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**Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC)**

18<sup>th</sup> Session  
4-5 April 2013  
Almaty, Kazakhstan

**Development of dry ports to facilitate intermodal transport in SPECA countries**

(Item 4.4 of the Agenda)

*Note by UNESCAP*

1. SPECA countries belong to the most remote countries in the world where distances between these countries and the closest seaport are significant. Development of dry ports is therefore particularly relevant and useful to ease international trade and transport for these countries as dry ports can play an equivalent role as sea ports in landlocked countries by facilitating the provision of efficient intermodal transport and logistics services. As such, they can improve the efficiency of transport services available to the region and consequently its overall international competitiveness. Dry ports can also promote balanced spatial development by helping industrialization extension to the hinterlands.
2. Against this background, intermodal facilities and dry ports have, in recent years, received high-level commitment from countries in the Asia region. The Commission in its resolution 66/4 of 19 May 2010 and the second session of the Committee on Transport (Bangkok, 1-3 November 2010) requested the ESCAP secretariat to work on an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports. Pursuant to this, the secretariat developed a working draft of an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports based on the outcome of the Regional Expert Group Meeting on the Development of Dry Ports along the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway Networks and the second session of the Committee on Transport held in Bangkok during 1-3 November 2010.
3. Three sub-regional meetings were subsequently organized in 2011 to provide platforms for member countries for discussion and to provide feedback and suggestion for further refinement of the working draft of the agreement. One of these meetings was organized by the

ESCAP secretariat in December 2011 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan to deal specifically with the Central and North-East region<sup>1</sup>. An ad hoc intergovernmental meeting on intergovernmental agreement on dry ports was then convened in Bangkok from 20 to 22 June 2012 to finalize the draft agreement which has been approved by the Committee on Transport at its third session (10 to 12 October 2012). The agreement is expected to be adopted by member States during the sixty-ninth session of the Commission and, if adopted, should be open for signature at the second session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of transport to be held in November 2013. In drafting Annex I to the Agreement, member States were invited to indicate dry ports, either existing or planned for development, within their respective territories. 43 such dry ports have been identified by SPECA member countries (list attached). It is envisaged that the list will serve the coordinated development of important nodes in an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system.

4. It is anticipated that formalizing the development of dry ports through an intergovernmental agreement would (a) promote international recognition of dry ports, (b) facilitate infrastructure investment by attracting strong commitment of member States and increased financing from international banks and bilateral donors, (c) define operational services for a more harmonized approach to the development and operation of dry ports in the region through enhanced collaboration with the private sector and (d) contribute to the development of an efficient logistics industry in member States.

5. Successful experiences have already taken place in a number of countries. Kazakhstan, for example, recently inaugurated road and rail-linked facilities at Khorgos at the border with China, while in Uzbekistan similar development has taken place to establish an International Logistics Centre in Navoi to support multimodal services of air, rail and road transport.

6. The Bangkok Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific adopted in March 2012 requested the Executive Secretary to continue to accord priority to the implementation of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), especially to assist regional members and associate members in their efforts to realize the vision of a sustainable international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system. With this in mind, the ESCAP secretariat recently initiated a study to enhance the capacity of member countries to develop dry ports. Under the study, subregional/national workshops and/or advisory services will be organized to share experiences and best practices.

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<sup>1</sup> The subregional meeting was attended by 5 SPECA countries (Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan).

Such sub-regional workshops will target SPECA countries. Supporting progresses in dry ports is particularly timely as the capacities of existing infrastructure are, in many cases, limited and new facilities are required. Building such facilities, however, is no easy task due to the number and variety of stakeholders and to the difficulties in securing the necessary financing.

**The Project Working Group may wish to**

- Invite SPECA countries to actively participate in meetings and other efforts towards the development of Dry Ports in the region;
- Provide information on existing experience and issues related to the development of dry ports in Central Asia;
- Encourage member countries to take the necessary actions for being able to sign the intergovernmental agreement on dry ports during the second session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport to be held in October 2013.

**Annex I: list of dry ports of international importance in SPECA countries**

Country	City/Location	Dry Ports
<b>Afghanistan</b>	Mimana Mazar-e-Sharif Herat Kabul Kondoz Kandahar Jalalabad Herat	Haqueena Heiratan Dry Port Islam Qala Kabul Dry Port Shirkhan Bander Dry Port Speenboldake Chaman Dry Port Torkham Dry Port Turghundi
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	Baku Azerbaijan-Georgia border Azerbaijan- Islamic Republic of Iran border Gabala Ganja Baku Azerbaijan- Islamic Republic of Iran border Lenkoran Autonomous Republic of Nakhichevan Baku Zagatala [Khirdalan Station [Samur [Sinig-Korpu [Baku [Ganja [International Logistics Centre, Alyat [Baku [Alyat [on frontier point at state border (Astara) [Sumgait	Baku Cargo Terminal of Heydar Aliyev International Airport Balakan Cargo Terminal Bilasuvar Cargo Terminal Gabala International Airport Ganja International Airport Heydar Aliyev International Airport Julfa Cargo Terminal Lenkoran International Airport Nakhichevan International Airport Silk Way Cargo Terminal Zagatala International Airport Baku City Goods Depot] Cargo Terminal on frontier point at state border] Cargo Terminal on frontier point at state border] Container Terminal of Baku International Sea Trade Port] Ganja Station] International Logistics Centre, Alyat] Keshla Station] New Baku International Sea Trade Port, Alyat] South Terminal] Sumgait Station]
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	Aktobe Almaty	Aktobe Centre, Aktobe Damu Industrial and Logistics Centre, Almaty

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