E/ESCAP/AHWG(4)/4

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Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
Working Group on the Asian Highway

4th meeting
Bangkok, 27-28 September 2011

Report of the Working Group on the Asian Highway on its fourth meeting

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I. Deliberations of the Working Group

1. The secretariat introduced the documents under agenda items 4 (E/ESCAP/AHWG(4)/1), 5 (E/ESCAP/AHWG(4)/2), and 6 (E/ESCAP/AHWG(4)/3), including the status of signatories to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network and status of development and upgrading of the Asian Highway routes in member countries, which formed the basis for deliberation.

2. The delegations of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, China, Kazakhstan, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Russian Federation, the Philippines and Thailand provided detailed updates of Asian Highway development programmes and projects in their countries under different funding arrangements including budgetary allocations, public-private partnership and funding from development banks. They also provided details of various road safety initiatives that were being implemented, particularly along the Asian Highway network.

II. Conclusions and recommendations

3. The Working Group noted with satisfaction the progress made in the upgrading of the Asian Highway network and requested member countries to further upgrade the remaining length of highways which were below Class III standards. In that regard, a number of delegations highlighted the importance of capacity development and technical assistance in upgrading the network and requested that the secretariat provide assistance in those matters. They also encouraged the development banks to consider funding Asian Highway projects in their countries.

4. The Working Group encouraged the signatory State to ratify the Agreement and other States to accede to the Agreement.

5. The Working Group noted with appreciation that Japan and Republic of Korea had completed the placement of Asian Highway route signs. It also noted the progress in installing Asian Highway route signs in Cambodia, China, the Philippines and Thailand and encouraged other Parties to install Asian Highway route signs.

6. The Working Group adopted the following amendments[1] with respect to the itineraries of Asian Highway routes in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Viet Nam and the Philippines:

(a) AH13: …- **Tai Trang/Pang Hok** (Lao-Viet Nam border) **– Muang Khoua** – Oudomxai – Muang Ngeun – Huai Kon – Uttaradit – Phitsanulok – Nakhon Sawan - …

(b) AH13: ... **Ha Noi** – **Hoa Binh – Son La - Dien Bien – Tai Trang/Pang Hok** (Viet Nam-Lao border) – …

(c) AH26: …- Laoag – **Tuguegarao** – Manila – Legazpi – Matnog – ferry – Allen – Tacloban (– Ormoc – ferry – Cebu) – Liloan – ferry – Surigao – Davao (– Cagayan de Oro) – General Santos – Zamboanga.

7. In accordance with the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network, the adopted amendments would be communicated to the Secretary-General of the United Nations for circulation to all Parties.

[1] Bold indicates amendments.

8. The Working Group also discussed the proposal for an amendment by the Lao People's Democratic Republic with respect to the inclusion of axle load in Asian Highway classification and design standards (annex II). In that regard, the Working Group took note of the concern expressed by a number of delegations because of the implications of such a standard. Considering the concern of many delegations and recognizing the difficulty that member States would encounter in adopting a standard of 11 tons/axle, the delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic withdrew the proposal.

9. Noting that the Asian Highway database was in the process of being updated, the Working Group requested that the member States provide updated information on the status of the Asian Highway to the secretariat, so that the database could be finalized soon and distributed.

10. The Working Group noted the progress and work of the member States in the upgrading of the Asian Highway routes. It requested that the secretariat continue playing its coordinating role in the development of international highways in the region.

III. Other matters

11. No other matters were raised.

IV. Adoption of the report

12. The Working Group adopted the present report on 28 September 2011.

V. Organization of the meeting

A. Opening, duration and organization

13. The fourth meeting of the Working Group on the Asian Highway was held in Bangkok on 27 and 28 September 2011. The Director of the Transport Division of ESCAP delivered an opening statement.

14. Welcoming those attending the meeting, the Director noted that the Agreement was the first treaty developed under the auspices of ESCAP and deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. He observed that the Agreement had entered into force on 4 July 2005 and had been signed by 29 member States; of those, 28 member States were Parties to the Agreement. He invited the signatory State to ratify and others to accede to the Agreement.

15. Outlining the obligations of the Parties to the Agreement, he mentioned that at least 10,000 kilometres of the Asian Highway had been upgraded to higher standards including 1,000 kilometres upgraded to meet minimum standards during 2007 and 2008. He stressed the further need to upgrade about 11,000 kilometres of Asian Highway routes.

16. Stressing the need to upgrade and improve Asian Highways and the challenge of mobilizing funds, he called upon international financing institutions and development partners to support countries in fulfilling their obligation to develop the Asian Highway.

17. He informed the Working Group that the next Ministerial Conference on Transport would be held in Bangkok from 14 to 18 November 2011. The Conference would provide an opportunity to discuss future transport

development in the region, including the development of the Asian Highway network.

18. He expressed confidence that the Working Group meeting would lead to further development of the Asian Highway.

B. Attendance

19. Representatives of the following member States attended: Afghanistan; Armenia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; 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; Singapore; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Turkey; and Viet Nam.

20. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations and specialized agencies were represented: Asian Development Bank; and World Health Organization.

21. In addition, representatives of the following organizations also attended: ARRB Group Ltd; Asia Injury Prevention Foundation; Automobile Association of Malaysia; Automobile Association of the Philippines; Automobile Association of Singapore; Don't Drive Drunk Foundation; Global Road Safety Partnership; Handicap International Belgium; Infrastructure Development Institute; Institute of Road Traffic Education; International Road Assessment Programme; Korea Transport Institute; Malaysian Institute of Road Safety; and Universiti Putra Malaysia.

C. Election of officers

22. The Meeting elected Mr. Mathar Rana (Pakistan) Chair, Mr. Artur Sargsyan (Armenia) and Ms. Nergiz Cetin (Turkey) Vice-Chairs and Mr. Dante M. Lantin (Philippines) Rapporteur.

D. Agenda

23. The Meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Status of implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network.
5. Consideration of proposals for amendments to the Agreement.
6. Policies and issues relating to the development of the Asian Highway.
7. Other matters.
8. Adoption of the report.

Annex

List of documents

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General series		
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