Good morning.

Today we are talking about the most fundamental issue facing us all – as parents, as citizens, as policymakers: the health and wellbeing of our children.

So this conference is an important and welcome step towards defining a common agenda for child health and urban mobility. I am pleased to speak not only as President of the FIA and as the UN Secretary General’s Special Envoy for Road Safety, but also as a trustee of the FIA Foundation.

We have heard and seen something of the challenge that faces us:

Last year, at least 1.2 million people killed on the world’s roads in traffic crashes. 3500 families destroyed, every day.

One thousand young people – children and young adults – lost every day.

Two billion children living in areas which breach World Health Organization standards for air quality.

And while the issues are serious here in London, and across the OECD countries, it is in the megacities of Asia, Africa, the Indian sub-continent, and Latin America that these modern, man-made epidemics combine to worst effect.

We see growing exposure to road traffic injury and air pollution in the places – like Accra - where youth populations are rising fastest. So there is real urgency in our call for action, if we are to prevent ever greater human catastrophe.
How do we respond?

It is cities that are showing us the way. We have already heard the steps being taken here in London to tackle air pollution, move towards zero road deaths, and prioritise healthy streets. We have examples like New York City, Minneapolis and Copenhagen; cities which have installed quality infrastructure for cyclists and pedestrians - protecting the most vulnerable road users while promoting active mobility.

In cities as diverse as Bogota and Ahmedabad, implementation of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) System – coupled with quality infrastructure - have also seen a marked improvement in safety. In the longer term, this could also reduce congestion and improve air quality.

Change does not only result from expensive major infrastructure projects. Mexico City and Sao Paolo have shown that redesigning community streets and city boulevards to reduce traffic speed saves lives and encourages more walking and cycling. Good for safety, good for the environment.

And more good news: we have the global frameworks for action necessary to build partnership and spur political commitment. Implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, and the New Urban Agenda will play a vital role in promoting health and the environment as part of sustainable urban development.

The SDGs provide us with an unprecedented opportunity to break down barriers and work across issues – for example urban planning, land-use, transportation decisions, education policies, fiscal frameworks, industrial strategies and healthcare provision, all play key roles in defining how cities move; and how their children live.
Now we must use these frameworks to strive for a massive reduction in road fatalities and injuries, promote active mobility, and improve air quality.

To meet this opportunity we need effective partnerships. C40 Cities is a powerful example of major cities coming together around a common agenda on climate change. The Breathe Life campaign is organising cities with a compelling mission to improve air quality.

Three major initiatives led by the FIA are building collaboration on road safety. Our High Level Panel on Road Safety is creating an alliance of business CEOs, UN bodies and civil society to address a global funding and capacity gap for road safety estimated at 770 million dollars a year. We urgently need governments to approve a new UN Road Safety Fund to meet this need.

Our Safer City Streets network, coordinated by the International Transport Forum, is working to advance road safety knowledge sharing and benchmarking with 40 cities, and growing, around the world. The Child Health Initiative, which has convened our meeting today, is bringing a strong and specific children’s focus to all these issues.

Alongside this, our #3500LIVES campaign was launched to highlight the devastating number of road deaths that occur every day on the world’s roads. With the support of JCDecaux and thirteen world famous ambassadors the #3500LIVES campaign encourages safer behaviour among all road users and highlights the need for improved infrastructure, safer vehicles and the introduction of effective legislation. Rolled out in 80 countries and more than 900 cities the FIA is working to raise road safety awareness to unprecedented levels.
So we must combine the energies of all these efforts, and work together wherever we find common ground. And I am optimistic that we can meet these challenges.

Many of the solutions will be driven by technology. Our FIA Formula E series is showcasing the potential of electric vehicles in the heart of some of the world’s leading cities, and making the argument for an e-mobility revolution. We see auto makers and policymakers converging to accelerate the introduction of electric fleets.

This electric revolution will come along with the development of smart cities and the FIA’s Smart Cities Initiative has been developed to meet this need. By encouraging sustainable and inclusive solutions to tackle the urban mobility issues facing cities around the world this multi-stakeholder platform will work to address and fill in the gaps letting down modern mobility systems. It is my hope that this initiative will bring about the coordinated action and innovative solutions required for safer and cleaner cities now, and for the generations to come.

Autonomous safety technologies in cars are another innovation we need to embrace today for a safer future. While autonomous emergency braking is already saving lives on our streets, imaginative public policy can help to advance this positive change. I am convinced that automation is a path that needs to be prepared, guided and controlled. The FIA has strongly encouraged the roll-out of testing of automated vehicles on public roads to get feedback, improve technology, create user acceptance and learn how automated vehicles will successfully and safely interact with all road users.

So let us resolve to meet this challenge, let us agree that the power to defeat these man-made epidemics lies in our own hands.
And let us not forget that at the heart of this issue are children, our children. Children who have a basic right to step out of their front door and travel to school or to meet their friends safe from injury, safe from harm.

This is our mission, this is our duty and I am sure that together we will make it happen.

Thank you.