



ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

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**REVIEW OF ISSUES PERTINENT TO THE SUBSIDIARY STRUCTURE OF
THE COMMISSION, INCLUDING THE PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE
REPORT FOR THE BIENNIUM 2008-2009 AND THE WORK OF THE
ESCAP REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS: TRANSPORT**

(Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda)

**REPORT OF THE FORUM OF ASIAN MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT
ON ITS FIRST SESSION**

SUMMARY

The Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport held its first session in Bangkok from 14 to 18 December 2009. It consisted of two segments, namely the senior government officials' segment, which was held from 14 to 16 December 2009, and the ministerial segment, which was held on 17 and 18 December 2009. The Forum was attended by 151 representatives, including 16 ministerial-level officials, from 27 members and associate members of ESCAP, and representatives from relevant organizations within and outside the United Nations system.

Major outcomes included the Bangkok Declaration on Transport Development in Asia. The Forum endorsed, among other things, the continued implementation of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific¹ and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2007-2011).² It also supported the development of an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports to facilitate a coordinated approach to an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system.

The Commission may wish to consider the matters calling for its action or brought to its attention, which are presented in chapter I. The Commission may also wish to provide the secretariat with guidance on the implementation of the recommendations.

¹ E/ESCAP/63/13, chap. V.

² Commission resolution 63/9 of 23 May 2007, annex.

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I. MATTERS CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE COMMISSION OR BROUGHT TO ITS ATTENTION

1. The Forum endorsed the continued implementation of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific¹ and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2007-2011).²

2. The Forum requested the secretariat to continue to assist and coordinate in the identification of priority investment needs and promoting financing for the development of road and railway infrastructure and rolling stock as well as supporting the installation of route signage along the Asian Highway network.

3. The Forum requested the secretariat to continue its work with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) on removing bottlenecks and operationalizing transport corridors along Euro-Asian transport linkages.

4. The Forum supported the development of an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports to facilitate a coordinated approach to an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system.

5. The Forum requested the secretariat to continue to assist member States in the negotiation of the annexes to the Agreement between the Governments of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Member States on Facilitation of International Road Transport, which, it was hoped, would be finalized in the near future.
6. The Forum considered that the development of minimum standards and codes of conduct for freight forwarders, multimodal transport operators and logistics service providers would be a critical factor in upgrading skills and professionalism in the industry.
7. The Forum stressed the importance of intermodal transport and encouraging a modal shift from road to rail and waterways, where possible, and from private motor vehicles to public transport, to help reduce energy consumption and emissions in the transport sector.
8. The Forum requested the secretariat to organize regional road safety meetings to consider implementation of the Moscow Declaration.³ In that regard, the Meeting welcomed the generous offer of support by the Russian Federation, through a voluntary contribution to ESCAP, for the implementation of a regional programme to improve road safety.
9. The Forum adopted the Bangkok Declaration on Transport Development in Asia.⁴
10. The Forum reiterated that, in all the activities to be implemented under the Bangkok Declaration, particular attention should continue to be given to the special needs of least developed countries as well as landlocked developing countries.

II. PROCEEDINGS

A. Policy debate on issues pertaining to transport development in Asia, and 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)

(Agenda item 4)

11. The Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport considered that the convening of its first session was timely and afforded the opportunity to take stock of progress and consider the issues which needed to be addressed to ensure that the advances in recent years of promoting regional connectivity were sustained.
12. The Forum considered that 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), were serving as an important long-term regional transport development strategy that supported international trade, tourism and regional economic cooperation.
13. The Forum endorsed the continued 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).

³ A/64/540, annex.

⁴ See chapter IV.

14. The Forum noted with satisfaction the progress being made by a number of countries in becoming a party to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network⁵ and the Intergovernmental Agreement on Trans-Asian Railway Network.⁶

15. The Forum noted that countries were developing and upgrading various sections of the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks as integral components of their national programmes. These projects were aimed at improving connectivity within the region and other parts of the world. It also noted that countries were placing renewed emphasis on collaborating with their neighbours in the planning and financing of specific projects.

16. The Forum requested the secretariat to continue to assist and coordinate in the identification of priority investment needs and to promote financing for the development of road and railway infrastructure and rolling stock as well as supporting the installation of route signage along the Asian Highway network.

17. The Forum recognized that the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks represented two major building blocks in support of the development of international intermodal corridors. It noted the progress made in implementation of the project on operationalization of international intermodal transport corridors in North-East and Central Asia.

18. The Forum requested the secretariat to continue its work with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) on removing bottlenecks and operationalizing transport corridors along Euro-Asian transport linkages.

19. The Forum also acknowledged that the efficiency of future international transport corridors required the development of intermodal facilities such as dry ports or inland container depots. It also observed that the growing importance of smooth logistics was behind specific projects, such as the development of intermodal facilities or hubs already being implemented or considered in many countries.

20. The Forum supported the development of an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports to facilitate a coordinated approach to an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system.

21. Noting the importance of sustainable road maintenance and road asset management, the Forum recognized the need for sharing experiences and best practices among member countries.

22. The Forum noted the special transport needs of archipelagic and island countries and requested the secretariat to consider programmes to enhance regional connectivity through ferry links. The Forum also requested the secretariat to consider programmes that included inland waterways.

23. The Forum stressed the importance of removing non-physical barriers to cross-border and transit transport in the region. In that context, it also stressed the need for simplification of cross-border and transit formalities and procedures, the harmonization of transport legislation and the application of new technologies to speed up clearances at border crossing.

⁵ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2323, No. 41607.

⁶ Commission resolution 62/4 of 12 April 2006, annex.

24. The Forum noted the progress made by some member countries in acceding to international facilitation conventions and also in the formulation and/or implementation of subregional transport facilitation agreements in the Greater Mekong subregion and among the Shanghai Cooperation Organization member States as well as bilateral transport agreements.

25. The Forum requested the secretariat to continue to assist member States in the negotiation of the annexes to the Agreement between the Governments of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Member States on Facilitation of International Road Transport, which, it was hoped, would be finalized in the near future.

26. The Forum noted the concrete actions taken by member countries to develop integrated logistics systems through policy and regulatory adjustments, the development of efficient, seamless and eco-friendly logistics networks, simplification of customs clearances and improved logistics management, as well as safe and free movements of goods.

27. The Forum considered that the secretariat's training activities in the field of freight forwarding, multimodal transport and logistics helped member countries upgrade traditional freight forwarders to fully-fledged multimodal transport operators and logistics services providers.

28. The Forum considered that the development of minimum standards and codes of conduct for freight forwarders, multimodal transport operators and logistics service providers would be a critical factor in upgrading skills and professionalism in the industry.

29. The Forum noted that Governments of most member countries had already commenced the implementation of measures designed to reduce energy consumption and emissions by the transport sector. It also underscored the importance of enforcement of vehicle emission norms and the introduction of new eco-friendly vehicles as important initiatives to reduce environmental degradation.

30. The Forum stressed the importance of intermodal transport and encouraging a modal shift from road to rail, waterways and non-motorized transport, where possible, and from private motor vehicles to public transport, to help reduce energy consumption and emissions in the transport sector.

31. The Forum noted that many countries had initiated various actions to improve road safety through (a) establishing national road safety committees or councils, safety boards, and road safety funds, (b) defining goals and targets, (c) developing and implementing road safety action plans, (d) enacting legislation; and (e) implementing educational and awareness programmes.

32. The Forum requested the secretariat to organize regional road safety meetings to consider implementation of the Moscow Declaration. In that regard, the Forum welcomed the generous offer of support by the Russian Federation, through a voluntary contribution to ESCAP, for the implementation of a regional programme to improve road safety.

33. Recognizing the massive investment needs for the region's future transport infrastructure development, the Forum noted various institutional arrangements and financing mechanisms, including special infrastructure funds, that many countries had put in place. The Forum also recognized the importance of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in transport infrastructure development and noted the impressive progress that many countries had made in implementing projects through PPP modalities. It

welcomed the offer of India, Turkey, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation to share their experience in PPP development.

34. The Forum recognized that rural road connectivity and transport services were key ingredients in strategies for sustainable poverty reduction. It also emphasized the benefits of participation of local people in design and construction of rural transport projects.

35. The Forum noted that, in many countries, rural bus services were the primary means of mobility available to rural populations. The secretariat was requested to include modalities for exchanges of experience with respect to the management and operation of public bus transport when documenting and disseminating best practices.

36. The Forum recognized the special needs of landlocked developing countries arising from their geographical constraints and, in many cases, their rugged terrain. It also noted that similar constraints were sometimes present in deeper hinterlands of countries. In both cases, the Forum recognized the importance of efficient transport infrastructure and services in promoting inclusive development.

37. The delegation of Indonesia informed the Forum that the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Public Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development would be held in Jakarta from 14 to 17 April 2010. It apprised the Forum of the structure of the conference, which included an expert group meeting, a public-private sector leadership forum, an exhibition and a ministerial meeting. The delegation extended an invitation to all ESCAP members to participate and requested the secretariat to assist in its organization.

38. The Forum welcomed the invitation extended to member countries by the delegation of Japan to participate in the Asian Highway seminar to be held in Tokyo on 18 and 19 February 2010 to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Asian Highway project. It noted that formal invitations would be sent out by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism and ESCAP in due course.

39. The delegation of Pakistan informed the Forum that, as a follow-up to the decision taken in the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), the Government of Pakistan planned to host an expert-level conference on a "Eurasian Land Bridge" at Islamabad in April 2010 under the aegis of the Ministry of Communication. The objective of the Conference would be to establish Euro-Asia land transport routes through the revival of the Silk Route, which had formerly been the backbone for trade, transfer of knowledge and sharing of ideas.

40. In their statements during the policy debate segment of the Forum, ministers and representatives provided details of their transport infrastructure problems and objectives, development experiences and policy initiatives.

41. **Armenia** attached great importance to the development of the transport sector as a driving force of its economy. A "North-South Highway" project on upgrading of AH81 and AH82 had been initiated; a memorandum of understanding on the construction of the Armenia – Islamic Republic of Iran railway had been signed; work on the improvement of rural roads was continuing; and the national Road Safety Improvement Strategy for 2009-2012 had been adopted.

42. **Bangladesh** was committed to playing its role in promoting the development of an integrated multimodal transport system across the region. A number of road and rail projects had already been initiated to increase the capacity of the existing AH and TAR routes and construct missing links. The potential of the PPP financing modality

for project implementation was very new to the country and a request was made to the Executive Secretary to extend assistance in that area.

43. **Cambodia** had made significant progress in rehabilitating and constructing transport infrastructure. High priority was being accorded to the development of roads and the rehabilitation of the railway system as well as the construction of the missing link from Sisophon to Poipet in the Singapore-Kunming railway. Challenges due to the impact of the current financial crisis, natural disasters, insufficient funds and road safety were still being addressed.

44. **China** had undertaken a large-scale construction of rural roads and had implemented a set of preferential policy measures for agriculture-related transport aiming at poverty alleviation. A series of measures to reduce energy consumption and emissions in the transport sector had been put in place. China was playing an increasingly active role in regional, subregional and bilateral cooperation for transport facilitation and infrastructure development and had already implemented some programmes and projects with other countries. At the same time, China was accelerating the development of an integrated transport system.

45. **India** had taken initiatives to accelerate development of road and rail infrastructure, including the National Highway Development Project, dedicated freight corridor project, and other regional programmes. Initiatives to enhance transport connectivity with neighbouring countries through several road and rail projects were also being taken. The development of rural road connectivity was being given priority as a key ingredient in ensuring sustainable poverty reduction by promoting access to economic and social services, and thereby generating increased agricultural income and employment opportunities. A national road safety and traffic board and a national safety fund would very soon be put in place.

46. **Indonesia**, was placing great emphasis on developing an intermodal transportation system, with road and railway networks and sea transportation forming a safe, secure and seamless transportation system. Various policies were also developed to improve the performance and service of the transport sector through the implementation of the Roadmap for Transport Safety. To support the development of integrated transport logistics, policies were being revised to accommodate multimodal transport and an inter-ministerial team on logistics had been established.

47. **Japan** was implementing international logistics and transport policies focusing on maritime and air transport through a range of activities, including the Comprehensive Programme of Logistics Policies (2009-2013) and the Super Hub Port project. Initiatives were also being undertaken to improve domestic roads and railways. ASEAN-Japan Action Plan on Environment Improvement in the Transport Sector (Ha Noi Initiative) placed increased emphasis on the environmental aspect of transport.

48. **Kazakhstan**, in line with the “Transport Strategy of the Republic of Kazakhstan to 2015” was implementing transport projects which had a total investment value of more than US\$ 30 billion. They included the development of the “Western China-Western Europe” road corridor, construction of two new railway lines: Korgas-Zhetgen and Uzen-Gyzylgaya-Bereket-Etrek-Gorgan (the Uzen-border of Turkmenistan section on the territory of Kazakhstan), and expansion of capacity at the Dostyk rail border crossing. Work to eliminate non-physical barriers and implement the single window principle was being undertaken and a National Commission on Transit had been established.

49. **Kyrgyzstan** stressed its advantageous geographical position at a crossroad between East and West. Special emphasis was being placed on the revival of the historical Great Silk Road. Priorities included the rehabilitation of international transport corridors and construction of new roads, in particular, the rehabilitation of such routes as Osh – Sary-Tash – Irkeshtam and Bishkek-Naryn-Torugart, as well as a project on the construction of logistic centres. The planned China – Kyrgyzstan – Uzbekistan railway project was of pivotal importance in the railway development. Great attention was given to road safety measures, and the Road Safety Commission had been established. The importance of effective transport planning and the strengthening of international cooperation in transport was highlighted.

50. The **Lao People's Democratic Republic**, as a least developed landlocked country, attached great importance to the development of land transport with a focus on transforming the country from being landlocked to land-linking. The opening of the railway link to Thailand constituted a first step towards the implementation of a plan for a wider network. It was noted that the national process for the ratification of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network⁷ was at a final stage.

51. **Mongolia**, as a landlocked country, placed special attention on the intensive development of transport infrastructure. Policy priorities included the “Millennium Road” project, the coordinated expansion of national roads and railways to support the country's mining sector, and increasing transit transport capacities. For the latter, the international conference “Transit Mongolia” had been held in March 2009.

52. **Myanmar** was constructing 1,845 km of railway lines in addition to its existing 5,284 km of metre-gauge lines. In addition, 1,696 km of the Asian Highway roads had been upgraded to two lanes. The number of berths at seaports had increased to 28 and the number of airports to 38. Bilateral air transport agreements with other countries of the Greater Mekong Subregion had been concluded along with a multilateral air service agreement with China, Singapore and Thailand.

53. **Nepal** had declared fiscal year 2009-2010 as the year of road construction for the development of the transport sector. Projects were under way to provide road access to all administrative districts. Ongoing initiatives to develop three inland container depots and four integrated border check posts would facilitate intermodal transport within the SAARC subregion. Efforts were also under way to develop road safety strategy and action plans and activate the Road Safety Council, which was headed by the Prime Minister.

54. **Pakistan** was implementing its National Trade Corridor Development Programme to improve transport infrastructure and logistics that would position Pakistan as a regional hub and provide improved connectivity to Central Asia, Western China, Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and South Asia. Asian Highways were being upgraded and improved and efficient border-crossing terminals had been constructed to facilitate international transport.

55. The **Philippines**, recognizing the importance, particularly for archipelagic countries, of physical connectivity in bridging economic and social divides and promoting regional integration, placed great emphasis on development of physical infrastructure, intermodal transport and information and communications technology linkages as well as harmonizing conventions, practices and regulations. The greening of the transport sector was also an ongoing initiative to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles and explore co-benefits.

⁷ Commission resolution 62/4, annex.

56. The **Republic of Korea** was implementing policies to establish the green transport system under its national agenda of low-carbon green growth. Various actions and programmes had been initiated, such as (a) a congestion fee charging system; (b) a car-sharing system; (c) Eco-drive; (d) a green transport promotion zone; (e) transit-oriented development (TOD) of railway station areas; (f) green transport modes; and (g) a bus rapid transit system in metropolitan cities.

57. The **Russian Federation**, in line with the “Transport Strategy of the Russian Federation to 2030”, was undertaking projects to develop transport infrastructure, including the Trans-Siberian Railway, Northern Sea Route, international corridor “Western China – Western Europe”, as well as sea and dry ports, with many of the projects being potentially attractive for implementation through the PPP modality. Work had been carried out on the simplification of customs procedures, the use of a single bill of lading for rail movement to Europe and the use of satellite-based navigation technologies.

58. **Sri Lanka** was promoting the development of public transport for the achievement of equitable national development and poverty reduction, and accorded high priority to public sector investment in road and rail infrastructure programmes. The development of dry ports and multimodal logistics centres was also given importance. Road safety had been given particular attention, with specific measures being taken, including the establishment of a road safety fund.

59. **Thailand** had launched its Economic Stimulus Package II in 2009 with a budget of \$5 billion for the improvement of rail and \$2.5 billion for the road sector. Great importance was placed on multisectoral transport safety in all modes of transport, including land, waterways and air. The year 2010 had been declared the year of Transport Safety, and the implementation of the Road Safety Master Plan 2010-2014 would follow up on the Moscow Declaration.

60. **Turkey** was developing a number of road and railway projects aimed at facilitating transit between Europe and Asia. In particular, the future completion of the tunnel under the Istanbul Strait and the Kars-Tbilisi-Baku rail link would establish a Euro-Asian corridor between Europe and the Caucasus region. It was planned that US\$ 350 billion would be invested in transport infrastructure, including intermodal facilities and high-speed passenger lines. Many of the transport projects used PPP modalities.

61. The representative of the **United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)** reported the main current and planned activities of UNCTAD to promote transport and logistics development in the ESCAP region. First, the Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA) had been implemented in a number of ESCAP member countries for customs automation. Second, UNCTAD provided training course targeting mid-level port managers in some ESCAP member countries to strengthen human resource development in the sea port industry. Finally, UNCTAD supported capacity-building related to WTO negotiation and trade facilitation in some ESCAP member countries.

62. The representative of the **Asian Institute of Transport Development (AITD)** emphasized the need to consider: (a) the setting up of an Asian infrastructure fund; (b) measures to promote interoperability between railway systems; and (c) the importance of transport infrastructure and services in poverty reduction. He observed that the integration of national railways in the Trans-Asian Railway would increase traffic volumes, thereby moving towards the critical mass needed for financial viability.

63. The representative of the **International Roads Assessment Programme (iRAP)** reported that a large number of people died or were injured every day because of road accidents. He pointed out that marginal increases in road construction and maintenance costs could ensure that new and existing roads would be safer and result in gains to national economies.

64. The representative of the **International Union of Railways (UIC)** briefed the Forum on the main area of action under its “Vision 2025” and the findings of a study on enhancement of containerization in Asia (2009). He stated the importance of developing international rail corridors and containerization, and the readiness of UIC to collaborate closely with ESCAP and member countries in the process.

B. Report of the Meeting of Senior Government Officials

(Agenda item 5)

65. The Forum considered the report of the Meeting of Senior Government Officials, Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport, first session, held in Bangkok from 14 to 16 December 2009 (E/ESCAP/FAMT/1), and unanimously endorsed its findings and recommendations.

C. Other matters

(Agenda item 6)

66. The participating delegations expressed appreciation of the work undertaken by the secretariat in the preparation and organization of the Forum, and stated that the documents had been submitted in a timely manner and contained very valuable and substantive information, which would assist member countries in developing their national transport sector effectively in order to create an international integrated intermodal transport system in Asia and the Pacific.

67. No other matters were raised.

D. Adoption of the Bangkok Declaration on Transport Development in Asia

(Agenda item 7)

68. The Forum had before it the draft Bangkok declaration on transport development in Asia (E/ESCAP/FAMT/1, annex).

69. The Forum held the view that the draft declaration provided a clear framework for promoting regional cooperation in support of socio-economic development in the region.

70. The Forum reiterated that, in all the activities to be implemented under the Bangkok Declaration, particular attention should continue to be given to the special needs of least developed countries as well as landlocked developing countries.

71. The Forum adopted the Bangkok Declaration on Transport Development in Asia.⁸

⁸ The text of the Declaration, as adopted, appears in chapter IV.

E. Adoption of the report

72. The Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport adopted the report on its first session on 18 December 2009. In so doing, it acknowledged with appreciation the support and assistance extended by the Government of the Russian Federation in the convening of the Forum.

III. ORGANIZATION

A. Opening, duration and organization of the session

73. The first session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport was held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok on 17 and 18 December 2009.

74. The Executive Secretary of the ESCAP read out the message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and delivered her statement. Mr. Andrey Nedosekov, Deputy Minister of Transport of the Russian Federation delivered a statement on behalf of Mr. Igor Levitin, Minister of Transport of the Russian Federation, as a sponsor of the Forum. Mr. Sophon Zaram, Minister of Transport of Thailand, delivered the inaugural address.

1. Message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations

75. In his message, the Secretary-General observed that transport was critical to sustaining economic vitality, advancing social inclusion, building healthier societies and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. He pointed out that enhanced regional connectivity was especially important and efforts to establish the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks, underpinned by two intergovernmental agreements negotiated under the auspices of ESCAP, showed what collective action could achieve. In that context, the Secretary-General urged the region's leaders and partners at all levels to work together in support of the two networks which could empower all segments of society and help people take the future into their own hands.

2. Statement of the Executive Secretary of ESCAP

76. The Executive Secretary, recalling Commission resolution 64/5 on the establishment of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport, stated that it was timely for transport ministers in the region to meet and discuss not only how to address the current financial crisis but also how to promote the foundations for more inclusive and sustainable development in the region, which would also contribute towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

77. For its part, ESCAP was working with member States to promote increased regional connectivity and economic integration, and the transport sector had a vital role to play in providing physical connectivity to achieve that goal. It also had important contributions to make in reducing poverty, protecting the environment and increasing food security.

78. The Executive Secretary said that the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks were the major building blocks for realizing the vision of an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system in the region. In that context, the Bangkok Declaration on Transport Development in Asia was designed to promote the improved connectivity of domestic, regional and interregional transport networks. That included the integration of road and rail networks through "dry ports" that would help to bring economic opportunities to remote hinterland areas and landlocked countries. In closing, the Executive Secretary reiterated that ESCAP stood

ready to work with the transport decision makers of Asia to turn the vision into a reality.

3. Statement of the Minister of Transport of the Russian Federation

79. The Minister of Transport of the Russian Federation said that, despite the global financial crisis, the Russian Federation had continued to take all the necessary measures to develop its transport infrastructure in order to remove barriers facing the transport sector. The Russian Federation recognized with gratitude the cooperation extended by ESCAP member countries for the Russian projects. The Minister expressed confidence that the support provided by the Russian Federation to the first session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport would contribute to the implementation of the Regional Action Programme of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific. In conclusion, he expressed his appreciation of the analytical work and preparations made by the ESCAP secretariat towards the convening of the Forum.

4. Inaugural address by the Minister of Transport of Thailand

80. The Minister of Transport of Thailand extended a warm welcome to all delegates attending the first session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport.

81. The Minister observed that unprecedented increases in trade, output and development experienced by many countries over the preceding two decades had increased standards of living, reduced poverty and resulted in the emergence of the region as a global growth centre. However, despite significant progress in improving physical connectivity, much remained to be done to realize “seamless” and efficient transport in the region. Specific areas included the upgrading of existing transport capacity, the construction of “missing links”, facilitating the movement of goods and vehicles across borders and integrating existing modes of transport into a truly intermodal regional transport system.

82. In expressing his appreciation for the role of ESCAP in promoting and facilitating the movement of goods, people and vehicles within the region and with other regions through the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks, the Minister said that Thailand would continue to support regional cooperation and integration, and actively participate in the work of the Commission. The Minister extended his best wishes for a successful session and declared open the first session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport.

B. Attendance

83. The Forum was attended by representatives of the following members of ESCAP: Armenia; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; Democratic People’s Republic of Korea; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Turkey; Uzbekistan; and Viet Nam.

84. Representatives of the following States Members of the United Nations attended the session in accordance with paragraph 9 of the terms of reference of the Commission: Czech Republic and South Africa.

85. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies attended: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and United Nations Environment Programme.

86. The following intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other organizations were present: Asian Development Bank, European Commission, International Union of Public Transport, Asian Institute of Transport Development, International Road Assessment Programme, International Union of Railways, GIF Research Foundation Japan, International Forum for Rural Transport and Development, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Japan International Transport Institute and Korea Maritime Institute.

C. Election of officers

87. The Forum elected Mr. Syed Abul Hossain (Bangladesh) Chairperson.

88. Following the past practice of the Commission, the Forum decided to elect the following heads of delegations with ministerial or equivalent rank Vice-Chairpersons:

Mr. Tauch Chankosal (Cambodia)
Mr. Kamal Nath (India)
Mr. Bambang Susantono (Indonesia)
Mr. Tadashi Shimura (Japan)
Mr. Mamataliev Abdyrakhman (Kyrgyzstan)
Mr. Sommad Pholsena (Lao People's Democratic Republic)
Mr. Tugs Purevdorj (Mongolia)
Mr. U Pe Than (Myanmar)
Mr. Mohammad Aftab Alam (Nepal)
Ms. Anneli R. Lontoc (Philippines)
Mr. Soon-Man Hong (Republic of Korea)
Mr. Andrey Nedosekov (Russian Federation)
Mr. Kuerkul Danhaivichit (Thailand).

89. Mr. Erdem Direkler (Turkey) was elected Rapporteur.

D. Agenda

90. The Forum adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the Forum.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Policy debate on issues pertaining to transport development in Asia, and 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).
5. Report of the Meeting of Senior Government Officials:
 - (a) Transport infrastructure;
 - (b) Transport and development;
 - (c) Transport and poverty;
 - (d) Transport and environment;
 - (e) Transport and society;

- (f) Future priorities within 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), and the draft Bangkok declaration on transport development in Asia;
 - (g) Dates and venue for the next session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport.
- 6. Other matters.
 - 7. Adoption of the Bangkok declaration on transport development in Asia.
 - 8. Adoption of the report of the Forum.

IV. BANGKOK DECLARATION ON TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA

We, the Ministers of transport and representatives of the members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, attending the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport, held in Bangkok from 14 to 18 December 2009,

Welcoming the convening of a forum for ministers to consider transport issues of regional importance,

Recognizing the crucial importance of regional integration to the economic and social development of countries in the Asian region,

Noting the central role of efficient, reliable and cost-effective transport services, including infrastructure, facilitation and logistics, in supporting the regional integration process,

Recalling Commission resolution 63/9 on the implementation of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific⁹ and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2007-2011),¹⁰

Recalling the 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,¹¹

Encouraged by the successful regional cooperation that led to the entry into force of the intergovernmental agreements on the Asian Highway Network¹² and Trans-Asian Railway Network,¹³

⁹ See E/ESCAP/63/13, chap. V.

¹⁰ Commission resolution 63/9, annex.

¹¹ *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.*

¹² United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2323, No. 41607.

¹³ Commission resolution 62/4, annex.

Noting the important role which transport infrastructure and high-quality transport services play in ensuring sustainable economic growth and increasing the competitiveness of regional economies as well as improving living standards,

Stressing the important role of dry ports in integrating modes of transport, reducing border crossing and transit delays, facilitating the use of energy-efficient and lower emission means of transport, and creating new opportunities for the growth and establishment of development clusters,

Recognizing that formalization of the status of dry ports could significantly contribute to the development of an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system,

Stressing the need to ensure the professionalism and improve performance of the logistics industry,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration¹⁴ and the 2005 World Summit Outcome,¹⁵

Stressing, in this context, the important contribution of transport infrastructure and services in achieving the Millennium Development Goals,

Recognizing that vast numbers of people in rural areas have limited access to transport infrastructure and services and, consequently, to economic and social opportunities,

Recognizing that the improvement of energy efficiency in the transport sector contributes to environmental sustainability,

Recognizing that road safety is a public policy issue of major concern that requires a strong political commitment and effective interventions if road traffic fatalities, injuries and related human suffering are to be reduced significantly,

Welcoming the important outcomes of the First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, held in Moscow on 19 and 20 November 2009,¹⁶

1. *Resolve* that, in order to support increased regional economic integration effectively, our respective government authorities will develop and implement transport policies at the national, subregional and regional levels in line with the following principles:

(a) Formulating integrated policies and decision-making frameworks based on strategic assessments of economic, environmental, social and poverty-related aspects;

(b) Developing an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system in support of production and distribution networks and international trade that contributes significantly to the realization of regional integration for the benefit of our people;

(c) Giving priority to investment in the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks, including intermodal interfaces to link them with water and air transport networks;

¹⁴ See General Assembly resolution 55/2.

¹⁵ See General Assembly resolution 60/1.

¹⁶ See A/64/540.

- (d) Promoting the development of economic and logistics activities at intermodal interfaces, particularly at production and consumption centres, and around seaports and dry ports;
- (e) Increasing access for people in rural areas to transport infrastructure and services;
- (f) Placing road safety high on the policy agenda;
- (g) Mobilizing financial resources for the development of the transport system, its maintenance and operation from all possible sources, including private-sector partnerships and other financial arrangements,

2. *Request* the Executive Secretary to continue to accord priority to the implementation of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific⁹ and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2007-2011),¹⁰ especially to assist regional members and associate members in their efforts:

- (a) To realize the long-term vision of an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system;
- (b) To accede to, ratify, accept or approve the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network¹² and/or the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network;¹³
- (c) To develop the Asian Highway network, the Trans-Asian Railway network and intermodal transport infrastructure;
- (d) To remove bottlenecks along, and operationalize, priority transport corridors and routes, including Euro-Asian transport linkages;
- (e) To join relevant international agreements and conventions aimed at the harmonization of standards, rules and procedures for highway and railway transportation as well as the facilitation of border crossings;
- (f) To provide connectivity and integration of the Asian Highway network, the Trans-Asian Railway network and other transport modes by working towards the development of an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports;
- (g) To develop guidelines for minimum standards and codes of conduct for freight forwarders, multimodal transport operators and logistics services providers;
- (h) To promote the access of rural populations to main transport networks and services;
- (i) To promote environmentally sustainable transport through efficient freight logistics and modal shifts in freight and passenger transportation;
- (j) To set road safety goals, targets and indicators through networking among national and subregional organizations,

3. *Also request* the Executive Secretary:

- (a) To ensure effective coordination with other United Nations and multilateral agencies as well as subregional organizations;

(b) To collaborate effectively with international and regional financing institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors and private sector investors, and international organizations to provide further financial and technical support for the wider development and operationalization of the Trans-Asian Railway network and the Asian Highway network;

(c) To convene a Ministerial Conference on Transport in 2011 to assess and evaluate the implementation of this declaration and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2007-2011), and to consider a regional action programme for phase II (2012-2016).

Annex

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
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