

November 24th, 2022.

Miryam Saade Hazin
Economic Affairs Officer
International Trade, Integration and Infrastructure Division
ECLAC

Seventh session of the Committee on Transport

Major issues in transport: Efficient and resilient transport and logistics networks and mobility for economic growth

Good morning to everyone and thank you to my colleagues from ESCAP for the invitation to participate in the Seventh session of the Committee on Transport.

The coronavirus pandemic exposed the fragilities on infrastructure and logistics issues in the countries of the region. Through the UNDAX project: "Transport and trade connectivity in the age of pandemics" that we had the opportunity to do among the UN Regional Commissions, we observed important progress in identifying and assessing weaknesses that have helped us to implement policy recommendations, technical assistances, and interventions to reduce, where possible, infrastructure and logistics gaps.

We can mention the cases of the Association of Caribbean States, Argentina, Brazil, Honduras, Paraguay and Uruguay, countries that have requested technical assistance, where the limited financial resources are the main concern to respond adequately to their demands. Previous experience in the Commissions allowed the quick formation of work teams, specifically dedicated to the analysis and solution of logistics problems for the distribution of vaccines and health care, which included innovative proposals in the field of connectivity technologies, for example: Airships.

In particular, I would like to highlight the analysis of the Airships, between ESCAP and ECLAC, that it offers the technical capabilities to make a broad contribution to the optimization of mobility and logistics networks in isolated communities and territories. Airships do not necessarily compete with other means of transport, instead, they complement traditional modes which improve synchro-modality and perform social functions, achieving a clear improvement in connectivity, interior (hinterland) and external (foreland) accessibility.

I have to say that after the development of this project, the government of Brazil demanded to ECLAC, technical assistance for analyzing the hybrid airship technology capabilities and application to improve the socio-economic wellbeing of the people in the Amazon region. The hybrid airship has certain key and unique features which enable it to operate remotely without the need for expensive infrastructure and transform the

connectivity of these remote regions. In a synchro-modal relationship with traditional methods of transportation, the airships are able to bring to remote regions an innovative transport solution that promotes a sustainable and resilient approach to logistics services and infrastructure. Brazil is the pioneer and as ECLAC we are looking for expanding Airships in other isolated areas.

As the Airships, we are providing technical assistance to Brazil and Uruguay in order to develop a project for connecting two lagoons both countries. We look for a decentralized strategic development through the promotion of navigation in the Merín Lake and its connection with Los Patos. The above will promote trade, tourism and finally, economic growth in a sustainable way.

The pandemic and the geopolitical developments in Europe have moderated even more the already scarce resources. To mitigate the crisis, the governments in our region prioritized the social over capital expenditures. We really recognize the importance of promoting the implementation of PPPs in our region. Currently, governments need to implement counter-cyclical policies, through more infrastructure investment in order to accelerate growth and to use PPPs in a sustainable way in order to facilitate the achievement of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Public investment is not enough.

- We need public and private investment but with Governments conducting the Orchestra.
- We need strategic planning, considering the national plans of development.
- The coordination among ministries and at different government levels is crucial.
- Planning, evaluation and execution of infrastructure projects with sustainability criteria (socially, environmentally and economically) are crucial. That means, all the criteria included in the SDGS.

Before the pandemic and the geopolitical developments in Europe, many SDGs in Latin America and the Caribbean were far to be achieved. These events have further diverted us from the targets. Today more than ever we need to invest in efficient and resilient transport and logistics networks and mobility for achieving sustainable growth.

Thank you again to ESCAP for the invitation and we look forward to collaborate in some project together in the near future.