

Commodore Golam Sadeq

Chairman of Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA)

Statement

To the honorable Chair, the Ministers, Country Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon,

The Bangladeshi's is pleased to participate in the Seventh Session Meeting of the UNESCAP Committee on Transport.

Bangladesh is one of the few countries could keep positive GDP growth despite the COVID pandemic. Thanks to the seafarers and ship operators for ensuring uninterrupted international, regional and internal cargo movements through waterways. All our sea and Inland ports were kept operations so that the supply chain for economic activities remain up and running. Now as the world tends come out of pandemic hinderances we are trying to revitalize the multimodal transportation sector.

It is our honor to share our insights and updates as our contribution to the Review of the Implementation of the Regional Action Program for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific.

ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SYSTEM

It is pertinent to mention that Generation of Green House gases (GHG) in Bangladesh is low. Among all modes of transport water transport if the most environmental friendly, cheaper and safer. Bangladesh is blessed with hundreds of

Inland waterways which does not only provides the sea ports hinterland connectivity, those also have sub regionally connecting India, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar. We are combinedly, trying to maximize the use of waterways for cargo movement to reduce carbon level as well as cost of transportation.

For combating climate change adversaries Bangladesh Govt has adopted a strategy named “Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan” where key priorities are Environmentally friendly transportation including an accelerated digital revolution. In that our Govt has taken the strategy of shifting the cargo/freight transportation from road to rail and waterways. Bangladesh is blessed with inland waterways of more than 24000 Km out of which presently in monsoon 8000km and in winter 5000km of waterways are navigable. Bangladesh govt has taken a project of reviving and maintaining 10000km all-weather navigable inland waterways.

However, the modal shifting efforts are not enough, we need to invest heavily on use of renewables in driving the all modes of transports. Road transportation has an upper hand in this aspect. Rails and Water sector is lagging far behind in this aspect due to various reasons.

For implementing the policy of co-ordinated transport system, Bangladesh has already identified 23 multimodal hub within the country and trying to develop those with all required infrastructure by 2030. We are also in a way to establishing Bangladesh Urban Transport Authority in this respect. In addition, use of hybrid and electric driven vehicles are given special incentives like Tax holidays to encourage people to increase use of those.

Our transport ministries have allocated fund in research and development for shifting all kinds of transports into environment friendly fuel gradually. However, this shifting needs a lot of budgetary enhancement.

I recommend an effort of allocating fund for research and development for this purpose. Already some works have been done. But more rigorous actions are needed to change the propulsion energy. The committee on transport may work on this aspect.

We will provide all out support to the Committee of Transport in its objective to initial and implement innovative policies and frameworks to assess, plan, develop, improve, and maintain sustainable environment friendly transport systems and services.

We are delighted to be part of this meaningful collaboration and we look forward to contributing to another productive meeting of the UNSCAP Committee on Transport. Bangladesh continuously aspires for inclusive and sustainable transport and connectivity and we have always been glad to be working on this with you all.