PRESS RELEASE

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IRF and Partners Announce Global Commitment to Advance Inclusive, Safe, Green and Efficient Roads Under the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport

Geneva, 10 December 2025 — The International Road Federation (IRF), together with a coalition of global partners, today announced a commitment to the **United Nations (UN) Decade of Sustainable Transport (2026–2035)** aimed at accelerating the transition towards inclusive, safe, green and efficient road systems for all.

The commitment is endorsed by Arup, Australia National Transport Research Organisation, Global Alliance of NGOs for Road Safety, International Federation of Consulting Engineers, International Road Assessment Programme, ORIS Materials Intelligence and World Wildlife Fund.

Roads are the arteries of global mobility, connecting people, goods and opportunities. They are key enabler for economic growth, resilient infrastructure, trade, global supply chains, climate action, health promotion, poverty reduction and access to education. How road systems are planned, built and managed will determine whether the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport achieves its goals.

In many developing regions, rural communities remain disconnected, while urban roads give little priority to people walking, cycling or using public transport. Each year, around 1.19 million people die on the world's roads and millions more are seriously injured, with vulnerable users such as pedestrians, cyclists and children disproportionately affected. Wildlife–vehicle collisions are also major contributors to roadway deaths and injuries, while causing biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. Meanwhile, road transport contributes to nearly 74% of all transport CO_2 emissions and faces growing exposure to climate hazards, causing disruptions and economic loss. In many road networks, congestion continues to erode productivity, undermining both efficiency and quality of life.

In 2023, the UN General Assembly declared the first-ever UN Decade of Sustainable Transport to start in 2026. The Implementation Plan was launched on 10 December 2025 at a Special Event in the ECOSOC Chamber at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, hosted by UN DESA, where IRF presented this new voluntary commitment.

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The commitment will help translate the vision of the Decade into concrete action by providing strategic direction and practical support for those who plan, build and manage them. At its core stands the **Roadmaps for Change** series, which will outline policy actions, technical standards and tools, replicable practices, innovation and indicators of progress for:

- **Inclusive roads** that improve safe rural access, connect isolated communities to essential services and rebalance urban space to prioritise active and collective mobility.
- **Safe roads** aligned with the targets of the UN Decade of Action on Road Safety, embedding evidence-based safety principles and interventions into planning, design, construction, maintenance and operation.
- **Green roads** that advance decarbonisation and resilience, enabling low-emission vehicles and fuels, using sustainable materials, applying whole-life carbon management frameworks and biodiversity-sensitive planning using nature-based solutions.
- **Efficient and smart roads** that maximise value, safety and performance through digitalisation, automation and intelligent operations, supported by procurement and contractual frameworks that enable data-driven maintenance, logistics and traffic flow.

The Roadmaps for Change series will draw on the IRF World Road Statistics and collaborations with partners to illuminate gaps and progress, helping countries and institutions to benchmark their efforts and identify practical next steps.

Complementing this, a **capacity-building programme** will offer trainings and peer-learning activities to strengthen institutional capacity, with a special focus on road and transport public authorities. The programme will support road sector stakeholders in taking ownership of their skills development strategies and instruments. The IRF Global Transport Knowledge Portal (gTKP) will serve as a dedicated resource hub, providing access to tools, case studies and learning materials that enable road agencies and professionals to put the roadmaps into practice.

Presenting the commitment in New York, Gonzalo Alcaraz, Director General of the International Road Federation, said:

"The world's road systems sit at the intersection of economic opportunity, social inclusion and environmental action. IRF and our partners are joining forces to help countries design and operate roads that are inclusive, safe, green and efficient for all. The UN Decade is a unique opportunity to rethink how roads serve people and the planet, and we are proud to support its Implementation Plan with concrete roadmaps and capacity-building for those on the frontlines of change."

Over the coming years, IRF and its partners expect the commitment to support the development, dissemination and uptake of the Roadmaps for Change series, and to expand the reach and diversity of capacity-building efforts, with particular attention to low- and middle-income countries, women and young professionals.

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Together, these efforts will better integrate sustainable road practices into national and regional policies and empower a new generation of road professionals and decision makers equipped to deliver the Decade's vision.

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About IRF

The International Road Federation (IRF) is a global, independent, not-for-profit organisation with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. Active since 1948, IRF is a membership-based organisation, representing leading corporate and institutional players drawn from the road and mobility sectors worldwide. Its mission is to promote the development of roads and road networks that enable access and sustainable mobility for all. Its approach is centred on key strategic components of knowledge transfer & information sharing, connecting people, businesses, and organisations, and working on policy & advocacy.

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