Joint ESCAP-UIC Regional Capacity Building Workshop on Accelerating Rail Digital Transformation in North & Central Asia region

Hybrid (Baku and online)

03 November 2022

Conclusions and Recommendations

1. The Joint ESCAP-UIC Regional Capacity Building Workshop on accelerating rail digital transformation in North and Central Asia region took place in Baku, Azerbaijan and online on 3 November 2022. It was attended by physically by participants from Ministries of Transport/Railways of invited countries including Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Representatives of many other countries were connected online.

2. The workshop was jointly organized by ESCAP and UIC under the twelfth tranche of the United Nation development account project on Enhancing Shift towards Sustainable Freight Transport in Asia and the Pacific being implemented by ESCAP with an objective to strengthen regional cooperation on deepening sustainability of freight transport operations.

3. ESCAP secretariat and UIC delivered opening statements emphasizing the importance and potential of railway digitalization in North and Central Asia region, especially during the pandemic and hope that the workshop would bring better insights on issues related to rail digital transformation for the railways of participating countries.

4. ESCAP presented the opportunities and challenges for railway transport in North and Central Asia countries with the opening of Lao-China railway and the boost

given to rail digitalization by the pandemic. The importance of Trans-Asian Railway network and the working group under the intergovernmental agreement on Trans-Asian Railway was underscored and highlighted as a regional platform to harness emerging opportunities from railway digitalization.

5. The representative from UIC gave a presentation on the joint ESCAP-UIC e-learning material for accelerating rail digital transformation in the Asia-Pacific region detailing the objectives and structure of five e-learning modules. It was further informed that the access to e-learning modules would soon be provided to all members of the Trans-Asian Railway network and formal communication would be send to the countries once the e-learning modules are finalized.

6. The representative from Uzbekistan Railways presented the state and potential of the development of transport and logistics infrastructure of the Central Asian countries including plans of forming a transport corridor connecting Southeast Asia with countries in Eurasia. He expressed his wish that donor countries and business companies would participate in financing the project.

7. The representative from UNECE introduced the UN/CEFACT standard for digital interoperability along transport corridors encouraging participants to use the standards for higher interoperability.

8. UIC representatives gave presentations on artificial intelligence applied to rail and on digital twins for railways bringing related challenges and opportunities.

9. The representative from the Birmingham Center for Railway Research and Education elaborated on the ESCAP study on issues in rail cyber security. He recommended the development of a rail cyber security strategy, cross-industry

collaboration, standardized signaling solutions, and a standardized approached for rail security to deal with this issue.

10. The representative from Indian Railways presented the freight business of Indian Railways and their digital strategy. He introduced the train operations, freight revenue management, customer relation management, decision support system, integrated logistics solution, and data analytics of Indian Railways.

11. The participants appreciated the ESCAP secretariat and UIC for jointly organizing capacity building workshop on rail digital transformation and express gratitude to the hosts for their warm hospitality.

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