



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Meeting of Senior Government Officials in preparation for the
Ministerial Conference on Transport

6-8 November 2006
Busan, Republic of Korea

**REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME
FOR PHASE II (2002-2006) OF THE NEW DELHI ACTION PLAN ON
INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

(Item 4 of the provisional agenda)

Note by the secretariat

SUMMARY

The Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure, held in Seoul, from 12 to 17 November 2001, adopted the Seoul Declaration on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for phase II (2002-2006) of the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific.

The present document provides an overview of the implementation of phase II of the Regional Action Programme and is accompanied by an information paper (E/ESCAP/MCT/SGO/INF/1) which describes the activities that have been undertaken to attain the objectives of the Seoul Declaration.

The Senior Officials will be invited to provide an overview of national progress in the implementation of phase II of the Regional Action Programme, particularly with respect to activities of regional importance.

INTRODUCTION

1. The Commission, at its fifty-fifth session, held in April 1999, endorsed the convening of the Ministerial Conference on Infrastructure,¹ which was subsequently organized by the ESCAP secretariat and hosted by the Government of the Republic of Korea in Seoul in November 2001. The Conference culminated in the adoption of the Seoul Declaration on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for phase II (2002-2006) of the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific.²

2. The Seoul Declaration has provided Governments and the ESCAP secretariat with a clear framework within which to focus resources to address transport issues of regional concern and priority. As a result of the important decisions in 2001, tangible results have enhanced national capabilities, promoted regional cooperation and helped to improve efficiency in the transport sector.

I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SEOUL DECLARATION ON INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, INCLUDING PHASE II OF THE REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME (2002-2006) OF THE NEW DELHI ACTION PLAN ON INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

3. The Regional Action Programme for phase II (2002-2006) of the New Delhi Action Plan as annexed to the Seoul Declaration has eight areas of focus: (a) infrastructure planning and policy, (b) administration, management and finance, (c) private sector participation, (d) logistics and facilitation, (e) environment and safety, (f) human resources development capabilities, (g) poverty alleviation, rural areas and disadvantaged population groups and (h) infrastructure needs of the least developed, landlocked and island developing countries and the economies in transition. These areas of focus are fully in line with the three key thematic areas of the work of ESCAP, namely, poverty reduction, managing globalization and addressing emerging social issues.

4. Activities implemented under the Regional Action Programme at both the national and regional levels have culminated in substantial progress being made in attaining the objectives of the Seoul Declaration, which focuses on realizing the vision of an international integrated intermodal transport network that takes into account the economic, social, environmental and safety impacts of transport on society.

5. To facilitate deliberations on the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for phase II (2002-2006) of the New Delhi Action Plan, the secretariat has prepared an information paper (E/ESCAP/MCT/SGO/INF/1) to provide more details of the activities implemented by the secretariat since January 2002 to attain the objectives of phase II.

¹ See the report of the Commission on its fifty-fifth session (*Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1999, Supplement No. 19*) (E/1999/39-E/ESCAP/1155), para. 209.

² See the report of the Conference in document E/ESCAP/1249.

6. Among the most tangible results in the implementation of phase II is the entry into force of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network, on 4 July 2005, 90 days after the requisite number of States had ratified or approved it. Currently, 28 member countries have signed the Agreement, of which 20 are Parties. In addition, the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network was adopted by the Commission in its resolution 62/4 of 12 April 2006 and will be opened for signature during the ministerial segment of this Conference. The formalization of these two networks demonstrates the high level of regional cooperation and provides the basic building blocks for the development of an international integrated intermodal transport network, as mandated in the Seoul Declaration.

7. A study was undertaken to assess the need for a facilitation agreement among the members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and reviewed by the Expert Group Meeting on Facilitation of International Road Transport among Members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, held in Urumqi, China, in June 2004. Subsequently, in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank, negotiating meetings on a draft intergovernmental agreement of the SCO member States on facilitation of international road transport were held in August 2004, March and June 2005 and August 2006. The agreement has the potential to make a significant contribution to the removal of obstacles for transport between Central Asia, China and the Russian Federation. Negotiations are continuing on the agreement, which will be open to other member States to join after it comes into force.

8. The secretariat has initiated an interdivisional programme on institutional capacity-building for the facilitation of trade in landlocked and transit countries. The focus of the project is to support the Governments of both selected landlocked countries, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and their respective transit countries, in the adoption of policies and plans to reduce non-physical bottlenecks in international trade and transport; this could be effected through the establishment or strengthening of national trade and transport facilitation committees and the application of ESCAP guidelines and tools, namely, the ESCAP Time/Cost-Distance Model and Trade Facilitation Framework. In this respect, the secretariat convened regional meetings on trade and transport facilitation for landlocked and transit countries in Bangkok in October 2005 and in October 2006. In addition, five of the six planned national workshops have been successfully convened, in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Paksé, December 2005), Mongolia (Ulaanbaatar, April 2006), Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek, May 2006), Tajikistan (Dushanbe, May 2006), and Kazakhstan (Astana, July 2006), and it is proposed that a further workshop be held in Uzbekistan. The project has been successful in raising awareness and building the capacity of the relevant stakeholders with regard to trade and transport facilitation.

9. Based on a secretariat survey and study findings undertaken in collaboration with the Korea Transport Institute, a “Subregional integrated transport and logistics network” and “Strategy and actions for the development of the integrated international transport and logistics system for North-East Asia” were prepared and adopted at the Subregional Policy-level Expert Group Meeting-cum Study Tour on an Integrated International Transport and Logistics System for North-East Asia, held in Ulaanbaatar in September 2004. The strategy and actions were subsequently promoted through national workshops held in Ulaanbaatar in April 2005, in Busan in June 2005, in Moscow and Vladivostok in July 2005, and in Beijing in August 2005. The strategy and actions provided an important framework within which countries could coordinate their efforts in developing an integrated international transport and logistics system for North-East Asia.

10. To promote public-private partnerships in member countries, the secretariat developed training materials on the financial and legal aspects of the partnerships and convened the Expert Group Meeting on a Public-Private Partnership Readiness Assessment Framework for Countries in the Asia-Pacific Region (Bangkok, March 2004), the Training Seminar on the Management of Public-private Partnership Programmes and Projects, Performance Evaluation and Benchmarking (Bangkok, August 2004), the Expert Group Meeting/Workshop on Assessment of Public-private Partnership Readiness in Bangladesh (Dhaka, May 2005), the Regional Workshop on Institutional Capacity-Building of National and Local Government Units: Legal and Financial Perspectives of PPP Projects (Manila, May 2005), and Training on Public-private Partnerships for Central and Local Governments (Bangkok, May-June 2005). As a result of the strong support expressed for public-private partnership programmes for infrastructure development, a United Nations Development Account project is now being initiated under the title “Public-private partnership alliance programme for capacity-building in infrastructure development and provision of basic services”.

11. The Asia-Pacific Network for Transport and Logistics Education and Research (ANTLER) was established and activities under the Network have included the Expert Group Meeting on Transport and the Millennium Development Goals, held in New Delhi in April 2005). Evaluation of major rural transport development programmes and findings of studies undertaken by ANTLER-affiliated institutions from Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka are contributing to the work of the secretariat on the role of transport in poverty reduction and improvement in the general welfare of the people.

12. ESCAP, in collaboration with German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and other organizations and networks, has established the sustainable urban transport project in Asia. A number of seminars and workshops were organized under the project for the promotion of sustainable transport development, including bus rapid transit (BRT). Awareness-raising for senior policy makers and capacity-building activities on BRT development have contributed to the consideration of BRT projects in Bangkok.

II. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

13. The Senior Officials may wish to:

(a) Inform the Meeting of action taken at the national and regional levels in working towards the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for phase II (2002-2006) of the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific and give their views on the activities undertaken under phase II;

(b) Express their appreciation to the donor Governments and agencies, namely, the Governments of Australia, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, the Netherlands and the Republic of Korea, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, for their valuable support for the implementation of the New Delhi Action Plan on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific.

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