

Editorial

Elizabeth Jones BSc, MSc, CEng
Transport Editorial Panel; Senior Transport Adviser, Department for
International Development, Whitehall, London, UK



Business as usual is not an option if the international community is to succeed in delivering the Global Goals. These Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN, 2015a) form the ambitious internationally agreed plan of action for eradicating poverty and taking the bold and transformative steps that are needed to shift the world onto a sustainable and resilient path. The 17 SDGs build on the Millennium Development Goals and aim to complete (by 2030) what these did not achieve.

The SDGs outline the global framework for the international community. Within this framework, transport has a number of targets and indicators. These focus on regional infrastructure and economic development, rural transport and poverty reduction, urban and low-carbon dioxide transport.

It is an exciting time for the transport sector globally. There have been a number of important international conferences including COP21 (UN FCC, 2015), HABITAT III (UN, 2015b) and the mid-term meeting for the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety (WHO, 2016). The United Nations High-Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport (UN, 2014) launched its final report in November 2016.

Our challenge is to be agile in our response to these significant global challenges and to align our efforts around climate-smart design, emerging technologies, rural poverty, resilience and urbanisation. In doing so we must ensure that transport contributes to wider development objectives around job creation and youth, female economic empowerment and that transport leaves no one behind.

More than 1 billion people globally do not have access to transport. Where populations are dense, the problems are different and there can be a reliance on cars that leads to congestion and pollution. The city populations of emerging economies are expected to double between 2000 and 2030, from 2 billion to 4 billion people. Built-up areas in cities worldwide will triple in size, from 200 000 to 600 000 km². Transport accounts for about 20% of world carbon dioxide emissions, around 60% of global oil consumption and around 27% of all energy use (IEA, 2013: p. 33). As prosperity increases vehicle ownership increases. Successfully tackling climate change means getting transport right.

Sustainable, safe transport is about creating new opportunities. It enables businesses to grow, generates jobs and creates new

markets. Countries can grow in an inclusive, resilient and low-carbon dioxide way.

Getting to zero poverty by 2030 means more and larger economic infrastructure investments in the poorest countries. It means reaching the remote rural poor and working in the most difficult environments. In order to deliver tangible improvements, there is a strong need for sector-wide leadership, coordination and accountability across transport at a global level. Without agreed roles and responsibilities, indicators and monitoring frameworks along with sufficient funding, it is unlikely that transport will contribute optimally to the achievement of the Global Goals and targets.

In this themed issue on transport and poverty, Lucas *et al.* (2016) explore definitions of transport poverty and their relation and impact in high- and low-income countries, arguing that the different ways that transport poverty is defined and recorded is directly related to how it is addressed in practice. This is closely aligned to the need for agreed indicators and accountability within the transport sector globally.

Strong transport links can facilitate international trade transitions, which can boost national income and reduce poverty. Urban areas have the potential to be centres of growth in low-income countries but insufficient transport connectivity is a barrier to this. Lack of transport infrastructure makes accessing markets and basic services difficult or impossible in both rural and urban environments and prevents poor people accessing social and economic opportunity (DFID, 2013).

Improving access to rural roads and lowering transport costs can have substantial impacts on poverty, on consumption levels, on farm output and on the development of non-farm activities. Jacoby and Minten (2009) show that agricultural incomes rise substantially due to lower transport costs and, importantly, non-farm earnings rise by even more. Dercon *et al.* (2009) report reductions in poverty and large increases in consumption levels. In this issue, Burrow *et al.* (2016) highlight findings of a systematic review of research supporting technology selection for rural roads in low- and lower-middle-income countries. This is complemented by a view on rural connectivity, which is brought out in this issue by Jenkins *et al.* (2016) through a case study in Liberia on motorcycle track construction and upgrading of footpaths and tracks. The paper by Naimanye and Whiteing (2016) focuses on poverty-centred

allocation of transport funding in sub-Saharan Africa and provides a financing view.

The road safety statistics released by the World Health Organisation (WHO) are shocking and set to worsen. Currently the number one killer globally of 15–29-year-olds is road accidents. The poor are disproportionately affected. Emerging economies and middle-income countries have the highest rate of increase of deaths as prosperity increases and car ownership keeps pace. WHO states that motorcyclists make up 23% of world traffic deaths and one-third of these occur in South-east Asia. In this issue, Phan *et al.* (2016) go on to explore how traditional motorcycle crash models could be adapted for the unprecedented rise in motorcycle use in South-east Asia, especially in cities where cars are no longer the predominant vehicle and motorcyclist behaviour is very different.

The role of transport infrastructure in the global challenge of poverty eradication is essential. This themed edition on transport and global poverty is a small step in building the evidence of how transport can contribute to the ambitious Global Goals. Looking forward to 2017, we anticipate another themed issue on transport and global poverty and look forward to building the evidence and contributing to the debate on the subject. The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) have sponsored Open Access for this themed issue. The journal publishes its most recent articles Ahead of Print on its Virtual Library homepage.

The author alone is responsible for the views expressed in this editorial.

REFERENCES

- Burrow MPN, Evdorides H, Ghataora GS, Petts R and Snaith MS (2016) The evidence for rural road technology in low-income countries. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Transport* **169**(6): 366–377, <http://dx.doi.org/jtran.15.00089>.
- Dercon S, Gilligan DO, Hoddinott J and Woldehanna T (2009) The impact of agricultural extension and roads on poverty and consumption growth in fifteen Ethiopian villages. *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* **91**(4): 1007–1021.
- DFID (Department for International Development) (2013) *Connecting People, Creating Wealth: Infrastructure for Economic Development and Poverty Reduction*. See https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/243802/130918_Infrastructure_Postition_Paper_FNL.pdf (accessed 25/10/2016).
- IEA (International Energy Agency) (2013) *Key World Energy Statistics 2013*. See http://nature.berkeley.edu/er100/sections/Week2_IEA_2013_key-world-energy-statistics.pdf (accessed 25/10/2016).
- Jacoby HG and Minten B (2009) On measuring the benefits of lower transport costs. *Journal of Development Economics* **89**(1): 28–38.
- Jenkins J and Peters K (2016) Rural connectivity in Africa: motorcycle track construction. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Transport* **169**(6): 378–386, <http://dx.doi.org/jtran.15.00080>.
- Lucas K, Mattioli G, Verlinghieri E and Guzman A (2016) Transport poverty and its adverse social consequences. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Transport* **169**(6): 353–365, <http://dx.doi.org/jtran.15.00073>.
- Naimanye AG and Whiteing T (2016) Poverty-centred rural road funds sharing in sub-Saharan Africa. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Transport* **169**(6): 387–396, <http://dx.doi.org/jtran.15.00071>.
- Phan VL, Evdorides H, Bradford J and Mumford J (2016) Motorcycle crash risk models for urban roads. *Proceedings of the Institution of Civil Engineers – Transport* **169**(6): 397–407, <http://dx.doi.org/jtran.15.00075>.
- UN (United Nations) (2014) *Secretary-General's High-level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport*. Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, New York, NY, USA. See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sustainabletransport/highleveladvisorygroup> (accessed 21/10/2016).
- UN (2015a) *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, New York, NY, USA. See <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld> (accessed 21/10/2016).
- UN (2015b) *HABITAT III Conference, Quito, Ecuador, December 2015*. United Nations, New York, NY, USA. See <https://habitat3.org/> (accessed 21/10/2016).
- UN FCC (United Nations Framework on Climate Change) (2015) *Paris Climate Change Conference – November 2015*. United Nations Framework on Climate Change, New York, NY, USA. See http://unfccc.int/meetings/paris_nov_2015/meeting/8926.php (accessed 21/10/2016).
- WHO (World Health Organization) (2016) *Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020*. World Health Organization, Geneva, Switzerland. See http://www.who.int/roadsafety/decade_of_action/en/ (accessed 21/10/2016).