Honorable Chair,

Distinguished delegates

Ladies and gentlemen,

Very good morning to you all, it’s indeed my great pleasure to attend the session of the 4th ministerial conference on Transport organized by UNESCAP Transport Division.

1. Bangladesh are celebrating the 50th anniversary of independence and have been recommended for the graduation from LDC to Developing Country status this year by the UN CDP. This is indeed a most impressive achievement and an important milestone in our country’s post-independence journey. So, this year carries a special significance for Bangladesh.

2. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the global supply chain has been seriously affected and the transport and logistic industries went under serious challenges both within the country and across the borders. This COVID pandemic has added a new dimension to the connectivity and demanded for seamless and paperless movement of goods across the borders.

Distinguished delegates,

3. The Regional Action Program for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017-2021) identified 7 (seven) aspects of transport connectivity with specific objectives, outputs and indicators of achievement.

4. For Bangladesh, the targets of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth and goals of improved living standards called for a vibrant and effective transport network. The transport sector vision is to develop an efficient, sustainable, safe and regionally balanced transportation system. Special emphasis is placed on the introduction of modern technology for increasing capacity and improving quality and productivity of the system,
5. In the area of regional transport infrastructure connectivity, government of Bangladesh has accorded highest priority on cross border connectivity issue in development of road network considering the globalization and modern market economy as well as particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries and regions.

6. Government of Bangladesh has been making relentless efforts to improve the global and regional road connectivity through various regional cooperation forums and initiatives. The key connectivity issues in Bangladesh are implementation of Asian Highway Network in Bangladesh and integration of Sub Regional Transport Networks.

7. The physical alignment of Asian Highway Route in Bangladesh is more or less completed so far as the road connectivity is concerned. There are 2 missing links exist on AH1, the construction of 6.15 KM long bridge over the Padma River and 690 KM long bridge over the Madhumati River at Kalna point are near to completion.

8. Roads and Highways Department is implementing South Asia Sub regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Corridor projects on Dhaka (Joydevpur)-Elenga-Rangpur-Burimari and Dhaka(Katchpur)-Narsingdi-Sylhet-Tamabil through upgrading to dual carriageway (4lane) highway with the provision of separate service lanes on both sides to improve international and regional transport and logistics network.

9. Development of the two new seaports with smooth transport links to Dhaka, establishment of effective railway linkages between the east and west zones of the country, integration of road, rail and inland water transport, and participation in global and regional transport connectivity initiatives that help to develop the land route links between South Asia and East Asia through Bangladesh.

Respected delegates,

10. Regarding regional transport operational connectivity, the BBIN (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, and Nepal) Motor Vehicle Agreement (MVA) has been signed on 15 June 2015 in Thimpu, Bhutan for the regulation of passenger, personal and cargo vehicular traffic between BBIN countries. The Protocol regarding the operation of BBIN MVA is under process.

Distinguished delegates,

11. In the area of sustainable urban transport goverenment of Bangladesh has developed Strategic Transport Plan (STP) for Dhaka focusing on developing mass transits. In order to provide affordable, inclusive, safe transport mode for
mobility, construction of Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) lines, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) lines are under construction and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) in the going to be introduced soon.

12. For reducing traffic congestion by intercity traffic surrounding Ring Road, Elevated Express ways, etc. are all in progress in Dhaka. Development of underground metro system is under active consideration and necessary study and design is going on.

13. Government of Bangladesh has placed huge importance on Road Safety. On top of ongoing projects on Road Safety government is preparing a US$ 360 million multiyear multiphase Road Safety Programs involving all the stakeholders. The focus of the project is capacity building of stakeholder organizations, introducing iRAP star rating system for the network, piloting road safety programs and implementing road safety mass action plan.

Dear Excellencies, Delegates, ladies and gentlemen

14. I hope this 4th ministerial Conference on Transport will facilitate to achieve universal accessible safe, affordable, efficient, resilient, multimodal transport among member countries.

Thank you all for your kind attention and patient hearing.