

1 INTRODUCTION

The ESCAP region, covering Asia and the Pacific (from Armenia in the West to Pacific islands in the East, and from the Russian Federation in the North to New Zealand in the South, see table 1.1) is one of the fastest developing regions in the world. Since the mid-1980s, the growth rates of the gross domestic product in the region's developing countries were about double the global rates, with the trend expected to continue in the foreseeable future.

This growth is causing increasing demand for transport services, including road transport, which results in the number of vehicles on the road growing rapidly. There were about 102 million registered road vehicles plying about 5 million kilometres of road network in Asia and the Pacific in 1991. In 1992, the corresponding estimated figures were 130 million and 6 million, respectively (both excluding the Central Asian republics).

Besides the overall positive effects, there are some unwanted side-effects of this growth in road traffic and expansion of roads, of which accidents are the most crucial and represent a severe loss to the national economies. The problem of road safety is therefore becoming of increasing concern to the developing countries of the region and, accordingly, there is an increasing demand for ESCAP's assistance in this field.

Safety aspects of transport have received prominent reflection in the Regional Action Programme for Phase II (1992-96) of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific launched by the Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Transport and Communications in June 1992 at ESCAP. The action-oriented programme embraces three major themes and four issues, including "Environment, Safety and Health in Transport". Consequently, a number of activities that address common regional and subregional problems of road safety were initiated.

In 1992, ESCAP undertook a limited questionnaire survey on the road safety situation in the ESCAP region. In the following year, ESCAP co-sponsored the first Conference on Asian Road Safety (CARS) in Kuala Lumpur and presented an overview paper on regional road safety. During the conference, the "Kuala Lumpur Agenda" on road safety was adopted which

recommended a number of actions to be considered at various levels to improve road safety in the region.

This, along with the mandate and the above-mentioned priorities under the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, gave ESCAP a strong stimulus to initiate in 1994 a more detailed study on road safety in the region, which was then undertaken from 1995 to 1997 with financial assistance from the Government of Germany. This study aimed not only to review and analyze the regional road safety situation but also to propose, based on identified critical situations and common regional problems, a comprehensive "model" safety action plan (published separately as "Guidelines on Road Safety Action Plans and Programmes").

As the base source of information for the study, the earlier questionnaire developed by ESCAP was broadened and improved. Subsequently, ESCAP member countries were requested to complete it and return. The level of response was, however, not always satisfactory, one of the reasons being the lack of or incompleteness of national road safety and accident databases.

The study was carried out by Dr. Alan Ross (Ross Silcock Limited) and Dr. Goff Jacobs (Transport Research Laboratory) with assistance of Ms. Caroline Ghee (Ross Silcock Limited) and Mr. Christian Palmer (Transport Research Laboratory).

This publication is the final report of the ESCAP road safety study and reflects, as far as the collected data permit, the road safety situation in the region at the end of 1994.

The report is split into 8 parts. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 outlines the methodology adopted in carrying out the study and discusses the data sources used.

Chapter 3 outlines the problem in the Asia-Pacific region and shows the relative scale of it by carrying out comparisons with other parts of the world and between countries within the Asia-Pacific region. It also discusses general motorization trends and the effects that medical facilities and other improvements can have on the safety situation. Detailed statistical analyses

are carried out and projections are produced showing, in broad terms, what is likely to happen in the future.

Chapter 4 presents detailed analyses of the data returned through the ESCAP questionnaires, and those collected from other sources and during visits to a number of the countries in the region. It illustrates the nature and characteristics of the problem in selected countries and enables comparisons between countries of the region.

Chapter 5 reviews current policies and practices and summarizes the situation in each road-safety-relevant sector. It covers those countries, which returned the questionnaire as well as those for which supplementary information could be obtained through country visits. This safety inventory covers activities in all sectors, ranging from organisation and administration of road safety to accident data systems, emergency services, driver training and testing, vehicle testing and children's education in schools.

Chapter 6 aims to highlight the issues influencing the strategy for the improvement of road safety in the region. The preconditions for improvement are identified and advice is given as how to achieve the necessary "enabling" environment.

Chapter 7 emphasizes the priorities for action at the national, sub-regional and regional levels. It emphasises the need for road safety action plans and programmes and provides information on a typical approach.

Chapter 8 summarizes the main findings and conclusions and identifies major weaknesses, inhibiting effective road safety action. In particular, it gives suggestions and advice on action required in the Asia-Pacific region to minimise the problem in the future.

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Table 1.1: Countries and territories of the Asia-Pacific region

<i>East Asia</i>	<i>South-East Asia</i>	<i>South Asia</i>	<i>Central Asia</i>	<i>Pacific</i>	<i>Developed</i>
China	Brunei	Afghanistan	Armenia	American Samoa	Australia
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	Darussalam	Bangladesh	Azerbaijan	Northern Mariana Islands	Japan
Hong Kong	Cambodia	Bhutan	Kazakhstan	Cook Islands	New Zealand
Macau	Indonesia	India	Kyrgyzstan	Fiji	
Mongolia	Lao People's Democratic Republic	Islamic Republic of Iran	Russian Federation	French Polynesia	
Republic of Korea	Malaysia	Maldives	Tajikistan	Guam	
Taiwan Province of China	Myanmar	Nepal	Turkmenistan	Kiribati	
	Philippines	Pakistan	Uzbekistan	Marshall Islands Federated States of Micronesia	
	Singapore	Sri Lanka		Nauru	
	Thailand			New Caledonia	
	Viet Nam			Niue	
				Republic of Palau	
				Papua New Guinea	
				Samoa	
				Solomon Islands	
				Tonga	
				Tuvalu	
				Vanuatu	