Statement of India

Fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport
(14 to 17 December 2021)

Agenda 7: Policy statements on scaling up sustainable transport initiatives in Asia and the Pacific to strengthen regional cooperation

Madame Chair,

1. It is well acknowledged that the role of transport connectivity in empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality in Asia and the Pacific is significant. As announced during COP26 summit in November 2021, India will achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2070 and will reduce the total projected carbon emission by one billion tonnes between 2021 and 2030. Additionally, the carbon intensity of the economy would be reduced to less than 45% by 2030. In line with these commitments, India is focussed towards developing a sustainable, efficient, safe road infrastructure network for accelerating regional connectivity and inclusive socio-economic growth along with environment friendly, accessible, and citizen-centric mobility.

2. The government has initiated several landmark reforms through the Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Act in the field of road safety, vehicle safety, reducing pollution, citizen facilitation, transparency and ease of doing business. For India, the key priority is to reduce the contribution of road transportation to environment pollution and, therefore, several initiatives have been undertaken in this regard.

3. Different authorities and agencies are working towards achieving the committed reduction in emissions through existing interventions and through
launch of new initiatives in certain priority areas, including reducing emissions from the transport sector and promoting transition to alternate fuels; enhancing energy efficiency of the vehicular and transport systems; promoting fuel efficient transport modes for passenger, freight, and urban populations; and building climate resilient infrastructure to reduce the risks of climate vulnerabilities.

4. Indian Railways is working in mission mode to become the largest Green Railways in the world and is moving towards becoming a “net zero carbon emitter” before 2030. Indian Railways Dedicated Freight Corridors are being developed as a low-carbon green transportation network with a long-term low carbon roadmap. Indian Railways has incorporated Climate Change features in its own risk assessments and disaster management protocols.

Madame Chair,

5. The Government of India has taken several other initiatives with a view to scaling up sustainable transport. The mass emission standards for BS-VI have already been mandated from 1st April 2020. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways of India has formulated the Vehicle Scrapping Policy to enable phasing out of unfit and old polluting vehicles and their replacement with fuel efficient, environment friendly, new generation vehicles. The policy ensures that vehicle owners will be extended incentives to scrap their old vehicles and replace them with new and less polluting vehicles, thereby reducing their contribution to vehicular air pollution. With a view to promoting Electric Vehicles in road transportation, the Transport Ministry has formulated standards, at par with global standards, to enable manufacturing and adoption of Electric Vehicles. It has also formulated standards for type approval of Hybrid Electric Vehicles of all categories. The
National Policy of Biofuels (2018) aims to increase usage of biofuels in the transportation sectors in the country. Over the years, the Transport Ministry has notified enabling standards to increase the use of alternate sustainable pollution-free fuel, achieve fuel efficiency and reduce carbon emission. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways of India has notified the mass emission standards for Ethanol blend fuels, Methanol blended fuels and Di-Methyl Ether.

6. As part of Bharatmala Pariyojana project, the Transport Ministry has identified a network of greenfield corridors, which will be more efficient alternative compared to brownfield expansion of existing corridors. The Indian Road Congress (IRC) has prepared several codes and guidelines for promoting green construction technologies and use of alternate material for reducing the carbon footprints of construction and maintenance works in the road sector. Further, India has set a target to increase the share of Railways in freight to 45% as per India’s NDC. Similarly, it is planned to increase the modal share of freight movement through Inland Waterways Transport (IWT) to 4% by FY 2030.

Madame Chair,

7. We believe that improvement in rural connectivity can help in increased connectivity of villages with high adoption of public transport. We also believe that infrastructure network needs to address all types of connectivity - urban-to-urban, urban-to-rural and rural-to-rural. India has implemented multiple schemes to strengthen rural connectivity in the country. Therefore, rural connectivity and improving road safety are important aspects in order to achieve the relevant SDGs.
Madame Chair,

8. We share the international community's desire for enhancing physical connectivity and believe it should bring greater economic benefits to all in an equitable and balanced manner. Expansion and strengthening of connectivity is an integral part of India's economic and diplomatic initiatives.

9. India believes that to further deepen regional connectivity, it is necessary to carry forward the initiatives along-with the core principles of respect for each other's sovereignty, and territorial integrity. India is also of the firm view that connectivity initiatives must be based on universally recognized international norms. They must follow principles of good governance, rule of law, openness, financial responsibility, transparency and equality.

Madame Chair,

10. The Government of India continues to implement a number of initiatives to strengthen its road transport connectivity and enhance regional connectivity, particularly in South Asia and Southeast Asia by way of development of road transport infrastructure, negotiating bilateral and regional motor vehicles agreements and promoting initiatives for standardization of transport systems. The Bangladesh, Bhutan, India (BBIN) Motor Vehicle Agreement and India, Myanmar, Thailand (IMT) Trilateral Highway agreement are two major steps to improve the regional transport connectivity with the neighbouring countries.

11. The rail transport output between India and the neighbouring countries has been constantly increasing over the years, particularly with Bangladesh
and Nepal. Besides, to improve people-to-people contact with neighbouring countries, India has facilitated operation of a number of bus services between India and Bangladesh and between India and Nepal on a number of routes.

Thank you.