Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

At this very moment, global supply chains are being put at risk by an unprecedented crisis, with road transport services at its heart.

Dramatic increases in demand, unnecessary and mis-directed Covid-19 restrictions, driver shortages and drastic fuel price increases are creating a perfect storm.

Without immediate action by governments, this may lead to delays and severe reductions in the availability of products over the holidays and well into 2022 – with devastating economic and social impacts.

IRU is the world road transport organisation – the voice of more than 3.5 million companies around the world operating both passenger and goods transport services.

We are calling on governments to take action in the following six areas.
Firstly, we need to restore trade flows with road transport digitalisation, by accelerating the use and implementation of the UN TIR and CMR Conventions, as well as their related IT tools.

This crucial step was recommended by UN Secretary General António Guterres to allow the exchange of electronic information without physical contact while facilitating and securing the flow of goods across borders.

Secondly, misguided Covid-19 restrictions, especially politically motivated border controls and driving restrictions, need to be rescinded immediately.

Thirdly, we need to restore freedom of movement for essential road transport workers. This includes providing vaccinations for essential workers and introducing a global mutually recognised digital vaccination certificate for commercial vehicle drivers.

On this point, we have the backing from both the ILO and WHO Directors General; now, we need implementing support from UNESCAP Governments.

Fourthly, with 24% of professional driver positions unfilled globally, governments must tackle chronic driver shortages by lowering the minimum age for professional drivers to 18, to attract the youth to our profession in particular in countries where youth unemployment runs
high, in addition to facilitating training, driver visa processes and attracting women drivers into the profession.

Fifthly, governments need to level out soaring fuel prices by freezing or adjusting fuel taxes and charges. Where necessary, national fuel reserves of diesel should be released now.

And finally, we need governments to work together with the industry to achieve ambitious decarbonisation targets and activities, as outlined in IRU’s Green Compact.

Within this perfect storm, and without immediate coordinated action by governments – economies, employment and consumers will pay the ultimate price, putting at huge risk the global economic recovery.

Excellencies, this is a final wake up call. IRU, and the industry we so proudly represent, will be there to serve communities and businesses across your countries, to deliver, digitalise and decarbonise.

You can count on us. We count on you!

Thank you for your attention.

*** ends ***