



PAN AFRICAN ACTION PLAN FOR ACTIVE MOBILITY



A COMMITMENT TOWARDS A BETTER WALKING AND CYCLING ENVIRONMENT FOR PEOPLE AND THE PLANET.

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Contents

Action Plan	7
The Pan-African Vision for Active Mobility	9
ACTION AREA 1: Create safe, accessible and comfortable places to walk and cycle.	11
ACTION AREA 2: Advocate for people who walk and cycle in Africa	15
ACTION AREA 3: Embed walking and cycling into policy and investment processes.	17
Partnerships for Action	20

The Pan African Action Plan for Active Mobility (PAAPAM) is a comprehensive framework aimed at transforming mobility across Africa by prioritising the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-motorized transport users. It was co-developed through extensive stakeholder engagement and is designed to support regional and sub-regional bodies, national and local governments and other stakeholders in prioritizing and investing in the needs of the billion people who walk and cycle every day in Africa.¹

PAAPAM recognises how important it is to invest in walking and cycling and other non-motorized transport modes for the environment, air quality, health, road safety, and social equity, while ensuring no one is left behind in the mobility transition. By embedding PAAPAM's multi-sectoral goals and actions into existing and new policies frameworks, and planning documents, African countries can address key challenges including road fatalities and injuries, pollution, climate change, congestion, etc; while at the same time designing and building more inclusive, vibrant, and equitable communities.

The vision, guiding principles, goals and actions in PAAPAM have been designed to guide implementation over the next 10 years. Governments and other stakeholders are encouraged to identify priority actions from this plan and embed them into their policy frameworks across sectors, including, but not limited to transport, urban development, environment, health, and education.

What is Active Mobility?

Non-Motorized Transport (NMT) and active mobility are closely related concepts, but they that have different meanings depending on the context and country framework. For the purposes of PAPAAM, active mobility includes all forms of non-motorized transport – including walking and cycling but also including all forms of predominantly human-powered micromobility, whether for transportation, recreation, or health.

Action Plan

OUR VISION is to protect and enable people who walk and cycle in Africa. We strive to make walking and cycling more accessible, ensuring a comfortable experience for all ages, genders, and abilities. We recognize the crucial role of active mobility in building just, resilient and inclusive communities and ensuring a safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

ACTION AREA 1:

Create Safe, Accessible and Comfortable Places to Walk and Cycle.

GOAL 1

Guarantee Safety

All road traffic fatalities and severe injuries are eliminated for people walking and cycling in Africa.

INDICATOR A

GOAL 2

Enable Accessibility

People can walk and cycle confidently within a reasonable amount of time and effort to reach public transport, goods and services.

INDICATOR B + C + D

GOAL 3

Enhance Comfort

Main corridors where people walk, and cycle have infrastructure and facilities that ensure safe and healthy mobility.

INDICATOR E + F + G + H

ACTION AREA 2:

Advocate for People who Walk and Cycle in Africa

GOAL 4

Boost Satisfaction

The experience of everyone walking and cycling in Africa is perceived as positive.

INDICATOR I + J

ACTION AREA 3:

Embed Walking and Cycling into Policy and Investment Processes.

GOAL 5

Increase Commitment and Investment

People walking and cycling are valued and given priority in policies, investment decisions and the delivery of projects throughout Africa.

INDICATOR K + L + M

Guiding principles:

- Leave No One Behind
- Evidence-Based Practice
- Policy Coherence
- Community Engagement
- Multisectoral Partnerships

Where does PAAPAM come from?

In 2022, stakeholders gathered in Kigali for the “Africa Regional Forum for Action – Inclusive and Active Mobility in a Changing Climate”. Although participants had come from across the continent, it was abundantly clear that they all had one thing in common: walking and cycling was a main mode of transport for most people in their countries, but it was not a main policy, investment or infrastructure priority. For many years, despite the massive benefits of walking and cycling, investments by governments and donors have not sufficiently financed the infrastructure needed to enable safe and enjoyable walking and cycling. It was determined that there was a need to build regional momentum and show that the commitment for active mobility was there.

The Kigali Forum was the starting point for a series of consultations on the action plan. Bilateral meetings with other development partners, NGOs and donors, several consultation sessions were subsequently set-up to capture the shared priorities across the region. They increasingly illustrated the need to build regional momentum to clarify the shared priorities for walking and cycling among governments, funders and show that commitment to deliver was there.

In 2024, dedicated sub-regional consultation sessions took place both virtually and in person, to understand whether the plan was being developed in the right direction. Today the first edition of PAAPAM is here. It has involved direct consultation with over 1300 individuals and hundreds of civil societies, NGOs, academics, and development partners.

The Pan-African Vision for Active Mobility

OUR VISION is to protect and enable people who walk and cycle in Africa. We strive to make walking and cycling more **accessible**, ensuring a **comfortable** experience for all ages, genders, and abilities. We recognize the crucial role of active mobility in building **just, resilient** and **inclusive** communities and ensuring a **safe, clean, healthy, and sustainable** environment.

Guiding Principles

LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND: The “Leave No One Behind” (LNOB) principle from the 2030 SDGs emphasizes eradicating poverty, ending discrimination, and reducing inequalities. Disparities in walking and cycling by age, gender, ability, and geography highlight existing inequities. This action plan prioritizes addressing the mobility needs of people in low-income, informal settlements, and across different life stages and abilities, ensuring equitable and inclusive transport systems for all.

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE: The recommended actions contained in PAAPAM are informed by a robust evidence base and extensive stakeholder consultation. Implementation of the plan should be led by up-to-date, disaggregated, and comprehensive data and continue to build and develop the evidence base through benchmarking

and performance tracking. With this plan, governments can establish clear, measurable objectives and assess progress.

POLICY COHERENCE: Walking and cycling can deliver benefits for individuals, communities, and countries across a range of sectors. Therefore, action is required across and between a wide range of policies and partners to achieve sustained change and impact. The SDGs recognize that people’s mobility and the health of the planet are not mutually exclusive, and that environmental sustainability is critical to safer, easier, more comfortable and enjoyable walking and cycling experiences.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: Encouraging community participation fosters ownership, strengthens social norms around sustainable mobility, and ensures that

interventions are responsive to the needs and aspirations of those they are designed to benefit. It is important to actively engage and empower communities and policymakers in the design, implementation, and evaluation of active mobility initiatives. This principle supports the creation of resilient and self-sustaining systems that are shaped by the people who use them.

MULTISECTORAL PARTNERSHIPS: A comprehensive, integrated and intersectoral approach consistent is essential to retain mode share and protect, and enable people who walk and cycle in Africa. Implementation of this action plan should foster collaboration across and between stakeholders from different sectors at all levels of government but also engage with academia, private sector and civil society.

How to use the Action Plan

Step 1: Conduct a baseline analysis using the indicators in the framework. This analysis will help determine current conditions and how close the country is to achieving the objectives outlined in the plan.

Step 2: Prioritize the Action Areas based on the needs identified in the baseline assessment as well as the resources, expertise and ease of data collection.

Step 3: Use the indicators and the checklists in the full edition of PAAPAM to identify next steps. The checklist provides specific examples of what conditions have been proven to improve the status quo. Other items can be added for action depending on local needs.

Step 4: Work with local stakeholders to develop a tailored action plan that highlights priority action areas, goals and indicators. The plan can exist at both national and local level.

Step 5: Monitor and evaluate progress.

PAAPAM

ACTION AREA 1: Create safe, accessible and comfortable places to walk and cycle.

GOAL 1

Guarantee Safety

All road traffic fatalities and severe injuries are eliminated for people walking and cycling in Africa.

INDICATOR A: Percentage of pedestrians and cyclists killed or seriously injured.

GOAL 2

Enable Accessibility

People can walk and cycle confidently within a reasonable amount of time and effort to reach public transport, goods and services.

INDICATOR B: Average number of minutes spent per day walking or cycling for transport.

INDICATOR C: Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone (both during the day and at night) in the area in which they live.

INDICATOR D: Percentage of people in African cities within 500m access to public transport.

GOAL 3

Enhance Comfort

Main corridors where people walk, and cycle have infrastructure and facilities that ensure safe and healthy mobility.

INDICATOR E: Percentage of roads meeting minimum standards for safe and comfortable walking and cycling.

INDICATOR F: Percentage of walking and cycling routes incorporating nature-based elements—such as shaded tree canopies, permeable pathways, or vegetative buffers.

INDICATOR G: Percentage of people near protected bicycle lanes (PNB) and People Near Walkway Improvements (PNW).

INDICATOR H: Number of Countries with up-to-date Street Design Standards that contain comprehensive specifications for safe walking and cycling.



GOAL 1 Guarantee Safety

All road traffic fatalities and severe injuries are eliminated for people walking and cycling in Africa.

OBJECTIVE 1: There are country specific targets and clear action plans for reducing the number of fatalities and injuries for pedestrians and cyclists.

INDICATOR A: Percentage of pedestrians and cyclists killed or seriously injured.

While under reporting is still a common issue, existing data indicates that Africa is currently the least safe place in the world for walking and cycling. 33% of road traffic fatalities involve pedestrians,² and cyclists make up 3% of the reported road traffic fatalities.³

Ensuring safety and protection for vulnerable road users is paramount. Achieving zero fatalities and serious injuries requires the design of high-standard infrastructure (Goal 3), including connected, well-lit pathways, clear signage, secure crossings, and traffic calming measures. Strengthening the enforcement of traffic laws, adopting WHO-recommended speed limits, and conducting public education campaigns are essential to promoting safe behaviour among all road users. Using tools to assess roads and linking the results to funding will help prioritize interventions and protect people walking and cycling from risk, danger, and injury.

**Many of the goals are cross-cutting. For example, street design guidelines adopted and national and local level also contribute significantly to improving road safety.*

GOAL 2 Enable Accessibility

People can walk and cycle confidently within a reasonable amount of time and effort to reach public transport, goods and services.

OBJECTIVE 2: Increase the quality and accessibility of catchments for public transport stops, school zones and markets.

INDICATOR B: Average number of minutes spent per day walking or cycling for transport.

INDICATOR C: Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone (both during the day and at night) in the area in which they live.

INDICATOR D: Percentage of people in African cities within 500m access to public transport.

Efforts to improve transport accessibility and access often face data gaps, especially for marginalized communities. Evaluating both distance and experience-based factors like comfort and safety helps assess true accessibility.⁴ Currently, only 33.8% of Africa's population can access informal and formal public transport within a walkable distance, compared to the global average of 60.9%.⁵ With 78% of people in Africa relying on walking daily, integrating Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) is crucial to create walkable, connected communities, reduce car dependency, and ensure equitable access to essential services for all.

GOAL 3 Enhance Comfort

Main corridors where people walk, and cycle have infrastructure and facilities that ensure safe and healthy mobility.*

OBJECTIVE 3: Walking and cycling routes meet safe, universally accessible design standards, featuring protected lanes, pedestrian refuges, lighting, and traffic calming measures, tailored to local conditions but meeting international best practice.

INDICATOR E: Percentage of roads meeting minimum standards for safe and comfortable walking and cycling.

INDICATOR F: Percentage of walking and cycling routes incorporating nature-based elements—such as shaded tree canopies, permeable pathways, or vegetative buffers.

INDICATOR G: Percentage of people near protected bicycle lanes (PNB) and People Near Walkway Improvements (PNW).

INDICATOR H: Number of Countries with up-to-date Street Design Standards that contain comprehensive specifications for safe walking and cycling.

Walking and cycling are largely unsafe due to inadequate protected infrastructure.⁶ Most roads lacking sidewalks and crossings while others fail to meet minimum standards. Ensuring the robust design and delivery of dedicated cycling lanes and pedestrian infrastructure, significantly improves both safety and comfort. Integrating nature-based solutions like tree-lined streets and green corridors enhances the environment together with ensuring water infiltration, reduced heat and pollution⁷ These measures not only promote safer, healthier transport options but also contribute to improved air quality and urban resilience.⁸

PAAPAM

ACTION AREA 2: Advocate for people who walk and cycle in Africa

GOAL 4

Boost Satisfaction

The experience of everyone walking and cycling in Africa is perceived as positive.

INDICATOR I: Percentage of the population perceiving walking and cycling as safe, easy, and enjoyable.

INDICATOR J: Number of countries with systematic and inclusive engagement processes embedded as pre-requisite to transport policy, investment decision and implementation.



GOAL 4 Boost Satisfaction

The experience of everyone walking and cycling in Africa is perceived as positive.

OBJECTIVE 4: Embed community engagement in the transport decision-making processes across Africa to ensure that future investments and decisions benefit people who walk and cycle.

INDICATOR I: Percentage of the population perceiving walking and cycling as safe, easy, and enjoyable.

INDICATOR J: Number of countries with systematic and inclusive engagement processes embedded as pre-requisite to transport policy, investment decision and implementation.

The foundation of any effective transport policy lies in its ability to resonate with and meet the needs of the people it serves. By prioritizing the perceptions and experiences of those who walk and cycle, alongside fostering inclusive and meaningful engagement processes, governments can ensure that their interventions are not only effective but also sustainable and widely supported. Insight into satisfaction can also have important implications for creating safe, accessible and comfortable places to walk and cycle.

By focusing on boosting satisfaction both in stakeholder engagement and in the walking and cycling experience, governments can create a positive feedback loop where increased participation leads to improved outcomes, further reinforcing the commitment to active mobility across Africa.

PAAPAM

ACTION AREA 3: Embed walking and cycling into policy and investment processes.

GOAL 5

Increase Commitment and Investment

People walking and cycling are valued and given priority in policies, investment decisions and the delivery of projects throughout Africa.

INDICATOR K: Number of African countries that review/adopt a national walking and cycling policy and/or other international commitments to benefit people walking and cycling.

INDICATOR L: Number of African cities that review/adopt a national walking and cycling policy and/or other international commitments to benefit people walking and cycling.

INDICATOR M: Number of African countries with documented capital expenditure budget allocated to active mobility.

INDICATOR N: Number of city and national governments that have dedicated staff working on active mobility.



GOAL 5 Increase Commitment and Investment

People walking and cycling are valued and given priority in policies, investment decisions and the delivery of projects throughout Africa.

OBJECTIVE 5: Governments across Africa adopt the PAAPAM framework to inform their own prioritisation and investments in walking and cycling infrastructure.

INDICATOR K: Number of African countries that review/adopt a national walking and cycling policy and/or other international commitments to benefit people walking and cycling.

INDICATOR L: Number of African cities that review/adopt a national walking and cycling policy and/or other international commitments to benefit people walking and cycling.

INDICATOR M: Number of African countries with documented capital expenditure budget allocated to active mobility.

INDICATOR N: Number of city and national governments that have dedicated staff working on active mobility

A walking and cycling policy either as a standalone or as part of an integrated transport strategy is an enabling condition that puts people and the environment first in transport planning. It sets out the intent of a government, increases recognition of the importance of walking and cycling, acts as a catalyst for provision of safe infrastructure for pedestrians and cyclists and leads to integrated and systematic investment in walking and cycling. In 2019, 19 of the 54 countries in Africa were reported to have a walking and cycling policy (35%).

Encouraging collaboration across sectors including transport, health, environment, and urban planning, integrates walking and cycling into broader policy frameworks and investing in dedicated capacity building programmes can have significant benefits. Securing sustainable funding is vital for improving infrastructure and ensuring long-term protection for current users. Continuous monitoring, evaluation, and feedback mechanisms help adapt and improve walking and cycling conditions over time.

Partnerships for Action

Government ownership of the Pan African Action Plan for Active Mobility (PAAPAM) is vital to ensuring its successful implementation, as they play a key role in shaping policies and allocating resources. However, PAAPAM is a plan for all people, not just governments. Communities, civil society, businesses, and individuals can also take ownership of the active mobility agenda. By working together, all stakeholders can ensure that walking and cycling becomes safer, more accessible, and more integrated into everyday life across Africa.

National Leadership

National governments should identify focal points within existing (ideally) multi-sector coordination mechanisms to embed PAAPAM/ walking and cycling into multi-sector strategies. This will allow harmonization of initiatives, avoid duplication, and streamline collaborative efforts including resources mobilization.

Local Level Governments

Local governments will lead the on-the-ground execution of PAAPAM by embedding walking and cycling into their local policies. These should include the development and maintenance of safe walking and cycling infrastructure, public awareness campaigns, and community engagement activities. They will work to ensure that these interventions are inclusive and equitable, addressing the specific needs of vulnerable populations.

Development Partners, Civil Society and Academia

PAAPAM is the result of significant inputs from development partners, civil society representatives and academic experts. These organizations are welcome to partner for action, develop knowledge products, advocate for PAAPAM delivery and continue to contribute to the growing momentum.

Regional Task Force

Five regional PAAPAM Task Forces, for North, South, East, West and Central Africa, are to be established, most likely hosted by a knowledge partner – such as a university. The hubs will invite the national focal points to be part of the PAAPAM Regional Task Force.

The Regional Task Forces will be encouraged to engage local stakeholders to understand the status of the PAAPAM actions being delivered in each country at a national level. The groups will be asked to identify what support, training and expertise is required to ensure the delivery of the PAAPAM vision at the pace and scale proposed.

Steering Group

The delivery of PAAPAM will be monitored by a small steering group coordinated by UNEP, UN-Habitat, and WHO. Members will include representatives of national governments from the five sub-regions of Africa and walking and cycling experts.

Africa Network for Walking and Cycling

Members of the Africa Network for Walking and Cycling – including relevant NGO representatives and active mobility experts – will be invited to support the Regional Task Forces and take responsibility at the Pan-African level to lead, steer and monitor the delivery of the goals.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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This document, launched on 6 November 2024 is a summarized first edition of PAAPAM. The plan's action areas and goals have been validated and peer reviewed through an extensive 3-year period. Beginning in 2025 regional, national and local initiatives will inform the efficacy of the indicators and detailed checklists that are provided with more detail in the full edition.



With support from



ENDNOTES

- 1 Walking and Cycling in Africa: Evidence and Good Practice to Inspire Action. UNEP and UN-Habitat. 2022. Nairobi.
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- 3 Global status report on road safety 2023. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2023. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.
- 4 World Bank. 2022. Technical Note on Accessibility. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- 5 UN-Habitat Urban Indicators Database. 11.2.1 Percentage Access to Public Transport.
- 6 Streets for walking and cycling, designing for safety, accessibility and comfort in African cities. UN-Habitat and ITDP 2018. License 4.0
- 7 Nature-based Infrastructure: How natural infrastructure solutions can address sustainable development challenges and the triple planetary crisis. 2023. UNEP. Geneva.
- 8 Guidelines for Integrating Ecosystem-based Adaptation into National Adaptation Plans: Supplement to the UNFCCC NAP Technical Guidelines. Nairobi. 2021. UNEP.

