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## Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

### Sixty-ninth session

Bangkok, 25 April-1 May 2013

Item 3 (c) of the provisional agenda\*

**Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of  
the Commission, including the work of the regional  
institutions: Transport**

## Report of the Committee on Transport on its third session

### *Summary*

The Committee on Transport held its third session in Bangkok from 10 to 12 October 2012. It was attended by 118 participants from 25 member countries as well as representatives of United Nations and other international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and private sector entities from Asia and the Pacific.

The Committee reviewed progress achieved in the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), and considered ways to enhance the contribution of transport to the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development within the scope of the Regional Action Programme, phase II. The Committee approved the finalized draft intergovernmental agreement on dry ports (E/ESCAP/69/8/Add.1) and recommended that it be adopted by the Commission at its sixty-ninth session. With regard to the future programme of work, the Committee generally endorsed the draft programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015. It also welcomed the convening of the second session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport in 2013 and the preparations being undertaken by the secretariat for the Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action, scheduled to be held in 2014.

The Commission may wish to adopt the intergovernmental agreement on dry ports, as recommended by the Committee, and provide the secretariat with guidance on any other matter contained in the report of the third session.

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\* E/ESCAP/69/L.1.

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## **I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention**

1. The Committee recommends that the Commission at its sixty-ninth session, in 2013, adopt the finalized intergovernmental agreement on dry ports (E/ESCAP/69/8/Add.1).

## **II. Proceedings**

### **A. Review of the implementation and future programme focus of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016)** (Agenda item 2)

2. The Committee had before it the note by the secretariat entitled “Review of the implementation and future programme focus of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016)” (E/ESCAP/CTR(3)/1) and an information document entitled “Activities implemented under the Regional Action Programme for Transport

Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016)” (E/ESCAP/CTR(3)/INF/4).

3. Representatives of the following members made statements: Cambodia; China; Indonesia; Japan; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Thailand; and Turkey.

4. The Committee reaffirmed the pivotal role of transport in pursuing continued economic growth and achieving sustainable and inclusive development.

5. The Committee noted that the 10 thematic areas contained in the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II, adopted by the Ministerial Conference on Transport at its second session, in March 2012, covered the critical issues for transport development in the Asian and Pacific region (see E/ESCAP/68/9). In that respect, it noted with satisfaction the work of the secretariat in the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016).

6. The Committee expressed its continued support for the activities related to the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway and recognized their role in supporting the development of Euro-Asian Transport linkages as well as improving connectivity for landlocked countries. In that respect, the Committee noted the progress being made in developing/upgrading transport infrastructure in member countries, including the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway. Some of the notable developments for the Asian Highway were: (a) the proposal for inclusion of about 5,247 km of highway network as part of the Eurasian Highway network, and an extensive programme to enhance the standards of the current highways, including increasing the length of dual carriageway highways in Turkey; (b) installation of the harmonized Asian Highway route signs in Thailand; and (c) completion of road sign and equipment inventory along Asian Highway routes in Sumatra (south Sumatra border-Jamoi-Pekanbaru-Dumai) and Java (Surabaya-Surakarta-Semarang) in 2012, and a plan for a similar exercise in 2013 in the Dumai-Medan-Banda Aceh and Semarang-Cikampek-Jakarta-Merak sections of the Asian Highway in Indonesia.

7. Some of the notable developments for the Trans-Asian Railway were: (a) ongoing construction of a missing link between Georgia and Turkey which, when completed in 2013, would provide landlocked Azerbaijan and Georgia with access to the Mediterranean ports of Iskenderun and Mersin as well as ongoing work to complete the Marmaray project, which would rail-connect Asia and Europe across the Istanbul Strait; (b) the provision by the Government of Thailand of the necessary budget to build the 6-km missing link that would allow the rail networks of Cambodia and Thailand to be connected.

8. The Committee stressed the importance of transport facilitation, including the elimination or at least reduction of bottlenecks and non-physical barriers and the simplification of customs formalities, in order to further promote regional cooperation and integration.

9. The Committee noted the efforts made by some member countries to implement transport facilitation measures, including (a) initiatives at the bilateral level on the establishment of joint management of customs checkpoints, (b) the application of modern equipment for improving the efficiency of border-crossing procedures, (c) implementation of a pilot project on using Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags on containers to assess

real-time information about freight and shipping routes, and (d) prioritization of transport facilitation issues through the mechanisms of subregional organizations.

10. The Committee recognized the important role of the Regional Network of Legal and Technical Experts on Transport Facilitation, as part of the action plan for the implementation of the Regional Strategic Framework on the Facilitation of International Road Transport, in stimulating regional cooperation in the field of transport facilitation.

11. The Committee expressed appreciation for the efforts of the secretariat in the development of a series of facilitation models aimed at more efficient and secure cross-border transport and requested the secretariat to disseminate additional information on the models to member countries.

12. The Committee recognized the importance of further developing efficient logistics systems in the region and noted the need, in the development of such systems, for an integrated approach towards transport, facilitation of transport and trade, interaction between all stakeholders of different modes of transport, and utilization of information and communications technology (ICT).

13. The Committee noted the efforts in some member countries to develop efficient logistics systems through such measures as: (a) the development of logistics centres in areas with effective intermodal connections between roads and railways as well as ports; (b) the use of multilateral forums, such as the China-Japan-Korea Ministerial Conference on Transport and Logistics; and (c) mutual operation of towed trailers for sea-land intermodal transport between China and the Republic of Korea.

14. The Committee requested the secretariat to consider planning future activities to enhance regional cooperation in the development of logistic services and to support the development of comprehensive logistics information systems.

15. The Committee expressed appreciation to the secretariat for providing technical experts, conducting studies, organizing workshops and drafting guidelines on transport logistics in its efforts to support the development of logistics systems in member countries.

16. Recognizing that the development of transport infrastructure requires considerable investment, the Committee noted that a number of countries were turning to public-private partnerships to meet their infrastructure investment needs in the highway, maritime and aviation sectors.

17. The Committee noted that the secretariat would be organizing an expert group meeting on public-private partnerships in conjunction with the third Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development, which was being organized and would be hosted by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran from 11 to 14 November 2012.

18. The Committee reaffirmed the importance of road safety and the significance of the Decade of Action for Road Safety.<sup>1</sup> The Committee was apprised of recent measures being implemented at the national level to improve road safety. They included (a) road safety impact assessments, such as road safety audits, (b) black spot eradication, (c) improved road signs and signals, (d) awareness-raising campaigns, (e) the use of smart transportation means, (f)

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<sup>1</sup> See General Assembly resolution 64/255 of 2 March 2010 on improving global road safety.

strengthened road safety management, and (g) the upgrading of emergency response systems.

19. The Committee noted increasing demand for safe, environmentally beneficial and convenient transport systems and therefore the need to enhance the quality of transport. In that regard, the Committee welcomed the offer made by Japan to share its experience in that area. The Committee noted the benefits of creating pedestrian-friendly environments and addressing the mobility needs of disadvantaged persons through various policy initiatives, such as provision of low-floor buses, sonic signalling systems and Braille block pavements.

20. The Committee noted the need to ensure that future transport development was inclusive as well as sustainable. In that regard, it took note of the planned activities of the secretariat, which would look at the contribution of transport development to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular to address the mobility needs of people living in rural areas and other disadvantaged groups of people, such as the elderly and people living with disabilities.

21. The Committee noted that the secretariat, in collaboration with the Korea Maritime Institute, would be holding a seminar on the development of an integrated transport and logistics system in ASEAN countries and the Pacific subregion from 21 to 23 November 2012. The seminar would include discussions on policy issues related to inter-island shipping, among other topics.

22. The Committee expressed its support for the formulation of international, subregional and bilateral agreements between landlocked and transit developing countries with a view to improving interconnectivity between subregions and transit transport for landlocked countries. The Committee requested the secretariat to assist in the coordination of various subregional initiatives as a priority for future activities.

23. With regard to the future focus of the Regional Action Programme, the Committee noted the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,<sup>2</sup> which emphasized safe, environmentally friendly and sustainable transport. It also noted that the Regional Action Programme, phase II, is well balanced across the thematic areas of the transport development and, in that regard, suggested that the issue of sustainable transport could be discussed further at the expert group meeting on sustainable and inclusive transport, as contained in the draft programme of work for 2014-2015.

24. The Committee generally endorsed the secretariat's proposals for strengthening the contribution of transport to the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development within the scope of the Regional Action Programme, phase II. The Committee also endorsed the draft programme of work for 2014-2015 (E/ESCAP/CTR(3)/1, sect. IV).

## **B. Adoption of the finalized draft intergovernmental agreement on dry ports** (Agenda item 3)

25. The Committee had before it the document entitled "Finalized draft intergovernmental agreement on dry ports" (E/ESCAP/CTR(3)/2) and a

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<sup>2</sup> See General Assembly resolution 66/288 of 27 July 2012.

conference room paper entitled “Proposal by the Russian Federation for amendments to the finalized draft intergovernmental agreement on dry ports” (E/ESCAP/CTR(3)/CRP.1).

26. The Committee approved the finalized intergovernmental agreement on dry ports (E/ESCAP/CTR(3)/L.3) and recommended that it be adopted by the Commission at its sixty-ninth session, in 2013.

27. The Committee noted that the agreement, if adopted by the Commission, would likely be opened for signature by member States during the second session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport, in 2013.

### **C. Preparations for the second session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport, 2013**

(Agenda item 4)

28. The Committee had before it the document entitled “Preparations for the second session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport, 2013” (E/ESCAP/CTR(3)/3).

29. Representatives of the following members made statements: Japan; Russian Federation; and Turkey.

30. The Committee noted that the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport at its first session, which had been held in Bangkok in 2009, had adopted the Bangkok Declaration on Transport Development in Asia, which provided important policy direction on priority areas for regional transport cooperation, including the development of an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports.<sup>3</sup> In that regard, the Committee welcomed the convening of the second session of the Forum in 2013.

31. The Committee noted that the second session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport would take place in a very different environment from that of the first session as many countries in the Asia-Pacific region had been affected by the global economic downturn. At the same time, the Committee noted that the issue of sustainable transport was a priority of the Secretary-General’s Five-Year Action Plan, and featured in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development.<sup>2</sup>

32. Recalling Commission resolution 64/5 of 30 April 2008 on the establishment of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport, the Committee noted that the Executive Secretary had been requested to ensure that a regional policy-oriented agenda was placed before the Forum, addressing transport infrastructure, transit policy, facilitation, logistics, interregional and international transport linkages, financing and safety issues, as well as their economic, environmental and social sustainability.

33. In that regard, the Committee considered the proposed themes for the agenda of the Forum, namely (a) strengthening the connectivity of regional transport networks for sustainable transport development, (b) financing sustainable transport development, and (c) sustainable transport for inclusive development. It emphasized the need to give balanced consideration to all of the thematic areas of the Regional Action Programme on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II. In particular, it highlighted the importance of the issues of financing of infrastructure investment and

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<sup>3</sup> See E/ESCAP/66/11, sect. IV.

facilitation of international transport to the further integration of transport in the region. It also requested the secretariat to consider an additional theme on intelligent transport systems.

34. The Committee requested the secretariat to develop the draft agenda further in close consultation with member States, including through the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (ACPR).

#### **D. Preparations for the Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action, 2014**

(Agenda item 5)

35. The Committee had before it a document entitled “Preparations for the Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action, 2014” (E/ESCAP/CTR(3)/4).

36. Representatives of the following members made statements: China; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Nepal; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; and Turkey.

37. The Committee noted that the General Assembly, in its resolution 66/214 of 22 December 2011, had decided to hold a comprehensive ten-year review conference on the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action<sup>4</sup> in 2014.

38. The Committee also noted that the secretariat, in collaboration with the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, was organizing a regional review meeting, which would be held in early 2013.

39. The Committee stressed the significance of successful implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action and the global and regional review processes for developing an efficient and effective transit transport system and thereby ensuring greater market access for landlocked developing countries.

40. The Committee recognized that the comprehensive ten-year review conference to be held in 2014 would provide an opportunity for the identification of existing challenges and future needs and priorities, and the formulation of a specific implementation plan, with a view to strengthening regional cooperation in order to address the special needs of landlocked and transit developing countries.

41. The Committee was informed that the secretariat was preparing background papers in the four substantive priority areas of the Almaty Programme of Action for the regional review meeting to be held in early 2013.

42. The Committee welcomed the draft outlines of the background papers relating to transport (see E/ESCAP/CTR(3)/4). It held the view that the outlines addressed well the special needs and problems of landlocked and transit developing countries.

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<sup>4</sup> 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).

43. The Committee reiterated the importance of addressing non-physical barriers to transport in landlocked and transit developing countries as a means to overcome the disadvantages that landlocked countries face. In that regard, it particularly highlighted the need for simplification of customs formalities and reduction in waiting times at border crossings.

44. The Committee noted the importance of cooperation at both the regional and subregional levels for the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action to promote trade and economic connectivity between landlocked developing countries and regional and global economic centres.

45. The Committee emphasized the significance of an integrated approach to trade and transport development for landlocked and transit developing countries to accomplish the objectives of the Almaty Programme of Action.

46. The Committee was apprised of various measures taken by transit countries to facilitate transit transport for landlocked countries, namely: (a) the establishment of a national transport facilitation committee with the participation of all relevant ministries and authorities; (b) participation in international conventions and subregional agreements relating to transport facilitation; and (c) the signing of bilateral agreements on cross-border and transit transport.

47. The Committee acknowledged the importance of transport infrastructure development and maintenance as one of the keys to achieving the Almaty Programme of Action's overall objective of addressing the special needs of landlocked developing countries. In that respect, the Committee was informed of recent national initiatives by some member countries to improve transport connectivity within their countries and across the subregions of Central and North-East Asia. The Committee also stressed the significance of the development of dry ports and logistics centres as a positive step towards enhancing the use and improvement of existing transport infrastructure networks and promoting trade in landlocked developing countries.

48. The Committee expressed appreciation to the secretariat for technical and financial support for the formulation of the Intergovernmental Agreement of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Member States on Facilitation of International Road Transport, which would provide sea access for the landlocked countries in Central Asia. It took the view that the agreement should be implemented as early as possible.

**E. Consideration of draft resolutions and decisions for submission to the Commission at its sixty-ninth session**  
(Agenda item 6)

49. The delegation of the Russian Federation informed the Committee that its Government would be willing to sponsor a draft resolution on the adoption of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports for consideration by the Commission at its sixty-ninth session, which would be held in Bangkok in 2013. The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran informed the Committee that its Government would be willing to co-sponsor the draft resolution.

**F. Other matters**  
(Agenda item 7)

50. No issues were raised under that item.

**G. Adoption of the report of the Committee**

(Agenda item 8)

51. The Committee adopted the present report on 12 October 2012.

**III. Organization****A. Opening, duration and organization of the session**

52. The third session of the Committee on Transport was held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok from 10 to 12 October 2012. It was declared open by Police General Wichan Potepkosree, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Transport of Thailand. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP delivered a statement.

**B. Attendance**

53. The session was attended by representatives of the following members: Bangladesh; Cambodia; China; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Fiji; Georgia; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Turkey; and United States of America.

54. Representatives of the following United Nations body and specialized agencies were present: United Nations Centre for Regional Development; International Maritime Organization; Universal Postal Union; and World Bank.

55. The following intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other organizations were represented: Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia; World Customs Organization; International Air Transport Association; Asian Institute of Technology; ASEAN Federation of Forwarders Association; International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations; Thai International Freight Forwarders Association; Global Infrastructure Fund Research Foundation Japan; Infrastructure Development Institute - Japan; Institute of Road Traffic Education; Japan Transport Cooperation Association; Korea Transport Institute; and Korea Maritime Institute.

**C. Election of officers**

56. The Committee elected the following officers:

Chair:	Mr. Anuradha Wijekoon (Sri Lanka)
Vice-Chairs:	Mr. Bouaphet Sayasane (Lao People's Democratic Republic)
	Mr. Jeke Tavai Kelo (Fiji)
Rapporteur:	Mr. Erdem Direkler (Turkey)

**D. Agenda**

57. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the session:
  - (a) Opening statements;

- (b) Election of officers;
  - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Review of the implementation and future programme focus of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016).
  3. Adoption of the finalized draft intergovernmental agreement on dry ports.
  4. Preparations for the second session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport, 2013.
  5. Preparations for the Ten-Year Review Conference of the Almaty Programme of Action, 2014.
  6. Consideration of draft resolutions and decisions for submission to the Commission at its sixty-ninth session.
  7. Other matters.
  8. Adoption of the report of the Committee.

**E. Side event**

58. A special session on follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) was held on 11 October to discuss transport's contribution to sustainable development through the lens of mobility and freight. The session displayed the range of issues and policies that might be incorporated into the work of ESCAP, including urban and rural transport and an interconnected intermodal transport system in Asia. The discussion panels included participants from the World Bank and the United Nations Centre for Regional Development.

## Annex

### List of documents

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