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**Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**  
Fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport

Bangkok and online, 14–17 December 2021  
Item 9 of the provisional agenda\*

**Adoption of the ministerial declaration on sustainable transport development in Asia and the Pacific, including a regional action programme for sustainable transport development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026)****Draft ministerial declaration on sustainable transport development in Asia and the Pacific**

*We, the Ministers of transport and representatives of the members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific attending the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport, held in Bangkok and online, from 14 to 17 December 2021,*

*Reaffirming* our commitment to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”,

*Bearing in mind* Commission resolution 75/3 of 31 May 2019 on advancing partnerships within and across regions for the sustainable development of Asia and the Pacific,

*Recalling* Commission resolution 76/2 of 21 May 2020 on regional cooperation to address the socioeconomic effects of pandemics and crises in Asia and the Pacific and Commission resolution 77/1 of 29 April 2021 on building back better from crises through regional cooperation in Asia and the Pacific,

*Acknowledging* the mutual understanding and comprehensive response to the challenges, restoring connectivity and building resilient transport networks,

*Recognizing* the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – and in this regard, underscoring the importance of the environmental dimension in the context of sustainable transport, highlighting in particular the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change<sup>1</sup> and that countries may seek to apply a climate and

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\* ESCAP/MCT/2021/L.1.

<sup>1</sup> See United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

environment-responsive approach to building back better from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic,

*Cognizant* of the importance of Commission resolution 76/1 of 21 May 2020 on strengthening cooperation to promote the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific,

*Attaching continued importance* to General Assembly resolution 75/313 of 29 July 2021 on strengthening the links between all modes of transport to ensure stable and reliable international transport for sustainable development during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, Assembly resolution 70/197 of 22 December 2015 on comprehensive cooperation among all modes of transport for promoting sustainable multimodal transit corridors and Assembly resolution 69/213 of 19 December 2014 on the role of transport and transit corridors in ensuring international cooperation for sustainable development,

*Welcoming* General Assembly resolution 74/15 of 5 December 2019 on the Political Declaration of the High-level Midterm Review on the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 and Assembly resolution 74/217 of 19 December 2019 on the follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States,

*Emphasizing* that unity, solidarity and renewed multilateral cooperation are key to building back better from the pandemic, focusing on the opportunities that the pandemic provides to harness innovation in the sector and to help to provide safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all,

*Acknowledging* the need for persistent efforts to address the road safety crisis, as called for in the Stockholm Declaration<sup>2</sup> and General Assembly resolution 74/299 of 31 August 2020 on improving global road safety, and as called for in the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030 and the related Global Plan of Action,

*Reaffirming* Sustainable Development Goal target 11.2 on providing access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety and expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons,

*Noting* that continued progress in the area of automotive and smart transport systems could improve transport connectivity, traffic efficiency, users' convenience and road safety, including through the progressive development of highly and fully automated vehicles, smart mobility and other technologies,

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<sup>2</sup> See [www.roadsafetysweden.com/about-the-conference/stockholm-declaration/](http://www.roadsafetysweden.com/about-the-conference/stockholm-declaration/).

*Underscoring* the need for continuously improved infrastructure of member States in order to facilitate regional and interregional transport connectivity and sustainability, including through the role of digitalization and automation,

*Recognizing* that the new developments in digitalization, such as big data, artificial intelligence, machine learning, the Internet of things, blockchain and automation, are of increasing relevance to improving mobility and the operationalization of the regional transport network,

*Taking note* of the Bangkok Declaration on City and Transport: Safety, Efficiency, and Sustainability, adopted at the Regional Meeting for Asia and the Pacific on City and Transport: Safety, Efficiency, and Sustainability, held in Bangkok and online on 9 and 10 June 2021,<sup>3</sup> in which the meeting participants recognized the importance of safe, efficient and sustainable urban transport systems and reaffirmed the importance of quality, efficient, safe and environmentally friendly public transport for the creation of comfortable living conditions in cities and towns, as well as for the improvement of the health and well-being of the population and the inclusion of these populations in the socioeconomic dynamics of their cities and agglomerations,

*Emphasizing* the importance of the further development of urban public transport systems and the facilitation of non-motorized transport for more equitable, healthier and less congested urban environments,

*Commending* the application of the sustainable urban transport index as an effective tool for enhancing overall sustainability of urban mobility in cities,

*Recognizing* the need to accelerate the transition to clean energy technologies and electric mobility including in public transport, the use of renewable energy in transport and the establishment of an electric mobility initiative for the region,

*Recognizing also* the importance of alternative fuels and ongoing national initiatives to increase adoption of such fuels in place of conventional fuels,

*Stressing* the importance of safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport links for the economic development of the Asia-Pacific region in the context of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,

*Recognizing* the need to continue the active efforts of the Commission in the comprehensive promotion of advanced management, technical and technological solutions aimed at developing sustainable supply chains with a particular focus on regional and interregional connectivity,

*Noting* the role of multimodal transport corridors in the Asia-Pacific region for the development of trade relations between the member States,

*Recognizing* the importance of integrating different modes of transport for an efficient and sustainable transport system in Asia and the Pacific,

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<sup>3</sup> See [www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/BangkokDeclarationOnSustainableUrbanTransport\\_10Jun2021-Adopted.pdf](http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/d8files/event-documents/BangkokDeclarationOnSustainableUrbanTransport_10Jun2021-Adopted.pdf).

*Noting* the efforts of member States to further strengthen the transport connectivity of landlocked countries in the Asia-Pacific region, notably, by promoting multimodal freight transport along existing and emerging interregional corridors and enhancing transport connectivity between Central Asia and other subregions, by, inter alia, exploring the establishment of a regional centre for the development of transport connectivity under the auspices of the United Nations,

*Supporting* seamless integrated corridors of areas with high potential and the establishment of connections between Asia and Europe, with special attention to the role of cross-border multimodal and in particular railway connectivity in accelerating regional development and regional integration,

*Supporting also* the efforts of member States with regard to the coordinated development of multimodal transport corridors, in line with the activities outlined in the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026),

*Noting* the ongoing national efforts of member States to enhance the sustainability of freight transport in the decade of action for the Sustainable Development Goals, and considering that a regional approach to sustainable multimodal freight transport would provide the required focus and ensure that the benefits of sustainable multimodal freight transport are maximized and the negative externalities minimized,

*Recognizing* that the exceptional circumstances created by the COVID-19 pandemic have positioned transport connectivity as an integral part of pandemic response and recovery policies and of further progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, and calling for special attention to be paid to the issue of railway transport, which demonstrated its resilience during the pandemic,

*Acknowledging* that the digitalization of supply chains will contribute to a sustainable recovery of the global economy after the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic,

*Recognizing* the importance of promoting cooperation between the Commission and other international organizations for the development of interregional transport links, including Euro-Asian transport links,

*Expressing appreciation* for the progress made in the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017–2021),<sup>4</sup> and reaffirming the vital role of regional cooperation,

*Recognizing* that the Intergovernmental Agreements on the Asian Highway Network,<sup>5</sup> on the Trans-Asian Railway Network<sup>6</sup> and on Dry Ports<sup>7</sup> provide an institutional framework for enhancing transport connectivity in the Asia-Pacific region, and encouraging the development of further normative instruments to support sustainable transport development in the region,

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<sup>4</sup> E/ESCAP/73/15/Add.1.

<sup>5</sup> United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2323, No. 41607.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 2596, No. 46171.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 53630.

*Welcoming* the progress in the implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement on International Road Transport along the Asian Highway Network<sup>8</sup> as a significant move to promote the use of the Asian Highway for connectivity, and noting that the Agreement is open for accession to all parties to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network,

*Welcoming also* the Second Global Conference on Sustainable Transport, held in China from 14 to 16 October 2021,<sup>9</sup>

*Noting* the outcomes of the Regional Conference on Transport Research and Education, held on 22 and 23 September 2021, the Regional Meeting on Sustainable Transport Connectivity between Asia and Europe, held on 25 and 26 November 2020 and the Forum on Sustainable Transport Connectivity between Asia and Europe, held on 5 and 6 October 2021,

*Emphasizing* the need for greater connectivity for maritime, rural and remote communities to wider transport systems in the region,

*Emphasizing also* the need to design a more resilient, sustainable and socially equitable transport system in view of the threat of future pandemics, and encouraging people to use sustainable modes of transport,

1. *Adopt* the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026);
2. *Endorse* the Transport Research and Education Network, launched during the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport;
3. *Decide* to work towards a harmonized legal framework for multimodal transport in Asia and the Pacific including in the context of the implementation of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports, as defined by the Agreement;
4. *Encourage* a regional approach on sustainable multimodal freight transport which provides coherence to the existing initiatives, creates synergies through partnerships and ensures high-level political affirmation with regard to sustainable multimodal freight transport;
5. *Welcome* the national and regional efforts to preserve and enhance transport connectivity in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic by using seamless and contactless solutions, such as electronic data exchange, and pursuing regional and sectoral cooperation on the transport response and recovery strategies;
6. *Decide* to convene a ministerial conference on transport in 2026 to evaluate the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026) and to consider a future programme of work;

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<sup>8</sup> [www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Intergovernmental-Agreement-on-International-Road-Transport-along-the-Asian-Highway-Network-English-language.pdf](http://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/Intergovernmental-Agreement-on-International-Road-Transport-along-the-Asian-Highway-Network-English-language.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> See [www.un.org/en/conferences/transport2021](http://www.un.org/en/conferences/transport2021).

7. *Request* the Executive Secretary:

(a) To accord priority to the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026);

(b) To promote activities on the strategic planning, policy and development of regional and interregional transport connectivity, “smart” supply chains and the introduction of digital and intelligent transport systems including within the framework of capacity-building projects;

(c) To encourage cooperation of member States to improve their transport infrastructure and remove related constraints in order to ensure a seamless transport system in the Asia-Pacific region and coordinate their efforts in that regard;

(d) To promote the exchange of best practices in the field of international road, rail, including container, and multimodal freight transport, as well as the digitalization of all processes including logistics;

(e) To support the initiatives of the Commission’s Committee on Transport and the working groups of the Intergovernmental Agreements on the development of multimodal transport corridors and to assist in their all-around promotion, including through requested studies and capacity-building workshops;

(f) To ensure effective coordination with other agencies, organizations and institutions in providing technical assistance to the members and associate members of the Commission for the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026);

(g) To collaborate effectively with international and regional institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors, private sector stakeholders and international organizations to strengthen localized, participatory and needs-based capacity-building by development actors for the achievement of sustainable and resilient transport in Asia and the Pacific;

(h) To assess periodically the progress made on the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026), at national and subregional levels, analyse results within the Commission’s Committee on Transport, and work out relevant policies and recommendations on promoting and accelerating the implementation process;

(i) To support the convening of the fifth Ministerial Conference on Transport, in 2026.

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