“Enabling resilience through sustainable and seamless connectivity”

3rd Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific 28-30 September 2022

Secretary-General Young Tae Kim, International Transport Forum (ITF)

- Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

- Good morning, good afternoon or good evening, depending on where you are. It is my honour to be here today to participate in the Third Ministerial Conference on Regional Economic Cooperation and Integration in Asia and the Pacific. Thank you very much for the invitation to this important event.

- Connectivity increases interactions, productivity, competition, and market opportunities between countries. Transport connectivity is fundamental to the increase of regional competitiveness, as it can promote economic growth, social integration, development, supply chain efficiency and resilience.

- While striving for connectivity enhancement, it is also important to pay attention to reducing the environmental and climate impact while increasing safety and efficiency by applying sustainable transport and logistics solutions.
• Sustainable and seamless connectivity can enhance the resiliency of the transport systems. Developing a transport system that is prepared and resilient to system shocks, such as climate impacts, COVID pandemics, wars, and conflicts is essential for the increasingly interconnected societies and economies.

• As shown in the ITF report “Enhancing Connectivity and Freight in Central Asia”, implementing appropriate policy measures can greatly enhance transport connectivity and compensate for distance and being landlocked. Next year in early 2023, the ITF will launch a new sustainable regional connectivity study focusing on Central and Southeast Asia regions. This new study will identify potential connectivity gaps in the future for the two regions and benchmark the national freight transport policies against OECD best practices, focusing on opportunities to reduce CO2 emissions from the build and use of the infrastructures. This new study will also provide recommendations on how to close the potential connectivity gaps through both hard and soft measures and how to improve the sustainability of current and future transport infrastructure and their levels of resilience.

• Countries are still in the phase of recovering from the pandemic. It is critical to consider the long-term impacts of recovery measures on the overall resilience and sustainability of transport systems and how well they can address future disruptive events.
Therefore, ITF, jointly with UN ESCAP, have developed Covid-19 recovery guidelines for freight transport connectivity.

- The ITF is ready to contribute to strengthening regional connectivity in the Asia and Pacific region while enhancing greater sustainability and resiliency.

- Thank you very much for having me. I wish you a successful conference.