

H.E. Antonio Guterres
Secretary General
United Nations
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CORONAVIRUS AND ITS IMPACT ON SUPPLY CHAINS AND MOBILITY NETWORKS

Your Excellency,

In these difficult times our thoughts go out to those who are working hard to fight the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. In this respect we do hope that you and your fellow colleagues in the UN are doing well.

IRU, the world road transport organisation representing the voice of 3.5 million transport operating companies as well as the implementing partner of the UN TIR Convention, is monitoring the situation across the globe carefully and evaluating the pandemic's impacts on commercial road transport. Nearly 6% of all employed people worldwide work in road transport – largely in small and medium sized firms that, due to their size, cannot easily cope with external shocks such as the economic impacts of COVID-19.

The most immediate concern for the road transport sector is to maintain supply chains, especially for essentials such as food and medical items, in the safest way possible for transport workers and citizens and respecting the latest relevant government guidelines.

Our industry takes every precaution, but implementation of adequate measures and timely coordination between governments remains dissatisfactory. Transport operators are implementing strict driver health practices for loading and unloading goods, particularly in quarantine areas, and higher standards concerning the carriage of documents to demonstrate compliance with health rules, but it remains difficult to comply with a patchwork of national initiatives.

While rules and restrictions change rapidly, it has become increasingly difficult to provide collective passenger transport by road and to keep road transport supply chains open with the aim to bring essential goods to affected areas. IRU thus urges the UN to call on all governments to:

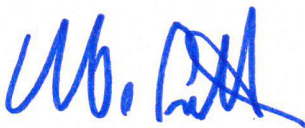
- implement measures in a coordinated and unified way;

- keep cross-border logistics flows open, giving priority to essential goods like medical supplies and food;
- clearly communicate changes on enforcement procedures for vehicles, drivers and cargo, especially for quarantine areas;
- mitigate the impact of restrictions on supply chains and related movements of goods, allowing for maximum flexibility on the interpretation of driving rules and driving restrictions, and lifting driving bans;
- encourage use of the UN TIR Convention and related IT tools, which allows for transport in a secure load compartment carried out under customs control, and, therefore, does not require physical checks and therefore reduces contact between people at the border;
- not quarantine drivers active in international transport if they do not show COVID-19 symptoms;
- allow to the extent possible domestic passenger transport services to enable people to commute to work and when needed buy critical supplies;
- provide emergency state aid programmes for impacted businesses to prevent bankruptcies.

Ultimately it is crucial to keep transport links open wherever and as long as possible in affected areas, so that people and essential goods can get to where they need to be, and to protect transport workers and companies who are the economic backbone of our societies.

IRU stands ready to provide the UN, its related agencies as well as all governments practical advice from the ground and guidance to ensure that, as a global community, we effectively tackle this pandemic.

Yours sincerely,



Umberto de Pretto
Secretary General