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

1st meeting
Bangkok, 25-26 November 2015

Report of the Working Group on Dry Ports on its 1st meeting

Contents

| | <i>Page</i> |
|---|-------------|
| I. Deliberations | 1 |
| II. Conclusions and recommendations | 2 |
| III. Other matters | 3 |
| IV. Adoption of the report | 3 |
| V. Expression of appreciation | 4 |
| VI. Organization of the meeting | 4 |
| A. Opening, duration and organization | 4 |
| B. Attendance | 4 |
| C. Election of officers | 4 |
| D. Agenda | 4 |
| Annex | |
| List of documents | 5 |

I. Deliberations

1. The secretariat introduced the documents under agenda items 4 (E/ESCAP/DP/WG(1)/1) and 5 (E/ESCAP/DP/WG(1)/2), which formed the basis for deliberations.¹

2. The Working Group received updates from delegations on ongoing or planned initiatives and policies related to the development and operation of dry ports of international importance in their countries.

¹ See the annex for the list of documents.

3. The Working Group was informed that 17 member States had signed the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports, of which 4 had become parties to it. In addition:

(a) The delegation of the Russian Federation informed the Working Group that the appropriate process to become a party had been recently completed and that a notification of approval would soon be deposited with the Secretary-General at Headquarters in New York;

(b) The delegation of China informed the Working Group that the required internal process of ratification was nearing completion and that China expected to become a party in early 2016;

(c) The delegation of India informed the Working Group that the appropriate process to become a party had been recently completed and that the necessary instrument had been signed by the President of India. It would soon be deposited with the Secretary-General at Headquarters in New York;

(d) The delegations of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey informed the Working Group that their respective countries expected to become parties in 2016;

(e) The other delegations informed the Working Group that their respective Governments were at various stages in the process of becoming a party.

4. The Working Group noted that the presentations/statements made by the delegations that had taken part in the deliberations and that had provided copies of their respective presentations/statements to the secretariat would be made available on the web page of the Transport Division at: www.unescap.org/our-work/transport.

II. Conclusions and recommendations

5. The Working Group encouraged member States to speed up their internal processes to become parties to the Agreement. In that respect, the secretariat informed the Working Group that it stood ready to assist member States in completing the required model instruments of ratification, approval, acceptance or accession and forwarding them to the Office of Legal Affairs at Headquarters in New York.

6. The delegations of China, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Thailand and Turkey informed the Working Group of projects that were being implemented or considered in their respective countries to further develop or operationalize dry ports. In so doing, several countries also informed the Working Group of some specific challenges that they were facing in the process.

7. The Working Group noted with satisfaction that, in the context of increased international trade, the establishment of dry ports was gaining momentum across the region. It further recognized the role of dry ports in: (a) improving regional transport connectivity; (b) enhancing the efficiency of freight movements across the region; (c) improving international logistical services in member countries; (d) integrating different transport modes; (e) creating the conditions for a greater utilization of rail transport; and (f) supporting local economic development. Most importantly, the Working Group noted that efficient dry ports along international intermodal corridors could contribute greatly to improving the access of landlocked countries to international markets.

8. The Working Group recognized the role of the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks in supporting the development of dry ports.

9. The Working Group recognized that the development and operationalization of dry ports posed a number of challenges. In particular, investment was needed in the acquisition of modern handling equipment and the development of efficient information and communications technology to facilitate data exchange between transport operators, logistics providers, customs authorities, business entities and other agencies.

10. The Working Group acknowledged that the development and operation of dry ports were particularly suitable for being carried out by partnerships between the public and private sectors. In that regard, the Working Group was informed about a number of such partnerships that were taking place in the region.

11. The Working Group noted that, along with the provision of adequate facilities, the efficient operation of dry ports required the adoption of specific customer-focused and facilitation measures, and efficient integration of all participants in the transportation process, including the creation of optimal logistics chains and development of “single window” modalities.

12. Noting that globalized trade required efficient dry ports located along international intermodal corridors, the Working Group recognized a crucial need for: (a) harmonizing the design parameters and operating norms of dry ports; (b) promoting an understanding of business practices related to the operation of dry ports, such as the establishment of joint ventures; and (c) developing suitably qualified human resources.

13. Recognizing the need to build capacity to assist member States in the development of dry ports, the Working Group called on the secretariat to play a coordinating role in engaging all the available technical and financial resources to organize relevant training courses and share best practices. In that respect, it noted the recent study carried out by the secretariat on the “Planning, development and operation of dry ports of international importance”. The study reviewed policies and approaches that had been adopted by selected member States in the region when developing and operating dry ports (www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/pre-ods/Planning%20development%20and%20operation%20of%20dry%20ports-Nov%202015.pdf).

14. The representative of the Asian Institute of Transport Development informed the Working Group of the impact that burgeoning international freight volumes and the new generation of mega container ships (namely, those with a carrying capacity of more than 18,000 twenty-foot equivalent units) would increasingly have on the capacity of the existing infrastructure of international corridors and inland facilities. He stressed the importance of dry ports in international supply chains and the benefits of public-private partnerships in their development.

III. Other matters

15. No other matters were raised.

IV. Adoption of the report

16. The Working Group adopted the present report on 26 November 2015.

V. Expression of appreciation

17. The Working Group expressed its appreciation to the Government of the Russian Federation for its generous financial assistance to the meeting. It also expressed its gratitude to the secretariat for organizing and servicing the meeting in such an efficient manner.

VI. Organization of the meeting

A. Opening, duration and organization

18. The 1st meeting of the Working Group on Dry Ports was held in Bangkok on 25 and 26 November 2015. The Director of the Transport Division delivered an opening message to the meeting.

B. Attendance

19. The meeting was attended by representatives of the following member States: Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; China; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand; Turkey; Uzbekistan; and Viet Nam.

20. Representatives of the Asian Institute of Transport Development and the Korea Transport Institute also attended the meeting.

C. Election of officers

21. The meeting elected the following officers:

Chair: Mr. Laxman Bahadur Basnet (Nepal)

Vice-Chairs: Mr. Bouaphet Sayasane (Lao People's Democratic Republic)
Mr. Jeyampathy Lokawisthara Patabendige (Sri Lanka)
Mr. Abdusamat Muminov (Uzbekistan)

Rapporteur: Ms. Unurbayar Sodnomdorj (Mongolia)

D. Agenda

22. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Status of implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports.
5. Policies and issues relating to the development of dry ports of international importance.
6. Other matters.
7. Adoption of the report.

Annex**List of documents**

| Symbol | Title | Agenda item |
|-----------------------|--|--------------------|
| <i>General series</i> | | |
| E/ESCAP/DP/WG(1)/1 | Status of implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports | 4 |
| E/ESCAP/DP/WG(1)/2 | Policies and issues relating to dry ports | 5 |
| <i>Limited series</i> | | |
| E/ESCAP/DP/WG(1)/L.1 | Annotated provisional agenda | 3 |
| E/ESCAP/DP/WG(1)/L.2 | Draft report | 7 |
