Fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport of the UNESCAP  
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Sri Lanka - Country Statement - (Video Message)

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

Excellencies  
Distinguished Delegates  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great privilege and honor to participate and share my thoughts at the fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport of the UNESCAP. The importance of this conference to Sri Lanka and the other countries is manifold.

I take this opportunity to thank the UNESCAP Secretariat, particularly the staff of the transport division of the UNESCAP for outstanding leadership in convening this Conference.

As a long-standing member, Sri Lanka is committed to achieve Sustainable Development Goals. Transport is one of the sectors that can contribute immensely towards realizing these goals.
Nonetheless, the current transport sectors in many countries are in need of rapid transformation to safer, efficient and more greener systems.

In this context, I believe that the UN new development initiatives create a conducive environment for the governments to establish and improve systems and infrastructures.

Excellencies,

Distinguish delegates,

Realizing the importance of having a more reliable, efficient and sustainable transport system, Development Policy Framework of the government of Sri Lanka “Vistas of Prosperity and Splendor” gives high priority to transport sector. Accordingly, bridging the gap of urban rural divide is expected with the implementation of “C” shape economic corridor linking major economic and trade hubs in the country.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Policy decision in principle has been arrived to increase power generation through renewable energy sources up to 70 % by 2030, which could be a proud milestone of the journey towards net zero emission target.

Initial steps have been taken towards e-mobility through undertaking a feasibility study on Developing Green and Smart Urban Transport System in Colombo city.
Digitalizing along with technological advancement of the sector is required to ensure the operational connectivity in the region which in turn will maximize the potential to harness the emerging opportunities.

Streamlining freight transport is one of the other areas of strategic focus. I must mention that a Country Strategy Report has been prepared for Sri Lanka with the technical assistance under the United Nation development initiative on Enhancing Shift towards Sustainable Freight Transport in Asia and the Pacific. Increasing role of railway transport, improving intermodal freight transport, transforming Sri Lanka into a global maritime hub, addressing urban freight transport issues are the key objectives of this strategy. Next step is to making arrangements for institutionalizing the strategy in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

Excellencies,

We observed that the new normal of the transport sector emerged with COVID-19 Pandemic situation, in fact, demanded major shift in the transport sector towards smart and intelligent Transport Systems.

Investment attraction, institutional capacity building, formulation of policy & regulatory instruments, technological adoption, are the areas where international corporation can be instrumental.

Excellencies,

Distinguished participants,

I believe that the thematic areas (07) identified by the “Ministerial Declaration” and the Regional Action Programme are of high importance to the
countries in the region. Further, knowledge sharing, learning international best practices and harmonizing systems will bring mutual benefits to member states. We look forward to having close cooperation and continuous dialogue which I am sure, will contribute to improve connectivity and mobility internally and internationally.

Having said that, with all the good wishes for the deliberations at the conference and productive outcome, let me conclude my remarks.

Thank you.