Conclusions and Recommendations

1. The Regional Meeting on Enhancing Shift towards Sustainable Freight Transport in the ESCAP region took place virtually on 17 August 2022. It was attended by participants from Ministries of Transport, of invited countries including, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Philippines, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Uzbekistan.

2. The Meeting was organized under the twelfth tranche of the United Nation development account project on Enhancing Shift towards Sustainable Freight Transport in Asia and the Pacific to discuss implementation of regional approach to enhancing shift towards sustainable freight.

3. The state of play on sustainable freight presented at the meeting highlighted challenges confronting freight sustainability including rising carbon emissions, escalating impact of climate on transport infrastructure, rapidly increasing congestion and pollution levels in urban areas, lack of women’s participation in freight sector, inadequate access of rural areas to wider national and regional markets.

4. To further implement the regional approach the secretariat presented ten general principles on enhancing shift towards sustainable freight transport in ESCAP region
that aim to consolidate the priority actions to deepen the linkages of freight policies to the realization of SDGs.

5. The guiding principles focus ten areas, as follows (i) Decarbonize freight transport; (ii) Optimize modal split in freight operations; (iii) Build the resilience of freight transport infrastructure to climate change and other disruptions; (iv) Reduce freight transport logistics costs, including for cross-border and transit transport; (v) Address urban freight challenges; (vi) Enhance inclusiveness of the freight transport sector by promoting women’s participation; (vii) Increase the access of rural areas to wider transport networks; (viii) Strengthen governance structures and capacity of freight transport stakeholders; (ix) Encourage innovative and diversified financing sources, including private sector engagement; (x) Promote use of data, digitalization, and transformative technologies.

6. The Regional Meeting agreed and recommended that the finalized principles on the sustainable freight be presented to the Committee on Transport, at its seventh session, in Bangkok from 23 to 25 November 2022, for endorsement. Accordingly, to finalize the principles, it requested the participants to share their comments/suggestions to the secretariat by 31 August 2022 at following email jain@un.org

7. The secretariat presented preliminary findings of the study for developing guidelines on enhancing women’s participation in the freight sector in the region. It also provided an update on the implementation of United Nations development account project on enhancing shift towards sustainable freight transport in ESCAP region detailing activities under progress and proposed including on addressing climate change impact along the Trans-Asian Railway network.
8. The participants thanked the secretariat for developing the general principles and organizing the Regional Meeting on Enhancing Shift towards Sustainable Freight Transport in ESCAP region virtually.

9. These conclusions and recommendations were agreed virtually on 17 August 2022.