Conclusions and Recommendations

1. The Capacity Building Workshop on Sustainable Port Development and Improving Port Productivity among ESCAP Member Countries took place in Bangkok on 3-4 April 2019. The Workshop was attended by a total of 34 participants from Ministries of Transport and Maritime Administrations from invited countries. Some delegations also included representatives from other entities such as Intergovernmental organizations, Port Authorities, University, Research institutes, and Private sector.

2. Participants emphasized that sustainable maritime transport and port development not only enhance economic development and regional integration but contribute, directly and indirectly, to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at global, regional and national levels.

3. The participants reiterated the importance of a holistic approach and regional partnerships in ensuring that sustainable port development and port productivity improvement effectively help achieve SDGs in the ESCAP region. In this context, the participants discussed at length the challenges and opportunities faced by the countries in this area and reviewed various initiatives and practices aiming to enhance sustainability and productivity in the ports.

4. The Workshop highlighted the importance of port infrastructure project financing and its working mechanism based on real cases and shared abundant examples of environmentally friendly port development and operation. The participants exchanged information on the numerous initiatives aimed at implementing sustainable maritime transport, container terminal automation, smart port/digitalization and resilient port as well as at enhancing
value of port functions among the participating countries. This included the development of national sustainable transport policies, integrated multimodal transport policies, dry ports development, inland waterways and coastal shipping, enhancing transport connectivity through transit/cross-border facilitation and related action plans.

5. Participants shared the view that automation, digitalization, and expansion and upgrading of port facilities not only improved productivity, but also contributed to promoting environmentally friendly port policies and increasing the value of the entire logistics chain.

6. Participants reiterated the importance of cooperation between all stakeholders to balance productivity and sustainability under 2030 Sustainable Development agenda and recognized that environmentally friendly port development could contribute not only to economic efficiency but also to social inclusiveness and environmentally sound development.

7. In this context, they emphasized the need to cooperate with Member States, IMO, APEC and ASEAN as well as academia and industry in order to continue to pursue global and regional agendas on sustainable shipping, marine environmental protection and sustainable port development.

8. ICT and the use of state-art of technologies were recognized as a powerful tool to improve port performance, contributing to the emergence of smart ports, ensuring reliable information services and promoting interoperability in the stakeholders’ exchanges along the entire supply chain.

9. Waterborne transport including Coastal shipping and Inland waterways was acknowledged as environmentally friendly transport mode and participants agreed to investigate the working mechanisms for strengthening regional cooperation in waterborne transport sector and to explore effective regional cooperation platform for challenges and issues on sustainable maritime transport and port development.

10. In order to further advance with the ESCAP research study on this topic, the ESCAP secretariat invited the participant countries to share national plans and good practices to prepare guideline for sustainable port development and improving port productivity.
11. The delegation of Republic of Korea expressed their willingness to continue strengthening its cooperation with ESCAP and its member countries on promoting sustainable port and maritime connectivity.

12. The participants expressed their appreciation to the ESCAP secretariat for organizing and hosting the workshop, and thanked the Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries and Korea Port and Harbour Association, the Republic of Korea, for financing the event.

13. These conclusions and recommendations were agreed on 4 April 2019 in Bangkok.