

Virtual Expert Group Meeting on Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation for Transport in Asia and the Pacific

Bangkok, 22-23 September 2020

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Expert Group Meeting on Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation for Transport in Asia and the Pacific was organized by the Transport Division of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and held virtually on 22-23 September 2020.

2. The Virtual Expert Group Meeting was attended by the representatives of the following ESCAP member States: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Russian Federation, Singapore, Thailand, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Vietnam. The Meeting was also attended by representatives of international organizations, research institutes, transport and logistics industry companies and professional associations, as well as by invited resource persons. The list of participants will be circulated to all registered participants as in Annex. The programme of the Meeting and all related materials and presentations are available on the meeting website: <https://www.unescap.org/events/virtual-expert-group-meeting-climate-change-mitigation-and-adaptation-transport-asia-and>.

3. The participants of the Virtual Expert Group Meeting welcomed the presentations made and exchanged information on their respective national plans and policies on Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation for transport. The participants recognized that transport is a contributor to climate change and as a sector it can greatly contribute to climate action if the

right focus is given to the emission reduction potential of the sector through energy efficiency, diversification of fuel consumption and prospects for modal shift.

4. In this context, participants discussed notable challenges including the need for effective emissions monitoring systems and energy efficiency standards, effective ways to manage transport demand and incentivize modal shift, cross-sectoral cooperation and coordination and wide-spread introduction and use of Information and Communications Technologies. Participants noted that, in addition to climate benefits, a carbon-neutral transport sector will be more competitive and capable of supporting sustained economic growth in the region.

5. The participants noted that the UN institutional framework for Climate action under the UNFCCC, the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda all provide the global context within which the region can define its goals and objectives for climate action. In that regard, several speakers noted the potential of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) as a good entry point for raising ambition on mitigation for the transport sector. The meeting also noted the recommendation to member-States to take necessary national coordination action to strengthen the commitments on transport in the NDCs. The ESCAP secretariat noted that it stands ready to assist member States in that regard.

6. The Expert Group Meeting also noted that, even after introducing significant measures to reduce GHG emissions, a substantial degree of climate change is unavoidable, thus, calling for adaptation measures to increase the resilience of transport networks, systems and services to climatic impacts. Government representatives, thus, shared challenges and experiences regarding assessing climate risks and vulnerabilities for regional transport networks, as well as on the special case of ports and coastal transport infrastructure.

7. In this connection, the meeting noted that the Asia-Pacific region is more susceptible to the impacts of climate change than the rest of world due to long coastlines and rising sea levels, increased frequency and intensity of extreme storm surges and waves. Also, droughts and/or river floods and increased temperatures, as well as extreme temperature variability are increasingly causing damage and disruption to transport systems. Impacts that are being experienced and are projected to become more frequent include port and coastal road

inundation/ submersion, access restrictions, deterioration of the condition and structural integrity of road pavements, and the rapid failure of bridges and railway tracks.

8. In this context, the meeting discussed the policy changes needed to promote systemic adaptation and recognized that knowledge sharing, exchange of good practices and capacity development through the ESCAP intergovernmental platform are warranted to support informed decision-making and policy formulation on climate change adaptation for transport. The meeting also recognized that there are benefits to be reaped from fully exploiting the available adaptation tools, standards and recommendations found across the sector and beyond.

9. Touching upon the urban and public transport theme, the participants expressed concerns related to rising urbanization and motorization rates in Asia and the Pacific and discussed the importance of incentivizing the use of public transport in Asia-Pacific cities. Country representatives also presented their respective climate action initiatives and policies for urban and public transport, including the plans for high-quality public transport services that provide accessibility, reliability of service and safety, as well as promote use of energy-efficient vehicles. The Expert Group also noted the importance of discussing and operationalizing the interconnection between urban and transport planning and promoting sustainable urban transport as an important part of the common work aimed at reducing emissions.

10. The participants recognized ESCAP's Sustainable Urban Transport Index as a useful tool that can help summarize, track and compare the performance of urban transport systems in cities and encouraged member-States to consider its further application across cities in the region.

11. The Expert Group Meeting also took note of the background materials prepared in connection with the meeting but also the materials cited in the presentations as useful reference documents for policy makers involved in climate change adaptation and mitigation for transport.

12. The participants also requested the ESCAP secretariat to continue to provide capacity building, advisory services and technical assistance, subject to availability of resources, to

support member-States in their efforts towards climate change adaptation and mitigation for transport in the region.

13. The ESCAP secretariat expressed gratitude to all country representatives and experts participating in the virtual expert group meeting for their engagement and cooperation and informed all participants about the forthcoming sixth Committee on Transport, scheduled to be held in Bangkok on 12 and 13 November 2020, as well as about the 13th Environmentally Sustainable Transport Forum of the United Nations Centre for Regional Development that will be held on 10 and 11 November 2020 in collaboration with the ESCAP secretariat.

14. These conclusions and recommendations were adopted on 23 September 2020 in Bangkok.
