



**REGIONAL ACTION
PROGRAMME
for TRANSPORT
DEVELOPMENT
in ASIA AND
THE PACIFIC,
phase II (2012-2016)**



UNITED NATIONS
ESCAP

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION ON TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

We, the Ministers of transport and representatives of the members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific attending the Ministerial Conference on Transport, held in Bangkok from 12 to 16 March 2012,

Recognizing the crucial importance of efficient, reliable and safe transport infrastructure and services to regional integration and the sustainable and inclusive economic and social development of countries in the ESCAP region,

Recalling Commission resolution 63/9 of 23 May 2007 on the implementation of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific¹ and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2007-2011), and Commission resolution 66/4 of 19 May 2010 on the implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Transport Development in Asia,

¹ E/ESCAP/63/13, chap. V.

Recalling also the Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries,² the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,³ and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 (the Istanbul Programme of Action),⁴

Recognizing the need for long-term commitment and continuity in addressing critical issues in the transport sector to support sustained economic growth, improve the living standards of our peoples and further increase the competitiveness of economies of the region,

Encouraged by the successful regional cooperation that led to the entry into force of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network⁵ and the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network,⁶ and progress in the formulation of an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports,

Recognizing that growth in intraregional trade can be further supported if regional transport corridors are expanded and bottlenecks removed,

Reaffirming our commitment to the implementation of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, and the Bangkok Declaration on Transport Development in Asia,

² Report of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 28 and 29 August 2003 (A/CONF.202/3), annex I.

³ Report of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Port Louis, Mauritius, 10-14 January 2005 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.05.II.A.4 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

⁴ Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9-13 May 2011 (A/CONF.219/7) (United Nations publication, Sales No. 11.II.A.1), chap. II.

1. *Adopt* the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016),⁷

2. *Adopt* the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport,⁸

3. *Request* the Executive Secretary to continue to accord priority to the implementation of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific¹ and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), especially to assist regional members and associate members in their efforts to realize the vision of a sustainable international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system,

4. *Also request* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To ensure effective coordination with other United Nations and multilateral agencies as well as subregional organizations;

(b) To collaborate effectively with international and regional financing institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors and private sector investors and international organizations to mobilize further financial and technical support for the wider development and operationalization of the Trans-Asian Railway and the Asian Highway;

(c) To convene a ministerial conference on transport in 2016 to assess and evaluate the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), and to consider a future programme of work.

⁵ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 2323, No. 41607.

⁶ United Nations, Treaty Series, vol. 2596, No. 46171.

⁷ Annex I.

⁸ Annex II.

REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME FOR TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, PHASE II (2012-2016)

Now more than ever, the region's development is reliant on its transport system. Whether to carry manufactured and agricultural products to international markets, food to rural and urban communities, workers to their jobs, the young to schools or the sick to hospitals, transport is essential. While development patterns across the region vary, countries that have been able to improve transport capacities and efficiency have been the most successful. For the future, improved transport connections to fast growing regional markets will further stimulate economic and social development.

The overarching goal of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific,^a and its Regional Action Programme^b is to foster regional transport cooperation and economic integration in support of inclusive and sustainable development. The Regional Action Programme, phase II (2012-2016), will provide continuity and build on the substantial progress that has been achieved over the past five years.

In each of the substantive areas, capacity-building and exchanges of experience will be a central theme in continuing to work towards the creation of a sustainable international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system as the long-term vision for the development of the region's transport system and to meet the challenges of globalization.

In the implementation of the Regional Action Programme, phase II (2012-2016), the ESCAP secretariat will continue to work closely with key United Nations agencies, intergovernmental organizations, subregional organizations, non-governmental organizations, and other collaborating institutions.

^a E/ESCAP/63/13, chap. V.

^b Commission resolution 63/9, annex.

1. Policy guidance at the ministerial level

Given the rapid pace of change in the region, there is a need for timely policy direction at the ministerial level to maintain and accelerate progress in moving towards the realization of an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system in the region. The Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport at its first session, held in Bangkok from 14 to 18 December 2009, provided substantive guidance and direction^c that was subsequently welcomed by the Commission in its resolution 66/4 of 19 May 2010 on the implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Transport Development in Asia.

Immediate objective: to promote regional cooperation and policy leadership at the ministerial level for the advancement of transport as a key to regional development.

Outputs:

1. A meeting of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport at the midpoint of the implementation of the Regional Action Programme, phase II (2012-2016);
2. Ministerial consideration and direction to transport policies in the region.

Indicators of achievement:

1. High level participation in the meeting of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport.
2. Documented decisions by transport ministers leading to a greater degree of coordination and consistency between countries on issues of mutual interest.

2. Transport infrastructure development

While the intergovernmental agreements on the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks provide the foundation for regional connectivity, the quality and capacity of this infrastructure across the region is uneven, and some links are still missing. In most countries, intermodal transport is limited due to a lack of capacity in dry ports.

^c See E/ESCAP/66/11.

Immediate objective: to promote regional and interregional connectivity and cooperation through the further development and upgrading of the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks as well as Euro-Asian transport linkages and dry ports.

Outputs:

1. Meetings of the working groups on the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway;
2. Intergovernmental agreement on dry ports;
3. Studies, meetings and capacity-building on integrated transport development, upgrading and maintenance (asset management) of the Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway, dry ports of international importance and seaports;
4. Studies on international intermodal transport corridors serving inter- and intraregional trade;
5. Updated information and data measuring progress in the development of regionally important transport infrastructure and operations;
6. Activities within the joint UNESCAP-UNECE project on the development of Euro-Asian transport links.

Indicators of achievement:

1. Adopted amendments to the Intergovernmental Agreements on the Asian Highway Network and Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network.
2. Member States negotiate and sign an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports.
3. Measures taken by member States to upgrade and expand the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks and internationally recognized dry ports in their countries.
4. Measures taken by member States to incorporate study recommendations for regional and interregional intermodal transport corridors.

3. Transport facilitation

Despite efforts to eliminate non-physical barriers in transport, progress has been slow due to the complexity of this challenge. This can be seen most clearly in international land transport, which still faces substantial difficulties across the region. To help resolve this problem, a number of subregional agreements on cross-border/transit transport have been negotiated and signed, but few have been fully or effectively implemented. In many countries of the region, international transport by road is restricted by the number of transport permits issued and is only allowed near borders or along a limited number of routes. While progress has been made, lengthy delays at border crossings are common. Similarly, with regard to railways, simplifying and harmonizing documents and procedures and expanding intercountry services remain major outstanding challenges. All of these restrictions raise costs and create delays in international land transport.

Immediate objective: to promote efficient and smooth movement of goods, passengers and vehicles by road and rail across the region, including at border crossings.

Outputs:

1. Establishment of a regional network of legal and technical experts on transport facilitation and the development of an action plan for the implementation of the regional strategic framework for the facilitation of international road transport;
2. Workshops/studies on regional and subregional cooperation under the regional strategic framework for facilitation of international road transport;
3. A study to identify the issues surrounding regional cooperation for the facilitation of international railway transport;
4. Assistance in acceding to and implementing international transport facilitation conventions and agreements, including those recommended in ESCAP resolution 48/11 of 23 April 1992 on road and rail transport modes in relation to facilitation measures, and in formulating and implementing subregional agreements related to the facilitation of international transport by road and/or rail;

5. Advisory services/workshops on the establishment or strengthening of national facilitation coordination mechanisms and on joint controls at borders to facilitate international road and/or rail transport;

6. Studies/workshops on the application of information and communications technology and other new technologies as well as the time/cost-distance toolkit to facilitate international road and/or rail transport.

Indicators of achievement:

1. A regional network of legal and technical experts on transport facilitation established.

2. Measures taken by member States and regional and subregional organizations/institutions to implement the regional strategic framework for the facilitation of international road transport.

3. Measures taken by member States to accede to and implement international facilitation conventions, in particular those recommended by the Commission in its resolution 48/11, and steps suggested to be taken for signing, ratifying and/or implementing subregional agreements.

4. National facilitation coordination mechanisms established or strengthened, and measures towards joint controls taken, by the member States.

5. Measures taken by member States to apply new technologies and time/cost-distance methodology to improve efficiency of international transport processes.

4. Transport logistics

In many countries of the region, the logistics industries are still at a nascent stage and therefore face challenges associated with high costs and poor performance. To develop an efficient logistics system, all relevant issues need to be addressed comprehensively. In this respect, an enabling environment, including a policy and regulatory framework, needs to be put in place. Transport logistics policy is a very important component of overall logistics policy, and its development can act as an entry point and contribute to wider logistics

policy goals. Other measures for enhancing the professionalism and competence of logistics service providers include the establishment of minimum standards and codes of conduct at the national level, the sharing of knowledge and experiences at the regional level, and the establishment of sustainable training and capacity-building programmes at the national, subregional and regional levels.

Immediate objective: to assist countries in developing transport logistics policies and in enhancing the professionalism and competence of logistics service providers.

Outputs:

1. Guidelines for the development of transport logistics policies;
2. Guidelines for the establishment of minimum standards and codes of conduct for logistics service providers;
3. Regional meetings of freight forwarders, multimodal transport operators and logistics service providers and their national associations;
4. Technical assistance and support to the industry and to governments for a sustainable training programme.

Indicators of achievement:

1. Measures taken by member States to incorporate guidelines for transport logistics policies into national logistics policies.
2. Measures taken by member States to incorporate guidelines for logistics service providers into national legislation and/or industry regulations.
3. Experience and knowledge shared among freight forwarders, multimodal transport operators and logistics service providers.
4. Sustainable training programmes on freight forwarding, multimodal transport and logistics established by countries.

5. Finance and private sector participation

There is massive demand for investment in the transport sector in terms of infrastructure and services as well as maintenance. Most countries are constrained by limited budgets, however. Some countries in the region have been successful in establishing innovative mechanisms for finance and investment, including public-private partnerships (PPP) and other revenue-generating approaches that have created new and expanded financing opportunities, but the application of partnership processes is hampered by numerous constraints, including a lack of skills and experience in the areas of PPP project development, implementation, contract management and the streamlining of administrative processes.

Immediate objective: to promote regional cooperation between the public and private sectors for financing and maintaining infrastructure.

Outputs:

1. Studies on investment in Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway sections and in intermodal linkages, including dry ports, river ports and seaports;
2. Investment forums to promote partnerships and the sharing of experiences in financing the Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway, internationally recognized dry ports, river ports and seaports;
3. Assessment and promotion of policy options and initiatives for the financing of road maintenance;
4. Support for regional cooperation and networking among PPP units/programmes;
5. Assistance to member countries and institutions through the sharing of good practices and the delivery of PPP capacity development programmes;
6. Technical assistance in assessing PPP readiness.

Indicators of achievement:

1. Measures taken by member States to increase investment in transport and logistics infrastructure, including through public-private partnerships, in line with the secretariat's proposals and policy advice.

2. Measures taken by member States to incorporate recommendations for the maintenance of road transport.
3. Recorded exchanges of information and reports of meetings.

6. Sustainable transport development

The transport sector is the third largest energy user in the region. Transport is also one of the fastest growing sectors in the region. Expectations are that energy costs will continue to rise, thus increasing pressure on all sectors to seek greater efficiency, and that the levels of harmful emissions will continue to increase unless appropriate measures are taken. In the transport sector, substantial gains can be made through modal shifts and improved organizational efficiency.^d

Immediate objective: to increase awareness and understanding of alternative freight transport policy options that can reduce energy consumption and emissions.

Outputs:

1. Proposals to encourage, through appropriate mechanisms, a modal shift from road to rail and water transport, and the use of the Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway and dry ports for the intermodal distribution of goods and carriage of people;
2. Regional meetings to share experiences in the adoption of energy-efficient and more environmentally friendly freight transport logistics systems;
3. Inclusion of sustainable transport-related issues in the *Review of Developments in Transport in Asia and the Pacific*, the *Transport and Communications Bulletin for Asia and the Pacific* and ad hoc regional transport policy studies;
4. Capacity-building to increase awareness and promote environmentally sustainable transport development.

^d Technology improvements related to motive power and energy sources will be dealt with under parallel programmes implemented by the Environment and Sustainable Development Division of ESCAP and other partners.

Indicators of achievement:

1. Measures taken by member States to promote modal shift policies in line with the secretariat's proposals and policy advice.
2. Measures taken by member States to consider sustainable transport issues when designing transport policies and projects.

7. Road safety

Road accidents cause human tragedies every minute of every day. In the Asia Pacific region, 700,000 lives or approximately half of the global road fatalities occur each year. The issue of road safety has received greater prominence in recent times with the Ministerial Declaration on Improving Road Safety in Asia and the Pacific (November 2006)^e and the United Nations General Assembly resolution 64/255 (2 March 2010). Despite these global initiatives, road safety in many countries of the region is still not receiving priority in national planning or policies.

Immediate objective: to assist countries in the region in meeting their commitments under the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020).^f

Outputs:

1. Meetings and technical assistance to aid countries in building road safety management capacity in line with the Decade of Action for Road Safety, including data collection and monitoring progress;
2. Meetings to advocate high-level commitment to road safety interventions and to exchange best practices in improving road safety;
3. Advisory services and technical support to national road safety campaigns and related awareness creation activities;
4. A web-based road safety network.

^e E/ESCAP/63/13, chap. IV.

^f See General Assembly resolution 64/255, para. 2.

Indicators of achievement:

1. Measures taken by member States to implement policies and programmes on road safety in line with the goals of the Decade of Action for Road Safety.
2. Measures taken by member States to improve road safety data and information collection systems.
3. Documented best practices in improving road safety, shared through meetings and a web-based road safety network.

8. Transport and the Millennium Development Goals

While the Millennium Development Goals do not include specific references to transport, it is now widely accepted that transport infrastructure and services play a critical role in addressing the Goals. Many countries in the region suffer large spatial inequalities with regards to income, wealth and opportunity. This is due to a lack of all-weather roads to villages, infrequent or unreliable transport services to outlying areas and islands, poor access to deeper hinterlands and weak rural-urban connectivity. Poor maintenance of infrastructure, particularly roads, reduces their asset value and increases vehicle operating costs, transit times and safety risk for users. There is tremendous potential to enhance the contribution of transport interventions to efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. To realize this potential, Governments must integrate poverty reduction and Goal-related policy objectives into their transport programmes and projects during the early stages of formulation and programming.

Immediate objective: to encourage the inclusion of Millennium Development Goals considerations in the planning and implementation of regional transport interventions.

Outputs:

1. Studies and workshops on mainstreaming Millennium Development Goals considerations into transport planning and policies as appropriate, in particular, in infrastructure development, farm-to-market logistics, food security and road safety;
2. The exchange of experiences between member countries regarding the develop-

ment of transport infrastructure and services to provide rural communities with physical access and connect them to national and regional trunk road systems;

3. Preparatory activities in support of the 10-year review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2013.

Indicators of achievement:

1. Measures taken by member States to mainstream Millennium Development Goals into transport programmes and policies, with particular focus on relevant areas of the Regional Action Programme.

2. Adoption of recommendations from the regional input document at the global meeting on the 10-year review of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action.

9. Inter-island shipping

The provision of efficient, reliable and affordable shipping services to, from, between and within island and archipelagic developing countries presents a number of unique constraints and challenges. These include long voyage distances, imbalanced cargo flows and low unit values of exports as well as challenges in matching ship size, service speed, port capacity, safety and comfort with low and often irregular traffic volumes. In some cases, these challenges lead to unprofitable routes or “cherry-picking” of the most lucrative or profitable shipments, leaving the less attractive shipments to others. This results in a “vicious downward spiral” as the regularity, reliability and affordability of services deteriorates. These challenges can arise domestically, subregionally and internationally.

Immediate objective: to assist in identifying possible approaches to enhancing the regularity, reliability and affordability of the shipping services of archipelagic and island developing countries.

Outputs:

1. Studies, capacity-building activities and policy recommendations on effective strategies for securing regular, reliable and affordable inter-island shipping services for the consideration of archipelagic and island developing countries;

2. Advisory services and technical support to member countries, upon request, regarding the implementation of policy measures to support inter-island shipping.

Indicators of achievement:

1. Measures taken by member States to incorporate recommendations on inter-island shipping in line with the secretariat's proposals and policy advice.

10. Connecting subregional transport networks

Across the Asia-Pacific region, intergovernmental organizations and programmes have been active in promoting physical and institutional connectivity within their own subregions. The conclusion of the associated agreements and the implementation of initiatives have led to the establishment of differing legal and operating regimes for the inter-subregional movement of goods, vehicles and passengers. These differences can act as physical and non-physical barriers to smooth and efficient transport between subregions.

Immediate objective: to identify physical and non-physical constraints to inter-subregional connectivity and to provide a platform for building closer collaboration among subregional entities in the development of transport.

Outputs:

1. Draft documents outlining potential issues that need to be addressed in order to improve physical and institutional connectivity between subregions;
2. Meetings of ESCAP member countries, subregional organizations and subregional programmes (back-to-back with relevant legislative meetings) to consider collaborative actions that support inter-subregional connectivity;
3. Technical assistance and support in the implementation of inter-subregional connectivity initiatives for the development of transport.

Indicators of achievement:

1. Measures taken by member States on improving subregional connectivity in line with the secretariat's proposals and policy advice.
2. Inclusion of proposals and issues raised by the secretariat in the agendas of meetings of member countries and subregional organisations/programmes.



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