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Policy debate on issues pertaining to sustainable transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific and the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), including the report of the senior officials segment

Report of the senior officials

I. Matters calling for action by the Conference or brought to its attention

1. The senior officials note that balancing the three pillars of sustainable development is essential for countries to attain the transport-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.
2. The senior officials recognize the value of the Asian Highway network, the Trans-Asian Railway network and dry ports in facilitating the coordinated development of regional road and rail networks as well as the central role they will play in fostering the development of international intermodal transport corridors.
3. The senior officials recognize that international intermodal transport corridors, which integrate land transport modes with airports and ports, can provide a regional architecture within which countries can define their national master plans.
4. The senior officials further recognize that the development of international intermodal transport corridors needs to incorporate the development of dry ports and intermodal facilities and the deployment of new technologies.
5. The senior officials also recognize the need for operationalizing integrated intermodal transport systems and reiterate the importance of eliminating non-physical barriers to achieve regional transport operational connectivity in the region.
6. The senior officials recognize that most developing countries in the region suffer from high logistics costs owing to the poor performance of the logistics sector, which is a serious impediment to more significant, sustained economic growth.

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7. The senior officials express their satisfaction to the secretariat for initiating a region-wide consultation process with member States to set up an institutional mechanism to support interregional connectivity between Asia and Europe. They agree that such a mechanism is needed to ensure coordination and greater coherence between initiatives and projects and request the secretariat to take action in this regard.
8. The senior officials note that in countries with special needs within the region, transport infrastructure and operational connectivity, urban and rural transport, and road safety are of major concern.
9. The senior officials recognize the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States with respect to transport and call for renewed efforts to address these challenges and to connect to the region's main transport infrastructure networks, including ports, for safe, reliable and affordable access to global markets.
10. The senior officials acknowledge the importance of the development of rural connectivity to wider transport networks for poverty alleviation, health and education access, and economic growth through enhanced market access, stressing the importance of overcoming the challenges to attaining greater connectivity of the rural network that countries are facing.
11. The senior officials highlight the importance of sustainable urban transport systems, stressing that accessibility, reliability, comfort and safety are essential components of a sustainable transport system. The senior officials support inclusion of sustainable urban transport, as one of the themes, in the draft regional action programme for sustainable transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017-2021) and request enhanced cooperation in the implementation of activities on urban transport.
12. The senior officials reiterate that road crashes are an issue of serious concern, given their magnitude and consequent negative impact on the economy of countries and general welfare of the people, in particular vulnerable road users and low-income groups.
13. The senior officials recommend that the ministerial segment of the Ministerial Conference on Transport adopt the draft ministerial declaration on sustainable transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, including the draft regional action programme for sustainable transport connectivity, phase I (2017-2021). The declaration will provide a framework for addressing transport-related issues facing the region and enhancing regional connectivity, while taking into account the diversity of development needs and capabilities of the countries and responding to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

II. Proceedings of the meeting

A. Assessment and evaluation of the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016) (Agenda item 2)

14. The senior officials had before them document E/ESCAP/MCT(3)/1. The document was accompanied by the information paper E/ESCAP/MCT(3)/INF/4, which contained a summary of the activities implemented under phase II (2012-2016) of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific.

15. Representatives of the following members and associate members of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) made statements: Indonesia; Russian Federation; and Turkey.

16. The senior officials noted that the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016) and the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport, adopted by the Ministerial Conference on Transport held in Bangkok in 2012 and endorsed by the Commission in resolution 68/4 of 23 May 2012, contained 10 thematic areas with activities to achieve the shared vision of members and associate members of the sustainable international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system.

17. The senior officials expressed their appreciation to the secretariat for the independent evaluation of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development, phase II (2012-2016), as mandated by the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2012, and noted the findings and recommendations of the evaluator. In particular, they noted that the Regional Action Programme, phase II, had been successfully implemented and served as an effective framework for fostering economic growth and regional development and was considered to be highly relevant to the needs of members and associate members of ESCAP for the development of a sustainable integrated international intermodal transport and logistics system. The senior officials also concurred with the recommendation in the evaluation to increase emphasis on intermodal integration of transport networks.

18. The senior officials noted with satisfaction that the secretariat had taken into account all the recommendations contained in the evaluation in drafting the regional action programme for sustainable transport connectivity, phase I (2017-2021). In particular, they supported the simplified approach adopted by the secretariat in articulating the regional action programme, phase I, around seven key areas, namely: (a) regional transport infrastructure connectivity; (b) regional transport operational connectivity; (c) Euro-Asian transport connectivity; (d) transport connectivity for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States; (e) sustainable urban transport; (f) rural transport connectivity to wider networks; and (g) improving road safety.

19. The senior officials took note of the national initiatives and projects in line with the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development, phase II (2012-2016). Those activities included programmes and actions by the Government of Indonesia to install road signage along the Asian Highway network routes, complete the missing links along the Trans-Asian Railway network, sign subregional and regional agreements on logistics and cross-border transport, implement wheel-based mass rapid transit/bus rapid transit in cities, revitalize urban railways, deploy intelligent transport systems in urban transport, and establish five pillars to improve road safety.

20. The senior officials acknowledged with appreciation the voluntary contribution of the Russian Federation to finance projects on the development of dry ports of international importance, the harmonization of rules and regulations for the facilitation of international railway transport, the harmonization of a legal environment for operations of international road transport and the development of seamless rail-based intermodal transport services to enhance Euro-Asian transport linkages for the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development, phase II (2012-2016).

21. The senior officials expressed appreciation to the secretariat for its relentless efforts in implementing the activities contained in the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development, phase II (2012-2016) and noted with appreciation that the technical cooperation activities financed by the Governments of China, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation, as well as development partners, including the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the International Union of Railways, the Islamic Development Bank, the Korea Expressway Corporation, the Korea Maritime Institute and the Korea Transport Institute, had significantly contributed to the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development, phase II (2012-2016).

B. Major issues in transport

(Agenda item 3)

1. Sustainable development goals and transport

22. The senior officials had before them the note by the secretariat on the Sustainable Development Goals and transport (E/ESCAP/MCT(3)/2).

23. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Azerbaijan; Cambodia; Pakistan; Russian Federation; and Sri Lanka. Representatives of the Asian Institute of Transport Development; European Commission; International Labour Organization (ILO); World Customs Organization; and World Road Association also made statements.

24. The senior officials noted that balancing the three pillars of sustainable development was essential for countries to attain the transport-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals and that better traffic management and infrastructure maintenance were essential to the efficiency of transport systems.

25. The senior officials were apprised of various national policy initiatives and projects that were being implemented in member States which contributed to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including: (a) regional projects that supported development of east-west and north-south corridors in Azerbaijan; (b) the modernization and development of integrated transport systems, such as modal shifts to more sustainable modes of transport, improving energy efficiency with heavy and light rail and bus rapid transit, and improving road safety in Pakistan; (c) the expansion of expressways and the rehabilitation and electrification of railways in Sri Lanka; (d) policies to improve the environmental impact of transport such as the quality of fuels, increased use of natural gas, improving energy efficiency, addressing climate change impacts on transport systems and developing urban transport and railway modernization plans in the Russian Federation; and (e) policies to enhance multimodal transport linkages and interconnectivity, as well as the improvement of the integration and efficiency of transport services in Cambodia.

26. The senior officials were informed of the concept of quality infrastructure, including the concepts relating to economic and life cycle costs, resilience to climate change, job creation and preferred social impacts being aligned with other policies, which informed substantial contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals.

27. The representative of ILO suggested that the transport sector could also be an important contributor for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 8, as well as the creation decent working conditions.

28. The representative of the World Road Association emphasized that an efficient and reliable road transport service was essential for sustainable development. It was working to promote the exchange of knowledge and experiences at the international level in the five strategic themes: (a) management and finance; (b) access and mobility; (c) safety; (d) infrastructure; and (e) climate change, environment and disasters. It was willing to continue its international and inter-organizational cooperation.

29. The representative of the Asian Institute for Transport Development recommended socially optimal modal choices in transport planning based on empirical studies of costs and encompassing economic, social and environmental imperatives as well as the adoption of efficient pricing and charges. The representative highlighted the significance of comparative efficiency of land-use by various modes of transport, particularly for countries with large populations and relatively limited arable land endowments.

30. The representative of the European Commission stated that the European Union had a strong commitment to sustainable transport as set out in its comprehensive strategy on how it would contribute to implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The following key drivers of sustainable transport were noted: (a) investment in resilient infrastructure; (b) contribution to combat climate change; (c) sustainable urban mobility; and (d) road safety. Its global cooperation and synergies through participation in relevant frameworks would be promoted continuously to develop seamless border crossing.

2. Regional transport infrastructure connectivity

31. The senior officials had before them the note by the secretariat on regional transport infrastructure connectivity (E/ESCAP/MCT(3)/3).

32. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Malaysia; Russian Federation; and Turkey. The representative of the Asian Institute of Transport Development also made a statement.

33. The senior officials expressed their appreciation to the secretariat for its work developing the Asian Highway network, the Trans-Asian Railway network and dry ports and recognized their value in promoting regional connectivity, while observing that a number of missing links, bottlenecks and technical incompatibilities continued to exist.

34. In this area, the senior officials noted that a number of initiatives were being implemented to further develop the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks, including in (a) Bangladesh where the Government planned to bring all Asian Highway routes to four-lane configuration by 2021; (b) Malaysia where the Government recently completed the double-tracking and electrification of the rail section between Kuala Lumpur and Padang Besar, at the border with Thailand, and was considering similar work on the line section to Gemas and Johor Bahru; (c) Indonesia where the Government was pursuing the development of the Trans-Asian Railway network in Sumatra and adding new lines to its rail network in Kalimantan; and (d) Sri Lanka where investment had been channelled into extending the southern line, initiating a programme to introduce electric operation on 70 km of the rail network and rehabilitating the rail network in the northern part of the country, including the spur line leading to maritime connections to India.

35. The senior officials recognized that international intermodal transport corridors, which integrated land transport modes with airports and ports, could provide a regional architecture within which countries could define their national master plans and ensure greater coordination in infrastructure development across borders. In that regard, they noted that projects developed with an international perspective in mind, such as the One Road, One Belt initiative of the Government of China or the projects within the international east-west and north-south corridors in Azerbaijan, provided useful references and guidance.

36. The senior officials acknowledged the recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of China and Turkey for the harmonization of Turkey's Middle Corridor Initiative with China's Silk Road Economic Belt and the Twenty-first Century Maritime Silk Road.

37. The senior officials were also apprised of a number of projects – recently completed or ongoing – to develop intercountry connectivity across the region. In particular, they noted (a) the implementation by the Government of Bangladesh of projects aiming at providing access to the ports of Mongla and Chittagong for landlocked countries and areas, such as Bhutan, Nepal and north-east India and the development of road connectivity to Myanmar with a view to promoting future transit between Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar and Thailand; (b) the recent completion by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran of a rail section to the border with Afghanistan and the start of the superstructuring within the territory of Afghanistan as the first stage in the construction of a future link to China through Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan and of the Qazvin-Rasht rail section as part of the project to reconnect the country's rail network with that of Azerbaijan where a previously missing 8-km section to the border as well as a bridge had been constructed as part of the same project; (c) the cooperation between the Governments of Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan on the development of international rail corridors; (d) the upgrading by the Government of Pakistan of highways leading to the border crossing points with Afghanistan at Torkham and Chaman and with China at Khunjerab, as well as the feasibility study for a motorway between Peshawar and Kabul; (e) that in Malaysia the Government placed importance on the improvement of road and rail connectivity to the port, optimizing last mile connectivity, as well as collaboration with the Government of Singapore on a high-speed line project between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore; (f) that in the Russian Federation the Government had recently completed the construction of the Sviyazhsky logistics centre in Tatarstan at the junction between two important east-west and north-south corridors.

38. The senior officials recognized that the development of international intermodal transport corridors needed to incorporate the development of dry ports and intermodal facilities. In that regard, they noted that the activities of the secretariat with regard to the implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports provided useful guidance to member States for the planning, development and management of dry ports. They welcomed the news that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran had ratified the Agreement and would soon officially communicate its ratification to the Office of Legal Affairs at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

39. The senior officials appreciated the offer of the Asian Institute of Transport Development to undertake studies and organize seminars and workshops on the harmonization of technology platforms and operational systems. They noted the establishment of the Asian Railway Association

with the mandate of promoting interoperability of railways across borders and fostering capacity-building and research in South and South-East Asia.

3. Regional transport operational connectivity

40. The senior officials had before them the note by the secretariat on regional transport operational connectivity (E/ESCAP/MCT(3)/4).

41. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Iran (Islamic Republic of); Pakistan; and Russian Federation. Representatives of the Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail and the Asian Institute of Transport Development also made statements.

42. The senior officials recognized the need for operationalizing integrated intermodal transport systems and reiterated the importance of eliminating non-physical barriers to achieve regional transport operational connectivity in the region. Such barriers included a lack of harmonization of technical and operational standards, cumbersome procedures and incomplete legislative frameworks, resulting in high transport and logistics costs.

43. The senior officials acknowledged that planning and developing efficient transit transport corridors, including facilitation arrangements, could obviate some of the challenges related to the process of operationalizing the infrastructure connecting countries in the region and beyond.

44. The senior officials expressed strong support for the identification and development of international intermodal corridors as a way to foster greater regional connectivity and called for a more sophisticated approach in their management.

45. The senior officials recognized that more efforts were needed to address the remaining major challenges preventing the seamless movement of goods, vehicles and crews across the region. The following measures and initiatives had been taken in member States: (a) the operationalization of transport facilitation agreements and the alignment of national transport plans with identified regional transport corridors in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Pakistan and Turkey; (b) the signing of the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal Motor Vehicles Agreement and the development of the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Economic Corridor; (c) the finalization and operationalization of bilateral and multilateral transport facilitation agreements and the harmonization of rules and regulations in Cambodia and Pakistan; (d) the consideration by the Government of Pakistan of joining the intergovernmental agreement on international road transport along the Asian Highway network and accession to international transport facilitation conventions; (e) the operationalization of container block trains along various railway transport corridors in the Islamic Republic of Iran; (f) the implementation by the Government of the Russian Federation of a set of measures to develop multimodal terminal/logistics centres on key routes of international transport corridors in parallel with the development of a base network of regular container transport routes covering all nodal points of the railway system and the organization of transcontinental container transportation; (g) the harmonization of legal documents, the further development of legal frameworks and the strengthening of competitiveness of railway networks within the Eurasian Economic Union; (h) the planned cooperative activities by the Government of Japan for enhancing regional operational connectivity under regional cooperation frameworks, such as the Association

of Southeast Asian Nations-Japan Transport Partnership and the China-Japan-Korea Ministerial Conference on Transport and Logistics.

46. The senior officials recognized that most developing countries in the region suffer from high logistics costs owing to the poor performance of the logistics sector, which was a serious impediment to more significant, sustained economic growth. They stressed the key role of logistics information systems in reducing transport logistics costs in the region to enhance the competitiveness of countries and unlock their trading potential.

47. The representative of the World Customs Organization provided information about the upcoming release of transit guidelines in July 2017 which would support Governments in their efforts to establish efficient transit regimes and which would serve as a supportive tool for the implementation of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement, the revised Kyoto Convention, the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014-2024 and the Commission's forthcoming regional action programme for sustainable transport connectivity, phase I (2017-2021).

48. The representative of the Organization for International Carriage by Rail introduced the Organization as a forum for discussion on harmonizing international railway transport rules and on neutral and balanced solutions taking into account different levels of development and the different legal cultures of its members. Its Convention concerning International Carriage by Rail addressed various aspects of international traffic by rail for application to different countries' specific organization of their traffic by rail. The Organization expressed a desire to cooperate with other international organizations dealing with transport and the legal regimes specific to railways.

49. The representative of the Asian Institute of Transport Development provided information about its ongoing training programmes for transport professionals from South and South-East Asian countries on issues relating to operational connectivity. The Asian Institute also provided information on its work harmonizing regulatory regimes, conventions on land transport and issues relating to trade and transport facilitation across the borders.

4. Strengthening of transport connectivity between Asia and Europe

50. The senior officials had before them the note by the secretariat on the strengthening of transport connectivity between Asia and Europe (E/ESCAP/MCT(3)/5).

51. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: China; and Russian Federation. The representative of the European Commission also made a statement.

52. The senior officials noted that a number of member States were actively pursuing the development of seamless transport connectivity between Asia and Europe and expressed their appreciation to the secretariat for initiating a region-wide consultation process with member States in order to set up an institutional mechanism to support interregional connectivity between Asia and Europe in accordance with Commission resolution 71/8.

53. The senior officials agreed that such a mechanism was needed to ensure coordination and greater coherence between initiatives and projects. They noted that member States were ready to cooperate with the secretariat

on related issues and welcomed the establishment of a purpose-driven mechanism. In that regard, the senior officials requested the secretariat to further its work in defining the structure and functioning modalities of that mechanism, including mandate, membership, working language and coordination with other existing projects.

54. The senior officials were apprised of a number of transport initiatives to facilitate trade between Asia and Europe. In particular they noted (a) the cooperation between the Governments of China and the Islamic Republic of Iran in February 2016 on the organization of the pilot run of a container block train from Yiwu, China, to Tehran; (b) the efforts by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to provide a combination of road-cum-rail-cum-maritime transport services from Mumbai, India, to Moscow and other destinations in Europe, as well as the ongoing construction of the Rasht-Astara rail section which would provide through rail multimodal transport connections from Bandar Abbas, Islamic Republic of Iran, to Moscow and to the Black Sea ports of Poti and Batumi in Georgia for onward maritime connections to Bulgaria and Romania; (c) the implementation by the Government of the Russian Federation of priority projects to develop the Baikal-Amur and Trans-Siberian main line as two intermodal bridges between Asia and Europe through capacity expansion and the improvement of infrastructure in ports in the far east region of the country, including rail/ports interfaces, and the support by the Russian Government for the construction of Asia-Europe linkages such as a Western Europe-China road corridor linking the port of Lianyungang, China, to Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation; and (d) the implementation by the Government of Turkey of a number of large-scale infrastructure projects aimed at realizing uninterrupted connectivity between origin points in China and London.

55. The senior officials also recognized the long-standing interest of the European Commission in developing Asia-Europe linkages, as evidenced by the work undertaken for the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia project and acknowledged that the extension of the Trans-European Network to the East constituted a bridge to countries in Central Asia and farther to South-East Asia.

56. In that regard, they noted the support of the European Commission for Association of Southeast Asian Nations-Europe connectivity as expressed in the Bangkok Declaration on Promoting an ASEAN-EU Global Partnership for Shared Strategic Goals of October 2016.

5. Transport connectivity for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States

57. The senior officials had before them the note by the secretariat on transport connectivity for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States (E/ESCAP/MCT(3)/6).

58. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; Bhutan; Kiribati; Nepal; Pakistan; Samoa; Tajikistan; and Viet Nam. Representatives of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and the Global Infrastructure Fund Research Foundation Japan also made statements.

59. The senior officials recognized that there remained many transport-related challenges for least developed countries, landlocked developing

countries and small island developing States, including lack of investment in transport infrastructure and services, challenging geography, lack of economical and efficient access to the sea, and for remote small island developing States, the burdening cost of shipping and aviation.

60. The senior officials recognized that among small island developing States, maritime linkages were survival lifelines, and reaffirmed that maritime connectivity was highly important as it served as an enabling factor to promote trade and economic development and one of the key engines driving inter- and intraregional trade.

61. The senior officials highlighted that in countries with special needs within the region, transport infrastructure and operational connectivity, urban and rural transport and road safety were of major concern. Transport infrastructure and services suffered from challenges associated with high costs and poor performance, and a lack of institutional expertise to develop and implement policy and programmes. Innovative and inclusive policies and frameworks that were suitable for countries with special needs were required to develop sustainable regional transport connectivity. Several measures and initiatives had been taken in this direction: (a) upgrading of highways connecting to the borders of Afghanistan and China by the Government of Pakistan, which allowed the development of transit traffic, notably for landlocked developing countries in Central and South Asia; (b) improvement of road and rail connectivity in Tajikistan with Afghanistan, China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan and Turkmenistan; (c) signing of the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal Motor Vehicles Agreement to establish integrated intermodal transport systems to facilitate access to the sea for landlocked Bhutan and Nepal; (d) the proposed railway project linking Vientiane to Vung Ang seaport in Viet Nam and the Vientiane–Hanoi expressway to achieve seamless transport connectivity between landlocked Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Viet Nam.

62. The senior officials acknowledged the special challenges faced by small island developing States, which had limited resources and whose economies were strongly dependent on air and maritime transport connectivity. The representatives of Kiribati and Samoa requested continuous assistance and support from ESCAP in the next regional action programme for sustainable transport connectivity, phase I (2017-2021), to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, including through a subregional approach to group all small island developing States in the ESCAP region.

63. The representative of Bhutan highlighted the need to address issues related to possible asymmetries while negotiating and implementing transport and transit agreements.

64. The senior officials recognized the special needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States with respect to transport and called for renewed efforts to address those challenges and connect them to the region’s main transport infrastructure networks, including ports, for safe, reliable and affordable access to global markets. In that respect, the senior officials highlighted a set of priority areas: (a) facilitating transport and integrated intermodal transport and logistics for least developed countries and landlocked developing countries; (b) improving urban and rural transport and road safety in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States; and (c) enhancing maritime connectivity for small island developing States, including inter-island shipping.

65. The representative of the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States highlighted the challenges of countries with special needs, such as limited trade integration, inadequate transport infrastructure and high transport costs. Establishing integrated, efficient and sustainable transit transport systems, involving both hard and soft infrastructure, was critical for enhancing connectivity in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. The senior officials noted the call for countries to ratify the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and to develop multimodal transit corridors and for development partners to accord priority to providing coordinated support for the transport development in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.

6. Rural connectivity to wider networks

66. The senior officials had before them the note by the secretariat on rural connectivity to wider networks (E/ESCAP/MCT(3)/7).

67. Representatives of the following members and associated members made statements: Bangladesh; Indonesia; and Malaysia. The representative of the Asian Institute of Transport Development also made a statement.

68. The senior officials acknowledged the importance of developing rural connectivity to wider transport networks to reduce poverty, provide access to health and education facilities and facilitate economic growth through enhanced market access and stressed the importance of the challenges that had been faced in attaining greater connectivity in the rural network. Furthermore, it was stressed that there was a pressing need to favourably consider financing rural connectivity in order to address the challenge of connecting isolated rural communities.

69. The senior officials noted the challenges facing least developed countries to improve rural connectivity, including land scarcity issues, poorly constructed roads, overloaded vehicles and the safety of road users.

70. The senior officials highlighted the specific plans or programmes that had been established to enhance rural connectivity, noting the important role of rural connectivity in reducing poverty: (a) in its new development plan, the Government of Malaysia emphasized the importance of providing facilities to serve rural communities, and in that regard, 3,000 km of roads connecting rural communities to villages and cities would be constructed and rural air services would be enhanced; (b) the granting of operational fee assistance for transport companies to service rural communities in Indonesia; and (c) the construction of 28,697 km of rural roads in Bangladesh during its sixth five-year plan (2011-2015).

71. The representative of the Asian Institute of Transport Development suggested that a new perspective on transport deriving from the idea of access as entitlement should be adopted in order to attain the Sustainable Development Goals. The traditional cost-benefit analysis of rural projects was insufficient to access the benefits of rural connectivity, limiting the provision of rural infrastructure.

7. Sustainable urban transport

72. The senior officials had before them the note by the secretariat on sustainable urban transport (E/ESCAP/MCT(3)/8).

73. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; Japan; Malaysia; Nepal; Pakistan; Russian Federation; Sri Lanka; and Thailand. Representatives of the following organizations also made statements: European Commission; ILO; World Road Association; International Union of Public Transport; and Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport.

74. The senior officials highlighted the importance of sustainable urban transport systems and stressed that accessibility, reliability, comfort and safety were their key attributes. The senior officials expressed support for the inclusion of sustainable urban transport as one of the themes in the regional action programme for sustainable transport connectivity, phase I (2017-2021), and requested enhanced cooperation in the implementation of activities on urban transport.

75. The senior officials noted the importance of first and last mile connectivity in urban transport systems and were updated on various initiatives taken to improve first and last mile connectivity, such as intermodal integration, encouragement of non-motorized transport, car sharing and park-and-ride systems, and construction of feeder roads, pedestrian walkways, cycling tracks and multimodal transport hubs.

76. The senior officials were apprised of the efforts by member States to develop their national policies for the improvement of public transport systems.

77. The senior officials were informed about various policy initiatives and projects being implemented to improve urban transport systems in cities, including (a) the planning and implementation of bus rapid transit projects in Dhaka; Greater Kuala Lumpur and Klang Valley in Malaysia; and several cities in Indonesia; (b) bus rapid transit projects in Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Multan in Pakistan were fully operational; (c) the promotion of improvement in the quality of urban transport systems through the implementation of a quality infrastructure concept by the Government of Japan; (d) the planning and implementation of mass public transport projects in Greater Kuala Lumpur and Klang Valley in Malaysia; Bangkok; Dhaka; Lahore and Karachi, Pakistan; 16 cities in India; and Kathmandu; (e) the construction of multimodal transport centres/hubs and light rail transit in Colombo and in Klang Valley, Malaysia; (f) the construction of parking facilities at terminals in Malaysia; (g) the extension of the mass transit system and the provision of exclusive lanes for buses and trams in Moscow; and (h) the deployment of intelligent transport systems in urban transport in Indonesia.

78. The delegation of the Russian Federation proposed to organize a joint regional seminar with ESCAP on sustainable urban transport in 2017 in the Russian Federation.

79. The representative of ILO stated that research on social dialogue and metro automation had been conducted in 2016 and the work would continue in 2017 with a view to finding good practices of worker consultation and social dialogue processes while deploying automation in metro systems.

80. The representative of the European Commission stated that the European Union's key policy objectives were to halve the use of conventionally fuelled cars in urban areas and achieve carbon-dioxide-free city logistics in major urban centres by 2030. Main policy actions included the adoption of sustainable urban mobility plans, the promotion of intelligent transport systems and the establishment of guidelines on improved urban

freight flows. Awareness-raising actions, analytical studies and funding of projects in the areas of regional and cohesion policy and infrastructure were among other initiatives.

81. The representative of the Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport highlighted the significant opportunities to integrate the work more deeply with global processes such as the New Urban Agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change process. There was a need for rapid transformation of urban mobility to address the multiple challenges of urban congestion and greenhouse gas emissions in order to support sustainable urban development. The representative indicated the opportunities for working together on the global macro road map, capacity-building, the Global Status Report on Urban Transport, the ESCAP sustainable urban transport index and a regional meeting on transport and climate change.

82. The representative of the International Union of Public Transport stressed the need to establish urban transport authorities integrating all modes and within a defined city area of daily mobility and to utilize intelligent transport systems as a policy tool to improve operations. The Union was willing to collaborate with others to develop training programmes in public transport and share information on mobility in cities' databases and the urban mobility innovation index.

83. The representative of the World Road Association stated that sustainable multimodal urban transport was one of its priority areas and that "Access and Mobility" was identified as the strategic theme. Efficient road networks and traffic management were essential to achieve sustainable urban mobility. The Technical Committees on Road Network Operations/Intelligent Transport Systems and on Sustainable Multimodality in Urban Regions periodically met and contributed to international knowledge exchange that would be beneficial to all the relevant practitioners and administrators.

8. Improving road safety

84. The senior officials had before them the note by the secretariat on improving road safety (E/ESCAP/MCT(3)/9).

85. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Armenia; Bangladesh; Cambodia; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Kyrgyzstan; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand; and Viet Nam. Representatives of the following organizations also made statements: European Commission; ILO; Institute of Road Traffic Education; and World Road Association.

86. The senior officials reiterated that road crashes were an issue of serious concern considering their magnitude and consequent negative impact on the economy and general welfare of the people, particularly vulnerable road users and low-income groups.

87. The senior officials acknowledged the commitments made and the special attention paid by members and associate members to improving road safety.

88. The senior officials stressed the importance of cooperation and the sharing of information, knowledge and best practices on road safety among member countries.

89. The senior officials noted with satisfaction the progress achieved in reducing the number of road traffic fatalities in Armenia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and Viet Nam. They noted, however, that the improvement achieved was still not sufficient to achieve Sustainable Development Goal target 3.6, and enhanced efforts were needed.

90. The senior officials were apprised of the following progress made in the area of road safety management: (a) the functioning of the designated lead agency for road safety in Armenia, Bangladesh and Cambodia; (b) the adoption of national road safety targets in Armenia and Thailand; (c) the formulation and implementation of national road safety policies, strategies and action plans in Armenia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Thailand; and (d) the implementation of a transport development strategy with emphasis on road safety improvement in Tajikistan.

91. The senior officials were informed of various infrastructure initiatives and projects being implemented to improve road safety, including (a) road safety audits in Armenia and Viet Nam; (b) the installation of road safety facilities such as guard rails, speed bumps and road marking in Armenia; (c) the construction of safe-crossing infrastructure such as flyover bridges in Thailand; (d) the installation and modernization of road signs and markings in Armenia, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Thailand; (e) the treatment of hazardous locations or black spots in Bangladesh and the Islamic Republic of Iran; and (f) the installation of surveillance cameras in Sri Lanka and Tajikistan.

92. The senior officials took note of actions taken for the strict enforcement and tighter control of the violations related to key risk factors – speeding, drink-driving and non-use of helmets and seat belts – in Armenia, Cambodia and Thailand. In addition, review and revision of road safety legislation was planned in Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam to strengthen road safety legislation.

93. The senior officials noted with satisfaction the implementation of awareness-raising, social media and education programmes for road safety, including a programme for children in Armenia, Cambodia, the Russian Federation and Sri Lanka. They also noted that road safety seminars and training had been conducted in Bangladesh, Kyrgyzstan and Sri Lanka.

94. The senior officials were also informed of other progress, including (a) the efforts to increase modal shifts from road to rail and inland waterways to reduce pressure on road transport, and therefore road crashes, in Thailand and Viet Nam; (b) the mandatory use of anti-lock brake systems in all vehicles in India; (c) the improvement of trauma care in Bangladesh and India; (d) the improvement of road safety data collection in Armenia; and (e) establishment of an accident research institute in Bangladesh.

95. The senior officials took note of the launch of a study report on the establishment of an intergovernmental international road organization along the lines of the International Maritime Organization and the International Civil Aviation Organization, which would significantly contribute to the improvement of road safety. They also noted the request to the secretariat to organize a regional meeting to review the findings and recommendations of the study report.

96. The senior officials noted with appreciation the offer of the Russian Federation to share the experience and technical knowledge on the use of

Emergency Road Assistance based on the Global Navigation Satellite Systems to organize timely rescue in case of road traffic crashes.

97. The senior officials welcomed with appreciation the proposal of the representative of the Russian Federation to jointly organize a seminar with ESCAP on road safety in 2017 in the Russian Federation.

98. The representative of ILO said that the Tripartite Sectoral Meeting on Safety and Health in the Road Transport Sector – held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 12 to 16 October 2015 – had adopted a resolution on transport network companies – “Transporting Tomorrow” – for the taxi sector and a resolution concerning best practices in road transport safety for the trucking sector. The work that had so far been undertaken by ILO, in the form of a taxi policy guidance document and a trucking handbook, would provide useful tools for combating commercial vehicle crashes.

99. The representative of the European Commission informed the senior officials that road safety was an integral part of its work in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Since 2000, the number of people killed each year on roads in the European Union had halved, but 70 people still died every day. Its strategic objective was to halve the number of deaths by 2020 and move closer to zero deaths and serious injuries by 2050, based on education, engineering and enforcement pillars focusing on speed, seat-belt use, infrastructure safety management and the adoption of ambitious targets followed by transparent monitoring. Interests in improving road safety worldwide, information exchange and partnerships with others were expressed.

100. The representative of the World Road Association stated that road crashes that caused fatality or severe injury resulted in the loss of opportunities. Safety was identified as a strategic theme to improve the safety and efficiency of road transport. As part of its commitment to the Decade of Action for Road Safety, 2011-2020, the Association was encouraging a sharing of best practices to improve road safety.

101. The representative of the Institute of Road Traffic Education stated that 11 countries in South and South-East Asia contributed 30.4 per cent of global fatalities, of which 34 per cent were riders of powered two-wheelers. The Institute had taken a major initiative towards the development of codes of practice, standard operating procedures and draft legal instruments for the safe operation of powered two-wheelers in policy, and regarding behavioural issues of riders and rider licensing to drive, infrastructure considerations, headgear and safety apparel, vehicle safety issues, mitigation of injuries and deaths, transport planning, data management and sustainability. It offered to share the result of the work with other countries to support the improvement of national policies and actions for the improvement of road safety.

C. Draft regional action programme for sustainable transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017-2021)

(Agenda item 4)

102. The senior officials had before them the draft regional action programme for sustainable transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017-2021) (E/ESCAP/MCT(3)/WP.1).

103. The senior officials considered the amendments proposed by the representatives of the following member States: Bangladesh; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Russian Federation; Timor-Leste; and Viet Nam. The senior

officials discussed and agreed to submit the draft regional action programme for sustainable transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017-2021), as amended, for consideration and adoption by the ministerial segment.

104. The senior officials expressed support for the establishment of an interregional coordination committee on transport between Asia and Europe and requested that the committee should be based at ESCAP to reflect the stronger need of ESCAP members and associate members for interregional connectivity.

D. Draft ministerial declaration on sustainable transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific

(Agenda item 5)

105. The senior officials had before them the draft ministerial declaration on sustainable transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/MCT(3)/WP.2).

106. The senior officials considered the amendments proposed by the representatives of the following member States: Armenia; Bhutan; China; Iran (Islamic Republic of); and Russian Federation. After some deliberations, the senior officials recommended that the draft ministerial declaration should be submitted for consideration and adoption by the ministers.

107. The senior officials discussed and agreed to the draft ministerial declaration on sustainable transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, as amended, for consideration and adoption by the ministerial segment.

108. Recognizing the importance of road safety, the senior officials agreed to align the fatality reduction targets for all categories of road users in the regional road safety goals and targets with the Sustainable Development Goal targets.

E. Other matters

(Agenda item 6)

109. The senior officials noted the transport connectivity initiatives involving Bangladesh, such as the Asian Highway network, the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation road connectivity initiative, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation road corridor, the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Forum for Regional Cooperation Economic Corridors and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation road corridors. In that regard, Bangladesh signed the Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal Motor Vehicles Agreement.

110. The following representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations made presentations on transport-related activities:

(a) The representative of the Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport highlighted the importance of integrating sustainable transport into global policies on sustainable development and climate change;

(b) The representative of the World Road Association introduced the work of the organization and informed senior officials of two upcoming events to be organized by it, namely the fifteenth International Winter Road Congress, scheduled to be held in Gdansk, Poland, in February 2018, and

the twenty-sixth World Road Congress, scheduled to be held in Abu Dhabi in October 2019;

(c) The representative of the Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail presented the work of the Organization in strengthening connectivity between Asia and Europe and briefed the senior officials on its convention that applied to international traffic by rail;

(d) The representative of the World Customs Organization introduced its 2014 “Transit Handbook” and informed senior officials about the ongoing preparation of a manual on transit guidelines scheduled to be released at the Global Transit Conference to be held in Brussels in July 2017.

F. Adoption of the report of the senior officials

(Agenda item 7)

111. The senior officials adopted the present report on 7 December 2016.

III. Organization of the meeting

A. Opening, duration and organization

112. The senior officials segment of the third session of the Ministerial Conference on Transport was held at the Andreevsky Ballroom, Renaissance Moscow Monarch Centre Hotel, Moscow, from 5 to 7 December 2016.

113. The session was opened by Mr. Nikolay Asaul, Deputy Minister of Transport, the Russian Federation. The Director of the Transport Division of ESCAP delivered a statement.

B. Attendance

114. The senior officials segment of the Conference was attended by representatives of the following members and associate members of ESCAP: Afghanistan; Armenia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; Democratic People’s Republic of Korea; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Kiribati; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nauru; Nepal; Pakistan; Palau; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand; Timor-Leste; Tonga; Turkey; Turkmenistan; Tuvalu; Uzbekistan; Vanuatu; and Viet Nam.

115. A representative of Germany attended.

116. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies attended: United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States; ILO; Secretariat of the Greater Tumen Initiative/United Nations Development Programme; and United Nations Industrial Development Organization.

117. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other organizations were present: Eurasian Economic Commission; Eurasian Development Bank; European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; European Commission; Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail; International Union of Public Transport; World Customs Organization; Asian Institute of Transport Development; International Air Transport Association; International Road Transport Union; International Union of

Railways; Global Infrastructure Fund Research Foundation Japan; Institute of Road Traffic Education; Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport; and World Road Association.

C. Election of officers

118. The senior officials elected the following officers for the meeting:

Chair:	Mr. Nikolay Asaul (Russian Federation)
Vice-Chairs:	Mr. M.A.N. Siddique (Bangladesh) Mr. Poumulinuku Onesemo (Samoa)
Rapporteur:	Mr. Voravuth Mala (Thailand)

D. Agenda

119. The senior officials adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session:
 - (a) Opening addresses;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Assessment and evaluation of the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016).
3. Major issues in transport:
 - (a) Sustainable Development Goals and transport;
 - (b) Regional transport infrastructure connectivity;
 - (c) Regional transport operational connectivity;
 - (d) Strengthening of transport connectivity between Asia and Europe;
 - (e) Transport connectivity for least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States;
 - (f) Rural connectivity to wider networks;
 - (g) Sustainable urban transport;
 - (h) Improving road safety.
4. Draft regional action programme for sustainable transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017-2021).
5. Draft ministerial declaration on sustainable transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific.
6. Other matters.
7. Adoption of the report of the senior officials.

Annex

List of documents

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E/ESCAP/MCT(3)/INF/4	Activities implemented under the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016)	2