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Item 4 (f) of the provisional agenda*

Review of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific: transport

Report of the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The Fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport was held in Bangkok and online from 14 to 17 December 2021. It comprised two segments: the senior officials segment (14 and 15 December 2021) and the ministerial segment (16 and 17 December 2021). The Conference was attended by 341 representatives of 40 member States, 1 associate member, 3 Permanent Observers and 21 international organizations, which included 34 ministerial-level participants and speakers, 11 ambassadors and a multitude of colleagues from the United Nations system as well as other stakeholders.

The Conference discussed strategies for scaling up sustainable transport initiatives in Asia and the Pacific to strengthen regional cooperation and reviewed and deliberated on the persisting and emerging issues in transport. The Conference culminated in the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/78/15/Add.1) and a new Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026) (ESCAP/78/15/Add.2), which feature a renewed, streamlined and concerted effort with regard to transport priority reforms and initiatives in the region towards efficient and resilient transport and logistics networks and mobility for economic growth; environmentally sustainable transport systems and services; and safe and inclusive transport and mobility.

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific may wish to review and endorse the Ministerial Declaration and the Regional Action Programme and provide guidance on their implementation.

* ESCAP/78/L.1/Rev.1.

I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention

A. Matters calling for action by the Commission

1. The Fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport recommends that the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), at its seventy-eighth session, endorse the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026).

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Commission

2. The Ministerial Conference adopts the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026).

II. Organization

A. Opening, duration and organization of the Conference

3. The Ministerial Conference was held in Bangkok and online from 14 to 17 December 2021. It comprised two segments: the senior officials segment (14 and 15 December 2021) and the ministerial segment (16 and 17 December 2021).

4. The senior officials segment was opened by the Executive Secretary. A statement was made by Mr. Chayatan Phromsorn, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Transport, Thailand.

5. The ministerial segment was also opened by the Executive Secretary. Opening and welcoming remarks were delivered by Mr. Saksayam Chidchob, Minister of Transport, Thailand.

B. Attendance

6. The Ministerial Conference was attended by representatives of the following members and associate members of the Commission: Armenia; Australia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Brunei Darussalam; Cambodia; China; Cook Islands; Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Fiji; France; Georgia; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People's Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Maldives; Marshall Islands; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; Pakistan; Papua New Guinea; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Samoa; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand; Turkey; Turkmenistan; United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; United States of America; Uzbekistan; and Viet Nam.

7. Representatives of the following Permanent Observers to ESCAP attended: Egypt; Italy; and South Africa.

8. Representatives of the following offices of the Secretariat attended: Economic Commission for Europe; United Nations Centre for Regional Development; and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

9. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations attended: Asian Development Bank; Economic Cooperation Organization; Eurasian Economic Commission; Intergovernmental Organisation for International Carriage by Rail; International Transport Forum; Pacific Community; South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation secretariat; and Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia.

10. Representatives of the following non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations and other entities attended: Asian Institute of Transport Development; Economic Research Institute for Northeast Asia; Institute of Railway Technology of Monash University; International Association of Public Transport; International Chamber of Shipping; International Coordinating Council on Trans-Eurasian Transportation; International Road Assessment Programme; International Road Transport Union; Thai Intelligent Transport Systems Association; and Towards Zero Foundation.

11. In accordance with rule 12 of the Commission's rules of procedure, the Chair and Vice-Chairs examined the credentials of all the representatives and found them to be in order.

C. Election of officers

12. The Ministerial Conference elected the following officers for the senior officials segment:

Chair: Mr. Punya Chupanit (Thailand)
 Vice-Chairs: Mr. Fakhriddin Sultanov (Uzbekistan)
 Mr. Sukmo Yuwono (Indonesia)

13. The Ministerial Conference elected the following officers for the ministerial segment:

Chair: Mr. Budi Karya Sumadi (Indonesia)
 Vice-Chairs: Ms. Serap Ersoy (Turkey)
 Mrs. C.A. Chaminda I. Colonne (Sri Lanka)

D. Agenda

14. The Ministerial Conference adopted the following agenda:

Senior officials segment (14 and 15 December 2021)

1. Opening of the senior officials segment:
 - (a) Opening statements;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. Assessment and evaluation of the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017–2021).
3. Major issues in transport:

- (a) Towards an efficient and resilient transport and logistics network and mobility;
 - (b) Towards environmentally sustainable transport systems and services;
 - (c) Towards safe and inclusive transport and mobility.
4. Supporting implementation of the next ministerial declaration and the regional action programme for sustainable transport development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026).
 5. Other matters.

Ministerial segment (16 and 17 December 2021)

6. Opening of the ministerial segment:
 - (a) Opening statements;
 - (b) Election of officers;
 - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
7. Policy statements on scaling up sustainable transport initiatives in Asia and the Pacific to strengthen regional cooperation.
8. Other matters.
9. Adoption of the ministerial declaration on sustainable transport development in Asia and the Pacific, including a regional action programme for sustainable transport development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026).
10. Adoption of the report of the Conference.

E. Other events

15. The following special sessions and side events were held in conjunction with or as part of the Ministerial Conference:

- (a) 14 December 2021, launch of the latest edition of *Review of Developments in Transport in Asia and the Pacific 2021: Towards Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient Urban Passenger Transport in Asian Cities*, organized by ESCAP;
- (b) 14 December 2021, side event: “Legal frameworks in the time of changes for multimodal transport”, organized by ESCAP;
- (c) 14 December 2021, side event: “Saving lives on the Asia-Pacific roads” organized by the Special Envoy for Road Safety and ESCAP;
- (d) 15 December 2021, side event: “Connecting globally through sustainable shipping”, organized by the Government of the Republic of Korea and ESCAP;
- (e) 15 December 2021, special event: “Transport connectivity and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic: pathways for greater resilience and sustainability”, organized by the International Transport Forum and ESCAP;

(f) 16 December 2021, ministerial round table: “Accelerating transformative action in transport for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals”, organized by ESCAP;

(g) 16 December 2021, side event: “Launch of the Transport Research and Education Network in Asia and the Pacific”, organized by the Russian University of Transport and ESCAP.

III. Chair’s summary

16. The deliberations during the Ministerial Conference will be summarized in the Chair’s summary, which will be available within a week following the conclusion of the Conference and included as annex II to the present report.

Annex I

List of documents

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
<i>General series</i>		
ESCAP/MCT/2021/1	Assessment and evaluation of the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017–2021)	2
ESCAP/MCT/2021/2	Towards an efficient and resilient transport and logistics network and mobility	3 (a)
ESCAP/MCT/2021/3	Towards environmentally sustainable transport systems and services	3 (b)
ESCAP/MCT/2021/4	Towards safe and inclusive transport and mobility	3 (c)
ESCAP/MCT/2021/5	Report of the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport	
ESCAP/MCT/2021/5/Add.1	Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific	
ESCAP/MCT/2021/5/Add.2	Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026)	
<i>Limited series</i>		
ESCAP/MCT/2021/L.1	Provisional agenda	1 (c) and 6 (c)
ESCAP/MCT/2021/L.2	Annotated provisional agenda	1 (c) and 6 (c)
ESCAP/MCT/2021/L.3	Draft report	10
ESCAP/MCT/2021/L.4	Draft ministerial declaration on sustainable transport development in Asia and the Pacific	9
ESCAP/MCT/2021/L.5	Draft regional action programme for sustainable transport development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026)	9
<i>Information series</i>		
ESCAP/MCT/2021/INF/1	Activities implemented under the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017–2021)	2
ESCAP/MCT/2021/INF/2	Explanatory note on the draft regional action programme for sustainable transport development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026)	4

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>
<i>Information available online</i>		
www.unescap.org/events/2021/ministerial-conference-transport-fourth-session	Information for participants	
www.unescap.org/events/2021/ministerial-conference-transport-fourth-session	Tentative programme	

Annex II

Chair's summary of proceedings of the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport

I. Introduction

1. Owing to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Fourth Ministerial Conference on Transport was held as a four-day online meeting, four hours per day, from 14 to 17 December 2021. The Chair's summary covers the proceedings of the senior officials segment (14 and 15 December 2021) and ministerial segment (16 and 17 December 2021) of the Conference.

2. The present annex contains a succinct summary of the converging views expressed by the Conference during the subsequent deliberations and does not elaborate on the details of any country statement. The country statements, as delivered during the Conference, are published on the Conference website (www.unescap.org/events/2021/ministerial-conference-transport-fourth-session) for ease of reference for all delegations.

II. Proceedings of the senior officials segment

A. Assessment and evaluation of the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017–2021) (Agenda item 2)

3. The Conference had before it the note by the secretariat entitled “Assessment and evaluation of the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017–2021)” (ESCAP/MCT/2021/1) and the information document entitled “Activities implemented under the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017–2021)” (ESCAP/MCT/2021/INF/1).

4. Representatives of the following members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) made statements: Bangladesh; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; and Thailand.

5. The Conference recalled that the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017–2021), which was adopted in Moscow in 2016 by the Third Ministerial Conference on Transport and endorsed by the Commission in resolution 73/4, contained seven thematic areas with activities to steer a path towards the realization of sustainable transport connectivity in the region and the achievement of the transport-related Sustainable Development Goals and targets.

6. The Conference expressed appreciation to the secretariat for the independent evaluation of the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I, which was carried out as mandated in resolution 73/4 on the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, and took note of the findings and recommendations of the evaluator. In particular,

the Conference noted that phase I had been successfully implemented and had greatly contributed to the achievement of transport-related Sustainable Development Goals. The Conference also concurred with the recommendation to incorporate cross-sectoral dimensions related to resilient, inclusive and environmentally friendly transport into the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026).

7. The Conference noted with satisfaction that in drafting the Regional Action Programme (2022–2026), the secretariat had taken into account all the recommendations contained in the evaluation. In particular, the Conference supported the merging of previously stand-alone thematic areas into broader themes and the incorporation of cross-sectoral dimensions, related to resilient, inclusive and environmentally friendly transport and the utilization of technology, around seven key areas, namely: (a) regional land transport connectivity and logistics; (b) maritime and interregional transport connectivity; (c) digitalization of transport; (d) low carbon mobility and logistics; (e) urban transport; (f) road safety; and (g) inclusive transport and mobility.

8. The Conference was informed of national initiatives and projects in line with the Regional Action Programme, phase I. Those activities included programmes and actions by the Government of Bangladesh to improve road, rail and maritime connectivity, as well as operational connectivity, to develop mass rapid transit and to improve road safety. They also included the initiatives taken by the Government of the Republic of Korea, namely its new deal, digital new deal and green new deal, to prepare for a post-pandemic era.

9. The Conference expressed appreciation to the secretariat for its efforts in implementing the activities contained in phase I, including related work on the Intergovernmental Agreements on the Asian Highway Network, the Trans-Asian Railway Network and Dry Ports as well as various capacity-building activities of the thematic areas.

10. The Conference also acknowledged, with appreciation, the technical cooperation activities financed by the Governments of China, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation and by the International Maritime Organization, the Islamic Development Bank and the United Nations Road Safety Fund, which had significantly contributed to the implementation of phase I.

B. Major issues in transport

(Agenda item 3)

Towards an efficient and resilient transport and logistics network and mobility

(Agenda item 3 (a))

11. The Conference had before it the note by the secretariat entitled “Towards an efficient and resilient transport and logistics network and mobility” (ESCAP/MCT/2021/2).

12. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: China; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Russian Federation; Sri Lanka; Thailand; Turkey; United States of America; and Uzbekistan.

13. Statements were also made by the representatives of the Asian Institute of Transport Development and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE).

14. The Conference emphasized the severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on freight transport operations in the region and stressed the need for enhanced cooperation among member States to ensure the uninterrupted supply of goods during the pandemic, including through the coordination of containment measures. Reference was made to initiatives such as plans to compensate the transport sector's losses, the establishment of ad hoc international expert platforms to discuss solutions for the disruptions to cross-border transport operations caused by the pandemic crisis and related restrictive measures, and the conduct of in-depth studies on COVID-19 restrictions and prevention measures.

15. Building up efficient and resilient supply chains was a central part of the regional response to the pandemic's challenges and represented the main direction that the post-pandemic recovery path should take. In that connection, the Conference emphasized the importance of the continued improvement of the regional transport and logistics network, notably through the further development of infrastructure and operational connectivity along the Asian Highway network, the Trans-Asian Railway network and the network of dry ports of international importance.

16. The Conference also underlined the importance of promoting multimodality in the region's transport sector, noted the progress made by several member States in establishing an enabling operational environment for multimodal transport operations, including through the harmonization of legal frameworks, and invited the secretariat to build upon the progress achieved by implementing further activities in that direction.

17. Member States should increase the use of innovation and new technologies and embrace digital transformation in the transport and logistics sector, including through the use of big data and artificial intelligence. Digital systems should be leveraged to further streamline cross-border procedures and increase capacities at border crossings to ensure smarter, more efficient and more resilient international transport connectivity and supply chain networks that were also transparent, diversified, open, predictable, secure and sustainable. Delegations welcomed the secretariat's initiatives to assist member States to undergo digital transformation.

18. The Conference noted the crucial role played by railway transport in maintaining essential national, regional and global supply chains during the pandemic and underlined its critical role in post-pandemic recovery for the member States. In that connection, the Conference reaffirmed the pivotal role of the Trans-Asian Railway network in fostering regional cooperation for enhancing the efficiency and development of railway infrastructure among the member countries. The network was particularly important for countries in resolving complexities associated with developing an integrated regional railway network. Member States were taking numerous measures to strengthen international railway transport connectivity in the region by addressing physical and non-physical barriers.

19. Transport corridors played an increasingly important role in enhancing sustainable regional transport connectivity, and there was a need to strengthen the means and mechanisms for transport corridor coordination and management, building upon existing good practices.

20. Transport operations between Asia and Europe continued to grow despite the pandemic. The Conference emphasized the necessity of continuing to deepen coordination, including at the interregional level, to enhance the integration of the Asia-Pacific region into Euro-Asian supply chains, and

called upon the secretariat to continue to facilitate interregional transport dialogue.

21. The Conference recognized the important role of maritime connectivity and ports in providing integrated transport connectivity to member States, including landlocked developing countries, and in supporting global and regional supply chains. The Conference also underlined the role of the maritime and port sector in progressing towards a low-carbon and net-zero-emissions transport sector.

22. The Conference expressed concern at the connectivity challenges facing Pacific island countries, such as service instability and high logistics costs. A sustainable and resilient maritime transport system was considered essential for their sustainable development. Ongoing initiatives in that area were highlighted, such as the Pacific Blue Shipping Partnership and the Clydebank Declaration for Green Shipping Corridors. The role of regional cooperation and partnerships in further supporting the establishment of the sustainable maritime transport network was emphasized.

23. The Conference underscored the vital linkages between the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and sustainable freight transport and reiterated the importance of enhancing the sustainability of freight transport to mitigate its negative externalities and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, the Conference noted the significance of developing dedicated national strategies on sustainable freight transport for enhanced coordination among stakeholders and of deepening the linkages of sustainable freight policies with the Goals.

Towards environmentally sustainable transport systems and services
(Agenda item 3 (b))

24. The Conference had before it the note by the secretariat entitled “Towards environmentally sustainable transport systems and services” (ESCAP/MCT/2021/3).

25. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: China; Maldives; Russian Federation; and Thailand.

26. Statements were also made by representatives of the following entities: Asian Institute of Transport Development; ECE; and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

27. The Conference recognized the need for the transport sector to expedite the transition towards environmentally sustainable transport systems and services, as the increase in the intensity of transport activities had positioned the transport sector as one of the leading contributors to greenhouse gas emissions and pollution and as a major consumer of fossil fuels, reversing progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

28. In that connection, the Conference was apprised of the commitment made by member States, in line with the Paris Agreement, to realize carbon neutrality and net zero emissions in the coming decades, including in the transport sector, and to link and align national transport policies with the nationally determined contributions.

29. The Conference underscored the importance of taking a comprehensive approach to achieve sustainable, efficient and environmentally friendly transport systems, including a modal shift from road to the more

environmentally friendly modes, the use of public transport, the development of mass-transit systems, transit-oriented development, integrated urban and transport planning, energy efficiency in transport, and the use of clean energy in transport, including electric vehicles, alternative fuels and future innovative energy sources. Furthermore, the growing interest in the digitalization of transport, including smart transport systems and big data, had the potential to address traffic issues effectively and to encourage a shift to greener transport systems.

30. In that regard, member States had taken various actions, including the following: (a) accelerated development of automated driving, mobility as a service, utilization of transport data and the green challenge projects in Japan; (b) an electric vehicles road map to increase the share of electric vehicles to 30 per cent by 2030 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Thailand; (c) implementation of zero-emissions intercity public transport systems with electric vehicle technologies in Maldives; (d) shift to green mobility in urban areas through green infrastructure development, new energy vehicles and smart and digital technologies, as well as the expansion of electric vehicle charging stations in China; and (e) strengthening the system of monitoring the environmental effects of vehicles and the introduction of modern technologies for managing road traffic in the Russian Federation.

31. The Conference noted the successful organization of the regional meeting on the theme “City and transport: safety, efficiency and sustainability”, held in June 2021, and also noted, with appreciation, the willingness of the Government of Japan to share environmental knowledge and technology from the public and private sectors. The Conference welcomed further international dialogue and close collaboration among member States and with regional partners and other key stakeholders to foster sustainable urban transport systems in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Towards safe and inclusive transport and mobility

(Agenda item 3 (c))

32. The Conference had before it the note by the secretariat entitled “Towards safe and inclusive transport and mobility” (ESCAP/MCT/2021/4).

33. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Bangladesh; China; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Russian Federation; Sri Lanka; and Thailand.

34. Statements were also made by representatives of the following entities: Asian Institute of Transport Development; ECE; International Road Assessment Programme; and Towards Zero Foundation.

35. Road crashes were an issue of serious concern given their magnitude and substantial negative impact on the economy and general welfare of the people, in particular vulnerable road users and low-income groups. In that context, the Conference made reference to the importance of the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030 proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 74/299, welcomed the launch of the Global Plan of Action for the Second Decade of Action and noted the efforts of member States to develop and implement corresponding national programmes. The Regional Action Programme (2022–2026) could provide a solid basis for further progress.

36. Adequate financial resources, technical assistance, capacity-building, sharing of best practices and advocacy were critical to improving road safety.

In that connection, the Conference noted the request from the Government of Bangladesh that the secretariat provide technical assistance, international seminars and training to government officials and share the good practices and experiences of member countries, in particular with regard to the better application of advanced technologies, including intelligent transportation systems.

37. The Conference was informed about the measures taken by member States across the region to improve road safety, including on legislation and enforcement; promoting public transport; strengthening education and awareness; incentivizing the use of smart transport technologies; and upgrading standards and equipment.

38. The Conference also made reference to aspects of transport and mobility related to accessibility and inclusion. Regionally coordinated efforts to incorporate social development considerations into the initial phases of policymaking and decision-making processes would contribute to the efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

39. In that context, the Conference emphasized the importance of ensuring that public transport systems were affordable, safe and accessible, including for older persons and persons with disabilities, with the aim of leaving no one behind. The principle of leaving no one behind was recognized as one of the core principles embodied in the Regional Action Programme (2022–2026). Inclusive transport ought to equally address the differentiated needs of men and women as transport users. The Conference noted important national initiatives to support the access of women to transport occupations, relevant training and career advancement.

C. Supporting implementation of the next ministerial declaration and the regional action programme for sustainable transport development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026)

(Agenda item 4)

40. The Conference had before it the information document entitled “Explanatory note on the draft regional action programme for sustainable transport development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026)” (ESCAP/MCT/2021/INF/2).

41. Representatives of Georgia and Indonesia made statements.

42. Statements were also made by representatives of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the United Nations Centre for Regional Development.

43. The Conference welcomed the work carried out by the secretariat to enhance transport connectivity in the region and reaffirmed its support for the forthcoming implementation of activities under the Regional Action Programme (2022–2026). Member States informed the Conference of projects and initiatives under way at the national and subregional levels to further enhance the international transport connectivity and logistics network, notably through infrastructure development in the rail, road and maritime sectors, digitalization efforts and the use of modern technologies. They stressed the importance of creating a sustainable and environmentally friendly transport system in Asia and the Pacific, which could be achieved through the use of alternative, low carbon and low sulfur fuels, electric vehicles and non-motorized vehicles.

44. In the context of discussing multi-stakeholder cooperation, the Conference noted the adoption, by the Fourteenth Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport Forum in Asia, of the Aichi 2030 Declaration on Environmentally Sustainable Transport: Making Transport in Asia Sustainable (2021–2030), aimed at catalysing transformational changes in the Asian transport sector. It was noted that the Aichi 2030 Declaration and the Regional Action Programme (2022–2026) complemented each other in addressing the needs of the member States. The Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport Forum in Asia would continue in future to facilitate the exchange of experiences and share good practices in the environmental sustainability of transport systems among member States and related regional stakeholders. In that connection, the Conference was apprised of an ADB initiative to collect and analyse transport data, which could support reporting on the Aichi 2030 Declaration and would be useful in monitoring the progress of the Regional Action Programme (2022–2026). The Conference noted with appreciation the role of the Asian Institute of Transport Development in promoting regional cooperation, sustainable development and capacity-building on sustainable transport issues.

D. Other matters
(Agenda item 5)

45. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran requested the secretariat to provide further technical assistance and capacity-building to strengthen transport connectivity and resilience.

III. Proceedings of the ministerial segment

A. Policy statements on scaling up sustainable transport initiatives in Asia and the Pacific to strengthen regional cooperation
(Agenda item 7)

46. The deliberations of the Conference were informed by a ministerial round-table discussion on accelerating transformative action in transport for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, which included the following speakers: Mr. Dongchang Dai, Vice Minister, Ministry of Transport, China; Mr. Faiyaz Koya, Minister for Transport, Fiji; Mr. Seong Kyu Hwang, Vice Minister for Transport, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, Republic of Korea; Ms. Renu Kumari Yadav, Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transport, Nepal; Mr. Dmitry Zverev, State Secretary-Deputy Minister, Ministry of Transport, Russian Federation; Mr. Saksayam Chidchob, Minister for Transport, Thailand; and Mr. Jasurbek Choriyeu, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Transport, Uzbekistan.

47. The round table participants noted that the continued development of regional transport and transit potential through the enhancement of infrastructure and operational connectivity was one of the most important determinants of sustainable economic growth, in particular for landlocked developing countries. While the challenges in maritime connectivity were global in nature, small island developing States were burdened with added limitations, not least of which was greater vulnerability to economic shocks, disruptions and climate change impacts. In the context of climate and environmental sustainability, the round table participants recognized that achieving carbon neutral transport systems by, for example, increasing the share of “greener” means of transport, accelerating the transition towards electric and hydrogen vehicles and investing in the relevant infrastructure and consumer incentives, would be an essential strategy. They especially highlighted the profound impact of the pandemic on transport systems and

services and emphasized the fast-rising demand for digital, contactless, seamless and collaborative solutions for both passenger and freight transport. The digital transformation and new technologies, when properly deployed, could serve the objectives of economic growth, efficiency, safety, social inclusion and environmental sustainability. The round table participants underscored the improvement of road safety and the aim to halve road traffic fatalities by 2030. The development of inclusive mobility systems would contribute to universal accessibility and ensure the safety and comfort of persons with disabilities. Against that background, the round table participants expressed support for the Regional Action Programme (2022–2026) as a living document that could in turn support strengthened regional cooperation towards a common vision to address the challenges of sustainable transport in the context of implementing the 2030 Agenda.

48. Representatives of the following members and associate members made statements: Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Georgia; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Maldives; Marshall Islands; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; Pakistan; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand; Turkey; and United States.

49. Statements were also made by representatives of the following entities: Asian Institute of Transport Development; ECE; Economic Cooperation Organization; International Road Transport Union; and United Nations Centre for Regional Development.

50. The Conference highlighted the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on international trade and transport and the efforts by member States to ensure the continuity of cross-border transport operations. In that connection, a coordinated regional approach was needed to deepen cooperation with a view to designing an effective response to the disruption of supply chains and mitigating risks. The Conference noted the importance of employing innovative solutions in transport, such as artificial intelligence, digital services and highly automated and autonomous vehicles to address the challenges imposed by the pandemic as a means to resolve the current crisis and boost development in the post-pandemic era.

51. The Conference underscored the significance of further enhancing regional land transport connectivity and closer transport connections between Asia and Europe, including through the systematic improvement of infrastructure and operational connectivity and the harmonization of legal requirements to remove non-physical barriers to transport, as well as simplifying and streamlining customs procedures, such as by introducing integrated border management, implementing risk-based customs controls and using relevant electronic unified systems. Despite examples of the successful development of transport infrastructure, additional efforts were required to strengthen the transport connectivity of landlocked developing countries by operationalizing existing routes and gaining more alternative access routes to the regional transport network.

52. Delegations made reference to several ongoing and planned initiatives, such as the consideration of a new annex to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network, due to be discussed by the Working Group on the Trans-Asian Railway Network, on guiding principles on electronic information exchange among railways and between railways and control agencies; the initiative of the President of Uzbekistan with regard to the establishment of a regional centre for the development of transport and communications under the auspices of the United Nations to strengthen

cooperation and develop a harmonized transport policy in Central Asia; and the proposal to create a joint working group on the problems in international cargo transportation during pandemics.

53. Owing to the pandemic disruptions, maritime transport had become an essential service, providing the citizens of most countries with the supply of essential goods while complying with safety. In particular, the reliable and affordable development of sustainable and resilient maritime transport networks serving small island developing States was essential to address the many urgent challenges they faced, including climate change. Therefore, national and regional initiatives to create low-carbon coastal maritime shipping systems, including the Pacific Blue Shipping Partnership, were of particular importance, and strong international collaboration was required in that regard.

54. The Conference highlighted the critical overall importance of decarbonizing the transport sector and the key role of the Asia-Pacific region in that respect. Efforts towards key strategic goals in decarbonization must be taken to strike a balance between addressing climate change and maintaining a robust transport sector to support economic growth. Proposals included introducing electric vehicles and related infrastructure to reduce vehicular pollution and fossil fuel consumption, increasing the use of biofuel, building green ports, reducing emissions and fuel consumption from transport using new technologies and completing a multimodal transport network with an optimal modal split favouring rail and waterborne transport.

55. Several delegations said that transport was an essential pillar in their national commitments to achieving carbon neutrality in the coming decades, underscoring that urban and rural transport were considered fertile ground for efforts in that direction, in particular with regard to applying smart transport technologies and promoting the development, operation and maintenance of high-quality low-carbon public transport. The Conference underscored the role of digital technology and smart transport and intelligent transportation systems as an essential driving force in achieving sustainable transport development and recovery from the economic disruptions caused by the pandemic.

56. The Conference noted with satisfaction that members and associate members placed significant emphasis on road safety in line with Sustainable Development Goal targets 3.6 and 11.2 and the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030. In that regard, members and associate members accorded priority to addressing factors affecting road crashes and to road safety pillars, including the effective enforcement of helmet, seat belt and speed limit laws. The Conference highlighted the importance of innovative technologies, smart transport and intelligent transportation systems in improving road safety.

57. Sustainable transport policies and seamless connectivity could support inclusive socioeconomic growth together with environment friendly, accessible and citizen-centric mobility. In that connection, the regional infrastructure network needed to address all types of connectivity, namely urban-to-urban, urban-to-rural and rural-to-rural connectivity, to ensure that no one would be left behind. Therefore, building a transportation system that effectively utilized digital technologies had the potential to create societies in which everyone had freedom of movement and to achieve barrier-free, seamless, door-to-door mobility experiences for elderly people, people with disabilities and other people with mobility constraints.

B. Other matters
(Agenda item 8)

58. No other matters were discussed.

C. Adoption of the ministerial declaration on sustainable transport development in Asia and the Pacific, including a regional action programme for sustainable transport development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026)
(Agenda item 9)

59. The Conference adopted the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026).

D. Adoption of the report of the Conference
(Agenda item 10)

60. The Conference adopted its report on 17 December 2021.
