

Committee on Transport, Sixth session, 12 - 13 Nov 2020

Intervention by Sri Lanka

Agenda Item 3: Cross-cutting issues in transport

a) Transport connectivity for efficient and resilient supply chains

Mr. Chair,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies & Gentlemen

Sri Lanka recognizes and appreciates the efforts of the UNESCAP in improving the performance of regional connectivity to make it a strong back bone for cost effective supply chain to facilitate international trade and particularly to support countries in their pandemic response mechanism as an integral part of recovery strategies.

As a State Party to the Agreements of the 'Asian Highway Network' and 'Trans-Asian Railway Network', and as a signatory to the 'Dry Port Agreement on International Importance', Sri Lanka wishes to reiterate its commitment to realize the core-objectives of these Agreements. The National Policy Document of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa; 'Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour'; is focused on 'New Approach of the Government in National Spatial System' including developing roads, railway transport and ports to make the country an international logistic hubs in Asia. Among Sri Lanka's priorities in developing infrastructure for sustainable freight transport, greater focus has been placed to improve road networks, which is also part of the Asian Highway Network. Developing ports to facilitate import and export, while ensuring higher efficiency, competitiveness, by expanding facilities required to transport cargo via trains to Colombo, Hambantota, Kankasanthurai and Trincomalee ports and developing harbours according to the requirement of the demand to improve the national economy is a priority agenda for Sri Lanka. It is noteworthy that 'Peliyagoda' and 'Thelagapatha' areas have already been identified as potential dry ports in Sri Lanka by studies conducted under the auspices of the UNESCAP.

Given the strategic location of Sri Lanka in the Indian Ocean, the Government has made considerable efforts to improve the capacities of Colombo Port as a transshipment hub. The work on sustainable transportation rests well within the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particularly goal 9 (Resilient Infrastructure), goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and goal 13 (Climate Action), and undoubtedly helps countries like Sri Lanka to effectively bounce back in improving the countries supply chain and also to provide logistical services of international standards in more competitive manner.

Sri Lanka appreciates the technical support and close collaboration by the Transport Division of the UNESCAP in developing national strategy for deepening sustainability in the freight transport, and has expressed its wish to join as a pilot country to carry out national assessment with a view to adopt the recommendations in enhancing sustainability for freight transportation in the Decade of Action.

Thank you