Draft road map on augmenting rail connectivity between countries in North and Central Asia and Southeast Asia

Sandeep Raj Jain
Transport Division

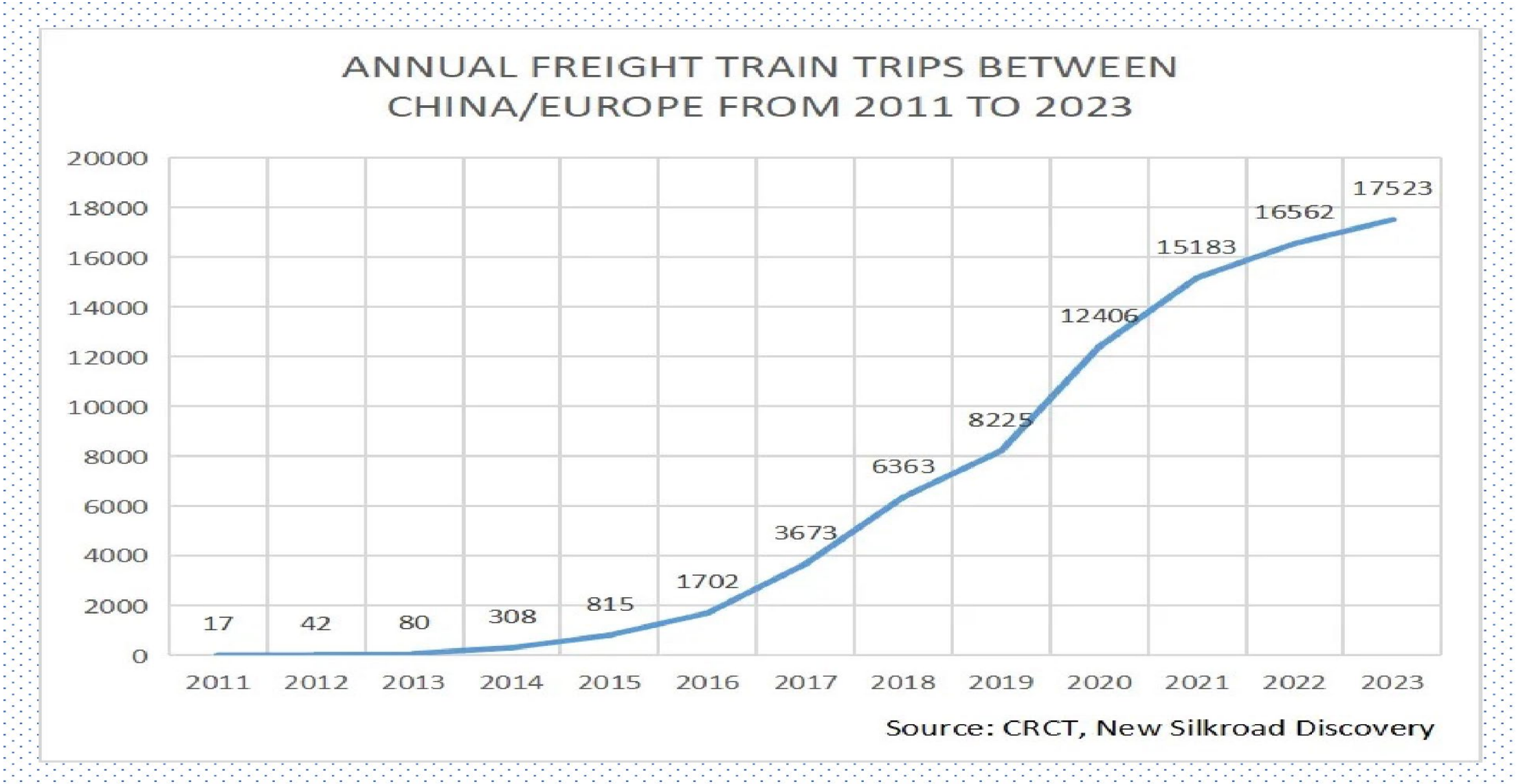
ESCAP
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Outline

- Background
- Rail connectivity between NCA and SEA countries
- Key suggested actions for draft road map for augmenting rail connectivity between NCA



Exponential increase in freight trains between Asia and Europe during last decade



TRANS-ASIAN RAILWAY NETWORK



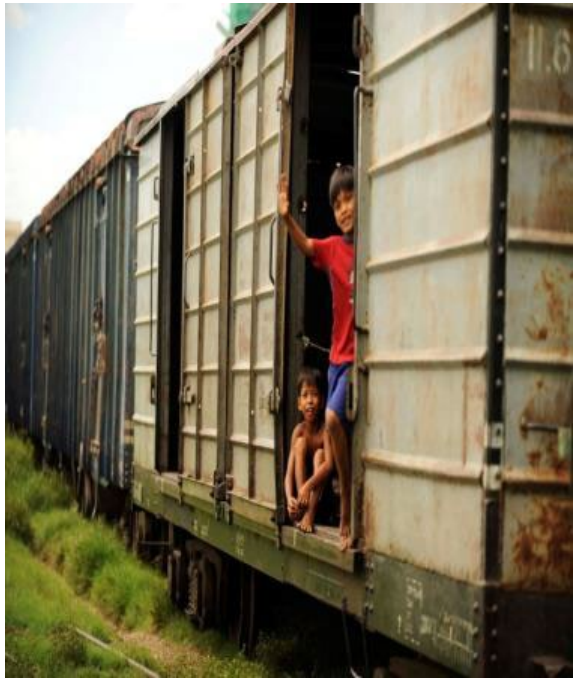
Rail connectivity between NCA and SEA countries



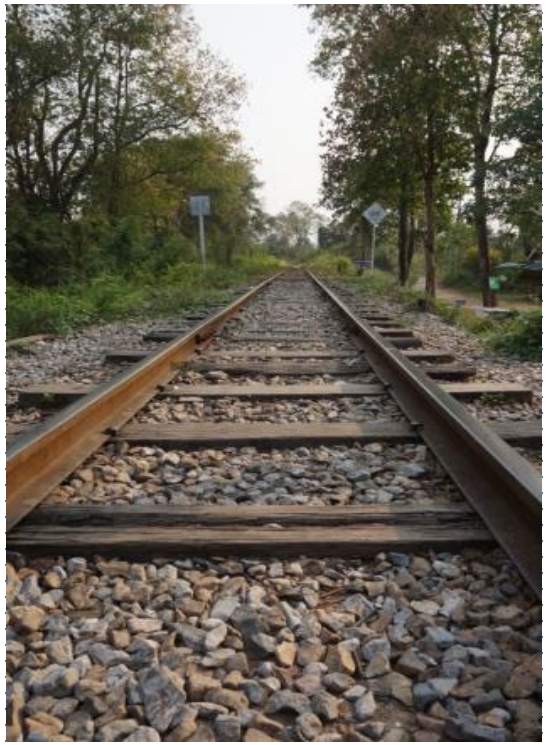
- ✓ Operationalization of Lao-China railway in December 2021
- ✓ ESCAP has launched a project entitled Leveraging Trans-Asian Railway network for promoting sustainable and resilient transport networks in ASEAN and beyond
- ✓ A preliminary draft of the road map was presented at the Expert Group Meeting was organized on 29-30 April 2024 in Bangkok
- ✓ Considering landlocked position of most countries in NCA, all existing rail transport links to countries in SEA is through China only.
- ✓ Currently operational rail routes *Malaysia-Thailand-Lao People's Democratic Republic (SEA countries)-China-Kazakhstan- (other NCA countries)* appears most promising

Challenges to rail connectivity between NCA and SEA countries

- ✓ NO established platform for SEA-NCA countries to coordinate on issues related rail connectivity and so no common project(s) prioritization
- ✓ Low levels of technical and operational rail interoperability
- ✓ Lack of rail legal interoperability between two subregions
- ✓ Inefficient border crossings processes along the route including inadequate transshipment facilities and lack of electronic information sharing among stakeholders (excessive reliance on paper documents)



Key suggested actions for the road map



- ✓ Establish SEA-NCA coordination mechanism on rail connectivity
- ✓ Consider future trade flows and scenarios between two subregions and beyond
- ✓ Common prioritization framework on rail infrastructure connectivity
- ✓ Electronic information exchange among stakeholders for efficient rail border crossings
- ✓ Augment rail connectivity within countries in SEA
- ✓ A railway standard connectivity scheme for strengthening rail connectivity between the two subregions

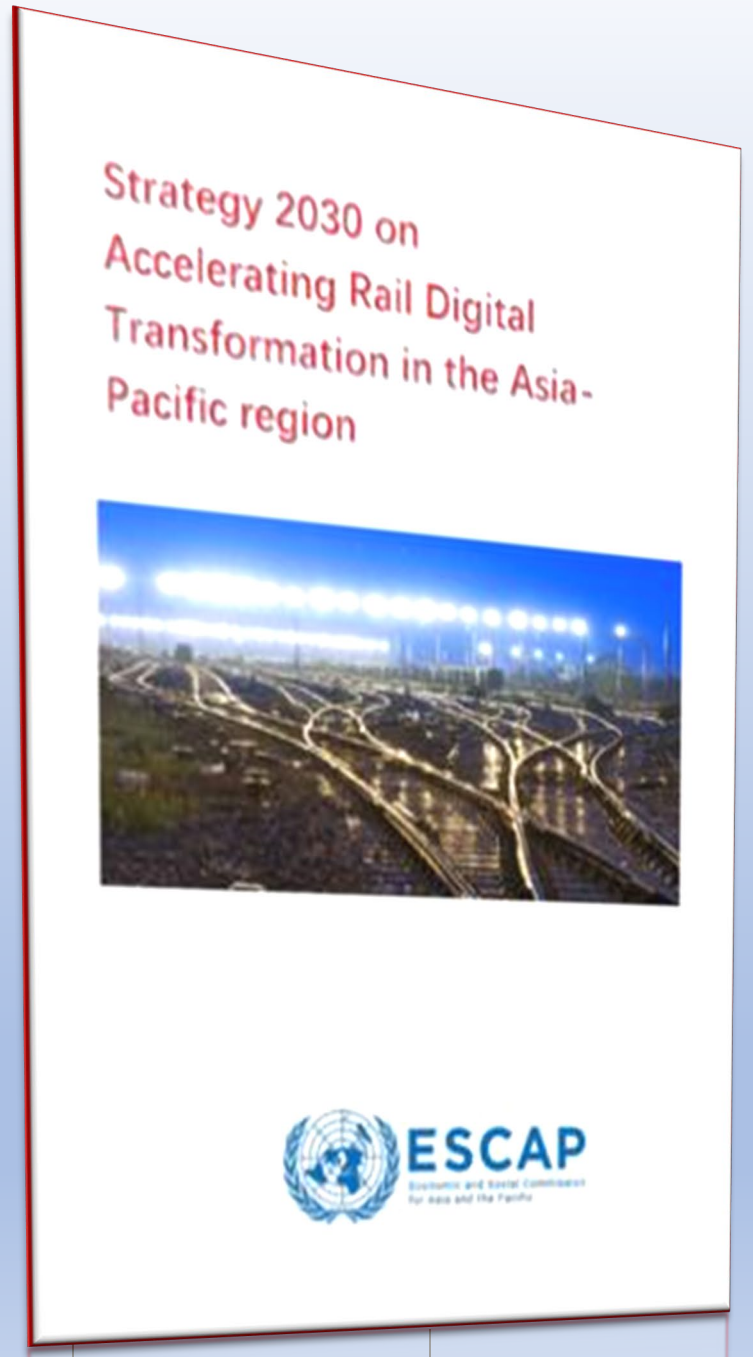
New Annex III to Intergovernmental Agreement on Trans-Asian Railway network

Exponential increase in Eurasian traffic over last decade has made it imperative to complete rail border crossing formalites expeditiously through electronic information exchange among stakeholders

Annex III on General principles on electronic information exchange/data interchange among railways and between railways and control agencies along the Trans-Asian Railway Network was adopted by the working group on Trans-Asian railway network in 2023

The guiding principles provides an overarching framework for countries to cooperate in developing seamless electronic information exchange practices along railway corridors.

ESCAP, in partnership with other organizations, supports countries in undertaking (a) pilot projects on electronic information exchange between railways and control agencies; (b) develop back ground studies and recommended good practices; and (c) undertakrelated advisory services. Please contact jain@un.org for further information



The Strategy 2030 on Accelerating Rail Digital Transformation in the Asia-Pacific region adopted at the eighth meeting of Working group on Trans-Asian Railway network in 2023 aims to provide coherence and momentum to rail digitalization initiatives.

The strategy comprises of a guiding vision, six objectives, eight priority areas and five enablers, as well as implementing arrangements, including for measuring progress in rail digitalization.

Implementation of the Strategy 2030 would enhance rail competitiveness in region over medium to long term, facilitating a shift towards rail and reducing carbon emissions, traffic congestion and air pollution.

For more information on the strategy please visit https://www.unescap.org/kp/2023/strategy-2030-accelerating-rail-digital-transformation-asia-pacific-region

Thank you
for
your attention

http://www.unescap.org/our-work/transport

