Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished delegations, Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to join this important conference on “Transport” as a participant from Sri Lanka. I pay special attention on sustainable freight transport.

In 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the SDG targets provide a framework for developing Sustainable Freight Transport. SDGs which are directly relevant to sustainable freight transport have been identified by UNESCAP.

SDG 3 (Good health and Well Being), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 11(Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 12(Responsible Consumption and Production) and SDG 13 (Climate Action) are directly impacted by the Sustainable Freight Transport.

Freight transport enables economic growth, provides access to markets, connects producers and consumers, determines trade competitiveness, supports effective integration into global supply chains, and contributes to inclusive development.

However freight transport activities generates negative externalities such as greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), fossil fuel resource depletion, pollution,
congestion, accidents, infrastructure degradation and noise and visual intrusion.

Therefore we must accelerate decarbonization of entire transport sector to achieve zero emissions. We have to implement **sustainable railway systems** to increase efficiency and increase its share of freight transport. **Zero emission ships** must be commercially available. Use of **sustainable Aviation fuels** will reduce carbon emissions. Implementing **road safety measures** provide safe conditions for all on public transport as same as pedestrians.

Enhancing shift towards sustainable freight transport has become imperative given the rising negative externalities of freight transport in South Asia.

It also provides an opportunity for the sub region to “**build back better from the pandemic**” (UNESCAP resolution No. 77/1).

This conference is a very important opportunity to build the sustainable freight transport network, which we need to minimize negative externalities generate by the freight transport. This conference will contribute to develop an efficient, inclusive and green world through regional cooperation.

Thank you