



# Economic and Social Council

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## Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

### Sixty-ninth session

Bangkok, 25 April-1 May 2013

Agenda item 3 (c)

**Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the Commission, including the work of the regional institutions: Transport**

### Draft report

#### Transport

1. The Commission had before it five documents: subprogramme overview: issues and challenges related to inclusive and sustainable economic and social development in Asia and the Pacific: transport (E/ESCAP/69/3); summary of progress in the implementation of Commission resolutions (E/ESCAP/69/4); report of the Committee on Transport on its third session (E/ESCAP/69/8); finalized draft intergovernmental agreement on dry ports (E/ESCAP/69/8/Add.1); and note verbale dated 24 December 2012 from the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Thailand addressed to the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/69/24).

2. Representatives of the following countries made statements: Bangladesh; China; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Sri Lanka; Thailand; and Turkey.

3. The Commission stressed the important role of transport in promoting inclusive and sustainable economic and social development and in promoting regional cooperation and integration.

4. The Commission expressed its support for the intergovernmental agreement on dry ports. In that regard, the Commission noted that some countries had initiated domestic processes for signing the agreement. It also noted with appreciation the financial support furnished by the Government of the Russian Federation in the process of drafting and negotiating the agreement.

5. The representative of Turkey declared its Government's intention not to consider itself bound by the provisions of article 13 relating to the reconciliation of the said agreement.

6. The Commission was informed that the development of dry ports would usefully support the work that was being undertaken by the secretariat in developing the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks and

would facilitate the realization of the vision of an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system for the region.

7. In that regard, the Commission welcomed the continued support of member States for the work of the secretariat in the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), including development of the Asian Highway network, Trans-Asian Railway network and Euro-Asian transport linkages. It noted the request that had been made for the secretariat to connect the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks with the Arab Mashreq transport networks by working collaboratively with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. It was also noted that the Government of Turkey was expected to complete its legislative process to become a party to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network.

8. The Commission noted the request of the delegation of Pakistan to organize a regional workshop in Pakistan on enhancing regional connectivity for South and South-West Asian countries.

9. The Commission noted the importance of the secretariat's activities on improving transport efficiency, including reduction of cross-border and transit transport costs, simplification of technical formalities and elimination of bottlenecks and non-physical barriers along international transport corridors.

10. The Commission recognized that the regional network of legal and technical experts on transport facilitation, which was being established with the financial support of the Government of the Russian Federation, could contribute significantly to the facilitation of cross-border and transit transport.

11. The Commission noted the progress that had been achieved in the formulation of an agreement on the facilitation of international road transport by the Governments of Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization; it was expected that the agreement would be signed in the near future.

12. The Commission acknowledged the efforts of some ESCAP member States to provide landlocked countries with access to maritime sea ports, through bilateral and multilateral transit agreements and intercountry cooperation for connectivity.

13. In the context of the final review of 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, the Commission noted the suggestion of one delegation to define parameters to support further regional cooperation to integrate landlocked countries within the global economy. In that respect, the Commission expressed its appreciation for the support of the secretariat in having organized the Final Regional Review of the Almaty Programme of Action, which had been held in Vientiane in March 2013. The outcome of the meeting, the "Vientiane Consensus", was expected to provide important guidelines for the development of seamless transport in landlocked countries.

14. The Commission was apprised of major investment projects that were being envisaged to improve transport infrastructure in the region, such as in India under the that country's twelfth five-year plan, in Papua New Guinea

with the construction of several new highways to provide accessibility to the rural population, in Sri Lanka where all areas of the country were being connected and in Thailand with the construction of a number of high-speed rail lines and the creation of conditions for a modal shift to rail transport.

15. In taking into account the infrastructure investment needs of the region, the Commission noted the importance of attracting private investment and financing for the development of the transport sector, including through the public-private partnership modality.

16. It also took note of the progress that had been made under Commission resolution 64/4 on the implementation of the Seoul Declaration on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific.

17. Several delegates informed the Commission of recent and future public-private partnership projects for transport infrastructure, as well as steps taken to strengthen institutional support for such projects and to establish viability gap funding mechanisms. In that regard, the Commission noted with interest the offers of the Governments of India, Malaysia and the Republic of Korea to share their knowledge and experience in implementing public-private partnerships and requested the secretariat to continue to support activities in areas that required regional cooperation, such as the standardization of contracts, processes and procedures.

18. The Commission also welcomed the successful outcome of the High-level Expert Group Meeting on Infrastructure Public-Private Partnerships for Sustainable Development and the Third Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development, which was held in Teheran in November 2012. The Commission was of the view that the provisions contained in the Tehran Declaration on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development would serve as a guide for the secretariat's future work on public-private partnerships. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran expressed its appreciation to the secretariat for the cooperation and technical support that the secretariat had provided in the organization of those events, and expressed its hope that the promotion of public-private partnerships could be continued through the organization of the next Asia-Pacific ministerial conference on public-private partnerships.

19. Several delegations acknowledged the technical assistance, support and cooperation that they had received from the secretariat for the development of their transport infrastructure, which included feasibility studies of Asian Highway sections and capacity-building training workshops on public-private partnerships for infrastructure development, investment studies and the preparation of project proposals, as well as multimodal transport and logistics activities. The activities undertaken by the secretariat had facilitated the funding of projects by development banks and bilateral and multilateral donor agencies.

20. In noting that transport was central to sustainable development, the Commission welcomed the secretariat's continued work to promote a sustainable transport strategy that would enhance efficiency in trade and mobility.

21. The Commission noted the secretariat's plan to undertake a study on best practices in sustainable transport development and organize a joint

seminar with the Korea Transport Institute and Korea Maritime Institute, with financial support from the Government of the Republic of Korea.

22. In recognizing the importance of road safety, the Commission noted with appreciation the secretariat's work in assisting member countries in preparing the national road safety strategy and action plan and in monitoring progress in road safety in line with the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety, 2011-2020. The delegation of India described the efforts of the country in raising the safety awareness of road users and the various other measures that the country was using to reduce road crashes and road traffic deaths.

23. The Commission recognized that good infrastructure and efficient transport connectivity were necessary for development and poverty alleviation, and that they contributed to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It noted in particular that good accessibility was an enabler for the delivery of public social services to rural people and allowed subsistence-based village economies to increase their specialization in goods and services through wider access to markets.

24. The Commission generally endorsed the report of the Commission on Transport at its third session (E/ESCAP/69/8).

25. The Commission noted that the second session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport was scheduled to be held in Bangkok from 4 to 8 November 2013, and decided that a signing ceremony for the intergovernmental agreement on dry ports should be held during the Forum.

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