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**EMERGING ISSUES AND DEVELOPMENTS AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL:  
TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS**

(Item 6 (d) of the provisional agenda)

**EVALUATION OF PHASE II (1992-1996) OF THE TRANSPORT AND  
COMMUNICATIONS DECADE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

*Note by the secretariat*

**SUMMARY**

The Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, 1985-1994 was proclaimed by the General Assembly in 1984, and adopted by the Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Transport and Communications in 1985.

As mandated by the Commission, an evaluation of the Decade was carried out by the secretariat in close cooperation with the implementing agencies and recipient countries. The evaluation included recommendations in respect of the strategy to be adopted for the effective implementation of the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific.

Based on the experiences gained and lessons learned from the Decade, and taking into account the suggestions made in the evaluation report, the present document has been prepared to meet the requirements of the Commission, and to solicit its guidance in working out the modalities for the implementation of the New Delhi Action Plan.

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## INTRODUCTION

1. During the 1980s, major structural changes, including expansion and redirection of trade, were becoming visible in many countries of the Asian and Pacific region. As these changes were making increasing demands on regional transport and communications services, it became clear that the processes which had gathered momentum could not be continued without major increases in the capacity, reliability and efficiency of the services. To respond better to the emerging needs of the countries of the region, the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, 1985-1994, was proclaimed by the General Assembly in resolution 39/227 of 18 December 1984.

2. The Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Transport and Communications, at its first session, held in January 1985, adopted the declaration on the launching of the Decade. In so doing, the Ministers requested the Executive Secretary of ESCAP to carry out all the work necessary for the implementation and coordination of the various programmes developed for the Decade and to prepare regular progress reports on their implementation for presentation to the Commission, and to the Ministers as and when they met.

3. During phase I (1985-1989) of the Decade, a considerable number of activities were undertaken to assist in the development of transport and communications for ESCAP members and associate members. Following the decision of the Commission,<sup>1</sup> a mid-term review of the Decade was undertaken in 1989 and 1990. The review assessed the impact of phase I, identified crucial short- and long-term transport and communications problems, and determined priorities for phase II of the Decade. The time-frame of phase II was readjusted by the General Assembly in its decision 46/453 of 20 December 1991, to cover the period 1992-1996.

4. The Commission, in resolution 47/10 of 10 April 1991 on phase II of the Decade, requested the Executive Secretary to undertake an evaluation of the Decade after its completion and to submit his report, with appropriate recommendations, to the Commission at its subsequent session. With a view to soliciting guidance from member and associate member countries on the approach and strategy to be adopted for undertaking the evaluation in 1997, an interim review of phase II of the Decade was undertaken in 1996 by the secretariat in close collaboration with the implementing agencies and recipient countries, and submitted to the Meeting of Senior Government Officials in Preparation for the Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure, held in October 1996.

5. In considering the report of the Meeting of Senior Government Officials, the Conference noted with appreciation the significant achievements made through the regional action programme of the Decade. The Conference recommended that the data and information already compiled be updated

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Commission on its forty-fifth session (*Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1989, Supplement No. 14*), para. 479; and on its forty-sixth session (*ibid.*, 1990, *Supplement No. 11*), paras. 554-557.

for the preparation of the final evaluation report of the Decade in 1997, and requested members and associate members to extend full support to the secretariat in carrying out that task through their respective focal points.

6. In pursuance of Commission resolution 47/10, and in accordance with the recommendation of the Conference, a consultant was engaged in December 1996 to undertake a study and prepare a detailed evaluation report, which will be published early in 1997. Based on the findings and recommendations of the 1997 evaluation, the present document has been prepared to meet the requirements of the Commission.

## **I. PHASE I (1985-1989) OF THE TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS DECADE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

### **A. Aims and objectives**

7. The aims of the Decade as spelt out by the General Assembly were as follows:

(a) Raising the transport and communications infrastructural facilities of developing member countries to a level commensurate with their development objectives and priorities, giving particular attention to the special needs of the least developed, landlocked and island developing countries of the region;

(b) Identifying systematically and in a comprehensive manner the problems of transport and communications in the region and working out feasible solutions;

(c) Promoting a more effective and efficient transport and communications network comprising all modes and means in an integrated way, in particular for the development of intraregional and interregional transport and communications linkages, as well as in the fields of maintenance and coordination of networks, tariff-setting and physical planning;

(d) Encouraging effective coordination and cooperation in the field of transport and communications in the region.

8. The General Assembly, in its resolution, expressed the long-term or development goals of the Decade, and the Meeting of Ministers formulated the following immediate objectives with a view to achieving concrete results from the Decade:

(a) Integrated transport and communications planning;

(b) Policies for increased transport and communications efficiency;

(c) Facilitation of international traffic and communications;

(d) Transport and communications for improved rural and urban living conditions;

(e) Rationalization of energy use in transport and communications;

- (f) Development of transport and communications technology.

9. The Meeting of Ministers emphasized that the transport and communications system in each country and for the region as a whole could be improved with limited resources through adequate planning analysis, intermodal coordination, reduction of administrative procedures and regulations, elimination of non-physical bottlenecks, efficient management by operators, and introduction of new technologies permitting cost-effective operations and energy savings.

## **B. Strategy and monitoring mechanism**

10. The Meeting of Ministers agreed upon a strategy to achieve the objectives of the Decade by implementing a programme of action consisting of national action programmes to be prepared by each country, and a regional action programme to be formulated by the ESCAP secretariat with the active participation of all United Nations agencies and organizations concerned. For the development of each programme, 22 thrust areas were delineated under the six immediate objectives of the Decade listed in paragraph 8 above.

11. The Commission, at its forty-second session, held in 1986, felt that the following five elements should constitute the strategy for the implementation of the programmes for the Decade:

- (a) Human resources development;
- (b) Transfer of technology;
- (c) Intraregional, interregional and international cooperation;
- (d) Optimum utilization of infrastructure, including maintenance;
- (e) Improvement of transport and communications in rural and isolated communities.

12. The Commission, at its forty-third session, held in 1987, endorsed the strategy adopted by the secretariat for the implementation of the programmes for the Decade, and emphasized the need for the adoption of rational, practical and pragmatic approaches to ensure the effective and optimum utilization of the limited existing resources.

13. The Meeting of Ministers also pointed out the vital role of an institutional mechanism to monitor and coordinate the programme of action for the Decade which would include, at the country level, the establishment of national coordinating committees, and at the regional level, the setting up of a centralized monitoring and reporting system in the secretariat.

14. As the lead agency for the implementation of the Decade, the ESCAP secretariat was given the following responsibilities:

- (a) To prepare a regional action programme for the Decade in close cooperation with the member countries and concerned specialized agencies;
- (b) To assist the member countries in the preparation of practical and integrated programmes of action for the Decade at the country level;
- (c) To promote intergovernmental and inter-agency cooperation at the regional and subregional levels, and to invite member countries to designate appropriate mechanisms to coordinate their national programmes with the regional action programme for the Decade;
- (d) To ensure regular monitoring of Decade activities at the national, subregional, regional, interregional and inter-agency levels.

### **C. Mid-term review of the Decade**

15. The Commission, at its forty-fourth session, held in 1988, noted that the Decade was approaching its mid-point in 1989, and decided that it was necessary to review the progress in its implementation, with particular reference to the national programmes, and to examine and modify the regional action programme as necessary to ensure that it continued to reflect the immediate needs and actual requirements of members and associate members for the remaining period of the Decade. The mid-term review project was also supported by the Commission at its forty-fifth session.

16. Following the decisions made by the Commission, a mid-term review of the Decade was undertaken from the end of 1989 to mid-1990 to assess the impact of the first phase and to determine the priorities for the second phase. As part of the review, a questionnaire was circulated by the secretariat to members and associate members to assess the stage reached in the implementation of the Decade. The answers received from 20 countries were consolidated and analysed.

17. In order to gain a better understanding of what had been achieved at the country level, and what could be considered as the impact of the Decade, intercountry missions were also undertaken to 23 members and associate members from November 1989 to May 1990.

18. The major findings of the mid-term review<sup>2</sup> may be summarized as follows:

- (a) Transport and communications improved in the region in many ways during phase I of the Decade; however, those achievements could not be attributed to the Decade as such;
- (b) The regional action programme for the Decade included substantive and successful achievements, particularly technical publications of high quality, modelling systems representing innovative breakthroughs, seminars and workshops of high quality, and advisory missions of great value;

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<sup>2</sup> ESCAP, *Mid-term Review of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, 1985-1994* (ST/ESCAP/982).

(c) The institutional mechanisms of the Decade had not functioned as foreseen. As a result, most activities in the transport and communications sectors were undertaken within the region, without reference to the objectives of the Decade and outside its framework.

19. The reasons cited in the mid-term review for the "lack of success" included a number of factors, the main ones being:

(a) Poor formulation of the strategy, which did not offer an effective methodology for implementation;

(b) Lack of commitment on the part of member countries to the Decade's objectives;

(c) Absence of guidelines to ensure coherence in the formulation of Decade projects at both the country and regional levels;

(d) Lack of coordination between ESCAP and the United Nations agencies for the development of a common approach, with the result that each agency identified and selected projects without reference to the Decade objectives;

(e) Lack of efforts towards the association and mobilization of lending institutions and bilateral donors in support of Decade objectives;

(f) Weakness in the management of the Decade, with the result that ESCAP was unable to play the catalytic role that had been envisaged;

(g) The decision of the ESCAP Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (ACPR) to communicate only through embassies or officially designated channels prevented the forging of a direct interactive communication link between the secretariat and the national Decade coordinating committees, posing difficulties for ESCAP in setting up an effective monitoring mechanism for the Decade;

(h) The non-functioning of national coordinating committees; non-formulation of national Decade programmes; and non-availability of annual country reports on the progress of Decade activities;

(i) No meetings of Ministers Responsible for Transport and Communications were held to oversee and review the progress of the Decade programme;

(j) No coordinating meeting associating either the member countries or other United Nations organizations and specialized agencies took place after 1985;

(k) The existence, until early 1989, of two separate transport divisions in the ESCAP secretariat, with one of them in charge of the Decade, did not represent the most effective mechanism for monitoring, coordinating and reporting of Decade activities by ESCAP.

20. The mid-term review made the following recommendations for more effective implementation of phase II of the Decade:

- The Decade should continue up to its term in 1994
- Phase II of the Decade programme should focus on regional activities
- The regional action programme for phase II should be constituted mainly of subregional programmes tailored to the specific needs of the different subregions of the Asian and Pacific region, and focus on a limited number of common issues, with activities identified within the framework of a programme approach
- The regional action programme should be prepared jointly by all the United Nations organizations and specialized agencies having activities related to transport and communications in the Asian and Pacific region
- Activities undertaken under the regional action programme should be linked with projects executed at the country level
- A resource advisory committee should be established to advise on the orientation, formulation and implementation of the regional action programme for phase II of the Decade
- ESCAP should remain the lead agency for phase II of the Decade, and demonstrate its technical capability for coordinating and monitoring the Decade programme effectively
- Wherever a subregional intergovernmental organization was operational, it should receive the responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the Decade, with the assistance of ESCAP
- Activities should be implemented with the effective involvement of a network of existing national institutions dealing with transport and communications
- Direct channels of communication should be authorized between the ESCAP Transport and Communications Division and the various technical departments in charge of transport and communications in each country, and governments should be kept informed through existing channels
- As part of its mandate, ESCAP should establish a compendium of the projects undertaken in the transport and communications sectors in the region
- Post-evaluation of selected group training activities should be undertaken to provide guidelines for a model training scheme and quality training materials

21. The conclusions and recommendations of the mid-term review were considered by the Meeting



of Senior Government Representatives Responsible for the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, 1985-1994 held in December 1990, and endorsed by the Committee on Shipping, Transport and Communications at its thirteenth session, also held in December 1990. The recommendations of the Committee were endorsed by the Commission at its forty-seventh session, held in 1991.

## **II. PHASE II (1992-1996) OF THE TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS DECADE FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

### **A. Strategy and scope for phase II of the Decade**

22. Based on the mid-term review, the Commission, in resolution 47/10, adopted a new strategy for phase II of the Decade. This included the formulation and implementation of a new regional action programme through closer cooperation with the countries and organizations concerned. The programme identified the problems which could be addressed at the intercountry level, within three strategic themes and four related issues:

Themes	Issues
1. Institutional development	1. Multimodal transport and logistics
2. Transport and communications operations	2. Commercialization of transport and communications operations
3. Human resources development	3. Environment, safety and health in transport
	4. Urban transport

23. The Economic and Social Council, in resolution 1991/75 of 26 July 1991, endorsed the new strategy and urged appropriate international organizations, particularly the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to contribute effectively to the formulation and implementation of the regional action programme. It invited all Governments to contribute to and participate effectively in the implementation of the programme. To permit all parties concerned to formulate the regional action programme, the time-frame of phase II was readjusted by the General Assembly, by decision 46/453, to cover the period 1992-1996.

24. The regional action programme for phase II was launched with the overall objective of creating an effective framework for the efficient operation of the transport and communications sector which would encourage more commercially oriented management systems and the increased involvement of the private sector in transport and communications enterprises. It aimed at enhancing planning capabilities through the provision of models and tools, upgrading management and operational systems to respond more effectively to user demands through the incorporation of market-oriented techniques to assist countries in overcoming constraints and eliminating bottlenecks.

25. The regional action programme comprised 48 activities, implemented individually or jointly by 11 implementing and two collaborating agencies, as follows:

Joint*	10
UNCTAD	1
ESCAP**	8
ILO***	4
ICAO	10
World Bank	2
UPU	2
ITU	3
IMO	2
UNIDO	1
APT	4
Forum Secretariat****	1
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Total	48

\* One joint ESCAP/World Bank project in collaboration with ADB.

\*\* One ESCAP project in collaboration with the Mekong River Commission.

\*\*\* Two ILO projects in collaboration with ESCAP.

\*\*\*\* One Forum Secretariat project in collaboration with ESCAP.

26. In endorsing the regional action programme, the Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Transport and Communications held in June 1992, agreed that the regional action programme should remain flexible to take account of any changes that might occur during phase II.

### **B. Monitoring and implementation of phase II of the Decade**

27. At its second session held in 1992, the Meeting of Ministers established the Inter-agency Steering Committee on Phase II (1992-1996) of the Decade to facilitate inter-agency cooperation throughout phase II. It comprised the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), World Bank, Universal Postal Union (UPU), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), International Maritime Organization (IMO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Asia-Pacific Postal Union (APPU), Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT), Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Mekong River Commission (MRC), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and World Tourism Organization (WTO) as members and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) as associate members.

28. In its lead role, ESCAP convened four annual sessions of the Steering Committee during the

period 1992-1996, to review periodically the status of implementation and resource mobilization for the regional action programme. In addition, ad hoc meetings of the Committee were held as and when required. This mechanism contributed to strengthening inter-agency cooperation, producing a number of joint activities and reducing possible duplication of work.

29. The regional action programme was reviewed annually at legislative meetings. Two sessions of the Committee on Transport and Communications, held in 1993 and 1995, *inter alia*, considered key issues related to the Decade, as well as the changing needs of the members, with a view to making necessary changes to the regional action programme. An ad hoc intergovernmental meeting on the Decade was also convened in November 1994 to provide a forum to consider the status of implementation of the regional action programme, as the Committee was not scheduled to meet that year. It incorporated the changes that were required in the regional action programme to reflect the changing needs of member countries.

30. To strengthen linkages between national and regional programmes, and to provide a resource base for the sharing of experience, ESCAP developed a Decade coordination and monitoring system comprising databases for the regional action programme and for subregional and national transport and communications activities. As a result, the status of implementation of the programme and resource mobilization have been updated regularly, and reports submitted to legislative meetings.

31. In 1992, ESCAP initiated a biannual newsletter entitled *Decade News*. To date, eight issues have been published with a view to, *inter alia*, providing an effective channel of communication between ESCAP, other partners involved in the implementation of the regional action programme, the governments and other interested parties.

32. Funds for the implementation of the regional action programme have been provided on a voluntary basis. The implementing agencies have been responsible, individually or jointly, for securing funding for the implementation of their own activities in the programme. The General Assembly, in resolution 48/177 of 21 December 1993 on resource mobilization for the implementation of the regional action programme for phase II (1992-1996) of the Decade, requested the Governing Council of UNDP to keep under review the level of funding to be provided for the implementation of the regional action programme, so that phase II would have a greater impact. It also invited all Governments in a position to do so to contribute to the implementation of the programme.

33. The secretariat wishes to reiterate its appreciation to all donor countries and agencies for a total contribution of more than US\$ 25.4 million for the implementation of the regional action programme for phase II of the Decade, as follows:

	<i>Donor</i>	<i>Cash contribution in US dollars</i>
	Australia	367
000	Canada	235
227	China	61
566	France	439
438	Germany	1
109 049	Japan	5 881 974
	Netherlands	406
648	Republic of Korea	415
180	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	75
000	United States of America	150
000	UNDP	16 263 899
	World Bank	20
000		
	Total	<div style="border-top: 1px solid black; border-bottom: 3px double black;">25 424 981</div>

34. The secretariat also owes a deep sense of gratitude to the Governments of France, Germany, Japan and the Republic of Korea which, in addition to cash contributions, extended support to the Decade by providing ESCAP with experts on a non-reimbursable loan basis.

35. The Commission may wish to note that UNDP was the largest contributor to the Decade programme. For the implementation of the inter-agency programme for economic reforms through enhanced transport and communications services, it earmarked a budget of US\$ 12 million to cover the period 1993-1997. The actual allocations for each year were, however, to be based on approval of annual input budgets of the respective executing agencies. Unfortunately, as a result of the serious financial situation of UNDP from 1994 onwards, and in view of its changing priorities, the actual amount released for the five-year period was about US\$ 5.4 million. In addition to the inter-agency programme, UNDP contributed about US\$ 10.9 million for other regional programmes to be implemented individually by ESCAP, ICAO and IMO within the framework of the Decade.

### **C. Preliminary impact assessment of phase II of the Decade**

36. The Commission, in resolution 47/10, mandated the secretariat to carry out an evaluation of the Decade in 1997. In preparing for such an evaluation and post-Decade arrangements, an interim review of phase II of the Decade was conducted in 1996 by the secretariat, in close cooperation with the implementing agencies and recipient countries, to solicit guidance on the approach and strategy to be adopted for undertaking the evaluation. Questionnaires were sent to the recipient countries and, based

on the returns, a preliminary impact assessment was carried out. The findings of the assessment were submitted to the Meeting of Senior Government Officials which was held at New Delhi in October 1996 in preparation for the Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure.

37. The Ministerial Conference, held at New Delhi in October 1996, noted with appreciation the significant achievements made through the regional action programme of the Decade, which are summarized below.

(a) The Commission, at its forty-eighth session held in April 1992, endorsed an integrated project on Asian land transport infrastructure development (ALTID), comprising the Asian Highway, the Trans-Asian Railway projects and facilitation of land transport, as a priority item for phase II of the Decade, and adopted resolution 48/11 of 23 April 1992 on road and rail transport modes in relation to facilitation measures (ESCAP);

(b) The Asian Highway project identified routes and formulated networks in several countries, revised technical standards and developed a new route classification. The Trans-Asian Railway project identified routes and requirements for different corridors. The projects provided the countries with practical guidelines on routes, networks, technical standards and requirements for the development of national highway and railway routes of international importance. Several ALTID projects have been included in national and subregional development plans. Routes were identified in several countries, many of which were approved by expert groups and policy-level meetings (ESCAP);

(c) Several subregional/national seminars were convened on cross-border land transport facilitation, which resulted in 23 accessions by seven countries (mainly the landlocked countries) to the conventions listed in Commission resolution 48/11 (ESCAP);

(d) The Committee on Transport and Communications, at its second session held in November 1995, recommended that the ALTID project should constitute a priority item in the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP);

(e) Taking into account the recommendation of the Committee, the Commission, at its fifty-second session, adopted resolution 52/9 of 24 April 1996 on intra-Asia and Asia-Europe land bridges, to support the completion and bringing into operation of both the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks, including Asia-Europe links and those linkages proposed at the Asia-Europe Meeting, held at Bangkok in March 1996 (ESCAP);

(f) A project on a regional network on control and regulatory measures concerning motor vehicle emissions triggered the development of active cooperation in the region and contributed considerably to the strengthening of local capabilities and expertise in the area of motor vehicle emission controls. As a result, several countries of the region started introducing policy measures and standards consistent with those developed under the project (UNIDO);

(g) Urban transport strategies for medium-sized cities were developed and training institutions strengthened to enable planners and transport operators to implement those strategies (ESCAP/World Bank);

(h) A project on the Railway Wagon Information and Control System (RAILWICS) was launched in July 1996 as a promising demonstration project to improve the utilization of existing rolling

stock (ESCAP/UNCTAD).

#### Water transport

(a) A regional seminar on the environmental aspects of dredging activities enhanced considerably the knowledge and awareness in the region of the latest developments in minimizing the adverse environmental impact of dredging and in utilizing dredged material. Some countries in the region started taking environmental concerns into consideration when undertaking dredging activities (ESCAP);

(b) A survey was undertaken jointly by China, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand on the effective utilization of the Upper Mekong River for navigation purposes, following which several quadripartite meetings were held among the countries concerned; this is expected to culminate in the signing of an agreement on navigation cooperation by the countries (ESCAP);

(c) A project on environmental impact assessment for inland water transport (IWT) projects in the Upper Mekong subregion increased environmental awareness of IWT engineering projects, and provided the countries with a basis for environmentally sound development of the waterways, in support of sustainable development in the subregion. The recommendations on measures to mitigate the adverse environmental impact of such projects have been incorporated in government policies, regulations, planning and management, as well as designs and implementation of some engineering projects (ESCAP);

(d) Under the project on IWT information systems and training, activities were designed to support national initiatives by addressing the problems of weak management and inefficient operations, through the provision of appropriate tools and related training support. Regional seminars and study tours greatly enhanced the capabilities of riverine countries in IWT techniques in management, operation and maintenance and cost-saving measures (ESCAP);

(e) A series of workshops and seminars were organized to assist and advise governments and other interested parties on matters related to the facilitation of international maritime traffic and implementation of the Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic, 1965 (FAL Convention). These acted as a stimulus for governments to work towards accession to the Convention, to review and improve documentary procedures, to change formalities so as to speed up cargo operations on arrival, to introduce electronic data interchange (EDI) systems and information networks, and to establish national maritime facilitation committees for increasing the overall efficiency of maritime transport (ESCAP/IMO);

(f) Through a regional programme on developing harmonized operational safety procedures for passenger/cargo vessels operating in inter-island, coastal and inland waterways, a set of safety

regulations were developed for non-Convention-sized vessels plying the Asian region, by adopting which the loss of life and property at sea and in inland waterways in the countries of the region would be much reduced, and maritime safety in general greatly enhanced (IMO);

(g) To prevent and manage marine pollution, a demonstrative and networking approach was adopted to support the governments in introducing policies and interventions for addressing the problems. Training seminars on oil spill preparedness, response and cooperation, pollution monitoring, impact assessment, waste management and geographic information systems (GIS) application, establishment of regional networks and demonstration sites have helped in strengthening intercountry linkages for the prevention and management of marine pollution (IMO);

(h) A study on the social and labour consequences of structural adjustment programmes in the port industry was undertaken, which is of value to countries in promoting measures for the smooth implementation of structural adjustments of ports, particularly on the effect on port personnel (ILO);

(i) A survey on human resources management and training needs and a technical workshop on port training needs have considerably enhanced the capabilities of member countries in maritime transport. The organization of a subregional training course on occupational analyses for port officials triggered the conduct of such analyses in several countries of the region (ILO/UNCTAD);

(j) A regional tripartite seminar and national seminars were organized on the application of ESCAP-ILO guidelines for maritime labour legislation and ILO guidelines for the inspection of labour conditions on board ships etc., which assisted member countries in adopting international maritime minimum labour standards and in drafting maritime labour legislation (ILO/ESCAP).

#### Air transport

(a) The organization of 23 in-country and 3 intercountry workshops on the costs and benefits associated with the new communications, navigation, surveillance and air traffic management (CNS/ATM) systems, dissemination of information for their implementation, and the award of 23 fellowships for in-country and 62 fellowships for intercountry participants have assisted in strengthening the capacity of about 1,300 officials in civil aviation administrations, institution-building and human resources development in air traffic management, improving navigational accuracy, and reducing airspace congestion in the region (ICAO);

(b) The Indo-China subregional programme on civil aviation has strengthened the aviation legislation by assisting countries in the formulation of their basic air laws and legislative frameworks (ICAO);

(c) The search-and-rescue capabilities in Indo-China were assessed and recommendations for improvement provided; draft civil aviation search-and-rescue plans were developed for some countries; on-the-job training was given to national counterparts; detailed manuals for government certification



and inspection of aircraft were developed; flight safety oversight workshops were held; and on-the-job training was provided for flight operations and airworthiness counterparts. Initial steps were taken to develop a cooperative flight safety oversight organization among the Indo-Chinese States and other South-East Asian nations (ICAO);

(d) Detailed aviation security assessments were undertaken at some major airports, and national aviation security programmes were developed for some countries. Aviation Technical English laboratories and libraries were established or upgraded in some countries; English training courses and on-the-job training were provided; and the syllabus of one civil aviation training centre was evaluated and modified (ICAO);

(e) A total of 42 fellowships were awarded and capabilities of concerned personnel were enhanced through a series of training courses or seminars on senior aviation management, accident prevention, instrument procedures design, and airspace planning, search and rescue, and aeronautical information services (ICAO).

#### Multimodal transport

(a) A set of rules was formulated for multimodal transport documents in cooperation with the International Chamber of Commerce, comprising all private sector interests; these have been widely accepted and are contributing to the simplification of transport and trade in the region (UNCTAD);

(b) Studies were undertaken on two national high-density corridors, and their findings were disseminated to major transport conferences held in each of the two countries concerned (UNCTAD);

(c) An awareness course was developed to familiarize the developing countries with the benefits derivable from the adoption of multimodal transport principles, on the basis of which more than 30 country-level workshops, subregional seminars and national conferences were held. These activities have considerably enhanced the awareness of countries of the benefits of multimodal transport and generated the potential for regional cooperation. Assistance was also provided in the formulation of a framework document aimed at harmonizing multimodal transport requirements in the South-East Asian subregion (UNCTAD/ESCAP);

(d) A study on ASEAN cargo transport was undertaken which resulted in the adoption of an action plan for the development of multimodal transport by each ASEAN member (ESCAP).

(a) Assistance was provided to member countries in designing and implementing organizational and institutional reforms through the production and dissemination of six handbooks on traffic, and a set of 11 guidelines on sector reform and planning; a report on the survey of telecommunications policy, legislation, regulation and market structure in Asian and Pacific countries was published and distributed; and a computerized course on planning was delivered. This helped many countries in reviewing their telecommunications sector policies and legislation and initiated the establishment of regulatory organizations. The South Asian countries and the ASEAN member countries have formed two regulatory forums for exchange of information and mutual cooperation. Some countries have introduced, or are preparing for the introduction of, competition and entry of private sector funds. These have been achieved through joint ventures, business agreements, leasing arrangements, sub-franchising, licensing of cellular and value-added services, permitting resale of services etc. Many countries have licensed private operators with a view to introducing effective competition. To improve the efficiency of government-owned companies, many countries in the region have converted telecommunications departments into corporations. Some countries have also taken steps to privatize these entities by issuing shares to the public. Consequently, the region is witnessing an unprecedented growth in telecommunications, in terms of both availability and accessibility of new services, with large amounts of private capital being invested in the sector (ITU);

(b) A handbook on competitive activities in the telecommunications sector was produced, which is being widely used by policy makers and other parties. A seminar on telecommunications sector reform provided valuable assistance to countries and resulted in some member countries seeking further assistance for restructuring their telecommunications sector (APT);

(c) Strengthening cooperation among the Asian and Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT), APT, ITU and UNIDO for promoting regional cooperation on the transfer of telecommunications technology helped in increasing cooperation among the governments and the private sector in the region (APT);

(d) A review of private sector initiatives in the provision of rural and remote communications in seven countries, training programmes and seminars on rural communications, and a study on the profitability of investment in rural communications, contributed to the growing interest of the private sector in rural communications and promoted rural development in the region (APT);

(e) A feasibility study on technology transfer in telecommunications software was conducted in association with APCTT (APT).

### Postal services

(a) *Guidelines for Postal Legislation and Restructuring* were published and distributed to postal administrations in member countries. At the request of many countries, the guidelines are being translated into French and Spanish. Fact-finding and advisory missions were also undertaken to a number of countries to assist them in preparing for postal restructuring. The project considerably increased the awareness of the important role which the postal sector plays in economic and social development (UPU);

(b) The capabilities of the Asian-Pacific Postal Training Centre were strengthened in the field of financial management, and in conducting courses for postal staff on core concepts and specifications to senior managers in the region. It stimulated some countries to transform their postal administrations into corporations. Several other countries expressed interest in following suit (UPU);

(c) A tracking and tracing system for express mail service (EMS) was incorporated in the UPU electronic data interchange business plan, focusing on the integration and evaluation of Postal Information Systems and related software and databases (UPU);

(d) International postal systems for electronic postal data exchange were installed in several countries, and a regional support centre was established in Singapore to support the development of international postal systems applications in the Asian and Pacific region. The professional capabilities of the developing countries have been considerably enhanced through training programmes on the tracking and tracing system (UPU).

### Models for transport planning

(a) Planning capabilities of countries in the region have been greatly enhanced through the development and application of five interrelated but independently operated modules on container terminals, dry bulk/liquid bulk terminals, inland container depots, and railway and inland water transport. Following the training of over 200 officials, transport planners and analysts on their application, many countries have applied the modules to investment projects, and about 16 private companies or transport organizations have formally registered for their use. The World Bank and ADB have expressed interest in using the modules in evaluating their investment projects, and the model was adapted for UNCTAD/TRAINMAR (training development in the field of maritime transport) as a training textbook (ESCAP);

(b) Activities continued to be undertaken with regard to the Maritime Policy Planning Model to provide the Governments in the region with a set of databases and computer models in the areas of maritime commodity flows, international shipping network and seaports of the region (ESCAP);

(c) Studies were undertaken on prospects for container shipping and port development for three subregions, ASEAN, South Asia and East Asia. Training courses were organized on the

application of the models with a view to enhancing capabilities in analysing past developments in the maritime sector and investigating future scenarios. A number of advisory services were also provided for the member governments to better acquaint them with the application of the models for strengthening their project evaluation and policy formulation capabilities. The project generated considerable interest even in the private sector, and increased their involvement and support in this area (ESCAP).

### **III. EXPERIENCE GAINED AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE DECADE**

38. A final evaluation of the Decade was undertaken in December 1996 and January 1997 and the report will be published early in 1997. It was based on an analysis of various progress reports prepared by the secretariat for the consideration of the Commission, the Committee and other intergovernmental and inter-agency meetings, the mid-term review (1990) and the interim review (1996), direct consultations or correspondence with the implementing agencies, and inputs provided by recipient countries.

39. The evaluation report of 1997 highlights the following lessons which may be learned from the experience of the Decade:

(a) The original objectives of the Decade were well conceived, touched cogently upon key issues and problems in the transport and communications sectors in the region, and set up practical goals for achievement;

(b) The programme of action for the Decade, consisting of national action programmes as well as a regional action programme, was beyond the practical capabilities of ESCAP. Most of the observations of the mid-term review of 1990 could be attributed to this factor;

(c) In view of the above, the decision to limit the second phase of the Decade to a regional action programme was a step in the right direction;

(d) There was lack of coordination between ESCAP and the United Nations agencies to develop a common approach, with the result that each agency identified and selected projects without reference to the Decade objectives. Coordination meetings associating member countries and United Nations agencies were not held after 1985. The Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Transport and Communications, which was required to oversee the progress, did not meet during the five years of phase I. These were serious omissions in the coordinating functions of ESCAP;

(e) The mid-term review stated that the ESCAP Decade programme did not fully reflect the objectives of the Decade, for example, assistance to the least developed and landlocked countries, and adopted a project-by-project approach under which individual projects were developed and implemented outside a comprehensive and integrated programme, with the exception of port/shipping activities, which were developed within a more coherent conceptual framework. While this is considered a valid

criticism of the nature of the projects, the fact remains that, by and large, the implementation of the ESCAP regional action programme during phase I of the Decade was fairly successful. The mid-term review also noted that the substantive activities had been implemented successfully by ESCAP as part of its Decade programme, and in some sectors the quality of outputs delivered was of a high order;

(f) Considerable progress was achieved during phase II of the Decade, but the scope and pace of implementation were seriously affected during the last two years owing to shortfall and uncertainty in the availability of resources from UNDP;

(g) Phase II (1992-1996) of the Decade witnessed a prominent change from phase I in the nature and quality of the coordination by ESCAP with respect to the formulation and implementation of the regional action programme. These included:

- (i) At the project formulation stage, member countries, implementing and funding agencies and subregional organizations were fully involved;
- (ii) In order to improve the quality of project proposals, a team of consultants was engaged to review the proposals for phase II, and make recommendations for improvement;
- (iii) The regional action programme for phase II was reviewed annually at legislative meetings. Two sessions of the Committee on Transport and Communications were held, in 1993 and 1995, while an ad hoc intergovernmental meeting on the Decade was convened in 1994 as the Committee was not scheduled to meet that year. This was a welcome sign of the awareness of the importance of meticulous monitoring and reviewing functions at the required periodicity;
- (iv) To facilitate inter-agency coordination and cooperation, an Inter-agency Steering Committee on Phase II of the Decade was established and ESCAP, in its lead role, convened four annual sessions of the Committee during the period 1992-1996;
- (v) To strengthen linkages between national and regional programmes, and to provide a resource base for the sharing of experience, a Decade coordination and monitoring system comprising two databases was developed by ESCAP;
- (vi) To provide an effective channel of communication between ESCAP and other partners, the secretariat initiated in 1992 a biannual newsletter, *Decade News*.

#### IV. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF THE COMMISSION

40. Based on the experience gained and lessons learned from the Transport and Communications Decade, and taking into account the suggestions made in the evaluation report of 1997, the secretariat proposes the following recommendations to be considered by the Commission for effective implementation of the regional action programme of the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific:

- (1) The implementing agencies should have the responsibility to implement only the regional action programme of the New Delhi Action Plan. The responsibility for formulating, implementing and monitoring projects and activities to be undertaken at the country level within the framework of national infrastructure development programmes should lie with the individual member governments;
- (2) To ensure greater involvement, ownership and commitment of member governments, the projects under the regional action programme should be implemented selectively in countries which have a matching national project/activity fitting within the objectives of regional projects. As such, governments will have the responsibility to identify, prioritize, implement and monitor national-level action within their development plans, to be supported by the regional action programme which was approved by the Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure;
- (3) The Commission, in resolution 51/8 of 1 May 1995 on implementation of the New Delhi Action Plan, invited members to establish national focal points for infrastructure development to oversee the implementation of the Action Plan at the national level, and to participate actively with all agencies and subregional organizations involved in supporting regional action. In pursuance of that resolution, the secretariat has written to member governments requesting them to nominate national focal points, and urges those members which have not yet done so to expedite the process;
- (4) The Regional Inter-agency Committee for Asia and the Pacific (RICAP) Subcommittee on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific (formerly Inter-agency Steering Committee on Phase II of the Decade) should continue to be the vehicle for inter-agency coordination for the implementation of the regional action programme. The status of implementation of the programme should be maintained and updated by the ESCAP secretariat in close cooperation with, and based on inputs provided by, the implementing agencies;
- (5) Annual review of the regional action programme and linked projects and activities at the country level should be carried out under the auspices of subregional organizations, while ESCAP should prepare documents for and service those meetings. Subregional implementation was found to be effective in carrying out some of the projects under the Decade, as countries falling within a subregion could identify issues common to that subregion, and concerted efforts were made to address those issues on a priority basis.

Annual review of the regional action programme under the auspices of subregional organizations would provide a forum for more active participation and constructive interaction among smaller groups of countries. Moreover, it will give a high profile to the regional action programme, promote greater awareness of its objectives and activities, and ensure increased commitment of governments for its implementation, as well as help maintain effective linkages between regional- and national-level activities. For countries which are not represented in a subregional organization, annual review should be undertaken by ESCAP through a relevant committee;

- (6) The Commission may wish to request the subregional organizations to include the review of the regional action programme of the New Delhi Action Plan as well as the linked projects and activities at the country level, as a standing agenda item in their appropriate meetings;
- (7) The progress of implementation of the regional action programme should be reviewed annually at the Committee level, subject to the outcome of the general review of the subsidiary structure of the Commission;
- (8) The member governments should report to the relevant Committee at the annual session, on the progress of implementation of the New Delhi Action Plan at the national level, with emphasis on the projects and activities implemented or planned as part of their national infrastructure development programmes;
- (9) The donor countries and agencies should give high priority to the New Delhi Action Plan, as infrastructure development has been well recognized by member countries as the key to economic and social development in the region;
- (10) Special efforts should be made by the implementing agencies to tap resources from other than traditional donor agencies and countries, and wherever possible from the private sector. In this regard, maximum benefit should be derived from the existence of the Asia Infrastructure Development Alliance (AIDA);
- (11) To review periodically the resource situation for the implementation of the regional action programme, annual meetings of senior representatives from donor countries and funding agencies, as well as the implementing agencies, should be convened. Since this needs to be carried out together with resource mobilization for all priority programmes on a secretariat-wide basis, such meetings may be convened by the Executive Secretary of ESCAP.