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

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda*
Status of implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network

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Note by the secretariat

Summary

The present document contains information on the obligations of the parties to the Agreement and the current status of implementation of the Agreement by the signatories and parties to the Agreement. It also provides information on the current status of the Asian Highway network. The Working Group may wish to consider the document with a view to encouraging the participation of member States in the further implementation of the Agreement and to promote the harmonized development of road transport infrastructure in the ESCAP region.

I. Introduction

1. The Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network[1] is a treaty that provides a coordinated plan for the development of highway routes of international importance within Asia and between Asia and neighbouring regions, with a view to promoting and developing international road transport in the region. The present document contains an outline of the obligations of the parties to the Agreement and the current status of implementation of the Agreement.

2. The main obligations of the parties to the Agreement are:

(a) To adopt the Asian Highway network as a coordinated plan for the development of highway routes of international importance which the parties intend to undertake within the framework of their national programmes (art. 1);

(b) To bring the routes of the Asian Highway network into conformity with the classification and design standards described in annex II of the Agreement (art. 3);

(c) To place route signs on all Asian Highway network routes within five years from the date of entry into force of the Agreement for the State concerned (art. 4);

* E/ESCAP/AHWG(5)/L.1.

[1] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2323, No. 41607.

(d) To give full consideration to issues of road safety while developing the Asian Highway network (annex II, chap. III, sect. 10).

II. Status of implementation of the Agreement

A. Accession, signatures and ratifications/acceptance/approval

3. The Agreement entered into force on 4 July 2005, 90 days after it had been signed definitively, ratified and/or approved by the requisite number of States. As of 20 May 2013, 29 member States are parties to the Agreement;[2] and one signatory member State has yet to become a party. The current status of signatories is given in annex I to the present document.

4. Member States that have not signed the Agreement can join by accession, which is a one-step action to become a party to the Agreement. A model instrument of accession is attached in annex II.

5. After completing the national procedure for ratification, acceptance or approval of the Agreement, signatory States should inform the Secretary-General of the United Nations. A model instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval is attached in annex III.

6. Reservations may not be made with respect to any of the provisions of the Agreement, except as provided in article 14, paragraph 5 of the Agreement, whereby any State may, at the time of definitive signature or of depositing its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, deposit a reservation stating that it does not consider itself bound by the provisions of article 14 relating to conciliation. A model instrument of reservation/declaration is attached in annex IV.

B. Conformity with the classifications and design standards

7. The Asian Highway network currently comprises about 143,000 km of roads passing through 32 member States.

8. The Asian Highway classification and design standards[3] provide the minimum standards and guidelines for the construction, improvement and maintenance of Asian Highway routes. In those guidelines, Asian Highway routes are grouped into four classes: primary; class I; class II; and class III, which is specified as the minimum desirable standard. Parties shall make every possible effort to conform to the minimum standards, both in constructing new routes and in upgrading and modernizing existing ones. A summary of the Asian Highway classifications and design standards is attached in annex V. In this regard, member States may provide the secretariat with updates for the Asian Highway routes in their territory.

9. The Asian Highway Database, which contains, among other things, information on compliance with minimum standards, is being updated using 2012 data received from member States.[4] According to the information currently available in the database, about 11,915 km (8 per cent of the total) of the roads in the network did not meet the minimum desirable standards in 2010. Progress in upgrading Asian Highway routes between 2004 and 2010 is shown in figure 1. Between 2006 and 2010 member States upgraded from their

[2] The Democratic People's Republic of Korea was the most recent member State to accede to the Agreement, with effect from 10 January 2013.

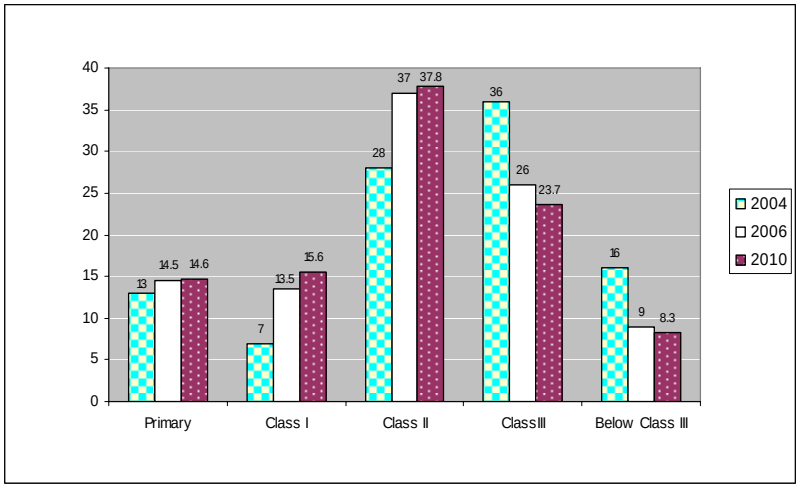
[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2323, No. 41607, annex II.

[4] As of 11 June 2013, updated data had been received from 10 member States.

previous design classes about 9,300 km (or 6.5 per cent of the total) highways in the Asian Highway network.

10. Information from the Asian Highway Database is available to member States and development partners through the ESCAP website (www.unescap.org/ttdw/common/tis/ah/member%20countries.asp).

Figure 1
Proportion of Asian Highway routes by class, 2004, 2006 and 2010



C. Asian Highway route signs

11. Parties are required to place Asian Highway route signs conforming to the descriptions in annex III of the Agreement on all routes of the Asian Highway network within five years of the date of entry into force of the Agreement for the State concerned. In this regard, member States may wish to update the Working Group on their progress and plans for placing route signs.[5]

12. Further, in order to improve the visibility and public awareness of the Asian Highway routes, member States are encouraged to indicate corresponding Asian Highway route numbers on national maps and to encourage similar notations on commercially produced maps. At the regional level, the secretariat will, when possible, encourage international map publishers to indicate the Asian Highway routes and numbers on commercially produced maps.[6]

D. Improving road safety on the Asian Highway

13. The agreement requires the parties to give full consideration to issues of road safety while developing the Asian Highway network. The Ministerial Declaration on Improving Road Safety in Asia and the Pacific (E/ESCAP/63/13, chap. IV),[7] adopted by the Ministerial Conference on Transport held in Busan, Republic of Korea, in November 2006, invited ESCAP members and associate members to address road safety with regard to, among other areas, developing the Asian Highway as a model of road safety.

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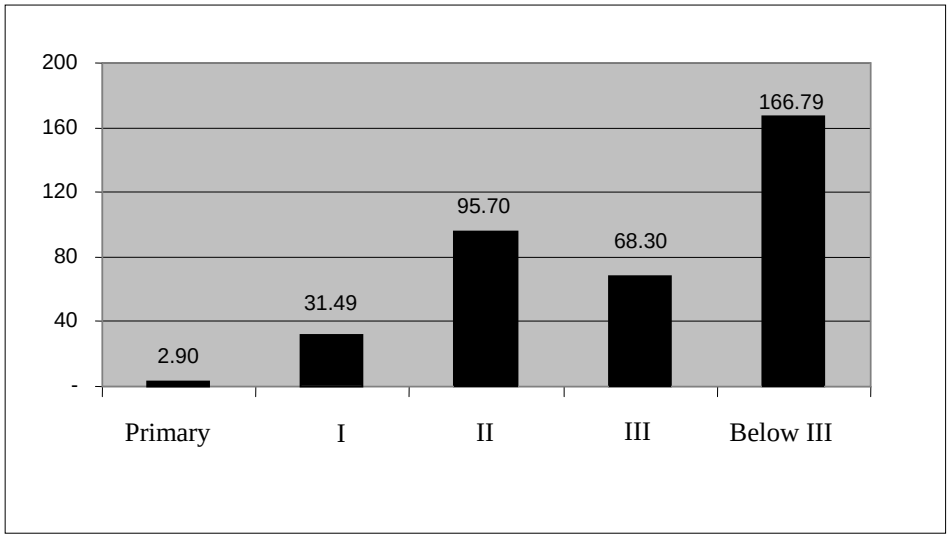
[5] According to information available to the secretariat, several member States, including Azerbaijan, Japan, Republic of Korea and Thailand, completed the placement of Asian Highway route signs along the routes in their territory, and some other member States were in the process of placing such signs.

[6] It should be mentioned here that Google Maps for some member States (for example, India and Thailand) show Asian Highway route numbers.

[7] www.unescap.org/EDC/English/Commissions/E63/E63_13E.pdf.

14. Data on road safety components are also contained in the Asian Highway Database, including the number of road crashes and fatalities for each Asian Highway section. Road safety data (2010) are available for 45.5 per cent of the length of the Asian Highway, including 695 road sections (or 46.6 per cent of all sections), covering 64,818 km in 24 countries. Figure 2 shows average fatality rates per billion vehicle-km by Asian Highway class. It clearly shows that the higher class of roads are generally much safer than the lower class of roads, and that significant improvement in road safety may be achieved through upgrading of Asian Highway routes and safer infrastructure design.

Figure 2
Average fatality rates per billion vehicle-km by Asian Highway class



Source: Based on information available from the Asian Highway Database.

Note: The fatality rates in the figure are based on reported fatalities on 24.1 per cent of the length of the Asian Highway network, which includes 485 road sections (or 32.5 per cent of all sections) covering 34,370 km of highways in 23 countries for which the required data for calculation was available in the Asian Highway Database. It may be noted here that fatality rates for all 64,818 km of roads could not be calculated as the necessary data for such calculation were not available for all sections.

15. Member States are encouraged to provide the secretariat with road safety data updates for the Asian Highway Database.

16. The General Assembly in its resolution 64/255 on improving global road safety proclaimed the period 2011-2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety. The overall goal of the Decade is to stabilize and then reduce the forecast level of road traffic fatalities around the world by increasing road safety activities conducted at the national, regional and global levels. The resolution, among other things, invited all Member States to set their own national road traffic casualty reduction targets to be achieved by the end of the Decade, in line with the plan of action of the Decade. The resolution may be considered as a renewed call to member States to address the issue of road safety.

III. Issues for consideration

17. The Working Group may wish to consider the present document with a view to encouraging the participation of member States in the implementation of the Agreement thus leading to the harmonized development of safe road transport infrastructure.

Annex I

Signatories to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network as of 20 May 2013

	Signatory	Type of signature	Date of signature	Date of entry into force
1.	Afghanistan	Simple Ratified on 8 January 2006	26 April 2004	8 April 2006
2.	Armenia	Simple Ratified on 6 June 2005	26 April 2004	5 September 2005
3.	Azerbaijan	Simple Ratified on 5 May 2005	28 April 2004	3 August 2005
4.	Bangladesh	Acceded on 10 August 2009		8 November 2009
5.	Bhutan	Simple Ratified on 18 August 2005	26 April 2004	16 November 2005
6.	Cambodia	Simple Approved on 5 April 2005	26 April 2004	4 July 2005
7.	China	Definitive	26 April 2004	4 July 2005
8.	Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Acceded on 12 October 2012		10 January 2013
9.	Georgia	Simple Approved on 9 December 2005	26 April 2004	9 March 2006
10.	India	Simple Ratified on 16 February 2006	27 April 2004	17 May 2006
11.	Indonesia	Simple Ratified on 11 February 2010	26 April 2004	12 May 2010
12.	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	Simple Ratified on 3 November 2009	26 April 2004	1 February 2010
13.	Japan	Definitive	26 April 2004	4 July 2005
14.	Kazakhstan	Simple Approved on 1 November 2007	26 April 2004	30 January 2008
15.	Kyrgyzstan	Simple Ratified on 30 August 2006	26 April 2004	28 November 2006
16.	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Simple Ratified on 10 April 2008	26 April 2004	9 July 2008
17.	Malaysia	Simple	24 September 2004	-
18.	Mongolia	Simple Ratified on 25 July 2005	26 April 2004	23 October 2005
19.	Myanmar	Simple Ratified on 15 September 2004	26 April 2004	4 July 2005
20.	Nepal	Simple Ratified on 14 June 2010	26 April 2004	12 September 2010
21.	Pakistan	Simple Ratified on 19 October 2005	26 April 2004	17 January 2006
22.	Philippines	Simple Ratified on 18 December 2007	2 November 2005	17 March 2008
23.	Republic of Korea	Simple Ratified on 13 August 2004	26 April 2004	4 July 2005

Signatory	Type of signature	Date of signature	Date of entry into force
24. Russian Federation	Definitive	27 April 2004	4 July 2005
25. Sri Lanka	Simple Ratified on 24 September 2004	26 April 2004	4 July 2005
26. Tajikistan	Simple Ratified on 9 April 2006	26 April 2004	8 July 2006
27. Thailand	Simple Ratified on 13 March 2006	26 April 2004	11 June 2006
28. Turkey	Simple Ratified on 30 March 2010	26 April 2004	28 June 2010
29. Uzbekistan	Definitive	26 April 2004	4 July 2005
30. Viet Nam	Simple Approved on 3 August 2004	26 April 2004	4 July 2005

Source: Based on information available from: http://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XI-B-34&chapter=11&lang=en (accessed on 20 May 2013); and http://treaties.un.org/pages/CNs.aspx (accessed 10 January 2013).

Annex II

Model Instrument of Accession

(To be signed by the Head of State, Head of Government or Minister of/for Foreign Affairs)

ACCESSION

WHEREAS the ***Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network*** was adopted ***on 18 November 2003 in Bangkok*** and opened for signature ***in Shanghai, China, from 26 to 28 April 2004 and thereafter at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 1 May 2004 to 31 December 2005,***

NOW THEREFORE I, [**name and title of the Head of State, Head of Government or Minister of/for Foreign Affairs**] declare that the Government of [**name of State**], having considered the above-mentioned ***Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network***, accedes to the same and undertakes faithfully to perform and carry out the stipulations contained therein.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have signed this instrument of accession at [**place**] on [**date**].

[Signature]

Annex III

Model Instrument of Ratification, Acceptance or Approval

(To be signed by the Head of State, Head of Government or Minister of/for Foreign Affairs)

[RATIFICATION/ACCEPTANCE/APPROVAL]

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WHEREAS the ***Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network*** was adopted ***on 18 November 2003 in Bangkok*** and opened for signature ***in Shanghai, China, from 26 to 28 April 2004,***

AND WHEREAS the said ***Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network*** has been signed on behalf of the Government of [**name of State**] on [**date**],

NOW THEREFORE I, [**name and title of the Head of State, Head of Government or Minister of/for Foreign Affairs**] declare that the Government of [**name of State**], having considered the above-mentioned ***Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network***, [**ratifies, accepts, approves**] the same and undertakes faithfully to perform and carry out the stipulations contained therein.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have signed this instrument of [**ratification, acceptance, or approval**] at [**place**] on [**date**].

[Signature]

Annex IV

Model Instrument of Reservation/Declaration

(To be signed by the Head of State, Head of Government or Minister of/for Foreign Affairs)

[RESERVATION/DECLARATION]

I, [**name and title of the Head of State, Head of Government or Minister of/for Foreign Affairs**],

HEREBY DECLARE that the Government of [**name of State**] makes the following [**reservation/declaration**] in relation to article [***14 (5) of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network adopted on 18 November 2003 in Bangkok***:]

[**Substance of reservation/declaration**]

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal.

Done at [**place**] on [**date**]

[**Signature and title**]

Annex V

Asian Highway Classifications and Design Standards

Highway classification		Primary (4 or more lanes)				Class I (4 or more lanes)				Class II (2 lanes)				Class III (2 lanes)			
Terrain classification		L	R	M	S	L	R	M	S	L	R	M	S	L	R	M	S
Design speed (km/h)		120	100	80	60	100	80	50		80	60	50	40	60	50	40	30
Width (m)	Right of way	(50)				(40)				(40)				(30)			
	Lane	3.50				3.50				3.50				3.00 (3.25)			
	Shoulde	3.00		2.50		3.00		2.50		2.50		2.00		1.5 (2.0)		0.75(1.5)	
	Median stri	4.00		3.00		3.00		2.50		N/A		N/A		N/A		N/A	
Minimum radii of horizontal curve (m)		520	350	210	115	350	210	80		210	115	80	50	115	80	50	30
Pavement slope (percentage)		2				2				2				2-5			
Shoulder slope (percentage)		3-6				3-6				3-6				3-6			
Type of pavement		Asphalt/cement concrete				Asphalt/cement concrete				Asphalt/cement concrete				Dbl. bituminous treatment			
Maximum superelevation (percentage)		10				10				10				10			
Maximum vertical grade (percentage)		4	5	6	7	4	5	6	7	4	5	6	7	4	5	6	7
Structure loading (minimum)		HS20-44				HS20-44				HS20-44				HS20-44			

Notes: Figures in parentheses are desirable values.

Minimum radii of horizontal curve should be determined in conjunction with superelevation.

The recommended width of the median can be reduced with the proper type of guard fence.

The parties should apply their national standards when constructing such structures as bridges, culverts and tunnels along the Asian Highway.

Abbreviations: L: level; R: rolling; M: mountainous; S: steep.