

Abidjan Declaration

Towards sustainable, efficient, inclusive and low carbon urban mobility in Africa

Adopted at the conclusion of the International Conference on Sustainable Mobility and Climate (CIMDC 2026), Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, 19–22 October 2026

By CODATU, Climate Chance and AMUGA, and submitted to the African Association of Urban Mobility Authorities (AUMA).

Preamble

Having met in Abidjan from 19 to 22 October 2026, at the invitation of CODATU, Climate Chance and the Greater Abidjan Urban Mobility Authority (AMUGA), representatives of transport planning authorities, local authorities, state institutions, transport operators (both formal and informal), financial institutions, civil society organisations, universities, businesses and young entrepreneurs exchanged views on the future of urban and peri-urban mobility in Africa in the face of climate, demographic and economic emergencies.

The following observations were made:

- The absolute urgency of combating climate change, following several consecutive years of global warming and extreme droughts, as well as

devastating climate disasters, which have hit the most vulnerable countries and populations first. No one can today dispute the findings of the international scientific community, as summarised by the IPCC, and their recommendations must be followed in order to limit the rise in average temperatures to as close as possible to 1.5 °C.

- In this context, Africa is suffering particularly from global warming for which it bears no responsibility. Therefore, funding for adaptation and mitigation policies, commensurate with the scale of the challenges, must be a priority for the international community and for the countries that emit the most greenhouse gases. The year 2026 will see the COPs of the three Rio Conventions – on biodiversity, climate and desertification – take place. It is at the local level that this convergence can best be achieved

- The population of African cities is set to rise from 700 million to 1.5 billion by 2050. This demographic transition makes Africa's urbanization the largest project on the planet and represents a historic opportunity for the continent's sustainable development. Urban and peri-urban mobility is emerging as a key driver of economic growth and climate resilience. It will determine access to employment, education, healthcare and essential services.

- Urban and peri-urban mobility currently accounts for over 90 per cent of daily journeys in most African countries. It relies heavily on walking, which is often a forced and arduous experience. The paratransit / informal transport sector, which is growing, continues to account for the bulk of motorized journeys, carrying nearly 400 million people a day. This sector remains insufficiently recognized, organized and funded. The rate of car ownership among households is rising sharply in cities.

- African cities are among those most exposed to the effects of climate change and the risks of disasters, particularly flooding, extreme heat and rising sea levels, even though they currently contribute very little to global emissions. These risks also affect transport infrastructure and may jeopardize the continuity of essential mobility services. Furthermore, the transport sector is one of the main sources of greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants. Africa's share of emissions is likely to rise sharply given the current trend in motorization rates.

- We emphasize the importance of road safety, which has reached exceptional levels and causes an unacceptable number of deaths and injuries every year. It must be given serious attention and addressed through dedicated prevention policies.

- At this stage in their development, African cities still have the opportunity to avoid replicating development models reliant on private cars and fossil fuels.

They can devise effective, low carbon solutions tailored to their specific circumstances. Countries that have been urbanized earlier have made numerous mistakes and are attempting to rectify them; this therefore provides a rich opportunity for sharing experience.

- Urban sprawl is also one of the major challenges to be addressed, as the baseline scenario suggests that built-up areas will triple whilst the population doubles; yet, in the most extreme cases in the North, sprawling cities consume up to ten times more energy for transport than more compact cities.
- The widespread decline in international public development assistance is undermining the efforts of governments and local authorities responsible for urban transport, as well as all civil society actors involved in action – who, given the challenges ahead, nevertheless need the best technical and financial support available on a global scale. However, there is also a widespread problem with the local allocation of resources, which always prioritize private cars over the other modes of transport.

In line with the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals, the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the declarations adopted at the CIMDC in Dakar in 2022, the three partner organizations are calling for immediate action to shape the African cities of the future and the regions on which they depend, based on sustainable mobility systems. In particular, they affirm the following:

PRINCIPLES

1. Access for all: Mobility is a right and an essential service. It must be affordable, safe and accessible to everyone: workers, young people, women, older people, people with disabilities, people in precarious circumstances, etc.
2. Public organization of mobility: The establishment of effective, coordinated and stable governance between local and national public bodies is a key prerequisite for defining a coherent strategy, prioritizing investments, securing funding and ensuring the long-term implementation of projects. Mobility organizing authorities with clear powers applicable at least at the level of urban areas, stable resources and technical capabilities are essential for a high-quality public service. Without this, future major urban transport projects will not be able to be implemented.
3. Recognizing the existing situation: Paratransit / Informal transport is a key player. It is important to organize it, professionalize it and integrate it into the transport system rather than ignoring it or pitting it against mass transport

projects. Similarly, the urbanization of the existing city poses a variety of problems but is essential to finding solutions. We must rectify its shortcomings, retain its strengths and structure its expansion whilst avoiding low-density sprawl. Medium-sized towns are also significantly affected, as they are experiencing strong population growth and can still avoid most of the problems that lie ahead.

4. Ecosystem conservation: This urban and peri-urban planning must also preserve natural spaces, watercourses, wetlands and ecological corridors, in order to limit habitat fragmentation and maintain ecosystem functions. Mobility planning must therefore be coordinated with land-use planning, biodiversity conservation and the restoration of degraded environments.

5. Moderation and complementarity: To be effective, the four levers for transforming mobility must be used simultaneously: 'anticipate, avoid, shift, improve' – understanding today's and tomorrow's travel needs, reducing the need for unavoidable journeys, prioritizing active and collective modes of transport, and improving the energy efficiency of vehicles. In this regard, digitalization and electromobility ,as well as alternative modes of transport (cycling), represent opportunities to build sustainable mobility systems more quickly in Africa.

6. Resilience. Mobility systems should be planned, designed, funded, operated and maintained with due regard to climate risks and disasters, in order to protect investments and ensure continuity of service for users during shocks and extreme events. As transport depends on and supports other critical infrastructure (energy, water, digital networks), resilience planning should also take into account the risk of cascading disruptions between systems.

7. Climate justice: The transition must be just, as reiterated by the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion of July 2025 concerning states' climate obligations. It must protect the jobs and incomes of workers in urban mobility and ensure that no urban areas or populations are left behind. Cities in the North, which are responsible for 75 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions, must help cities in the South – and, as a priority, African cities – to adopt a more sustainable trajectory. The same applies to states responsible for safeguarding the major global and human balances.

COMMITMENTS

1. Strengthening governance and organizing authorities

- We support the strengthening of mobility governance in African urban and peri-urban areas. There is no one-size-fits-all model for such governance, but there must be, at the very least, an inclusive and participatory approach, a clear division of responsibilities and a project coordination right through to commercial implementation: strategic planning – with every city with a population of over 200,000 having its own plan – operational organization, the organization and regulation of paratransit / informal transport and institutional public transport, consideration of active modes of transport, parking and traffic management, ticketing systems, etc. This process must also extend to medium-sized towns, in order to structure their sustainable, low-carbon and resilient mobility systems as early as possible.
- We believe that the African Association of Urban Mobility Authorities (AUMA) provides a relevant framework for peer-to-peer experience-sharing, training and advocacy with governments and international organizations. It can benefit from exchanges with cities around the world and become a driving force for proposals and innovations across African countries.
- The coordination of policies on mobility, urban planning, climate mitigation and adaptation, and land use is a key driver for shaping the cities of the future. We support processes that move in this direction, in particular the creation or strengthening of urban planning agencies, integrated planning of transport and urban development, and operational approaches that help to better control urban sprawl.
- Examples include TOD-style approaches that increase density along mass transit corridors, or land reserves along future transport routes. Planning processes should also incorporate, at the earliest possible stage, an assessment of climate and disaster risks likely to affect transport infrastructure and services. Such planning must be designed with due regard for its effects on biodiversity and the functioning of ecosystems, particularly the fragmentation of natural corridors. It must also preserve nature-based solutions with a view to adapting to climate change.
- We believe it is important to involve the public and businesses, as far as possible, in defining transport provision and services.

2. Developing high-quality public transport

- We support the roll-out of mass transport networks tailored to cities' resources and population densities, complementing existing networks as part of a holistic

approach to the mobility system. We warn of the risks posed by projects limited to infrastructure alone, without genuine intermodality or urban integration. We support an approach that takes into account the full range of costs over the lifetime of vehicles, beyond the initial investment alone (TCO), as well as funding mechanisms that also cover maintenance, training and the operational availability of fleets. These developments must be accompanied by the development of local expertise in maintenance sectors, technical training and local industrial partnerships.

- We support the professionalization of paratransit, starting with a genuine dialogue between the authorities and operators on the formation of owners' groups, training, access to finance and the renewal of vehicle fleets, infrastructure improvements, service contracts and better working conditions, etc. This development is a necessary condition for the success of mass transit projetcts as well as for the mobility system as a whole.
- We call for the development of passenger information, ticketing systems and digital tools to benefit both users and transport operators.
- We call for the integration of new mass-transit systems to be planned and funded alongside their infrastructure, under the leadership of the organizing authority and with the involvement of local authorities, project owners and operators. Each new service launch must be accompanied by a solid operational foundation for intermodality: safe and accessible pedestrian access, well-organized connections, suitable feeder services, passenger information and coordination between operators. Responsibilities, resources and deadlines must be set out in a joint roadmap, and interfaces must be tested before passengers are welcomed on board.
- We call for fare arrangements to be put in place from the very first day of operation, ensuring financially accessible connections underpinned by revenue-sharing agreements and the necessary public funding. Investment funding must be accompanied by sustainable resources for operation, maintenance and renewal. Contracts must specify funding commitments, allocate risks according to the responsibilities actually controlled by each party, and define a performance framework based on realistic, objective and verifiable indicators. Ticketing and digital systems must support these agreements, the implementation of which may be phased in.
- The requirement for intermodality from the beginning does not imply an immediate reorganization of the entire network. It presupposes that the interfaces essential to the operation of the new lines are in place, and that integration is then extended and improved according to a clear timetable, taking into account actual commissioning dates and lessons learnt from

operations. This transition must involve both established operators and paratransit, ensure the continuity of services and maintain direct connections where they remain relevant. It must be underpinned by evaluated pilot schemes, training and appropriate economic and social support. Its success must be assessed in terms of the passenger's entire journey: journey and waiting times, the reliability of connections, total cost and accessibility, including for residents living far from major transport corridors.

3. Making active modes of transport a priority

- We reiterate the importance of ensuring that roads, pavements, footpaths and cycle routes are continuous, safe and accessible.
- We call for a significant proportion of infrastructure budgets to be allocated to walking and cycling, which are the modes of transport most widely used by the greatest number of people and which promote good health.
- We support tactical urban planning approaches, particularly to reduce road hazards around schools and markets.
- We recommend the introduction of PARK & RIDE (P+R) facilities on major traffic routes with direct access to heavy transport modes (Metro, BRT, BHNS) to facilitate a modal shift away from cars, motorbikes and scooters.

4. Decarbonising transport in a realistic and equitable manner

- We support a pragmatic energy transition, favouring a technologically open approach that considers available energy infrastructure, operating conditions and local financial capacities: the electrification of two-wheelers and buses, cleaner fuels, the renewal of ageing fleets and the regulation of imports of polluting second-hand vehicles, etc.
- We propose linking the development of electric mobility to that of renewable energy production capacity, as well as local battery maintenance and recycling sectors.
- We will promote the measurement and publication of emissions from the sector in order to guide public policy and provide reliable data for dialogue with climate finance bodies.

5. Strengthening the resilience of transport systems in the face of climate change and disaster risks

- Our organizations will take action if they find that climate and disaster risks have not been assessed throughout the entire life cycle of mobility infrastructure and systems (planning, design, financing, construction,

maintenance and operation), taking into account the hazards to which they are exposed – notably flooding, extreme heat and rising sea levels – and identifying the infrastructure, networks and critical nodes on which the continuity of urban mobility depends.

- We reiterate that the resilience of transport systems is measured not only by the survival of infrastructure assets, but also by the continuity of service provided to users: we call for the capacity of transport systems to maintain or rapidly restore essential services during disasters and extreme weather events to be strengthened.
- We call for climate and disaster risks to be integrated into the planning, assessment and prioritization of mobility investments, so that new investments do not exacerbate existing vulnerabilities or create new long-term risks, particularly in areas highly exposed to climate hazards.
- We encourage cities and transport authorities to consider the interdependencies between transport and other critical infrastructure systems – in particular energy, water and telecommunications – as well as the risk that a disruption in one of these systems could spread to transport services.

6. Preserving biodiversity and ecological connectivity in transport infrastructure

- We call for biodiversity and ecological connectivity issues to be integrated from the very outset of transport infrastructure planning, by assessing their direct, indirect and cumulative impacts on natural habitats, species movement and ecological processes.
- We encourage the application of the impact mitigation hierarchy, prioritizing first the avoidance of damage to areas of high ecological value and ecological corridors, followed by the reduction of impacts and the restoration of affected habitats. Offsetting should only be used as a last resort.
- Where impacts cannot be avoided, we encourage measures tailored to local contexts, such as wildlife crossings, river crossing structures or the restoration of vegetated corridors, based on scientific assessments.
- We call for the impacts of infrastructure and the effectiveness of the measures implemented to be monitored, involving the relevant authorities, scientists, civil society organizations and local communities.

7. Mobilising funding

- We will encourage states, development banks, climate funds and the private sector to significantly increase funding dedicated to sustainable urban mobility in Africa, with simplified access for cities and organizing authorities. This funding must also be accessible to civil society initiatives. We propose that the

AUMA play a central role in this dialogue, in coordination with African networks of local authorities.

- We encourage the systematic integration of climate and disaster risks into the planning and evaluation of transport investments, in order to better protect these investments over the long term, reduce future losses and support the financing of more resilient infrastructure.
- We call for the establishment of sustainable local funding mechanisms (dedicated taxation, vehicle licence fees, paid parking, land value capture, reliable central government grants, etc.) at a level that enables local authorities to function and to support the economic model of public passenger transport.
- We call for urban mobility to be recognized as a priority sector, within the framework of the Paris Climate Agreement, for Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and adaptation plans.

8. Support innovation, employment and the mobility of people with specific needs: women, young people, people with precarious situations, disabilities, etc.

- We support the provision of assistance to young African entrepreneurs – both men and women – working in the fields of urban mobility and climate action, through incubation schemes, funding and access to public procurement.
- We support investment in training for careers in urban mobility and the energy transition, with a particular focus on employment for women and young people.
- We support research and the production of disaggregated data on mobility and its vulnerabilities in African cities, in partnership with universities and local mobility observatories.

9. Strengthening international cooperation

- We wish to intensify South-South, North-South and decentralized cooperation between cities, based on the exchange of experiences and respect for African priorities, including with regard to the resilience of infrastructure and mobility systems in the face of climate change and disasters, with a view to developing a genuine alliance of the world's cities on urban mobility.
- We call for the establishment of frameworks for dialogue and monitoring involving non-state actors and local authorities, so that their contributions can be accounted for in Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) – covering both mitigation and adaptation – particularly within the framework of the 2nd Global Stocktake to be launched at COP31 in Antalya, ensuring that African

cities and urban mobility challenges are finally given the consideration they deserve, commensurate with the scale of the issues at stake.

OUR ROADMAP

The signatories undertake to:

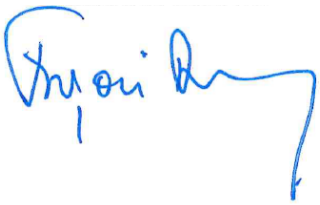
1. Disseminate this Declaration to governments, African and European cities, financial institutions and international organizations dealing in particular with mobility, climate and public health. A follow-up will be proposed with these stakeholders to make progress on operationnal proposals. Voluntary commitments from cities, operators and financial partners (initiatives, quantified targets, projects) will be collected and promoted, notably through AUMA.
2. Identify and develop collaborative initiatives that can enable faster and more effective progress: joint training programmes, joint advocacy campaigns, an African paratransit fair, communities of practice between African cities, an observatory on urban mobility in Africa, a public transport central purchasing body (incorporating criteria on quality, safety, total cost of ownership, maintenance and environmental performance), performance indicators, the identification of replicable pilot projects, etc.
3. Raise these recommendations at upcoming international and continental climate and development summits.
4. Facilitate joint capacity-building programmes for African urban transport organizing authorities and civil society actors, in collaboration with partner networks. This includes, in particular, developing mentoring schemes between technical experts, launching initiatives for decentralized cooperation, organizing regular exchanges, and strengthening capacities for risk assessment, planning and investment in resilient mobility infrastructure.
5. Organize a call for proposals on the 'blind spots' of urban mobility in Africa, to establish a pipeline of projects to be supported on issues that are often neglected yet have a significant impact, and which are characterized by ease of implementation: intermodality, coherence between urban development and mobility, active modes of transport, integrated ticketing systems, new data arising from digitalization, training, gender equality, governance, informal transport, network maintenance, infrastructure resilience to climate risks and disasters, and continuity of mobility services, etc.

CODATU and AUMA are today signing a framework partnership agreement setting out how they will make progress on several of these issues. Climate Chance is committed, through its climate observatory, to developing its analyses of trends in transport-related greenhouse gas emissions across the African continent.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the Government of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, the Ministry of Transport, the Greater Abidjan Urban Mobility Authority, as well as all the partners, sponsors, speakers and participants whose commitment has made this historic conference possible.

Done at Abidjan, 22 October 2026

On behalf of CODATU	*On behalf of Climate Chance*	*On behalf of AMUGA*
		
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