

PRESS RELEASE

URGENCY TO FIND CONGESTION SOLUTIONS REFLECTED AT UITP MENA TRANSPORT CONGRESS & EXHIBITION

DUBAI, 28 APRIL 2016

The UITP (International Association of Public Transport) MENA Transport Congress & Exhibition concluded yesterday in Dubai and reflected the urgency to find congestion-cutting solutions in the region.

Cities in the MENA region are seeing **rapid urbanisation**, with two thirds of citizens now living in cities. These cities are now also facing the issue of sprawl, with urban populations relocating to suburban areas. At the same time, economic growth combined with the relatively low cost of running a car is leading to **increasing motorisation**.

With population and urbanisation expected to continue increasing, public transport and non-motorised modes will be crucial to limit traffic and congestion, which has already reached alarming levels in many capital across the MENA region.

The role of **governance** was discussed at the event and the main recommendations were for cities to play a leading role in establishing a **vision** for public transport, to develop comprehensive and integrated **master plans** and to develop diverse public transport infrastructure, supported by policies to reduce car use. **Technology** will act as an enabler and cities will need to invest in new skills and adapt their structures to include and facilitate data-based decisions.

Given tight public resources, the issue of **funding** was a major topic for discussion, Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), increasing efficiency or station naming rights/branding were all cited as potential solutions, whilst finding the right ticket price so as to maintain revenue but not to lose customers. The importance of providing safe and efficient school transport was also touched upon.

Despite congestion issues in the region, the event also provided participants cause for optimism. **Major public transport development projects** across the region – such as Riyadh's planned six metro and three Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines - are already bearing fruit: in Dubai, for example, sustained efforts have seen public transport usage increase by 215% from 2006-2015. Dubai also announced a target of 25% driverless mobility by 2030.



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"The big issue in the MENA region is that we have cheap oil which has pushed against public transport for decades but congestion is something we need to deal with whatever the oil price," said Eng. **Khalid Alhogail**, Chairmain of the UITP MENA Region and CEO-Board Director of Saudi Public Transport Company. "Here we see the challenge because we need to build big networks in a very short time and cities are becoming crowded and congested because of an absence of transport."

The UITP MENA Transport Congress & Exhibition (25-27 April 2016) took place in Dubai and was organised by UITP and RTA. The event attracted 528 delegates from 34 countries, 85 exhibitors and more than 2,000 visitors bringing together both regional and international transport experts.

NOTE TO EDITORS

The International Association of Public Transport (UITP) is a passionate champion of sustainable urban mobility and is the only worldwide network to bring together all public transport stakeholders and all sustainable transport modes. We have 1,400 member companies giving access to 16,000 contacts from 96 countries. Our members are public transport authorities and operators, policy decision-makers, research institutes and the public transport supply and service industry. Visit our website www.uitp.org. Follow us on Twitter: [@UITPpressoffice](https://twitter.com/UITPpressoffice)

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