

Editorial statement

The *Transport and Communications Bulletin for Asia and the Pacific* is a peer-reviewed journal published once a year by the Transport Division (TD) of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The main objectives of the *Bulletin* are to provide a medium for the sharing of knowledge, experience, ideas, policy options and information on the development of transport infrastructure and services in the Asia-Pacific region; to stimulate policy-oriented research; and to increase awareness of transport policy issues and responses. It is hoped that the *Bulletin* will help to widen and deepen debate on issues of interest and concern in the transport sector.

Sustainable development is a major challenge in the transport sector. Although there seems to be a convergence towards a broad definition and scope of sustainable transport, operational definitions and guidelines for its practice in the context of developing countries, have yet to emerge.

The transport sector is a major consumer of energy resources – particularly petroleum products. It is also one of the major contributors to air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and ozone depletion, as well as a producer of waste products. Transport infrastructure and services are, however, essential elements required to support economic and social development, including achieving the Millennium Development Goals at the local, national and international levels.

In order for cities to function effectively, goods need to be moved around. However, the freight transport movements tend to be assigned a lower priority than passenger movements in developing transport policies and interventions. Many large cities are the centres of national production and distribution facilities and form the hubs of road, rail, and international maritime and air transport networks. Consequently, a large share of their freight traffic is composed of outgoing and incoming traffic.

An important development in freight transport is the growth of logistics facilities in suburban areas. While these logistics facilities may have created opportunities to introduce efficient services and new technologies, they have also led to generating of additional vehicle-kilometres and many of the logistics facilities are no longer connected to existing rail and water transport terminals. Such development trends have created new challenges to environmentally and ecologically sustainable transport development.

Despite its large environmental footprint, huge consumption of natural and financial resources and the substantial volumes of waste and pollution, freight transport has not received sufficient attention within sustainable transport development initiatives. A number of “good practices” are, however, emerging in the sector. The challenge is to advocate and implement such practices. In order to support the advocacy and implementation of initiatives, there is also a need to develop indicators that can effectively measure eco-efficiency and sustainability.

In consideration of the importance and interest in the subject, sustainable urban freight transport was chosen as the theme for the current issue of the *Bulletin*. Five papers are included in this issue.

In order to address and overcome the negative impacts of urban freight transport, it is necessary for policymakers to develop sustainability strategies that attempt to balance the economic, social and environmental impacts of urban freight transport operations. In devising these sustainability objectives and measures it is important that policymakers work in close cooperation with companies involved in the operation of urban supply chains. The first paper outlines a set of urban freight policy measures and company actions that can be

part of a sustainability strategy, and also non-freight transport policy measures that can have unintended effects on urban freight sustainability.

The second paper focuses on two issues: what governments can do to promote more eco-efficient and sustainable transport; and how the progress in this endeavour can be measured. The paper considers a number of 'attack points' on which governments can focus in order to achieve the required improvements and a range of instruments that governments can employ in order to influence outcomes on each of these points. The paper identifies a range of policies that are available to governments and suggests some specific measures that could be undertaken in implementing these policies. It also develops a framework for prioritising policy action.

The third paper provides case studies on freight transport policies and measures implemented in several countries in Asia, Europe and North America. It considers three main objectives for sustainable freight development as reducing energy consumption, decreasing the usage of less sustainable transport modes and increasing the usage of more environmentally friendly transport modes. The policies and measures in each of the categories are discussed based on their contribution to achieving the objectives, and their practicality is analyzed. Issues of concern with each policy are also presented.

With the rapid growth in road freight vehicle numbers and the corresponding increase in road freight tonnage, the road freight sector has become a major consumer of energy resources and a contributor to air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. In order to address the issues of the road freight sector, China has undertaken various policy, legal and regulatory, and other measures including introducing pilot projects at different levels of the government. The fourth paper focuses on lessons learned from the Guangzhou Green Trucks Project, aiming to promote an alternative approach towards sustainable road freight transportation.

Urban logistics systems, involving physical distribution and supply chains in urban areas, is a promising subject that can be looked at in developing a framework on how to address the issues in urban environment in the context of transport and land use. Measures, involving transport planning and logistics in urban areas under the term of city logistics have been found promising in dealing with many traffic and transport problems. The concept of city logistics has a potential to contribute to meeting the objectives of logistics related to efficiency, economy and environment. The fifth and last paper presents how logistics and transport initiatives can be instrumental in developing a framework which can eventually contribute to alleviating the negative impacts of freight transport on urban environment.

The *Bulletin* welcomes analytical articles on topics that are currently at the forefront of transport infrastructure development in the region and on policy analysis and best practices. Articles should be based on original research and should have analytical depth. Empirically-based articles should emphasize policy implications emerging from the analysis. Book reviews are also welcome. See the inside back cover for guidelines on contributing articles.

Manuscripts should be addressed to:

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