Pacific region. Aviation is growing even more rapidly than road transport, while use of public transport systems (rail and bus), which are generally more environmentally benign, is declining in many countries.

The intractability of the transport sector has several causes. The most significant is the increasingly central importance of motorized transportation in the lives of the residents of many countries. They depend on extensive, complex systems for the movement of people and goods that could hardly be imagined a century ago.

Sustainable transportation is about meeting or helping meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Agenda 21 made several references to the environmental and social impacts of transportation.* However, despite transportation's profound relevance to the attainment of sustainable development, Agenda 21 did not contain a chapter on transportation and thus did not provide a comprehensive and integrated approach to the subject. Our capacity to meet many of the environmental objectives listed in Agenda 21 depends on our ability to properly address concerns related to transportation activities in OECD and other countries.

Canada's reports to the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development have reflected growing concern about transportation. The 1996 report included a section entitled "The Challenge of Sustainable Transportation" and noted that the most significant challenge confronting Canadians may be that of making personal transportation more sustainable. The purpose of this monograph is to alert the United Nations General Assembly to the importance of developing a shared vision of sustainable transportation and to start building consensus on the broad direction to take.

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*These references are mostly in Chapter 9 (the atmosphere) and Chapter 7 (human settlements), but there are important references too in Chapter 4 (consumption patterns), Chapter 6 (human health), and Chapter 17 (oceans and coastal areas).