

REVIEW OF
**DEVELOPMENTS
IN TRANSPORT
IN ASIA AND
THE PACIFIC**

2015

TRANSPORT FOR
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT AND
REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This latest biennial Review sets out transport developments in the Asia-Pacific region and serves as a mechanism for reporting on the provision of transport infrastructure and services; the challenges remaining in regional, urban and rural connectivity; and public health issues, such as road safety and emission pollutions.

The Review finds that regional connectivity has been placed high in policy agenda of many countries in the region. This has resulted in the strong demand for strengthened regional transport connectivity, largely emanating from the desire to have smooth flow of goods movements within the region that also provides inclusive access for the emerging development opportunities to all countries in the region, in particular those with special needs such as least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states.

2015 saw the adoption of the global mandate in the 2030 UN development agenda and the agreement to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Of the 17 goals and 169 targets, transport is specifically mentioned in four targets and indirectly in seven others. SDGs targets for transport include the subjects of resilient and transborder infrastructure; road safety; energy efficiency; safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transports systems, notably by expanding public transport; and increased investment in rural infrastructure to achieve an integrated transport network.

To achieve the SDGs, transport's contribution will need to focus towards achieving an integrated intermodal transport system that provides balanced integration of the three pillars, economic, social and environmental, of sustainable development. Integrated intermodal transport system provides access to economic and social opportunities while accommodating the need of better living environment. The Review examines how an integrated intermodal transport

system allows for better optimization in energy efficiency and minimization of harmful emissions to environment and how an integrated transport system also strengthens economic, environmental and social outcomes. The Review also shows that in some subregions, such as South-East Asia, the share of road transport, a heavy polluting mode of transport, is relatively high at 55 per cent, and extremely high in some countries, accounting for more than 90 per cent of the total transport activity. In that regard, the Review highlights the benefits for the region of an integrated intermodal transport system that uses the benefits of a seamless approach to connect and capture the comparative advantages of the different modes of transportation.

The Review shows adoption of overall policy on developing the integrated intermodal transport systems in a number of countries. Increasing investment in environmentally sound railway and intermodal transport hubs has been seen in these countries. Many countries have made substantial efforts to upgrade their road connectivity networks within the region with an increase in the percentage of higher class Asian Highway roads such as class I and II and decrease in the percentage of lower class Asian Highway roads such as class III and below. For the Trans-Asian Railways overall, this upgrading has been slow, with missing links still remaining, which impedes the use of more efficient railway for regional backbone transport.

In the context of SDG 11 on more sustainable cities, the Review reports on the initiatives of the cities of the region to stem the social and economic losses from the burden of increasing congestion and pollution caused by private vehicles. The Review acknowledges the increasing role of intelligent transport systems for urban and inter-city mobility.

The Review recognizes the role of rural accessibility as a key component of success in connecting production with consumption, another SDG, to end hunger and promote sustainable agriculture. Greater connectivity is needed for rural and remote communities in the region where around two thirds of a billion people do not have all-weather access, and further onwards connection to the regional networks, such as the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway.

The Review also reports the region's greater interest and the need in further improving road safety, which resulted in social and economic loss from road traffic fatalities with some 733,000 deaths on Asia-Pacific roads in 2013, especially in East and North-East Asia and the Pacific subregions where their fatality levels have increased from 2010.

PART I – INTRODUCTION

Asia and the Pacific region has become less dependent on its traditional markets in Europe and North America with more than half of its trade now conducted within the region. This situation calls for enhancing regional connectivity. Structural bottlenecks, such as poor quality transport infrastructure, are hindering the potential for more trade within subregions. By strengthening cross-border overland links with their neighbours, the region can achieve a more balanced distribution of trade flows. The need for better intraregional transport systems is being addressed with several regional initiatives paving the way with the help of infrastructure-focused funds for boosting connectivity among ESCAP member States.

PART II – TRANSPORT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development is one of the key issues facing policymakers today, a fact underlined by four of the seventeen new United Nations Sustainable Development Goals — which come into effect from 2016 — including targets that make specific reference to transport and infrastructure. Demographic trends, such

as rapid urbanization and the increase in disposable incomes, are pushing up demand for private vehicles. This, in turn, has resulted in several negative environmental externalities. Motorization also has negative social consequences, such as an increasing number of traffic accidents and possibly greater inequality, both within urban areas and between urban and rural areas. The key to making the transport sector more sustainable is to encourage both passenger and freight transport to shift to more sustainable modes of transport. For passengers, the provision of infrastructure to facilitate non-motorized transport (walking and cycling) and high quality public transport systems are the way forward. Road transport remains the dominant mode for freight transport, accounting for an ever-increasing proportion of fossil fuel consumption. Governments must consider measures to encourage more intermodal transport, which would allow shippers to take advantage of the environmental and economic efficiencies of railways, maritime transport and inland waterways and the flexibility and reliability of road transport. The promotion of railways for long-distance freight movement and intermodal transport and the use of intelligent transport systems are essential for improving sustainability in the region.

PART III – INTEGRATED INTERMODAL TRANSPORT SYSTEM

CHAPTER 1 - REGIONAL TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY

INFRASTRUCTURE NETWORKS

Over the past fifty years, infrastructure networks in the ESCAP region have grown faster than in any other region in the world. Significant progress has been made in linking major production and consumption centres with intensive transport network. Governments have put a lot of effort in upgrading and improving the quality of these networks, with the region now boasting world class highways, high-speed railway systems and some of the busiest ports and aviation hubs in the world. In particular, progress has been made under the frameworks of the intergovernmental agreements on the Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway, and dry ports. However, the region has yet to achieve the kind of “seamless connectivity” that would allow countries to make the optimal use of regional infrastructure networks, and thereby bring down transport and logistics costs. This chapter provides an update on the status of those networks and a number of major ongoing and planned highway and railway projects, while also discussing several major dry port development projects and the prospects for further development.

TRANSPORT FACILITATION AND LOGISTICS

Non-physical barriers to transport add to logistics costs. The facilitation of transport and the improvement of logistics performance would enhance the competitiveness of the region’s developing countries, particularly its landlocked developing countries. One of the most effective means to facilitate transport is through harmonization of norms, standards, processes and procedures, which can be accomplished through: accession to international legal instruments; subregional facilitation agreements; and implementation of facilitation models. Innovative approaches and technologies are available to help governments expedite cargo, crew and vehicle processing times at borders while allowing them to maintain control. These include integrated check posts, automated customs processes, and the

use of radio-frequency identification and intelligent transport systems to track cargo and vehicles. Various “e-logistics” systems, are directed at streamlining logistics procedures and improving logistics performance.

INTER-ISLAND SHIPPING IN THE PACIFIC SUBREGION

The maritime sector plays an important role in many countries of the ESCAP region, but it is especially critical for the maritime countries of the Pacific subregion. This subregion is heavily dependent on shipping services for the domestic and international transport of cargo and passengers. Inter-island shipping is also central to the lives of Pacific islanders, often providing the only means of access to and from the smaller outer islands, as well as being a major source of employment. Given its importance, governments in the region have formulated a number of cooperation frameworks to strengthen the maritime sector. The efficiency of services has also been enhanced with the emergence of several hub ports as major transshipment points, resulting in relatively good north-south and east-west international shipping connections with major trading partners for all categories of cargo. However, a number of challenges remain, including the poor safety record of the sector, insufficient budgets to invest in new infrastructure and lack of effective maintenance regimes for existing ports. The chapter reviews policy options for overcoming these challenges.

CHAPTER 2 – URBAN TRANSPORT

The Asia-Pacific region is home to more than two billion urban residents, representing 55 per cent of the world’s urban population. Unprecedented population growth and the expansion of Asian cities is putting tremendous pressure on urban public transport systems, while the rapid growth of private vehicle ownership has led to worsening traffic congestion and greater road crashes, emissions and air pollution. An increasing number of poor people inhabit urban areas, as more and more people migrate to cities from rural areas. However, Asian cities feature a colourful array of urban transport modes, such as para-transit, public transport, taxi

services, and non-motorized transport (walking and cycling). Drawing on the examples from the region, some of the main policy options which would be effective in developing sustainable urban transport systems are presented.

CHAPTER 3 – RURAL TRANSPORT

Many of the region's poor population do not have access to safe and affordable means of transport, particularly in rural areas where the majority of the poor live. As a result, they remain excluded from socioeconomic activities and services, which could help them overcome their poverty. The level of rural connectivity varies from country to country, with people living in least developed countries having the lowest levels of access to all-weather roads. Access to rural roads alone, however, will not lead to sustainable development results. Selected national rural road development programmes demonstrate innovative techniques for promoting the involvement of local people and using locally sourced materials, including some aimed at integrating other development targets, such as resilience and employment generation.

CHAPTER 4 – ROAD SAFETY

Road safety now fully acknowledged as being important development objectives. Goal 3 of SDGs: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages, includes a specific target to halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2020. The growing epidemic of road injuries and fatalities has made traffic crashes the

CHAPTER 5 – TRANSPORT FINANCING

The Asia-Pacific region is facing soaring demand for transport infrastructure to support its economic development and burgeoning population. To meet this demand, the investments required are considerable and governments are exploring ways to mobilize both public and private financial resources. With regard to public finance, governments have to consider how to mobilize greater domestic resources, access new external resources and improve public expenditure management. Concerning private finance, public-private partnerships have become a key mechanism for channelling private resources for infrastructure development. These partnerships have a long history in the transport sector across the ESCAP region, with approximately \$230 billion being mobilized during the period 2000-2014 through this mechanism. Developing successful public-private partnership projects is, however, challenging. In response to the need for sustainable development, the region shows increase of investment in more economical and environmentally sound railway infrastructure.

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