainable Low Carbon Transport with support from the International Union of Railways and the International Association of Public Transport at the 2022 MENA Climate Week

30 March 2022 | 12:00 - 13:30 Gulf Standard Time (GMT+4) | Venue: Atlantis D

Hybrid format with on-site and virtual participants

[Microsoft Teams link](#)

Background

SLOCAT and IsDB are delivering a think tank session at the 2022 Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Climate Week. The session will discuss how social and economic recovery and resilience for the region will be accelerated through increased investment in public, shared and active transport. The session will have a focus on South-South cooperation among regional actors and will centre on two overarching questions:

- **Question 1:** Which transport policy responses will help drive shifts toward more sustainable, low carbon transport modes, and, where relevant, the recovery of public transport and paratransit ridership to pre-pandemic levels in order to meet Paris Agreement targets?
- **Question 2:** Which post-pandemic investments in sustainable transport are needed to enhance equitable passenger transport access and bolster more sustainable logistics chains to support economic recovery and ensure no one is left behind?

The outcomes of this think tank session will inform a forthcoming **regional snapshot analysis** showcasing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on mobility in IsDB sub-regions and demonstrating the essential role of increased investment in sustainable transport towards green, equitable recovery.

Objectives

- Elicit feedback and compile expert perspectives on key questions related to pandemic impacts response and recovery, and investments from a sustainable transport perspective.
- Enable structured, interactive dialogue among transport and resilience stakeholders for concerted engagement in global and regional processes.
- Enhance collaboration on transport pandemic recovery among decision-makers and practitioners.

Session preparation

Participants are kindly requested to read the session agenda before attending the session. To maximise the time, the session will be mainly dedicated to interactive discussions among all participants.

Participants

IsDB member country delegates and transport specialists, and regional hub staff. SLOCAT partners and close collaborators, including UIC and UITP association members in the MENA region.

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Think Tank Session Agenda

Session moderator: Mr. Christopher Dekki, SLOCAT Partnership

Welcome and session overview (15 min) [12:00 - 12:15]

Mr. Christopher Dekki, SLOCAT Partnership (objectives, format, timekeeping) (2 min)

Mr. Atiq Ahmad, Global Lead and Transport Specialist, Islamic Development Bank (5 min)

Tour de table with all participants (name, country, affiliation) (8 min)

Discussion Segment 1. Pandemic Transport and Mobility Responses (35 min) [12:15 - 12:50]

Overarching question: Which transport policy responses will help drive the shifts toward more sustainable, low carbon transport modes, and, where relevant, the recovery of public transport and paratransit ridership to pre-pandemic levels in order to meet Paris Agreement targets?

Challenge statement: Public transport ridership dropped 70-90% in major cities at the height of lockdown measures. Low-income residents are more likely to rely on public and paratransit services, underscoring social equity issues. Many have shifted to private transport modes, due in part to the **largely negated** fear of COVID-19 contagion on public transport. The MENA region, while facing service reductions due to precautionary measures, has demonstrated **above-average recovery** in several key markets.

Aspects to address: Increased remote work; surging e-commerce; rebounding congestion; increasing private motorisation; unequal access to public transport and paratransit services; rising fuel prices.

Facilitator: Mr. Mark Major, SLOCAT Partnership

Presenters: Ms. Farida Moawad and Mr. Philip Turner, Int'l Association of Public Transport (5 min)

Respondent: Ms. Alaa Zuhair Olaian, Ministry of Transport, Palestine (5 min)

Expert Discussion among participants (25 min) - ([Jamboard Frame #1](#), inputs for remote participants)

Discussion Segment 2: Pandemic Recovery Investments (35 min) [12:50 - 13:25]

Overarching question: Which post-pandemic investments in sustainable transport are needed to enhance equitable passenger transport access and bolster more sustainable logistics chains to support economic recovery and ensure no one is left behind?

Challenge statement: Current COVID-19 recovery packages **dwarf existing low carbon investments**; and within recovery packages, only around one third of transport investments are associated with clean transport, which are outweighed by fossil fuel-focused investments. In the MENA region, relatively few public recovery packages have been introduced, and transparent and credible environmental, social and governance impact reporting remains limited.

Aspects to address: Public-private investment in recovery efforts; shifting areas of goods production and consumption; persistent fossil fuel subsidies; constrained government budgets; emerging and expanding transport investments (e.g. Egypt e-bus production, Morocco high-speed rail).

Facilitator: Ms. Lucie Anderton, International Union of Railways (UIC)

Presenter: Mr. Olatunji Yusuf, Islamic Development Bank (5 min)

Respondent: Ms. Seham Farouk, Office of Minister of Finance, Egypt (5 min) (TBC)

Expert Discussion among participants (25 min) - ([Jamboard Frame #2](#), inputs for remote participants)

Wrap up and next steps (5 min) [13:25 - 13:30]

Mr. Christopher Dekki, SLOCAT Partnership (Overview of planned think tank outputs) (2 min).

Mr. Olatunji Yusuf, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB role in regional climate weeks, COP27) (3 min).