World Sustainable Transport Day - 26 November 2026: Rethinking How We Move
Written by Karely Jaimes Ramos - HOPE researcher Vic)

Transport is an essential part of our life, whether we travel for work, school, visit friends and family or access different services. Since transport is a regular part of our daily routines, the choices we make about how we travel can have an important environmental impact.

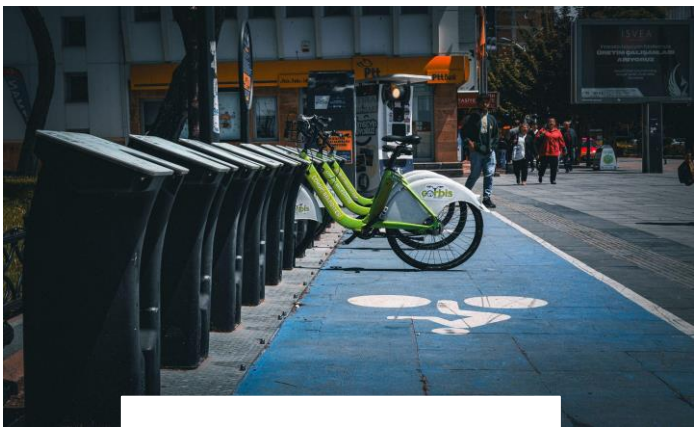
The environmental impacts related to transport are associated to its contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. As well as the rely on the fossil fuels on some cars and vehicles that affect air quality. The reduction on unnecessary car journeys is an important way to build sustainable communities.

Sustainable transport is more than just reducing emissions, is about the creation of accessible, reliable, affordable, safe and reliable transport systems. It is a fundamental right of people to be able to reach workplaces, schools, shops, healthcare without needing their own private vehicle.

Sustainable transport

The United Nations defines sustainable transport as the provision of services for mobility of people or goods in a way that is sustainable, safe, efficient and affordable and at the same time minimising carbon emissions and the reduction of environmental impacts.

Every year on 26 of November, the United Nations marks World Sustainable Transport Day, an opportunity to think about how we move and what we can do to make transportation safe, reliable, accessible and more sustainable. This day is an opportunity to reflect on our choices, whether we drive to shops, catch a bus to work, walk to a cafe nearby or ride a bicycle to meet a friend, the way we move around our communities has an impact on the environment and the quality of life around us.



Furthermore, a sustainable transport system is not one where nobody drives or uses their car. It is one where people can have genuine alternatives to travel while improving mobility and supports urban development.

Why this matter

We rely on transport in almost every part of our lives and at the same time, transport is a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions. This means that changing the way we travel can be an essential form of addressing climate change.
Often when thinking about transport, we think about the journey itself and how quickly we can get somewhere and the most convenient option but transport also shapes the way our communities' functions. This is not only about replacing every car with an electric vehicle, imagine if the only realistic option for a person to transport is to drive, a person who does not own a car may need to depend on someone else or face a more complicated journey.

That is why sustainable transport is also a about accessibility and about creating transport systems that give people real choices, according to the UN the shift from private cars to public transportation can reduce at least an individual's annual carbon emissions by up to 2.2 tones. A well-connected and

efficient public transport system gives people freedom to move around and opportunity to not rely on a private vehicle.

How can you get involved?

The World Sustainable Transport Day give us an opportunity to start small; you do not need to change your entire lifestyle to participate. You could just start with one journey, think about a place you usually drive to, a shopping centre, a cafe, work or university, on 26 of November challenge yourself to change these journeys, take the bus, train, or tram. Walk if the destination is nearby or ride a bicycle. You could also share a trip with someone else, or combine many activities into one journey. Every small change can be meaningful.

The ultimate goal for this day is raising awareness, experiment and find sustainable and practical choices that could be part of our daily routine. You might discover a walking path that you had never before considered or you might realise that some short car trips have become habits rather than a necessity.

So, this 26 of November, leave your car at home. Catch the public transport available in your location, walk, cycle our share the ride. Try something different and see where this takes you.

What can organisations and governments do?

While individuals' choices are important, sustainable transport can not only rely on individual actions. People need realistic alternatives to change the way they travel. Government and local councils play an essential role in sustainable transport by improving the public transport, creating safe walking and cycling paths and infrastructure to make it accessible to different members of the community.

Business and organisations can also contribute, encouraging employers to use public transport, walk or cycle to work providing facilities for those who travel on a bicycle or support working arrangements that could reduce unnecessary travel. These changes are significant for people who do not own a car or do not drive. The creation of a sustainable transport system requires cooperation between individuals, communities, organisations and governments. Individual actions can increase awareness but the long-term changes depend on the system and infrastructure surrounding us.

References

United Nations. (n.d). *World Sustainable Transport Day 26 November*. https://www.un.org/en/observances/sustainable-transport-day

United Nations Development Programme. (2025). What is sustainable transport and what role does it play in tackling climate change? https://climatepromise.undp.org/news-and-stories/what-sustainable-transport-and-what-role-does-it-play-tackling-climate-change