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Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific Committee on Transport

Sixth session

Bangkok, 12 and 13 November 2020

Annotated provisional agenda

The present document contains the provisional agenda for the sixth session of the Committee on Transport (section I) and the annotations thereto (section II).

I. Provisional agenda

1. Opening of the session:
 - (a) Opening statements;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Review of the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017–2021).
3. Cross-cutting issues in transport:
 - (a) Transport connectivity for efficient and resilient supply chains;
 - (b) Environmentally sustainable transport systems and services;
 - (c) Safe and inclusive transport and mobility.
4. Accelerating transformative action in transport for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.
5. Other matters.
6. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its sixth session.

II. Annotations

1. Opening of the session

(a) Opening statements

The programme for the session will be available online at www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/committee-transport-sixth-session.

(b) Election of officers

The Committee will elect a chair and two vice-chairs for the session.

The list of participants will be available online at www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/committee-transport-sixth-session.

(c) Adoption of the agenda

Documentation

Annotated provisional agenda (ESCAP/CTR/2020/L.1/Rev.1)

Annotation

The provisional agenda will be considered and adopted by the Committee, subject to such changes as may be necessary.

2. Review of the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017–2021)

Documentation

Review of the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017–2021) (ESCAP/CTR/2020/1)

Activities implemented under the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017–2021) (ESCAP/CTR/2020/INF/1)

Annotation

The Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific was adopted by the Ministerial Conference on Transport at its third session, held in Moscow from 5 to 9 December 2016. In the Ministerial Declaration, member States recognized the need for long-term commitment and continuity in addressing critical issues in the transport sector to support economic growth, improve living standards and increase the competitiveness of economies in the region. To that end, the Ministerial Conference adopted the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017–2021), contained in annex I to the Ministerial Declaration. At its seventy-third session, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) adopted resolution 73/4 in which it endorsed the Declaration, including the annexed Regional Action Programme, and

requested the secretariat to accord priority to the implementation of the Regional Action Programme.

The Committee will be updated on the implementation of the Regional Action Programme, including highlights of completed and current activities under each thematic area. The Committee may wish to comment on the status of the implementation of the Regional Action Programme and provide guidance on its final year of implementation.

3. Cross-cutting issues in transport

(a) Transport connectivity for efficient and resilient supply chains

Documentation

Transport connectivity for efficient and resilient supply chains (ESCAP/CTR/2020/2)

Guidelines developed by the Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation on measures to ensure the anti-epidemic safety of transport operations (ESCAP/CTR/2020/INF/3)

Annotation

The institutional backbone of the development of regional transport networks in the ESCAP region is composed of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network and the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network. In addition, the identification of a set of dry ports of international importance under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports has facilitated the implementation of the two networks and their integration with ports and other modes of transport. This regional effort has gone a long way towards aggregating disparate infrastructure systems into a common regional infrastructure network that is best able to serve the region's economic integration and strengthen its future growth by supporting the creation and operation of global and regional supply chains.

Despite the progress made, the level and quality of infrastructure provision remain uneven across the region and relatively low in many Asia-Pacific countries, particularly the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. Meanwhile, operational challenges persist. Notable examples include restrictions on international road traffic rights, lack of harmonized standards, uncoordinated border crossing procedures, cumbersome administrative requirements across different modes of transport and insufficient legal and regulatory frameworks for multimodal transport and logistics. These shortages in infrastructure and operational connectivity have commensurate effects on supply chain efficiency and logistics performance. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has further exacerbated these challenges and demonstrated how seamless transport connectivity is a crucial measure of the resilience of supply chains at large, including those extending beyond the region, notably to Europe.

The Committee may wish to discuss regional transport connectivity as well as supply chain efficiency and resilience against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Committee may also wish to discuss the key drivers of regional transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific and identify opportunities for transformative actions with special consideration for the needs of the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, as well as consideration for interregional transport

linkages between Asia and Europe. Lastly, the Committee may wish to provide guidance to the secretariat on ongoing and planned activities to strengthen its support to member States with a view to achieving seamless, efficient and resilient transport connectivity across the region and beyond.

The Committee may also wish to take note of information document ESCAP/CTR/2020/INF/3 containing the guidelines developed by the Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation on measures to ensure the anti-epidemic safety of transport operations.

(b) Environmentally sustainable transport systems and services

Documentation

Environmentally sustainable transport systems and services
(ESCAP/CTR/2020/3)

Annotation

The transport sector continues to be a leading contributor to greenhouse gas emissions and a major consumer of fossil fuels. In the Asia-Pacific region, the transport sector accounts for 19 per cent (852 million tons of oil equivalent) of total final energy consumption, 51.9 per cent of total oil consumption and nearly 13.5 per cent of total carbon dioxide emissions, with road vehicles accounting for the majority of the sector's emissions. Since 2000, the sector's total final energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions have doubled owing to the rapid population growth and economic development, and they will continue to increase. Emissions from freight transport are increasing much more rapidly than those from other types of transport, while total freight transport demand is expected to continue to increase, tripling between 2015 and 2050. Estimates also show that growing economies and expanded road infrastructure will more than double fuel consumption by trucks in the Asia-Pacific region by 2040. It follows that the transport sector ought to better articulate its role in addressing the climate change challenge, ensuring climate resilience and supporting the objectives of the Paris Agreement.

The current modal split of freight transport in the region is far from optimal, with road transport continuing to dominate despite the potential for greater use of the more environmentally friendly modes such as rail and waterborne transport. Domestic and international freight transport continues to rely heavily on oil for propulsion and is not yet in a position to be fully adapted to cleaner alternative energy sources. In addition to making it harder to effectively mitigate the environmental impact of transport, this continued reliance on oil also exacerbates traditional development challenges and further emphasizes the need to implement sustainable freight transport policies. In contrast, environmentally friendly mobility and sustainable urban transport are gaining ground with the development of more affordable vehicle technologies and policies that support shared mobility, walking, cycling and smart public transport systems. However, given the rate of urbanization in the region, further efforts are needed to fully capitalize on the potential of these policies and to support evidence-based decision-making. Lastly, the use of technology and its role in attaining low-carbon and environmentally sustainable transport systems need to be further assessed. The intersection of information and communications technology and transport has drastically affected the dynamics of transport systems as these systems, including intelligent transport systems, continue to evolve.

In this context, the Committee may wish to take select considerations from document ESCAP/CTR/2020/3 into account as it discusses ways to create policy frameworks that foster innovation and leverage technology with a view to pursuing a sustainable and low-carbon development path for the transport sector. The Committee may also wish to provide further guidance to the secretariat on ongoing and planned activities in support of environmentally sustainable transport systems and services.

(c) Safe and inclusive transport and mobility

Documentation

Safe and inclusive transport and mobility (ESCAP/CTR/2020/4)

Annotation

In the Asia-Pacific region, a road traffic fatality occurs every 38 seconds. This amounts to two lives lost every minute and 2,200 per day, which causes substantial economic and social loss. While the economic cost of road traffic accidents in the region is estimated to be between 1 per cent and 6 per cent of the respective national gross domestic products, the social cost is immeasurable. The lower-middle-income countries of the region account for 55 per cent of road fatalities. More than 54 per cent of all road fatalities in the region involve vulnerable road users. The Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011–2020 and target 3.6 of Sustainable Development Goal 3 were intended to halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2020. However, with a road fatalities trend that is increasing instead of decreasing, the region is far from meeting that ambitious target. While leaps in safety have been recorded for rail, waterborne and air transport, road safety remains the most critical area for urgent intervention. Analyses have shown that if road fatalities in ESCAP countries continue to increase at the current pace, no amount of reduction in road fatalities in non-ESCAP countries would be enough to achieve the desired global reduction. Accordingly, measures to accelerate the improvement of road safety in the region are urgently called for. At the same time, addressing the challenges of road safety also requires a closer examination of and holistic approach to transport safety in general.

The safety of the people using transport and employed in the transport sector inherently involves the social dimension of transport. Conversely, the prominence of safety often overshadows the role of transport as an instrument for developing human capabilities, gender equality and social inclusion. The social benefits of transport policies have traditionally been considered a by-product of the economic stimulus resulting from infrastructure development and the corresponding increase in the volume of goods and passengers transported. However, transport policy, investment and design should be conceived and implemented as part of a broader social and/or poverty reduction strategy, which calls for greater cross-sectoral synergies within countries and across the region. The Asia-Pacific region has yet to fully define the optimal package of transport policy interventions that extend beyond infrastructure investment to include reforms and policies capable of amplifying the wider economic benefits of that infrastructure and to include areas of unrealized economic potential and possible positive spillovers for social development.

The Committee may wish to use document ESCAP/CTR/2020/4 as a basis for discussing the challenges related to improving road safety in the region and for identifying ambitious actions to address road safety beyond the 2020 milestone. Furthermore, the Committee may wish to consider transport within the context of broader social development imperatives that the sector can serve,

including elements of gender equality, accessibility and inclusion. Lastly, the Committee may wish to provide guidance to the secretariat on ongoing and planned activities to support safe and inclusive transport and mobility.

4. Accelerating transformative action in transport for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals

Documentation

Accelerating transformative action in transport for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (ESCAP/CTR/2020/5)

Preparations made by the secretariat for the fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport (2021) (ESCAP/CTR/2020/INF/2)

Annotation

The transition to low-carbon, climate-resilient transport systems remains slow, and advancements in decoupling transport growth from environmental degradation are insufficient. At the same time, while progress has been made towards well-connected and efficient transport across Asia and the Pacific, the region is progressing unevenly with regard to its connectivity. As a result, the potential of several countries to fully access economies of scale and sustained economic growth is restricted. Furthermore, persistent gender gaps, road traffic fatalities and inequalities in accessing transport and related opportunities further inhibit the capacity of the sector to equally address all dimensions of sustainable development. The decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals calls for regional action as well as raising ambitions and identifying solutions. In this effort, Governments must lead the way, working closely with stakeholders from civil society, the private sector, academia and beyond on transformative action for the transport sector to accelerate the achievement of the Goals. The COVID-19 pandemic has lent additional urgency to the need for the transport sector to amplify efforts and synergies and to safeguard against future disruptions of this magnitude, as recognized in Commission resolution 76/2. Improved analytical capacity, access to metrics and data for evidence-based policy development, and peer-learning and strengthened normative and institutional mechanisms at the regional level will be pivotal in that regard.

As the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017–2021) enters its last year of implementation, attention will inevitably turn to the future and to the pressing need to better align the priorities of the sector with the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals and the socioeconomic recovery efforts in the short and medium term following the pandemic. In that regard, a bold and well-coordinated regional response to the challenges of the post-2020 world in the lead-up to 2030 may be the centrepiece of the next regional action programme.

The Committee may wish to highlight pressing priorities and areas for policy interventions and regional cooperation in the transport sector that can accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific, taking into account recent global and regional developments. The Committee may also wish to share views and experiences and to provide guidance to the secretariat on the development of the next regional action programme (for 2022–2026), which will be submitted for consideration at the fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport. Under this agenda item, the Committee will also be informed of organizational preparations made by the secretariat for the Ministerial Conference, tentatively scheduled for the last

quarter of 2021. The Committee may wish to provide feedback to the secretariat in that regard.

5. Other matters

The Committee may wish to consider other matters not covered under the items mentioned above.

6. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its sixth session

Documentation

Draft report (ESCAP/CTR/2020/L.2)

Annotation

The Committee will consider and adopt the report on its sixth session for submission to the Commission at its seventy-seventh session.
