Intergovernmental 13th Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport Forum in Asia
in conjunction with 6th Session of the Committee on Transport

10-11 November 2020
Virtual meeting via video conference in Webex platform

Draft Concept Note & Provisional Programme

Theme: Changing the Course of Asia’s Transport Sector through Transformational Change

Co-organized by:
Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia & the Pacific
United Nations Centre for Regional Development of Division for Sustainable Development Goals/
United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Co-Sponsored by:
Asian Development Bank (ADB)
Busworld Foundation (BW)
SLOCAT Partnership for Sustainable Low Carbon Transport
German International Cooperation (GIZ)
Research for Community Access Partnership (ReCAP)

Forum Chair: (tbc)

Supporting Organizations

ASUA- Japan, China SUC Institute and JiaCui (P.R. China) Environmental Promotion Center, Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute, Eco-Mo Foundation, International Transport Forum (ITF), OECD, ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Liechtenstein Institute for Strategic Development, UN-Habitat, International Association of Public Transport (UITP), UNCTAD, SAFER-Vehicle and Traffic Safety Centre, Wuppertal Institute, Walk21, WRI India, World Bank (WB), World Health Organization (WHO), among other (tbc)

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CONCEPT NOTE

1. BACKGROUND

While Asian countries are progressively adopting and implementing sustainable transport policies and programmes, the region still faces numerous challenges in building transport systems that are economically, socially, and environmentally sustainable, and which can accelerate economic and social development. In the meantime, Asia is, like other parts of the world, struggling to overcome the impacts of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19). Most of the countries have been, or are still, going through a lockdown situation which has resulted in drastic reductions in transport activity. All countries in Asia and the Pacific have adopted several containment measures, including enforced isolation, social distancing approaches, border closures and restricted use of public transport to prevent the further spread of COVID. In this extraordinary global health crisis, developing countries are suffering the most based on their socio-economic condition, and preparedness capacity. Many countries face challenges to maintain or restore normal life and keep the economy thriving with the reduced capacity of transport and freight and logistic delivery systems. Forcing behavioral changes and transforming the way people communicate, work and live, has had a substantially affected transport, providing a unique opportunity to revise and rethink transport strategies.

The 'Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the member states and calls for ambitious economic, social and environmental action to make cities and communities safe, resilient, inclusive, liveable, and sustainable. To address this issue, it is important for national governments and city leaders to bring transformational changes in their overall transport policy, development of transport infrastructure and services, technologies, funding, and financing, as well as institutional capacity, and governance. It is important for countries to enhance strong cooperation, collaboration, and network building among local, national, and international communities in order to achieve the sustainable development goals and targets related to transport. Asian countries and cities will need a massive transformation in their transport sector to remain on the path of peace, prosperity, and the sustainability. Success will depend on the vision and quality of the leadership for bringing about these transformational changes to transport systems and logistics to address current needs and future demands. It is important for national, regional and city leaders and planners to introduce state-of-the-art technologies on urban and rural mobility solutions for achieving sustainable development and SDGs in the region. In the recovery following the pandemic, it will be important for Asian countries and cities to learn from best practices from around the world and develop robust and cost-effective transport systems that learn from the lessons to the pandemic and harness the latest technologies to deliver cities and rural areas the wider benefits.

With the above background, the Ministry of the Environment of the Government of Japan, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and United Nations Centre for Regional Development of Division for Sustainable Development Goals/United Nations Development of Economic and Social Affairs will be co-organizing the Intergovernmental 13th Regional EST Forum in Asia from 10 to 11 November 2020 in conjunction with the UN ESCAP 6th Session of the Committee on Transport, on the theme of “Changing the Course of Asia’s Transport Sector through Transformational Changes”.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Intergovernmental 13th Regional EST Forum in Asia are to:

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• Discuss transformative transport policies for sustainable transport infrastructure and services, planning approaches state-of-the-art technologies, funding and financing mechanisms, better institutional capacity development, good and transparent governance, and cooperation and collaboration opportunities for changing the course of Asia’s transport sector;

• Develop a consensus on how Asian EST member countries can contribute towards the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development, in particular, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic through effective mobility solutions, including better traditional and new public transport options as well as walking, cycling and other transport modes;

• Facilitate mayors’ policy dialogue on urban mobility and smart cities for building cities and communities safe, resilient, inclusive, liveable, and sustainable;

• Review and evaluate countries’ progress, initiatives, achievements, and best practices in addressing the Goals of the Bangkok 2020 Declaration (2010-2020); and

• Setting out the concept and process of the successor of the Bangkok 2020 Declaration/New Declaration (2020-2030) that will ensure a strong aligning with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development/SDGs in Asia and the Pacific.

3. SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

The 13th Regional EST Forum in Asia is expected to be supported by various international organizations and donor agencies such as: Asian Development Bank (ADB), ASUA- Japan, Busworld Foundation (BWF), China SUC Institute and JiaCui (P.R. China) Environmental Promotion Center, Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute, Research for Community Access Partnership (ReCAP), Eco-Mo Foundation, German International Cooperation (GIZ), International Transport Forum at the OECD, International Association of Public Transport (UITP), ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Liechtenstein Institute for Strategic Development, SLOCAT Partnership for Sustainable Low Carbon Transport, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Conference on Tread and Development (UNCTAD), SAFER-Vehicle and Traffic Safety Centre, Wuppertal Institute, Walk21, WRI India, the World Bank (WB), World Health Organization (WHO) among other (tbc).

4. GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

The geographic coverage of the Forum encompass 25 countries in Northeast, Southeast, and South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, People’s Republic of China, Indonesia, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam) and Russian Federation. Several Central Asian and Pacific countries from ESCAP region are also expected to join the Intergovernmental 13th Regional EST Forum in Asia.

5. PARTICIPANTS

Participation in the Intergovernmental 13th Regional EST Forum in Asia is by invitation only. It is expected that approximately 500 participants, including senior government representatives from Asia and the Pacific countries, city mayors, international experts and resource persons, and others as listed below will be attending the conference.

• High-level government representatives and policy makers from the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Urban Development, the Ministry of Railways, and the Ministry of Health etc;
- Government officials from central, regional and local governments;
- Distinguished transport, environment and climate change experts and international resource persons;
- Representatives of relevant UN and international organizations, including international financial institutions, multi-lateral development banks and donor agencies; and
- Selected representatives of the private and business sectors, Academia, and NGOs etc.

6. OFFICIAL SEMINAR & PRE-EVENTS

As a part of the Intergovernmental 13th Regional EST Forum in Asia, there are several pre-and post-events will be organized.

Pre-Event 1
Theme: Scaling Public Bus Transport-Outlook 2030 for Achieving SDGs in India
Date: 22 October 2020
Organizers: Busworld Foundation, UN-Habitat and UNCRD
Venue: Virtual meeting
Registration: https://bit.ly/349CyYh

Pre-Event 2
Theme: Tracking Progress in Asia's Transport Transformation -Opportunities for Linking SDG and NDC Reporting
Date: 5 November 2020 (11:45 Bangkok time)
Organizers: GIZ, SLOCAT, LEDS and UNCRD
Venue: Virtual meeting
Registration: christoph.koester@giz.de
https://www.uncrd.or.jp/content/documents/809813th%20EST%20Forum_Draft%20Concept%20Note%20&%20Provisional%20programme-%2022Sept%202020.pdf

7. HOW TO REGISTER

The virtual 13th Regional EST Forum in Asia is open to the governments and the public (upon registration) but the organizers will be screening all registered participants as this is an intergovernmental meeting. Participation in the UN Forum is free of charge.

8. CONTACTS

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