

First Meeting of the Regional Network of Legal and Technical Experts on Transport Facilitation

10-11 February 2014
Phuket, Thailand

OPENING STATEMENT

by Mr. Dong-Woo Ha, Director, Transport Division

*Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the First Meeting of the Regional Network of Legal and Technical Experts on Transport Facilitation. At the outset, I would like to offer my profound gratitude to the Government of the Russian Federation for generous financial support for the project on the establishment of the Regional Network, including organization of this Meeting. I am grateful to Mr. Taras Pronin, Assistant Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to UNESCAP, for joining us for the opening session despite his pressing duties.

*Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Cross-border and transit transport in the Asia-Pacific region continues to face numerous non-physical barriers, which significantly increase costs, travel times and uncertainty, thereby impeding operational transport connectivity.

In order to address challenges to international road transport in the region, the Ministerial Conference on Transport held at Bangkok in March 2012 adopted the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport, which identifies six fundamental issues for the facilitation of international road transport and provides long term targets along with the modalities to achieve them.

As a component of the Regional Strategic Framework, the Regional Network of Legal and Technical Experts on Transport Facilitation was established to provide legal support for the formulation and implementation of relevant agreements, accession to international conventions and harmonization and coordination of different legal instruments on transport facilitation.

We have received more than 80 applications for membership of the Regional Network from legal and technical experts representing government authorities, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, professional transport associations, research institutions and private sector, as well as from independent experts.

As the initial activity of the Regional Network, a series of comparative studies on the existing subregional agreements in the region has been conducted in 2013, and the findings of the studies will be presented to this Meeting.

Taking this into account, we have this Meeting in conjunction with the Seminar on Legal Aspects of Inter-subregional Connectivity, which will discuss the main existing subregional agreements on transport facilitation and issues related to their practical implementation, and we believe the two events can provide good synergy.

*Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The main purpose of this Meeting is to formally launch the Regional Network of Legal and Technical Experts on Transport Facilitation, to provide you with an opportunity to exchange information and share experiences on the existing international legal instruments on transport facilitation to which your countries are parties, and to build your capacity with a view to help further find the ways for more harmonized legal regime in this field across the region.

The Meeting will discuss proposals for the work programme of the Network for 2014, possible future activities and working arrangements of the Regional Network. We hope to involve as many as possible members of the Regional Network into the future activities to make them really benefited from the Network and to ensure the Network's sustainability.

*Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I believe that with your rich experience and strong commitment to moving towards harmonization of legal instruments on transport facilitation in the region, the Meeting will have fruitful discussion and pave the way to successful subsequent activities of the Regional Network.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to the experts who are present here today for their valuable contribution to this Meeting.

In closing, I wish you every success in your deliberations and wish you a pleasant stay in Phuket.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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