

79th Session of Economic and Social Commission for
Asia and Pacific (ESCAP)

Draft Speech on

Agenda 4(f)

Committee on Transport

15-19 May 2023

Bangkok (Online Platform)

Agenda 4(f)

BismillahirRahmanir Rahim

Chair of the Session, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalamualaikum and Good Afternoon.

Excellencies,

Under the leadership of Honourable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Government of Bangladesh has been undertaking necessary steps with a fresh endeavour to reach an Upper Middle-Income Country status by 2031 and a High-Income Country status by 2041 with poverty approaching extinction. The transport and communication system is a vital physical infrastructure which acts as a prerequisite of the socio-economic development of Bangladesh. The sectoral share of Land Transport sector to GDP was 6.49% and the growth rate was 6.08 % during 2021-22 at constant price.

Bangladesh would soon become a developed and prosperous country in the global arena if the ongoing pace of progress is maintained. Being a member of ESCAP, Bangladesh is aimed to contribute for improving the socio-economic condition of the region through facilitating People to People connectivity, trade and investment opportunities in the region. Government of Bangladesh has keen interest to attract investors for taking part in developing road, rail and waterways of Bangladesh.

The Government of Bangladesh has been pursuing international and regional connectivity policy since long time. Road Transport and Highways Division (RTHD) has focused high priority on the cross-border transportation issue during present and previous long term plans such as Seventh & Eighth Five Year Plan (2016-2020 & 2021-2025),

Perspective Plan 2021 & 2041, targets of the Sustainable Development Goal 2030, Delta Plan 2100 with a view to develop a sustainable, safe & quality road infrastructure and integrated modern mass transport system for achieving desired socio-economic development in the country.

Distinguished Participants,

Ministry of Road transport and Bridges is solely responsible for the development, maintenance and management of arterial highway network in the country with a vision to provide seamless mobility through building sustainable, safe & quality road infrastructure and integrated modern transport system for achieving desired socio-economic development. Ministry of Shipping has been entrusted with the responsibilities of uplifting the management of the country's ports, shipping, water transportation and maritime education system to a world class standard.

The Government, under the development strategy, upgrading the National Highways into 4/6/8 lane with provision of separate service lane on both sides of the Highway, improving border access road, sea port link roads, upgrade and widen national corridors to link Economic Zones /Special Economic Zones/ Export Processing Zones, ensure road safety through proper and modern design of highway, bridge the existing river gaps and constructing multilane bridges to ensure uninterrupted traffic flow, provide multi-modal transportation facilities and integrate the transport modes by constructing link road with National Highways to activate the Sea, River and Dry Ports, introduce integrated high-speed mass transport system, improve the Reliability and Safety on National Highway Corridors of Bangladesh.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bangladesh has accorded the highest priority on regional connectivity taking into account the particular needs and problems of landlocked neighboring countries & states. A substantial progress has been achieved through investment and technical assistance projects under the development budget to implement regional and sub-regional road connectivity by this time

During last few years, Bangladesh has taken various efforts to strengthen sub-regional connectivity. Bangladesh is trying to engage in various sub-regional connectivity projects through road, rail and sea routes with neighbouring countries. The 8th FYP put strong emphasis on further improving the efficiency of the port performance to improve the competitiveness of the Bangladesh economy. Specifically, the 8th FYP strategy for the maritime port subsector would involve emphasis on removing all the constraints to the use of the Mongla Port to its full capacity through a combination of investments in strategic dredging and investments in port equipment and facilities to support expanded and efficient cargo handling includeing the investment programmes for the expansion of Chittagong Port.

Distinguished Guests,

Bridges Division under the Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges has been playing a pivotal role in implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the construction of bridge, elevated expressway and tunnel of 1500m or over, subway, toll road, flyover, expressway, causeway, link road, etc.

Our Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has been inaugurated the 9.83 (nine point eight-three) kilometer long Padma Bridge (with viaduct) on 25th June 2022. It has been built a smooth and integrated communication system of the southern part with the other regions of the country. As the bridge is located on the Asian Highway (AH-1), it is anticipated that in near future it will revolutionize the transportation system among the countries in the South Asian region.

“Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Tunnel” is expected to be opened for traffic in this year 2023. This tunnel will connect the western and eastern parts of Chattogram, the port city and it will be connected to Asian Highway (AH-41).

The 3 routes of length 1665 kilometer in total (excluding overlapping section) in Bangladesh which are the part of the Asian Highway Network. GoB has taken initiatives to upgrade all National Highways including Asian Highway Routes in Bangladesh into 4/6/8 lane width. So far Asian Highway is concerned, a total length of 674 kilometer Highway has already been developed and under development at present to class I on AH routes. There exists 2 missing links on AH1, one over the Padma River at Mawa point and another over the Madhumati river at Kalna point.

Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges has been ensuring uninterrupted transportation of emergency goods & services, medicine, food grains, medical equipment's & services, patients & frontline workers, export-import throughout the country during the pandemic. All official communication and management planning of Roads and Highways Department are being done through digital platform in order to keep the Highway Network functional throughout the country during pandemic situation.

Excellencies,

Bangladesh is currently the fastest growing economy in South-Asia. Bangladesh is also rapidly urbanizing with nearly half of its population expected to live in urban areas by 2025. These trends, combining with a policy push to establish transport connectivity with neighbouring countries, has created tremendous growth opportunity for the transport sector of Bangladesh in the near future. To achieve the double digit growth for Bangladesh would be through the timely implementation of all nationally important infrastructure projects.

The Government of Bangladesh has recently formulated sound Inland Water Transport (IWT) related policies which recognized to meet the poverty alleviation and to attain the SDGs. In order to utilize the complete potential of countries Inland Water network, especially for container trade, Government of Bangladesh is increasingly promoting the usage of Inland Water Transportation. To encourage transportation of container using Inland Water Transport, Government of Bangladesh intends to develop a network of river ports with modern container handling facilities.

A draft Sustainable Freight Transport Policy 2030 has been prepared with the assistance of UNESCAP to encourage the Government of Bangladesh and other relevant stakeholders to make planning, policy, and investment decisions in freight transportation based on the three dimensions of sustainable development: the environmental, economic, and social dimensions. A National Consultation Workshop in this regard took place. The draft policy is under the process of finalization.

In conclusion, Bangladesh is currently one of the fastest-growing economy in South Asia. Bangladesh is also rapidly urbanizing with nearly half of its population expected to live in urban areas by 2025. These trends, combined with a policy push to establish transport connectivity with neighboring countries, have created tremendous growth opportunities for the transport sector of Bangladesh in the near future.

Thank you all.

Oral statement: Agenda 4(f)

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Assalamualaikum and Good Afternoon.

Excellencies,

The transport and communication system are vital physical infrastructure that acts as a prerequisite for the socio-economic development of Bangladesh. The sectoral share of the Land Transport sector to GDP was 6.49% and the growth rate was 6.08 % in the last fiscal year.

The Government of Bangladesh has been pursuing international and regional connectivity policy for a long time with a high priority on the cross-border transportation issue with a view to developing a sustainable, safe & quality road infrastructure and integrated modern mass transport system for achieving desired socio-economic development in the country. The Government is also considering the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026) in this regard.

Distinguished Participants,

The Government, under the development strategy, upgrading the National Highways and other multi-modal transport facilities including sea, river, and dry ports to have an integrated high-speed mass transport system and freight facilities to improve the Reliability, Safety, and sustainability of the transport sector in line with related Sustainable Development Goals. A draft Sustainable Freight Transport Policy 2030 has been prepared with the assistance of UNESCAP.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Bangladesh has accorded the highest priority to regional connectivity taking into account the particular needs and problems of landlocked neighboring countries & states and substantial progress has been achieved in this regard. Bangladesh has extended transit and transshipment facilities to BBIN countries including the use of its two major seaports, Chattogram and Mongla which usher in a new paradigm of connectivity in the region. For this, Bangladesh is investing hugely to increase the capacity and modernization of roads and its ports.

Distinguished Guests,

Our Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina inaugurated the 9.83 (nine point eight-three) kilometer long Padma Bridge on 25th June 2022 which is located on the Asian Highway (AH-1). It is anticipated to revolutionize the transportation system in the region.

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In conclusion, Bangladesh is currently one of the fastest-growing economies in South Asia. Bangladesh is also rapidly urbanizing with nearly half of its population expected to live in urban areas by 2025. These trends, combined with a policy push to establish transport connectivity with neighboring countries, have created tremendous growth opportunities for the transport sector of Bangladesh in the near future.

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