
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Working Group on Dry Ports

3rd meeting

Bangkok, 13 and 14 November 2019

Item 4 of the provisional agenda*

**Policies and issues related to the operationalization
of dry ports of international importance**

**Policies and issues related to the operationalization of
dry ports of international importance**

Note by the secretariat

Summary

In view of the broader strategic context of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific, the present document contains a review of the regional framework for the planning, design, development and operation of dry ports of international importance, which was developed by the secretariat and welcomed by the Working Group on Dry Ports at its 2nd meeting in November 2017. It sets out in detail the policies and issues relating to the development and operationalization of dry ports of international importance.

A large number of inland logistics facilities in the region have been developed, including the dry ports mentioned in annex I to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports. However, the operationalization of these dry ports has revealed that dry ports can only function successfully and efficiently if a number of technical and institutional issues are properly addressed at the stage of their planning, construction and operation. Such issues were summarized and systematized in the regional framework.

The Working Group may wish to consider the matters to be prioritized in the future with respect to the coordinated development of dry ports of international importance.

I. Introduction

1. Growth in the global economy, over the past two decades, has increased manufacturing and agricultural production, and new marketing techniques have created more demand and resulted in the need for more efficient transport infrastructure and services. These services are important because industry is now located worldwide and requires frequent shipments, precise scheduling and efficient logistics to bring components together for assembly and to deliver finished products where they are wanted.

* ESCAP/DP/WG/2019/L.1.

2. In this context, inland intermodal facilities or dry ports are increasingly attracting attention because of the potential that they offer to improve transport efficiency and meet supply chain requirements by grouping access to highways and railways together with customs processing, warehousing, consolidation and distribution, manufacturing and clustering of economic activities along domestic as well as transboundary economic corridors.

3. The dry port concept traditionally emerged from the idea of a seaport directly connected by rail to inland intermodal terminals, where shippers can leave and/or collect standardized units as if directly at the seaport. This was a response to the problems posed by the growth of containerized transport, the corresponding lack of space at seaport terminals and the growing congestion on the access routes serving their terminals.

4. Seaports can generate scale economies to operate cost-effective intermodal transport with high frequency to different destinations beyond their traditional hinterland; that is to say, to use rail to enlarge their hinterland and at the same time to stimulate intermodal transport. In addition, seaports are not competing only with seaports in their local area but also with distant seaports attempting to serve the same hinterland. Therefore, as seaports try to attract as much flow of goods as is economically feasible, the size and shape of a seaport's hinterland is not statically or legally determined, but varies dynamically owing to developments in technology, economy and society. However, in contrast to a seaport that is an integral link between the marine and land transport systems, a dry port is an optional transport node. A dry port, as an element of hinterland transport, is a part of supply chains and, thus, has an effect on supply chain performance.

5. The term “dry port” has been in use for decades. It has often been used interchangeably with “inland clearance (or container) depot”. More recently, it has been used in industry as a marketing tool to imply that a facility has reached a particular level of sophistication in terms of services offered, such as customs or the presence of third party logistics firms within the site and/or an adjoining freight village.

6. Against this background, the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports was developed under the auspices of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to provide a uniform definition of a dry port of international importance, which shall refer to “an inland location as a logistics centre connected to one or more modes of transport for the handling, storage and regulatory inspection of goods moving in international trade and the execution of applicable customs control and formalities”, identify the network of existing and potential dry ports of importance for international transport operations and propose guiding principles for their development and operation.

7. Since the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports entered into force on 23 April 2016, issues relating to their development and operation have continued to receive high priority at high-level legislative meetings. The most recent legislative meetings since the 2nd meeting of the Working Group on Dry Ports included the seventy-fourth session of the Commission (Bangkok, 11–16 May 2018), the fifth session of the Committee on Transport (Bangkok, 19–21 November 2018) and the seventy-fifth session of the Commission (Bangkok, 27–31 May 2019). At these meetings, participants highlighted the role of dry ports in promoting integrated intermodal and multimodal transport systems that fully utilize the comparative advantages of different modes of transport in order to ensure safe, efficient, economical, competitive, socially inclusive and environmentally sound transport infrastructure and services as a

means for achieving sustainable development. Selected relevant excerpts from the reports of those legislative meetings are contained in the annex to the present document.

8. Following the entry into force of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports, the secretariat launched follow-up activities to facilitate its implementation, including the regional framework for the planning, design, development and operation of dry ports of international importance. The framework was developed and welcomed by the Working Group at its 2nd meeting in November 2017¹ and subsequently taken note of by member States, as mentioned in Commission resolution 74/2, adopted in May 2018.²

9. The present document outlines the secretariat's continued activities in promoting among member States a common understanding of the issues and challenges relating to the planning, development and operation of dry ports, and highlights selected policy considerations that have arisen in the course of these activities.

II. Implementation of the regional framework for the planning, design, development and operation of dry ports of international importance

10. The key principle underlying the development of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports was that it would lead to consistency in terms of the services that dry ports provide, their location in relation to trade-generating industry and their transport connections.

11. The Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports also specifies that dry ports should, ideally, be connected to the Asian Highway and/or the Trans-Asian Railway Networks and operate under institutional, administrative and regulatory frameworks that are favourable to the development and smooth operation of dry ports, including procedures for regulatory inspection and the execution of applicable customs control and formalities in line with the national laws and regulations of the party concerned. It further sets out guiding principles for the development and operation of dry ports in its annex II.

12. While the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports provides guidelines with respect to all these factors, it is clear that the facilities identified by countries as dry ports under the Agreement fall within a wide range of types, infrastructure links and service functions, and do not always comply with the above-mentioned guiding principles established in annex II to the Agreement.

13. As part of its activities supporting the implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports, the secretariat, with funding support from the Government of the Russian Federation, formulated a regional framework for the development, design, planning and operation of dry ports of international importance.

14. The framework was developed with a view to facilitating the definition of a common approach to the development and operationalization of the dry ports designated in annex I to the Agreement as being of international importance. The key concept underlying the framework is that of a network of interconnected dry ports in the Asia-Pacific region. It is envisaged that such a network could be formed from the dry ports nominated for coverage by the

¹ The full text of the regional framework is annexed to Commission resolution 74/2.

² Commission resolution 74/2.

Agreement. This framework provides a means by which their development may be planned so that in the future they may follow the same standards and be interconnected.

15. The regional framework identifies fundamental issues related to both hard and soft infrastructure of dry ports of international importance, and, together with the description of each issue, proposes a related target to be set when designing or operating dry ports of international importance, as well as a process to follow to reach each target.

16. In terms of hard infrastructure, the regional framework prioritizes: (a) ensuring compliance with basic requirements in accordance with annex II to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports when designing dry ports; (b) dry port location; (c) transport infrastructure linkages both connecting dry ports to other locations and within dry ports; (d) technical standards for dry ports; (e) container yard capacity and equipment; and (f) design of other major facilities of dry ports. As regards soft infrastructure, the regional framework recommends focusing on the issues of: (a) introduction of information technology systems to manage dry port workflows; (b) application of the United Nations Codes for Trade and Transport Locations for identification of dry ports of international importance; (c) incorporation of dry ports into international transport documents; (d) arrangements for customs clearance at dry ports; (e) policy measures, legislation and solutions for planning dry port development; and (f) practical options for financing the development and operation of dry ports.

17. After discussion with government officials from the region, the framework was reviewed and presented at the 2nd meeting of the Working Group on Dry Ports held on 14 and 15 November 2017. The Working Group welcomed the regional framework and recommended that it should be submitted to the Commission at its seventy-fourth session, in 2018, for endorsement through a resolution.

18. The Commission at its seventy-fourth session, held from 11 to 16 May 2018, adopted resolution 74/2 on the promotion of the regional framework for the planning, design, development and operation of dry ports of international importance. The Commission took note of the framework and recognized its potential for assisting member countries in facilitating the development of regional connectivity. It requested the Executive Secretary to: (a) accord priority to the promotion of the regional framework by assisting members and associate members in their efforts to realize the vision of a sustainable integrated intermodal transport and logistics system; (b) encourage effective coordination with other United Nations and multilateral agencies, relevant subregional organizations, international and regional financing institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors and the private sector while promoting the regional framework; (c) facilitate the sharing of experiences and good practices in the planning, design, development and operation of dry ports of international importance while promoting the regional framework; and (d) seek effective cooperation and collaboration with international and regional financing institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors, private sector investors and international organizations, as appropriate, to mobilize further financial and technical support for the wider development of dry ports of international importance in accordance with their respective mandates.

19. In accordance with its plan for the implementation of the above-mentioned resolution, the secretariat organized a series of capacity-building workshops for the countries of South-East Asia (Bangkok, 23 and 24 May 2018), North and Central Asia (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 31 May and 1 June 2018)

and South Asia (New Delhi, 1 and 2 August 2018) to create awareness of the regional framework and its practical recommendations among the relevant stakeholders, including government policymakers and dry port operators. Through the workshops, government officials and dry port operators of the above-mentioned subregions increased their knowledge and strengthened their capacity to successfully plan, develop and operate dry ports of international importance.

20. During the period September 2018–August 2019, ESCAP, with funding support from the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport of the Republic of Korea, implemented a project on strengthening the institutional framework for the development of dry ports in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Viet Nam and Thailand. The project studied the policies and institutional frameworks for the development of dry ports of international importance and proposed guiding principles for achieving consistency among them and facilitating the uninterrupted movement of consignments between dry ports located in different countries.

21. In the course of the implementation of the above-mentioned activities, the secretariat identified the need to make further efforts to address the key infrastructure issues in the development and operation of the dry ports, ensuring their compliance with the provisions contained in annex II to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports. These activities also highlighted the importance of creating a favourable environment for dry ports by improving the institutional framework for their operation. These two issues are described in the next section of the present document.

22. In addition, it is worth noting the progress in the implementation of the recommendation of the regional framework on the application of the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations for identification of dry ports of international importance.³

23. Transport operators and logistics service providers, that enable trade flows, rely on the codes as location identifiers to enable seamless transport connectivity. Dry ports assigned with such codes can act as points of origin and destination of international cargoes, where customs clearance of goods can take place, which would not be possible otherwise. The assignment of a code to a dry port facility also enables transport operators and logistics service providers to develop transport services for these locations. The transport service between Cikarang dry port in Indonesia and Lat Krabang Inland Container Depot in Thailand is an example of such a modality, whereby customers in either country can consign goods at a dry port in one country for collection by customers at the dry port in the other, with minimal formalities applied at seaports during transit. In November 2018, the Government of Mongolia informed the secretariat that, following the recommendation of the regional framework, codes were applied for and assigned to dry ports and other logistical centres in the country.

³ A more detailed description of the United Nations Code for Trade and Transport Locations system can be found in the document ESCAP/CTR/2018/4.

III. Policy issues relating to the development and operation of dry ports

A. Addressing key infrastructure issues in the development of dry ports of international importance

24. The regional framework identifies the proper location of dry ports as one of the key prerequisites for their subsequent successful operation. In the case of a dry port network, dry ports located along intermodal transport corridors can act as consolidation and deconsolidation centres that enhance and optimize intermodal transport thus generating economic, environmental and social benefits to society. Over time and through the clustering of economic activities along the corridors, intermodal transport corridors can eventually transform into economic corridors.

25. The location of a dry port, in relation to the origin and destination of the cargoes handled and to the seaports and/or dry ports they are connected to, plays a key role in their long-term viability. Dry ports located in proximity to trade-generating centres and at a considerable distance from seaports (over 300 km) could achieve economies of scale and consequently lower logistics costs, by consolidating cargoes at the dry port and transporting them using a combination of road and rail transport for short- and long-distance transport respectively. In contrast, dry ports located near seaports (less than 300 km) and away from trade-generating centres could face problems of having cargo volumes that are inadequate to generate the economies of scale necessary to make rail haulage tenable. It is therefore essential to blend the economics of long-haul rail transport with that of short-haul road transport and the location of dry ports to lower overall transport and consequently logistics costs.

26. Strategically positioned dry ports can also serve to decongest existing seaports that are functioning at maximum capacity. The increase in the number of very large container ships carrying over 12,000 twenty-foot equivalent units calling at major ports has required port operators to process increasing volumes of cargoes, while ensuring quick vessel turnaround time. In the context of increased competition among ports and limited options to expand existing seaports, port operators are looking at setting up dry ports as a means to decongest seaports.

27. On the other hand, dry ports can also extend the reach of seaports to the hinterlands by increasing the catchment area of exiting ports. In the case of seaports serving landlocked countries, the catchment areas extend even beyond national borders; while in other cases the catchment areas of seaports may also overlap, as is the case with the Indian ports of Kolkata and Visakhapatnam, which both offer connectivity to the Birgunj dry port in Nepal.

28. While the location of dry ports is a key factor in optimizing freight transport networks and lowering overall logistics costs, the viability of these facilities depends to a considerable extent on their ability to provide customers with time bound and cost-effective services. Dry ports and seaports can only serve their purpose and operate at their intended capacities, if the connecting road, rail and waterway infrastructure can handle the cargo volumes being processed at these facilities. Bottlenecks in the transport infrastructure can result in inefficiencies and high logistics costs, which could render these facilities unviable.

29. The development of dry ports of international importance does not require them to have identical design standards, however, they need to have basic facilities and provide a minimum set of services in order to function efficiently as part of an integrated transport network.

30. The basic services for dry ports have been identified by the regional framework as:

- (a) Handling, consolidation, storage and modal transfer of containers and cargo;
- (b) Customs and other border control inspection and clearance of international cargo.

31. The effective provision of these services will normally require the following infrastructure:

- A fenced secure customs area
- A container yard for receiving and dispatching containers by road and rail as well as for storing containers
- A container freight station for loading and discharging containers
- A customs inspection area
- A bonded warehouse for the storage of bonded cargo
- An administration building with two or more levels for accommodating the offices of the various service providers on site

32. The physical area to be occupied by dry ports would depend on the volume and type of cargoes that these facilities are expected to process and the type of handling equipment to be deployed. Dry ports with intermodal transport linkages will need to make provisions for the smooth flow of heavy-duty vehicles in the facility and, in the case of rail served dry ports, will need to design their facilities considering the length and number of railway tracks to be accommodated within their boundaries. Adequate provisions should also be made for the future expansion of these facilities to accommodate increasing trade flows.

33. Ideally, rail-served dry ports should position their rail infrastructure in such a way that will reduce the number of moves required before a container or other cargo is placed on a train wagon for dispatch to onward destinations. Rail infrastructure should be of sufficient length to enable the arrival and departure of full-length trains running between a single origin and single destination without the need for remarshalling trains or disconnecting carriages. The railway infrastructure should comprise at least three tracks for loading and unloading trains, with the third track enabling the release and repositioning of locomotives. The actual number of tracks would also have to consider the forecasted traffic volumes.

B. Creating an enabling institutional environment for the successful development and operation of dry ports

34. One of the issues identified in the regional framework that warrants further attention and evidence-based analysis is the predominantly fragmented authority for the coordination and planning of dry port development in the region. This feature is primarily linked to the overall insufficient institutional and regulatory frameworks that hinder the effective delivery and

implementation of government policies designed to assist dry port development.

35. Voluminous literature has established a strong correlation between institutions and economic performance, which means that the introduction of new technologies or know-how, whether hardware or software, can only be as effective as the institutional set-up in which they are implemented. This holds true across a broad spectrum of sectors, including transport and logistics.

36. In looking at the development of efficient intermodal transport, the complexity of modern supply chains, together with the multiplicity of actors with different interests, make all the more essential the provision of effective, reliable and transparent institutional arrangements with the task of governing related issues across ministries, transport modes operators, logistics providers and other stakeholders such as chambers of commerce.

37. It follows that dry ports, as points of convergence and interaction between transport modes, transport operators and logistics providers, public sector agencies and private sector entities, offer ideal settings for all public and private sector stakeholders to establish sustainable cooperative mechanisms and identify the needed logistics- and connectivity-related interventions with the highest potential to reduce the cost of trade and boost integration into global supply chains. This role of dry ports is important given that logistics- and connectivity-related issues are so intertwined that success lies in addressing these issues in a holistic manner. In other words, the development of dry ports should not be considered only for their merit in connecting infrastructure but also for their potential to implement policies encompassing the regulation of services, sustainability and resilience. In some cases, depending on the national development vision of Governments, related reforms may also consider the wider integration of dry ports into local economies in the form of special economic zones.

38. From that perspective, one of the issues that affects and could seriously deter the continued development of Asia and the Pacific is an institution-level failure in the areas of design, control and implementation of public policies that address infrastructure services. This failure is typically characterized by a lack of a common vision among those who make decisions on matters of infrastructure, transport and logistics and by the absence of the coordination and integration of policies and investments that target these sectors, creating cost overruns and inefficiencies that hamper the region's economic and social development.

39. The absence of such overarching institutional structures often holds back the development of efficient logistics and intermodal transport in many developing countries of the region. In addition, the Sustainable Development Goals have put pressure on policymakers of the region – especially in low-income or lower-middle-income countries – to articulate a long-term vision of sustainable development that encompasses the next two or three decades. Part of this vision brings the negative externalities of the transport sector under renewed scrutiny. In that context, identifying and putting in place the appropriate institutional arrangements will facilitate the adoption of home-grown policies that best serve national as well as multilateral interests, and promote a holistic approach in defining transport for the future.

40. The significant body of academic work that emphasizes the importance of institutions for driving growth provides, at the same time, little guidance on how to measure institutional strength on the ground. This makes the institutional strength analysis a largely theoretical construct that requires

translation into the real economy, and into the sector being analysed. At the same time, institutions are latent factors within the economic system, and it is hard to find one single proxy that would suitably represent the quality of the institutional environment in a specific sector, a case in point being dry port development. Realistically, much depends on national objectives as well as on the national/local context, including overall governance, legal frameworks, relevant capacity, cultural and social structures and the economic situation.

41. Against this background, ESCAP implemented a project on strengthening the institutional framework for the development of dry ports in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Viet Nam and Thailand. The project built on the earlier work of ESCAP on dry ports and was designed with a view to compiling, studying and analysing the institutional frameworks for the development of dry ports of international importance in the countries participating in the project. The project has served as the basis for an institutional strength-measuring exercise that could, ultimately, lead to the identification of actions that could be taken by member States across the ESCAP region to build strong institutional foundations for the development of dry ports.

42. The project found that there are seven core elements that need to be present for a strong institutional basis on dry ports, namely: (a) whether the countries are parties to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports; (b) whether a relevant national master plan has been developed; (c) whether a lead decision-making entity has been designated; (d) whether there is a multi-agency coordination mechanism at the policy level; (e) whether there is coordination across mode-specific authorities in defining infrastructure and/or investment plans; (f) whether the private sector has a defined role and involvement in the policy consultation process; and (g) whether there is a law on public-private partnerships that can enable or facilitate private sector financing and investment in facilities.

43. The corresponding institutions of the countries participating in the project were assessed against these core elements, both in terms of whether or not they are present but also, where present, as to their quality and implementation, in order to ascertain the reasons for the differing levels of performance among countries with similar institutional set-ups and identify ways to strengthen their institutional framework.

44. From this exercise, a number of conclusions were drawn with respect to key strategic aspects, policy planning, institutional and organizational aspects, as well as legal and regulatory aspects. The same methodology could be applied to any country and lead to the identification of specific institutional actions that can have a measurable impact on improving dry port development and operation.

45. In terms of overall strategic aspects, the project research and implementation have revealed that national policy should ideally be conceived in an integrated manner and not as the sum of sector development plans. Infrastructure planning should be designed to serve productive development to support existing and future productive centres.

46. Regarding the institutional and organizational aspects, it is essential that there is clarity on the meaning of "strengthened institutions". In the context of dry port development, this is understood to mean that forums should be created for dialogue and analysis, as well as that coordination and cohesion be achieved within the Government and beyond. High-performing countries in the region tend to have a coordination mechanism in which all government

ministries and institutions involved in the process are represented, but in which the private sector (the major generators and users of cargo), academia and non-governmental organizations are also present. A lead agency serving as the visible head under clearly defined jurisdictional relationships has shown to make a difference towards a common vision and execution of related policies.

IV. Issues for consideration by the Working Group

47. The Working Group on Dry Ports is invited to review the present document and to consider the above-mentioned policy issues. In particular, the Working Group may also wish to:

(a) Encourage all member States to become parties to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports, to expedite plans to further modernize or build the dry ports listed in annex I to the Agreement, and to communicate to the secretariat related projects with estimated costs and a projected time frame for completion;

(b) Discuss measures that could be taken to ensure compliance of existing and planned dry ports with the guiding principles for the development and operation of dry ports as contained in annex II to the Agreement;

(c) Recommend ways to achieve a more favourable institutional environment for the efficient functioning of dry ports;

(d) Provide further guidance to the secretariat on the areas where support may be most useful in promoting dry port development and efficient operation in the region.

Annex

Excerpts from the reports of legislative meetings related to the development of dry ports

<i>Legislative meeting</i>	<i>Decisions and recommendations</i>
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, seventy-fourth session, Bangkok, 11 to 16 May 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commission recognized that the development of integrated and intermodal transport, seamless connectivity and urban transport were essential for advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Well-connected and integrated transport and enhanced urban mobility could improve accessibility for vulnerable groups, promote trade and investment, provide increased employment opportunities and, ultimately, reduce inequalities in the Asian and Pacific region.^a • The Commission recalled the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017–2021), and reiterated the priority accorded to their implementation. The Commission underlined the importance of achieving the region-wide facilitation of international transport through the simplification and harmonization of documents and procedures, efficient management techniques for transport infrastructure and services, and the coordinated development and operation of dry ports and intermodal facilities.^b • The Commission recognized that the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network, the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network and the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports provided normative architecture for transport development in the region.^c • The Commission adopted resolution 74/2 on the promotion of the regional framework for the planning, design, development and operation of dry ports of international importance.^d
Committee on Transport, fifth session, Bangkok, 19 to 21 November 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee acknowledged that the development and operation of dry ports played an important role in advancing regional connectivity, enhancing intermodal transport and facilitating the integration of rail, road, airports and seaports. In that regard, the Committee acknowledged the work of the secretariat in promoting the development of dry ports within the framework of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports, which entered into force in April 2016. In that regard, the Committee encouraged member States that had not yet done so to become parties to the Agreement and noted with satisfaction that the Government of Pakistan was considering becoming a party through accession. It also noted that the Government of China had secured financial resources for the development of 12 dry ports in the list in annex I of the Agreement.^e • The Committee expressed its support for the secretariat for its work in promoting the development and operation of dry ports. In that respect, the Committee noted the outcome of the Working Group on Dry Ports at its 2nd meeting, held in Bangkok in November 2017, and welcomed the adoption of resolution 74/2 of May 2018 entitled “Promotion of the regional framework for the planning, design, development and

Legislative meeting

Decisions and recommendations

	<p>operation of dry ports of international importance” by the Commission at its seventy-fourth session.^f</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee welcomed the Commission’s regional framework for the planning, design, development and operation of dry ports of international importance and recognized its potential as a cooperative mechanism to get all stakeholders, whether public or private, working on a similar understanding of (a) what dry ports should do and (b) their respective responsibilities during the development phase as well as during operation.^g • Noting the knowledge gap related to understanding the issues linked to the development and operation of dry ports, and recognizing the ever greater complexity of modern supply chains, the Committee noted with appreciation the past capacity-building activities implemented by the secretariat and requested that such activities be stepped up, in particular to help member States implement the regional framework for the planning, design, development and operation of dry ports of international importance. The Committee further requested the secretariat to continue sharing best practices relating to successful dry port development from within and outside the region with member States.^h
<p>Commission, seventy-fifth session, Bangkok, 27 to 31 May 2019</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commission recognized that the Intergovernmental Agreements on the Asian Highway Network, the Trans-Asian Railway Network and Dry Ports were major building blocks in the realization of the vision of an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system for the region.ⁱ • The Commission further recognized the important role of dry ports in achieving seamless transport connectivity and highlighted the need to further facilitate multimodal transport. In that context, the Commission was informed of the implementation of the projects to strengthen the institutional framework for dry port development in Cambodia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Thailand and Viet Nam, as well as the projects to enhance the efficiency of intermodal transport operations in Asia, financed by the Governments of the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation, respectively, and took note of the planned activities aimed at improving the international legal framework for multimodal transport.^j

^a ESCAP/74/44, para. 45.

^b Ibid., para. 50.

^c Ibid., para. 51.

^d Ibid., para. 60.

^e ESCAP/CTR/2018/8, para. 33.

^f Ibid., para. 34.

^g Ibid., para. 37.

^h Ibid., para. 38.

ⁱ ESCAP/75/36, para. 158.

^j Ibid., para. 164.