

Foreword

Globalization is essentially a ‘story’ of technological change coupled with the development and organization of interacting physical and non-physical networks designed to take advantage of the change. The economies of East and South-East Asia that have developed and used these networks have been able to participate in the fragmented international production networks that have emerged since the early 1980s and have consequently benefited much from globalization.

Such participation requires an efficient connection to an integrated, international transport network. Therefore, the ultimate objective of the development of a network that covers all of Asia and links it to the rest of the world is to spread the benefits of globalization with a view to reducing the widening income gap between coastal and inland areas, as well as between landlocked countries and those with access to the sea.

This publication assumes importance in that overall context. It defines the scope of the proposed network, lays out a broad vision for it, and brings together in one document information on the status of Asian transport networks. It is expected to form the basis for a common vision of the evolution of transport system in the Asia-Pacific region over the coming decades.

The manner in which it outlines and discusses the shape of future developments will be of particular interest to transport professionals and policy makers. Both will find the conceptual background against which the UNESCAP Secretariat identifies specific corridors, routes and intermodal facilities – with the overarching goal of developing an international integrated intermodal transport network – of special relevance.

The UNESCAP Secretariat is very grateful to the Asian Institute of Transport Development and its Chairman, Mr. K. L. Thapar for their support and professional

advice in bringing out the monograph. Without their support, a hard-copy version would not have been possible and the dissemination of its message would have been more limited. It is but the latest example of the many years of fruitful collaboration between UNESCAP and the Institute for the benefit of the countries of Asia and the Pacific.



Kim Hak-Su
Under-Secretary-General of United Nations
and Executive Secretary of UNESCAP

Bangkok, December 2006

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