

WIPO Director General Daren Tang
Opening Remarks to the Launch Event - [“WIPO Technology Trends: Future of
Transportation”](#)
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Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Friends and colleagues,

Welcome to the launch of WIPO’s third Technology Trends Report, focusing on the future of transportation.

The story of transport is the story of innovation.

The invention of the wheel, the advent of steam power, the birth of aviation, the dawn of the space age – these and other breakthroughs have changed our history, shaped our economies and societies, and brought us closer together. Innovations in transport — driven by necessity, fueled by our curiosity and underpinned by our desire to explore — have not only changed how we move, but also redefined how we work, trade, connect and live. To this day, some of humanity’s boldest dreams are related to our desire to move.

A New Era

Given the importance of transport to our future, it is only natural that we want to know where it is headed, how might these developments shape our future, and who are driving them.

As the UN agency for IP, innovation and creativity, we gather global data on IP and innovative activity and we use this to help us answer these questions. After having crunched the data, we have found some very interesting insights on the future of transport.

More than 1.1 million patents relating to the future of transportation have been published since 2000 – an annual growth rate of 11%, more than double the pace of global patenting overall.

Behind these figures are major shifts in business strategies, consumer expectations and societal goals. Back in 2003, less than 20% of transportation-related inventions were future-focused. By 2023, this figure had risen to 40%,

with innovators from China, Japan, the US, the Republic of Korea and Germany leading the way.

At the heart of this transformation are two megatrends: sustainability and digitalization. Over the past two decades, these forces have shaped a transportation sector that is cleaner, smarter, and more connected. Electric vehicles, smart infrastructure, digital logistics – once part of science fiction – are now increasingly part of people’s lives, with the potential to touch the lives of millions more in the years to come.

Together these technologies also hold the promise of addressing some of the biggest global challenges we face—cutting carbon emissions, easing urban congestion and making mobility more inclusive. At the same time, they can open new frontiers for exploration and growth—on land, sea, air, and space. A new and transformative era beckons.

From Innovation to Impact

But to reach these goals, innovation alone is not enough. Groundbreaking ideas must get to market and into society if they are to fulfil their potential and drive real-world change.

One of the key messages of this report is that the technology exists – with sustained patenting growth across multiple fields and regions – but we need to do much better at translating these ideas into real-world solutions. This means making the path from patents to products smoother.

To achieve this, IP commercialization is key. Whether it’s AI, clean energy, or transportation, deployment depends on turning cutting-edge concepts into tangible, scalable innovations that can be applied and adopted by consumers , by people, by societies.

Policy also plays a pivotal role. Effective regulation and efficient standards must strike a delicate balance—prioritizing safety and security while fostering innovation and economic growth. Funding is another key enabler, particularly for capital hungry and intensive sectors like space exploration and aviation, where bold ambitions require sustained patient investment.

Another key takeaway is the importance of seeing the future of transportation through a holistic, ecosystems lens. Sustainability and digitalization are blurring the boundaries between innovation across land, sea, air, and space. Advances in one area—like more efficient batteries or smarter digital systems—can have far-reaching applications across others as well. The most effective innovation

ecosystems will harness these synergies, connecting industries, researchers and companies in ways that accelerates and reinforces progress.

Soon, many colleagues will walk you through the report in greater detail, exploring its key findings and methodology.

Let me take this opportunity to thank the many expert contributions from industry, NGOs and fellow international organizations, who have enriched our report. I want to take this opportunity to also thank Christopher Harrison and the WIPO team behind this report for their sterling work.

We will also have the opportunity soon to hear from our keynote speaker, futurist thinker Mr. Nikolas Badminton, and an expert panel on innovation in transportation technologies.

In closing, transportation is not just about getting from place to place, but a testament to human imagination, ingenuity and cooperation as well as our desire to connect and to explore. Few areas of innovation have shaped history as profoundly and will continue to do so for our future.

Thank you.