Fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport  
Friday, 16 December 2021 (2:05 PM)  
Live Video Conference

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

Statement of Hon. Renu Kumari Yadav, Minister, Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport, Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal,

Thank you, Madam Chair,

Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Firstly, I would like to express my appreciation to ESCAP for preparation made for this Conference and high quality of documents.

I also appreciate the opportunity to share some of the policies of the Federal Government of Nepal to enhance overall sustainability of transport system in Nepal.

My interventions will focus on Federal Government’s policies and plan on improving transport connectivity, urban public transport, transition to electric mobility and road safety.

Nepal is committed to 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and has mainstreamed Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in
our national policies and plans. We are aiming to reduce 28 per cent Green House Gas (GHG) emissions from the transport sector by 2030 in our updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement.

Enhancing transport connectivity is vital for economic development. One of the priorities of the government is to provide road accessibility to all district headquarters and improve transport connectivity. Now we have road access to all district headquarters except one which is planned to be connected by this fiscal year. Work on Kathmandu-Terai Fast Track is progressing – that will bring enormous economic benefits by reducing travel time from the federal capital city Kathmandu to Terai and connectivity to India. North-South corridors and links from Southern border (India) to Northern border (China) are also in the government’s priority. Road construction works on seven such corridors are in progress while two corridors which are now in operation through Rasuwagdhi and Kodari (a part of Asian Highway- 42) are being upgraded. Upgrading the East-West Highway (part of Asian Highway -2) to four lanes is progressing in many sections. Recently dry ports in Kodari (near Chinese border), and Chobhar, Kathmandu has been developed and construction of Rasuwa dry port is progressing.

Study on development of East-West Electrified Railway is completed and following with construction work in Bardibas-Nijgadh section. Jayanagar Janakpur- Kurtha section of Nepal India cross border railway has recently been upgraded to modern broad-gauge track and two new Diesel Electrified Multiple Unit
(DEMU) rail locomotives have been procured and will start operation soon. A tunnel road to facilitate access to Kathmandu is also progressing in Nagdhunga, Tribhuwan Rajpath, the part of Asian Highway- 42.

**Madam Chairperson,**

Major cities in Nepal including the capital Kathmandu are rapidly urbanizing. Number vehicles is increasing at 14% annually in Nepal. Kathmandu alone has more than 50% of national vehicle fleet. In this context, providing sustainable mobility is facing major challenges due to growing demand.

Federal government is working to improve urban mobility in partnership with provincial governments and local bodies. Government is planning to develop a mass transit system in Kathmandu. Feasibility study of a metro systems is completed and there is a plan to operate Bus Rapid Transit, some electric buses too. The development of mass transit would facilitate public transport and reduce congestion. Upgrading and widening of urban roads as well as infrastructure for active mobility is ongoing.

During the COVID-19 pandemic there has been change in users’ behaviors to walk and cycle and use of personal cars. There is rise in the use of cashless payments using electronic payment platforms, QR codes, Khalti, and mobile payment.

We are aiming to integrate urban and transport planning in major cities – focusing on the development of public transport as well integration of Non-Motorized Transport (NMT) footpaths and
cycling tracks, improvement of urban roads, green infrastructure, and parks. City authorities are required to develop integrated urban development and public transport master plans. This will enable urban residents to have safe, accessible, inclusive and sustainable urban environment and mobility.

With abundance of hydropower generation potential of 42 Giga Watt, the transition to electric mobility is government priority reflected in the NDCs that will support decarbonization of the transport sector. Currently Nepal has surplus green energy and hydroelectricity generation will reach 11 GW by 2030. To support transition, the Government has reduced import taxes for electric vehicles. The transport sector police and strategies include a plan to operate electric public transport in 3 provinces, and e-vehicles to cover 90% of all private passenger vehicle sales by 2030.

Private sector is operating a fleet of electric buses and minibuses in Kathmandu and has installed 80 fast and slow charging stations and plans to expand service to other cities. The government is procuring 200 electric buses to operate public transport in Kathmandu. Nepal Electric Authority is developing 500 charging stations in Kathmandu and planning to expand number and other areas.

Gradually, Nepal is planning to expand electric public transport network in intercity travel by installing charging stations at strategic locations.
We are in the process of organizing a stakeholder’s consultation and refine strategy and operational policy to further accelerate transition to electric mobility in public transport with support of UNESCAP.

Due to difficult mountainous terrain, road safety is still a major concern for Nepal. We have adopted a new Action Plan for Road Safety 2021-2030 is aligned with the second Decade of Action for Road Safety. Its gradual implementation would improve road safety situation. High level Road Safety Council is established. In order to improve safety in Kathmandu various safety measures including the “Do not drink and drive” campaign is ongoing with reduction in number crashes and fatalities. One of the challenges for safety has been the number of casualties per crashes due to the difficult topography and roads in the mountainous terrain. Improving data collection and analysis, sharing of experiences in the areas of accident analysis and reduction key risk factors would be beneficial for improving road safety in Nepal.

**Madam Chair,**

With the efforts of the government and implementation of sustainable transport policies, – Nepal transport sector would be more sustainable, inclusive and resilient. The improvement of urban public transport and transition to electric mobility will help to reduce GHG emissions as well as save foreign currency by reducing import of fossil fuels.
Nepal will be graduating from LDC by 2026. In this transition phase—
we would need support from UN agencies and development
partners to make structural reform and refine polices and strategies
towards overall sustainability and accelerating their implementation.

I would like to request ESCAP and development partners to
support Nepal’s transport sector and consider piloting sustainable
transport initiatives in the areas of regional connectivity,
sustainable urban mobility and road safety.

Nepal endorses the proposed Ministerial Declaration and the
Regional Action Programme and extends full support to UNESCAP
transport sector initiatives and seven priority themes.

Nepal looks forward to collaborating and working with Member
States, UNESCAP and other development partners in the
implementation of the proposed regional action programme on
sustainable transport development as well the achievements of
Sustainable Development Goals.

Finally, I wish for the success of the Conference.

Thank you!

Renu Kumari Yadav

Minister of Physical Infrastructure and Transport, Nepal

16th December 2021