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Assessment and evaluation of the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2007-2011), of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and of the Bangkok Declaration on Transport Development in Asia

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Note by the secretariat

Summary

The Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and its annex, the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2007-2011), was adopted by the Ministerial Conference on Transport, held in Busan, Republic of Korea, in November 2006. The Declaration described the shared vision of ESCAP members and associate members of an integrated international intermodal transport and logistics system in Asia and the Pacific, while the Regional Action Programme (RAP) set out the specific objectives and activities which would be implemented over the period from 2007 to 2011 to achieve that vision. The purpose of the present document is to highlight the main achievements and activities that were undertaken under phase I of the RAP and to present the findings and recommendations of an independent evaluation of the implementation of phase I of the RAP.

The document concludes with a number of issues for consideration by the Ministerial Conference.

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List of abbreviations

| | |
|-------------|--|
| AFFA | ASEAN Freight Forwarders Association |
| ADB | Asian Development Bank |
| AIT | Asian Institute of Technology |
| AITD | Asian Institute of Transport Development |
| ASEAN | Association of Southeast Asian Nations |
| ECE | Economic Commission for Europe |
| ECO | Economic Cooperation Organization |
| ESCAP | Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific |
| FIATA | International Federation of Freight Forwarders' Associations |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GIZ | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (formerly GTZ) |
| GMS | Greater Mekong Subregion |
| GRSP | Global Road Safety Partnership |
| HIV/AIDS | human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immune deficiency syndrome |
| IDI | Infrastructure Development Institute |
| ILO | International Labour Organization |
| IFRTD | International Forum for Rural Transport Development |
| IGC TRACECA | Intergovernmental Commission Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia |
| iRAP | International Road Assessment Programme |
| IRF | International Road Federation |
| IRU | International Road Transport Union |
| IsDB | Islamic Development Bank |
| JICA | Japan International Cooperation Agency |
| KEC | Korea Expressway Corporation |
| KMI | Korea Maritime Institute |
| KOTI | Korea Transport Institute |
| KRRI | Korea Railroad Research Institute |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| NELTI | New Euroasian Land Transport Initiative |
| PIARC | World Road Association |
| PPP | public-private partnership |
| RAP | Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific |
| SCO | Shanghai Cooperation Organization |
| OSJD | Organization for Cooperation between Railways |
| UIC | International Union of Railways |
| UNCTAD | United Nations Conference on Trade and Development |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| WCO | World Customs Organization |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

I. Introduction

1. The Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and its annex, the RAP, phase I (2007-2011), was adopted by the Ministerial Conference on Transport, held in Busan, Republic of Korea, in November 2006. The Declaration described the shared vision of ESCAP member and associate member States of an integrated international intermodal transport and logistics system in Asia and the Pacific, while the RAP set out specific objectives and activities which would be implemented over the period from 2007 to 2011 to achieve that vision. Subsequently, the Commission adopted resolution 63/9 of 23 May 2007 on the implementation of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2007-2011). The vision set out in the Busan Declaration was reaffirmed by the Commission in its resolution 66/4 of 19 May 2010 on the implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Transport Development in Asia, which had resulted from the first session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport, which was held in Bangkok in December 2009 (see E/ESCAP/66/11).

2. The present document serves two purposes: first, to review the implementation of phase I of the RAP and, second, to present the findings and recommendations of an independent evaluation of the implementation of phase I. The present document should be read in conjunction with information paper E/ESCAP/MCT.2/INF/5.

II. Overview of the implementation of phase I (2007-2011) of the RAP

3. The Busan Declaration recognized that countries required efficient transport infrastructure and services in order to realize new opportunities for economic and trade development brought about by globalization. Phase I of the RAP therefore comprised eight thematic areas, which are shown in table 1 along with their immediate objectives.

Table 1
RAP thematic areas and their immediate objectives

| Thematic area | Immediate objective |
|--|--|
| 1. Policy guidance at the ministerial level | |
| 1.1 A forum of Asian ministers of transport | To promote regional cooperation and policy leadership at the ministerial level for the advancement of transport as a key to regional development |
| 2. Transport infrastructure development | |
| 2.1 Promotion and development/upgrading of the Asian Highway network | To promote the Asian Highway network through coordinated planning for development of national road infrastructure, including upgrading of the network. |
| 2.2 Promotion, development and operationalization of the Trans-Asian Railway network | To promote the Trans-Asian Railway network for the efficient and sustainable movement of goods and people. |

| Thematic area | Immediate objective |
|--|---|
| 2.3 Using an integrated intermodal approach to transport planning and infrastructure development | To promote an integrated approach to transport planning as an integral part of an international integrated intermodal transport system for Asia and a focus for economic and trade development. |
| 2.4 Management and maintenance of transport infrastructure | To improve national capacities in the management and maintenance of transport infrastructure. |
| 3. Transport facilitation | |
| 3.1 Facilitation of coordinating mechanisms | To promote collaboration between all stakeholders involved in international transport from the public and private sectors for transport facilitation. |
| 3.2 Establishment of legal frameworks for international transport | To assist countries in putting in place suitable legal regimes to facilitate international land transport. |
| 3.3 Application of new technologies | To promote the simplification/harmonization of border-crossing procedures and documentation for international transport and the application of new technologies, including information and communication technology. |
| 3.4 Developing tools for the identification of bottlenecks and the monitoring of the impact of facilitation measures | To assist countries in identifying, isolating and addressing the major bottlenecks impeding smooth and efficient international transport. |
| 3.5 Upgrading of transport operator skills | To assist countries in upgrading the capacity of professionals to undertake international land transport operations. |
| 4. Transport logistics | |
| 4.1 Developing guidelines for the operation of logistics service providers | To create common standards for the operation of logistics service providers and to harmonize the approaches of regional member countries with a view to raising the profile of freight forwarders, multimodal transport operators and logistics services providers within the transport industry. |
| 4.2 Development of logistics service centres | To promote the development of efficient logistics service centres and clusters throughout the region. |
| 4.3 Promoting partnerships and exchange of experiences within the region | To create local, subregional, regional and international networks to strengthen the capacity of the logistics services industry to create partnerships, to share experiences and to improve their competitiveness. |
| 4.4 Capacity-building in logistics | To enhance national competencies and skills within the logistics industry through sustainable education programmes targeting freight forwarders, multimodal transport operators, logistics service providers and civil servants. |

| Thematic area | Immediate objective |
|--|--|
| 5. Finance and private sector participation | To enhance institutional capabilities for the mobilization of additional funding for investment in the transport sector from traditional and non-traditional sources, including public-private partnerships. |
| 6. Sustainable transport development | To increase awareness and understanding of alternative policy options for sustainable transport by decision makers. |
| 7. Road safety | To foster better awareness and understanding of road safety issues and potential interventions, and improved international collaboration in Asia and the Pacific. |
| 8. Transport and the Millennium Development Goals | To foster a better understanding of the links among transport interventions, poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. |

4. The RAP thus served as a joint planning document between the secretariat and the member States to achieve the shared vision of an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system for the region. The major achievements and activities under each thematic area of the RAP are summarized below.

A. Theme 1 Policy guidance at the ministerial level

5. With the rapid expansion of trade, both within the region and with other regions, as well as the evolution of global production networks, it became clear that there was a need for a high-level mechanism to respond to the changing transport demands of the region. Before 2007, the main regional convening bodies were ministerial conferences on transport or infrastructure, organized by ESCAP every five years. In view of this, the 2006 Ministerial Conference on Transport, held in Busan, expressed strong support for the establishment of a forum of Asian ministers of transport as a formal regional mechanism to facilitate collaboration in order to address emerging issues (see E/ESCAP/63/13, para. 3). Subsequently, the Commission adopted resolution 64/5 of 30 April 2008 on the establishment of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport.

6. The first session of the Forum was held in Bangkok in December 2009 with the participation of 27 members and associate members, two United Nations bodies, and 11 intergovernmental, non-governmental and other organizations. The Forum considered the main transport developments in the region and adopted the Bangkok Declaration on Transport Development in Asia, which was welcomed by the Commission in its resolution 66/4 of 19 May 2010.

7. With the establishment of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport, ministers of transport can meet every two or three years to exchange views on transport development, promote regional cooperation, provide policy leadership, accelerate joint initiatives, and respond to emerging issues in a timely manner.

B. Theme 2

Transport infrastructure development

8. ESCAP has served as the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network since it came into force in 2005.¹ This involved servicing the Working Group on the Asian Highway and monitoring the implementation of the Agreement. Between 2007 and 2011, seven countries ratified the Agreement,² bringing the total number of parties to 28 with only one signatory yet to become a party.

9. Between 2007 and 2011, many countries upgraded or added new sections to the Asian Highway network, including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Georgia, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Russian Federation, Thailand and Turkey. The length of highways which were below the standards of class III fell from 12,000 km (9 per cent) of the total of 141,000 km in 2006, to 11,580 km (8 per cent) of the total of 142,000 in 2008.³ Furthermore, the addition of AH48: Thimphu-Phuentsholing-Jaigaon between India and Bhutan in 2009 meant that all landlocked countries of the region were connected to the network.

10. The secretariat stepped up its collaboration with donors and international financial institutions to assist countries in financing investment projects on the Asian Highway network. In 2010, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) initiated a project, entitled “Promoting regional infrastructure development” under Technical Assistance (TA)-7757, which included an assessment of the contribution of ADB to the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway and the possibility of establishing a regional project development facility.

11. One of the pending obligations under the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network is signage along the network. To date, Japan, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea and Thailand have placed signage along their Asian Highway routes. This issue will be discussed at the next meeting of the Working Group on the Asian Highway, scheduled for the second half of 2011.

12. In 2009, a major milestone was reached when the eighth country ratified the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network,⁴ bringing the agreement into force. Since then, eight more countries have become parties, namely Bangladesh (2010), Georgia (2009), Islamic Republic of Iran (2009), Pakistan (2009), The Lao People’s Democratic Republic (2011), Sri Lanka (2010), Uzbekistan (2009) and Viet Nam (2009). To date, the Agreement has been signed by 22 countries, 16 of which are parties.

13. Since 2007, significant progress has been made in the planning and construction of missing links in the Trans-Asian Railway network. In 2009, a line section was inaugurated from Nong Khai in Thailand to Thanaleng in the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, raising the prospect of future rail services between the Lao People’s Democratic Republic and ports in Malaysia and Thailand. In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the missing link between Kerman

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2323, No. 41607.

² Lao People’s Democratic Republic (2008), Bangladesh (2009), Islamic Republic of Iran (2009), Indonesia (2010), Nepal (2010), Philippines (2007) and Turkey (2010).

³ The secretariat is currently collecting 2010 data on the status of the network

⁴ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, No. 46171.

and Zahedan was completed in 2009, as was construction of the line section between Sangan and the border with Afghanistan. In Uzbekistan, the line between Tashguzar and Boysum was inaugurated.

14. Meanwhile, the Russian Federation has been investing in the Transib-7 project, which aims to achieve a seven-day transit time along the Trans-Siberian main line between ports in the Far East region of the Russian Federation and Moscow to speed up Asia-Europe rail transit. Also, as part of ASEAN's Singapore-Kunming Rail Link project, work is being done to reconnect Cambodia's network with Thailand, while the Governments of China and the Lao People's Democratic Republic signed a memorandum of understanding in 2011 to build the line from Vientiane to Boten.

15. A series of initiatives was launched to assist member countries in integrating the Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway and other transport modes. Towards this end, the secretariat conducted research on dry ports, which informed discussions on the content of the draft intergovernmental agreement on dry ports currently under development. Between 2009 and 2010, the secretariat implemented a project on the operationalization of international intermodal transport corridors in North-East and Central Asia to enhance corridor-based cooperation among member countries. The third expert group meeting, held in Uiwang, Republic of Korea, in July 2010, adopted a joint statement of experts to enhance corridor-based cooperation among member countries.

16. In cooperation with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the secretariat organized a seminar on road networks in 2008 to promote the integration of the Asian Highway into the subregional network. A seminar on road maintenance in Asia was also organized by the secretariat in 2009.

C. Theme 3 Transport facilitation

17. In order to strengthen coordination in countries on trade and transport facilitation, the secretariat promoted formal national coordinating mechanisms on trade and transport facilitation. Following the publication of a study on national coordinating mechanisms, the secretariat organized national workshops and provided advisory services to Pakistan (2007), the Islamic Republic of Iran (2007), Mongolia (2009) and Kazakhstan (2009). The secretariat also provided advisory services to the national committee in Kyrgyzstan and provided information to the committees in the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Mongolia.

18. The secretariat continued to support the formulation and implementation of subregional agreements on transport facilitation. In cooperation with the secretariat of SCO and ADB, the secretariat provided technical and financial assistance to support the formulation of an agreement between the Governments of SCO Member States on facilitation of international road transport. At the negotiating meeting held in Astana in 2011, delegations of the SCO member States reached a consensus on nearly all outstanding articles of the draft annexes. The secretariat also provided technical assistance for the implementation of the ADB-supported Greater Mekong Subregional Cross-Border Transport Agreement.

19. The secretariat developed guidelines on information and communications technology (ICT) applications for trade and transport facilitation for landlocked countries in the Asia-Pacific region, which focused on Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

20. The ESCAP time/cost-distance methodology is now widely recognized as a useful tool for identifying bottlenecks along transport routes. Several countries have applied the methodology, in some cases with technical support from the secretariat, while a number of international organizations have also adapted the methodology for their use. For example, the International Road Transport Union (IRU) used the methodology to monitor routes along the New Euroasian Land Transport Initiative (NELTI), while technical assistance was extended to the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Thailand, in cooperation with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in applying the methodology to transit routes between the two countries.

21. The secretariat also assisted the ADB in preparing training materials and delivering a training course on the implementation of the Greater Mekong Subregional Cross-Border Transport Agreement along the East-West Economic Corridor in 2009.

D. Theme 4 Transport logistics

22. In formulating the RAP, it was recognized that the logistics industry was key to the development of an integrated intermodal transport network, but that the lack of common standards was a major impediment to its development. The secretariat therefore undertook research on codes of conduct, minimum standards and qualifications, membership criteria, standard trading conditions and registration requirements. In 2011, an expert group meeting was held to discuss and refine guidelines for minimum standards and codes of conduct of freight forwarders and logistics service providers.

23. In 2011, the secretariat launched a project to assist ASEAN countries in undertaking prefeasibility studies of dry ports. This activity will provide policymakers with important references for planning dry ports, particularly in the context of the development of the intergovernmental agreement on dry ports.

24. The secretariat organized regional forums and meetings of chief executives of national associations of freight forwarders, national logistics associations and other professional transport bodies on an annual basis between 2007 and 2011. In this regard, cooperation with the International Federation of Freight Forwarders' Associations (FIATA) has been strengthened during phase I of the RAP.

25. Technical assistance and advisory services were given to national associations of freight forwarders and national logistics associations for the design, delivery and monitoring of customized training programmes in freight forwarding, multimodal transport and logistics in Cambodia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Training-of-trainer workshops have created a pool of local trainers, while the secretariat has also promoted regional networking among these trainers.

E. Theme 5 Finance and private sector participation

26. In designing the RAP, it was recognized that most countries faced a shortfall in funding for transport infrastructure from traditional sources. One of the objectives of the RAP was therefore to enhance the capacity of countries to mobilize funding for investment from traditional and non-traditional sources, including public-private partnerships (PPPs). In this regard, the secretariat

provided support for the organization of the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development, held in Seoul in 2007 and in Jakarta in 2010.⁵

27. The secretariat also developed resource and training materials on PPPs for use in online training courses. Courses on model concession contracts were offered in 2009 and 2011, and the ESCAP assessment tool was used by several countries to assess their readiness to implement PPP projects.⁶ In collaborating with the Asian Institute of Transport Development (AITD), the secretariat organized, in 2011, a regional meeting of PPP units on capacity building in PPPs and a consultation meeting on curriculum development regarding PPPs.

F. Theme 6 Sustainable transport development

28. One objective of the RAP was to increase awareness of policy options for sustainable transport. During the first session of the Committee on Transport, held in Bangkok in October 2008, some delegations expressed support for the secretariat to promote sharing of experiences among members in the area of reducing energy consumption and emissions in the transport sector (see E/ESCAP/65/4, para. 4). Subsequently, the issue of transport and environment was discussed at the first session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport, in December 2009 (see E/ESCAP/66/11). The Forum stressed the importance of intermodal transport, as well as modal shifts from road to rail and waterways and from private motor vehicles to public transport. In 2010, the secretariat organized an expert group meeting on the eco-efficiency of freight transport and logistics and prepared a review of good practices and indicators on eco-efficiency and sustainability for urban freight transportation. In collaboration with GIZ, the secretariat also organized a break-out session on sustainable transport and financing at the Fifth Asia-Pacific Urban Forum, held in 2011 (see E/ESCAP/CED(2)/2).

G. Theme 7 Road safety

29. The Busan Declaration, together with the Ministerial Declaration on Improving Road Safety in Asia and the Pacific (see E/ESCAP/63/13, chaps. IV and V), stressed the need to stem the number of road accidents and related fatalities in the region. In response, regional road safety goals, targets and indicators were developed through a series of expert group meetings on improving road safety on the Asian Highway in 2007 and 2008. The secretariat also organized an expert group meeting to prepare regional inputs to the first Global Ministerial Conference on “Road Safety: Time for Action”, held in Moscow in 2009. The Conference adopted a declaration which led to the proclamation of the period 2011-2020 as the “Decade of Action for Road Safety” by the General Assembly.⁷ Subsequently, the Commission adopted resolution 66/6 of 19 May 2010 on improving road safety in Asia and the Pacific. In 2010, regional road safety goals, targets and indicators for the “Decade of Action for Road Safety” were refined and the secretariat began providing governments with technical assistance in developing national road

⁵ See ESCAP resolutions 64/4 of 30 April 2008 on the implementation of the Seoul Declaration on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific and 66/5 of 19 May 2010 on the implementation of the Jakarta Declaration on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific.

⁶ Available from <http://www.unescap.org/ttdw/ppp/PPPReadiness.html>.

⁷ See General Assembly resolution 64/255 of 2 March 2010 on improving global road safety.

safety plans. It also began work on developing a web-based regional network of road safety stakeholders.

H. Theme 8 Transport and the Millennium Development Goals

30. Another objective of the RAP was to foster a better understanding of the links between transport interventions, poverty reduction and the achievement of the MDGs. In this regard, the secretariat conducted analytical reviews of the issues pertaining to transport and the MDGs with a focus on rural access, farm-to-market logistics and food security.⁸ The secretariat's other activities under the RAP have also contributed to the MDGs, particularly those relating to the Almaty Programme of Action,⁹ which supports MDG Goal 8 on developing a global partnership for development.

III. Independent evaluation of the implementation of phase I of the Regional Action Programme

A. Objectives and methodology

31. In early 2011, the secretariat initiated an independent evaluation of phase I of the RAP, the objectives of which were:

(a) To assess the implementation of the RAP in terms of the achievement of the objectives set out under each of the eight thematic areas;

(b) To assess the usefulness of the RAP as an overarching framework for cooperation between member States, ESCAP and other partners.

32. An independent consultant was recruited to conduct the evaluation. Questionnaires were sent to seats of government and, where available, national focal points, as well as partner organizations. A total of 34 questionnaires were returned: 22 from various ministries in 11 countries, 4 from private sector companies (freight forwarders) and 8 from partner organizations. In addition, the consultant visited Cambodia, China, India, Mongolia and Thailand to conduct in-depth interviews with stakeholders as well as ESCAP staff. Furthermore, the consultant collected information from the following sources: (a) desk reviews of documents; (b) country statements; (c) progress and terminal reports for projects conducted within the RAP; (d) published studies, manuals, guidelines, resource materials; (e) meeting documents; (f) participants' feedback on activities conducted under the RAP; and (g) secondary sources, including information published on the Internet and the ESCAP website.

B. Summary of findings

33. The overarching goal of the RAP was to build the capacity of government officials and other stakeholders on policies and programmes to strengthen regional cooperation in transport for inclusive and sustainable

⁸ See "Transport and poverty: from farm to market – extending the reach of logistics" (E/ESCAP/CTR/2) and "Rural access and farm-to-market logistics" (E/ESCAP/FAMT/SGO/5).

⁹ Almaty Programme of Action: Addressing the Special Needs of Landlocked Developing Countries within a New Global Framework for Transit Transport Cooperation for Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries (*Report of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 28 and 29 August 2003* (A/CONF.202/3), annex I).

development. In this context, the evaluation focused on the assessment of the RAP as a whole, based on the criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, United Nations coherence, and partnerships, as well as the implementation of the RAP by thematic area according to the indicators set out in the RAP.¹⁰

34. In terms of the overall programme, member States and partner organizations were asked to assess the extent to which the RAP reflected their national and regional transport priorities; complemented similar initiatives by other development partners; and, supported the goals of related United Nations global mandates. Respondents were asked to rank the extent or importance of each response on a scale of 1 to 5, and the aggregate scores were calculated and then expressed as a percentage.

35. *Relevance:* When asked whether the RAP reflected the regional and national transport priorities of their countries, member States gave a score of 85 per cent, while when asked about the extent to which the RAP reflected the transport priorities of the region, partner organizations gave a score of 73 per cent. The evaluator found that the RAP was considered to be highly relevant to the expressed needs of all countries, as evidenced by project documentation, stakeholder consultations, global and regional mandates and deliberations of intergovernmental bodies.

36. *Partnerships:* Under the RAP, the secretariat strengthened its ties with other United Nations bodies as well as with transport organizations and associations. In some cases, ESCAP organized joint workshops and collaborated in joint analytical studies; in others, collaboration took the form of sharing information and participating in each other's meetings. Table 2 below shows the United Nations agencies and offices, external organizations, and associations which have been partners under each thematic area of the RAP.

Table 2
Partnerships*

| | RAP thematic area | Other United Nations bodies | External partners |
|---|--|----------------------------------|--|
| 1 | Policy guidance at the ministerial level | UNCTAD, UNEP | ADB, ASEAN, AITD, iRAP, UIC, GIF, IFRTD, JICA, KMI, IGC-TRACECA |
| 2 | Transport infrastructure development | ECE | World Bank, ADB, ECO, UIC, OSJD, IRU, IRF, IsDB, KEC, KOTI, KMI, KRRI, PIARC, IDI, Nepal Administrative Staff College, Railway Staff College (India) |
| 3 | Transport facilitation | All regional commissions, UNCTAD | ADB, SCO, WCO, UIC, OSJD, IRU |
| 4 | Transport logistics | | FIATA, AFFA, KMI, KOTI |
| 5 | Financing and PPPs | | World Bank, ADB, IsDB, AITD, AIT |

¹⁰ These evaluation criteria are set by the ESCAP Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines (available at <http://www.unescap.org/pmd/documents/me/EvaluationGuidelinesOct09Pub.pdf>). Gender-mainstreaming, human-rights based approaches and environmental sustainability are also ESCAP evaluation criteria, but as these issues were not considered in the formulation of the RAP, they were not included in the questionnaires.

| | RAP thematic area | Other United Nations bodies | External partners |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| 6 | Sustainable transport development | All regional commissions | UNEP-GEF, GIZ |
| 7 | Road safety | United Nations road safety collaboration (including all regional commissions), WHO | GRSP, iRAP, FIA Foundation |
| 8 | Transport and the MDGs | ILO | IFRTD, AITD, ILO |

* Please see list of abbreviations for full names of partners.

37. There is clear evidence of effective links between ESCAP and key partners in the delivery of the RAP. From the perspective of member States, when asked “To what extent did the Regional Action Programme complement similar initiatives by other development partners or agencies?”, respondents indicated a score of 86 per cent, while partner organizations indicated a score of 70 per cent when asked “To what extent did the RAP complement the work of your Organization?” Interviewees were also of the view that the RAP was supporting rather than duplicating the work of partners.¹¹

38. *United Nations coherence:* Respondents and interviewees confirmed that the RAP supported a number of United Nations global mandates and understood their significance. In particular, member States recognized that the RAP supported the MDGs and the Almaty Programme of Action. In addition, interviewees stressed the important relationship between the RAP and the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020. However, respondents were less aware of the linkages between the Regional Action Programme and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (2005-2015) and the Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010. This is partly because the respondents did not include any Pacific island developing countries and partly because of the limited number of activities involving these countries. Furthermore, although the RAP indirectly addresses the MDGs, the secretariat recognized that more targeted interventions were required to strengthen linkages between the RAP and the MDGs. It was noted that, in areas such as sustainable transport, there was scope for working more closely with other United Nations offices, such as UNDP and UNEP, as well as other secretariat units.

39. *Effectiveness:* The evaluator noted that the effectiveness of the RAP should be assessed by measuring the benefits to member States from implementing policies and plans arising from their participation in the RAP, but that in reality it could be many years before such benefits were realized. Nevertheless, he made a limited assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation of each thematic area based on the extent to which member States participated in RAP activities, and individually or collectively implemented the recommendations, policies, initiatives, agreements or other outcomes of the RAP. The levels of effectiveness in each thematic area were determined by the following criteria:

¹¹ For more information on cooperation between ESCAP and other agencies, see E/ESCAP/MCT.2/INF/5.

(a) **HIGHLY EFFECTIVE**: objectives and outputs met fully with significant and/or multiple achievements;

(b) **EFFECTIVE**: objectives and outputs met fully with some tangible achievements;

(c) **LIMITED EFFECTIVENESS**: objectives and outputs met fully but with few tangible achievements or objectives and outputs met partly but with at least some tangible achievements;

(d) **INEFFECTIVE**: objectives and outputs fully, partly or not met but with no tangible achievements.

40. Table 3 below provides the summary of the assessment. It suggests that overall, the RAP has served as an effective framework for regional cooperation in the development of transport, and that none of the thematic areas was judged to be ineffective. In particular, the provision of policy guidance at the ministerial level and the contribution to regional transport infrastructure development has been highly effective. The thematic areas of sustainable transport development and transport and the MDGs are rated as being of only limited effectiveness.

Table 3

Assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation of the RAP

| Thematic area | Key indicators of achievement | Level of effectiveness |
|--|--|---|
| Policy guidance at the ministerial level | The Bangkok Declaration is evidence that ministers and senior government officials from member States are cooperating to identify policy goals for regional transport development. | Significant tangible progress. HIGHLY EFFECTIVE |
| Transport infrastructure development | The Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network; Inauguration of the Working Group on the Trans-Asian Railway Network; Progress on upgrading links and constructing missing links to the Asian Highway network and Trans-Asian Railway network; The promotion of the Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway and integrated intermodal transport systems in national planning priorities; Preparatory work on an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports. | Significant tangible progress. HIGHLY EFFECTIVE |
| Transport facilitation | Study on national coordination mechanisms for trade and transport facilitation in the ESCAP region; Publication entitled <i>Towards a Harmonized Legal Regime on Transport Facilitation in the ESCAP Region – Guidelines</i> (ST/ESCAP/2489); | Some tangible progress EFFECTIVE |

| Thematic area | Key indicators of achievement | Level of effectiveness |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Transport logistics | <p>Technical assistance in formulating and implementing an intergovernmental agreement between SCO Member States on the facilitation of international road transport;</p> <p>Study on pricing of customs documents under the GMS Cross-Border Transport Agreement (CBTA);</p> <p>Guidelines on ICT Applications for Trade and Transport Facilitation for Landlocked Countries in the Asian and Pacific Region;</p> <p>Time/cost-distance methodology and toolkit.</p> <p>Annual regional forums and meetings of chief executives of national associations of freight forwarders, national logistics associations and other professional transport bodies (2007 – 2011);</p> <p>ESCAP document entitled “Towards an appropriate regulatory environment for the multimodal transport and logistics industry”;</p> <p>ESCAP Foundation Course on Multimodal Transport and Logistics: Study Guide (2009).</p> | <p>Some tangible progress</p> <p>EFFECTIVE</p> |
| Financing and PPPs | <p>PPP alliance programme for capacity-building in infrastructure development and the provision of basic services;</p> <p>High-level Expert Group Meeting on Public-Private Partnerships in Infrastructure Development (Seoul, 2007, and Jakarta, 2010);</p> <p>Seoul Declaration on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP resolution 64/4 of 30 April 2008);</p> <p>Jakarta Declaration on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP resolution 66/5 of 19 May 2010);</p> <p>Regional workshop and study visit on developing bankable public-private partnership projects for infrastructure development in India in 2008;</p> <p>Development and provision of online training courses and PPP readiness tool.</p> | <p>Some tangible progress</p> <p>EFFECTIVE</p> |
| Sustainable transport development | <p>The secretariat organized the Expert Group Meeting on Sustainable Transport Development: Eco-efficiency of freight transport and logistics (Bangkok, 2010).</p> | <p>Little progress to date</p> <p>LIMITED EFFECTIVENESS</p> |

| Thematic area | Key indicators of achievement | Level of effectiveness |
|------------------------|--|--|
| Road safety | Project on achieving road safety goals and targets for Asia and the Pacific: Decade for Action for Road Safety (2011-2020); High levels of engagement by member States on road safety. | Some tangible progress EFFECTIVE |
| Transport and the MDGs | No specific activities on the MDGs apart from policy documents for intergovernmental meetings. However, the Regional Action Programme as a whole can be said to have contributed to the achievement of the MDGs. | Little tangible progress LIMITED EFFECTIVENESS |

41. In terms of modality, there is some evidence that regional expert group meetings, advisory services and national workshops, in all thematic areas, are highly valued by participating States. In addition, the proposed web-based road safety network that will be established to encourage partnerships and the monitoring of achievements at the regional and national levels was seen as innovatory and potentially valuable.

42. *Efficiency:* Activities conducted under the RAP have been funded from a number of sources, including: the regular budget, which contributed in the main to staffing costs; the regular budget technical cooperation account; the United Nations Development Account; and extrabudgetary funding from non-regular budget sources, usually individual donor countries. Until 2011, these funding sources operated on an annual cycle, apart from some extrabudgetary projects, which could be up to 24 months, and the United Nations Development Account projects, which covered three to five years. The implementation of the RAP has, to date, been very dependent on extrabudgetary funding sources. As most donors preferred to maintain a degree of control over how their funds were utilized, the activities which received funding reflected, to some extent, the priority themes of the donors, though all were within the framework of the RAP.

43. The evaluator assessed 11 extrabudgetary projects completed between 2007 and 2011, totalling US\$ 1,164,828 of actual funds spent. A review of the expenditures associated with these projects indicated that 54.3 per cent of the total project funds were committed to group training, 17.3 per cent was spent on consultants, 7.2 per cent was spent on administrative support¹² and 6.3 per cent was utilized for travel on official business. Programme support costs in aggregate amounted to 11.5 per cent of total actual expenditure.¹³ In terms of expenditure, the budget delivery rate of these projects was 83 per cent on average, with most projects being initiated within three months of the planned start date. Four projects achieved a budget delivery rate of 70 per cent or less, suggesting that project budgeting and/or management needed to be improved. However, it was also noted that these projects involved cooperation between

¹² Administrative support is direct costs incurred in organizing meetings, printing, translating, transmitting and collecting documents, and travel arrangements for ESCAP staff and sponsored participants.

¹³ In accordance with United Nations procedures, programme support costs are deemed to be the indirect costs of programme management, human resources management, financial services, conference services and protocol.

several countries on highly technical matters, such as the negotiation of intergovernmental agreements.

44. It was noted that there was a variety of funding cycles and projects, most having relatively modest budgets (the largest being US\$ 220,000). It was also noted that (a) project outputs might not cover all the activities in a particular thematic area; (b) project outputs might cover more than one thematic area; and (c) some specific objectives of a given thematic area were covered by more than one project. The evaluator concluded that, since neither annual budgets nor financial statements of income and expenditure had been prepared for the RAP as a single programme, it was impossible to determine the efficiency of its overall implementation. He noted, however, that this problem might be partially addressed by the secretariat's move towards a programmatic approach for its technical cooperation activities in 2011.

45. *Sustainability:* The creation of an efficient regional transport network requires a framework in which all States can collectively address the issues involved. A number of interviewees indicated that, in their opinion, no organization, other than ESCAP, had the convening power or ability to build a consensus on complex connectivity and cross-border issues at the regional level. Similarly, the RAP had the potential to establish regional standards or norms from which common regional transport policies should ensue. However, these issues continue to evolve and often take time to be integrated into national transport plans and projects. It was therefore thought that the overall objective of the RAP of realizing an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system in the region was unlikely to be sustainable without the involvement of ESCAP.

46. Furthermore, the evaluator noted that there was a correlation between the effectiveness of the thematic areas and the level of donor support. Thus, to a great extent, the secretariat will continue to be dependent on donors to provide support to all areas of the RAP; without continuing donor support, it is unlikely that many countries, particularly least developed countries, would have the capacity to participate in the activities associated with the RAP.

47. *Other issues:* Respondents and interviewees made a number of other observations regarding the RAP, including: (a) while improvements to the regional road and railway transport infrastructure will benefit the whole community, the extent of such economic and social benefits on the communities affected, including women, has not been enumerated; (b) there is some concern about the potential role that the increased use of the regional transport networks may play in the transmission of HIV/AIDS in the region, as well as drug trafficking and security; and (c) the ESCAP transport website is an important resource but is not user-friendly or up-to-date.

48. *Future priorities:* At its second session, held in November 2010, the Committee on Transport identified nine priority thematic areas for phase II of the RAP, to be implemented between 2012 and 2016 (see E/ESCAP/67/7, para. 1). Table 4 provides a summary of the responses from countries and thus provides an indication of the importance of these areas from a regional perspective. In view of the changing transport needs of the region, there was particularly strong support for the new area "connecting subregional networks".

Table 4
Priority areas for phase II of the RAP

| Thematic area | Percentage score |
|--|-------------------------|
| Transport infrastructure | 92 |
| Transport facilitation | 93 |
| Transport logistics | 88 |
| Finance and private sector participation | 85 |
| Sustainable transport | 88 |
| Road safety | 78 |
| Transport and the Millennium Development Goals | 72 |
| Inter-island shipping | 62 ^a |
| Connecting subregional networks | 91 |

^a This result may be partly explained by the fact that, as of the beginning of June 2011, there were no questionnaire responses from Pacific island countries.

49. Some respondents felt that, during phase I, several thematic areas had been implemented as stand-alone activities, therefore causing important interdependencies to be overlooked. Thus, while network development, intermodality and sustainable transport systems are closely related, they had been treated as disparate subjects within the RAP. As a result, the RAP lacked a degree of coherence and its ultimate goal of international integrated intermodal transport was somewhat obscured as a result.

C. Recommendations for phase II of the Regional Action Programme

50. Overall, the evaluation of phase I of the RAP found that the RAP had provided a very effective framework for regional cooperation in the development of transport in the region. However, the evaluator noted that, while the RAP fulfilled certain requirements for the creation of an integrated intermodal transport system in the region, its scope and structure should be reconsidered in the design of phase II for the following reasons:

(a) The building of the regional Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks has been “bottom up”, which has meant adding together significant parts of national networks for the different modes and connecting them at national borders. While this approach has had considerable merit to date, it is likely that the adequacy of this approach will become progressively weaker because network planning is not being driven by regional objectives that would ensure that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. The question of how national planning can be combined with a regional level of planning will become more and more relevant as the networks become integrated and increasingly complex. The RAP does not as yet sufficiently address the need for “top-down” strategic planning for network development at the regional level;

(b) The benefits of infrastructure projects, such as railways and roads, not only extend beyond national boundaries, but are enhanced across networks. It is highly likely that the prospects for infrastructure development will improve when markets and government action stretch beyond the confines of a single country. Since improving regional connectivity creates benefits that will be spread widely across Asia, it needs to be planned and financed collectively to ensure “win-win” outcomes. Furthermore, since there are potentially large cross-border and cross-network externalities, a strong economic case for greater regional cooperation in the joint planning of infrastructure provision should be made;

(c) Intermodal infrastructure networks will affect the economic geography of the region in terms of where economic activity is located and the pattern of trade across the region. Indeed, the benefits of regional infrastructure will be realized through the creation of cross-border economic corridors. Agglomeration effects will probably mean that the largest benefits will accrue to the new network hubs, but these benefits will depend on the efficiency of the network and, particularly, the speed of cross-border transit. The development of such corridors requires more systematic and coordinated planning as well as associated policy and institutional changes;

(d) Increasing network connectivity will increase user choice of mode and route. Socially optimal modal distribution requires appropriate transport pricing policies across borders, networks and modes. Countries will need to deepen their economic reforms in most transport sectors through coordinated actions and policies;

(e) Subregional transport planning is gaining momentum, as shown by ASEAN formulating its master plan on connectivity.¹⁴ Such master planning at the subregional level would benefit significantly from the clarification of regional planning assumptions and their impact on subregional connectivity.

51. Taking these issues into consideration, the evaluator suggested that member States consider the following recommendations when deliberating on phase II of the RAP:

(a) The scope of the RAP, which has been mainly limited to network formulation and formalization, should be extended to include the strategic planning, financing and implementation of the regional transport network and its connectivity;

(b) A long-term regional master plan should be prepared, for the development of a "core network" of corridors that will carry large and consolidated volumes of freight traffic through more extensive use of efficient modes in inter- and multimodal combinations. The plan should be a blueprint for the phased development of the network, including timescales for the realization of integrated intermodal transport and logistics, and should expound how regional connectivity will be achieved and have provisions for periodic monitoring, review and revision. In this way, countries would have a common framework of targets for action at the national level;

(c) In view of the region's varied needs and circumstances — and varying political commitment to closer integration — network connectivity should be developed by strengthening and integrating existing subregional programmes and plans;

(d) The efficient development and utilization of the evolving network(s) will require coordinated and deeper economic reforms in the transport sector in order to foster effective competition within and between modes and corridors. In this regard, the pace of policy development needs to increase, and its scope should include transport sector reform and deregulation, including guidance on pricing and other interventions in support of key policy objectives;

(e) The development of the intergovernmental agreement on dry ports should receive high priority;

¹⁴ See www.asean.org/documents/MPAC.pdf.

(f) The pace of development of the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks remains slow overall, and the funding requirements as regards completing missing links and upgrading the networks are great. In this regard, work should continue under phase II to mobilize additional funding for investment from traditional and non-traditional sources, including PPPs;

(g) The pace of progress in the development of the main networks will need to be more closely monitored by ESCAP. This will require more investment in the Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway and possibly dry ports databases and a greater commitment from countries to provide the necessary data;

(h) While significant progress has been made in formalizing and promoting the Trans-Asian Railway, considerable challenges remain if the full potential of the network is to be realized. In particular, regional railway integration will require progressive policies by railways, such as the development of effective inter-railway agreements that allow full interoperability and seamless customer services, cooperation in the planning of railway investment so that it benefits the region as a whole rather than just particular countries; and greater private sector participation and competitive pricing;

(i) Cross-border and transit transport using the existing infrastructure still faces tremendous difficulties across the region. In spite of the efforts of ESCAP and other international organizations to eliminate non-physical barriers, progress remains slow due to the complexity of this challenge. There is an urgent continuing need to enhance government and private sector capacity to implement facilitation measures in a more integrated approach, through subregional and bilateral agreements, international conventions, the use of facilitation tools and the application of new technologies;

(j) Many countries in the region, particularly landlocked developing countries, still face high transport costs due to the lack of effective regulatory frameworks for private sector participation in the logistics industry. There is a continuing need, therefore, to develop the capacity of officials involved in transport to create the necessary enabling environment for the development of the freight forwarding and logistics sector;

(k) The transport constraints and challenges of archipelagic and island countries need to be evaluated and ways of reducing international transport costs need to be identified;

(l) The thematic areas of "sustainable transport" and "transport and the MDGs" lack focus and need to be systematically integrated into the other thematic areas. Rather than developing separate activities under these items, it would be more effective, for example, to develop policies for shifting to greener, low carbon transport within the strategy for improving transport connectivity;

(m) While the Busan Declaration was an expression of the collective vision of governments in the region, the RAP is primarily a framework for ESCAP activities. In this regard, the respective roles of national Governments and the secretariat could be more clearly defined. A different formulation of indicators of achievement of the RAP, which reflects jointly agreed goals for the period of implementation, may increase the collective ownership of the RAP and encourage higher levels of government to participate in ESCAP activities;

(n) While some thematic areas and activities are recognized as ESCAP activities, other work undertaken by the secretariat and the RAP as a whole are not very well known by the general public. In this regard, communication and promotional activities should be enhanced, particularly through the better use of the ESCAP Transport website;

(o) Without overall estimates for planned expenditure on all RAP activities, it is difficult to determine if costs have been properly allocated to the specific activities undertaken in each of the extrabudgetary projects. In this regard, the move towards a programmatic approach to technical assistance projects, which has been initiated by ESCAP, should help in planning and assessing the RAP as a whole. With greater ownership of the RAP, member States may also make more resources available for their own participation in RAP activities. Nonetheless, the support provided to the RAP by donors, in particular bilateral donors, has been invaluable for the implementation of the RAP and is likely to continue to be critical to the next phase.

52. The secretariat has carefully reviewed the report on the evaluation of phase I of the RAP and has taken its recommendations into consideration in the process of drafting the background documents for the Ministerial Conference on Transport. In the next section, a number of outstanding issues are presented for the consideration of the Conference.

IV. Issues for consideration

53. The Ministerial Conference may wish to provide its views on the review of the implementation of phase I of the RAP and the findings and recommendations of the evaluation of the RAP, as presented above. In addition, the secretariat seeks the views of Conference on the outstanding issues described below, which were raised by the evaluation.

54. *Complementarities between the nine proposed thematic areas:* In view of the recommendations given above, the secretariat is considering a matrix approach for phase II of the RAP, which would focus primarily on four principal areas: transport infrastructure development (including the Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway, and dry ports); transport facilitation; transport logistics; and inter-island shipping. Future activities in the other five areas could focus on supporting the four principal areas. A visual representation of this structure is given in table 5. This approach would not necessarily limit the work of the secretariat to these areas (for example, road safety activities will support the Decade of Action for Road Safety, and not be limited to road safety on the Asian Highway), but it may be a useful way to focus staff and financial resources on the core areas where the ESCAP Transport Division has a clear comparative advantage. Activities in other supporting areas could be integrated into the activities in principal areas and implemented in close collaboration with other relevant divisions of ESCAP.

Table 5
Matrix approach to the RAP

| Principal Areas | | Support areas | | | | |
|---|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|------------------------|---|
| | | Finance and PPP | Sustainable transport development | Road safety | Transport and the MDGs | Connecting subregional transport networks |
| Transport infrastructure development | Asian Highway | * | * | * | * | * |
| | Trans-Asian Railway | * | * | | | * |
| | Dry ports | * | * | | * | * |
| Transport facilitation | | | | | | * |
| Transport logistics | | | * | | * | * |
| Inter-island shipping | | | | | * | * |

Note: An asterisk (*) indicates where these areas will support principal areas.

55. *Consolidated planning framework:* The new programmatic approach of ESCAP, which involves the planning and budgeting of technical assistance activities within a three-year time frame, will help to improve the planning and financing of activities under the RAP. The Transport Division's Capacity Development Project for 2011-2013 covers activities in all nine areas of the next phase of the RAP. However, the financing of the RAP will continue to depend on the support of bilateral and multilateral donors.

56. *Improved communication between the secretariat and member States:* With the spread of Internet and email access, communication between the secretariat and member States has improved. However, there are still significant gaps which should be addressed in order to strengthen collaboration and increase the impact of the RAP during phase II. Actions the secretariat is taking in this regard include:

(a) The Transport Division is currently reviewing its website in line with a secretariat-wide initiative aimed at making the ESCAP website more user-friendly. In addition, the secretariat is exploring ways to improve communication with member States. Member States may also consider ways to ensure that the secretariat is informed of changes in communication channels, particularly when there is a change of staff or focal point;

(b) The Transport Division is reviewing the kind of data it requires to support its activities and the most effective means of collecting these data. Member States may also consider ways to collaborate with the secretariat in order to systematise the updating of data, particularly on the Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway, dry ports and road safety.