

High-level Intergovernmental 14th Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) Forum in Asia

18-20 October 2021
Nagoya, Japan

Theme: *Next Generation Transport Systems for Achieving SDGs and Carbon Neutrality – for a Safer, Affordable, Accessible and Resilient Asia.*

Draft Concept Note

1. BACKGROUND

Asia is not only the most populated region in the world, but in aggregate it has also been the world's largest economy since 2020¹. Hence, the region is in a unique position to influence the world's economy, prosperity, and growth in the coming decades. Transport and accessibility will need to play a significant role if this level of economic growth is to be sustained along with the widespread benefits across all sections of society and development. Transport is key to enabling the mobility of people and goods, allowing access to essential utilities and services, and connecting all sections of the society. Sustainable transport also ensures social equity through better rural-urban linkages in the spirit of “*No One is Left Behind*” which forms the common axis of all the SDGs. At the same time COVID-19 pandemic has taught us important lessons to enhance resilience of cities and communities (both urban and rural). Considering the climate impacts, increasing frequency and magnitude of natural disaster, health pandemics like COVID-19, unexpected economic shocks, resilience should be central to overall transport policy, planning and infrastructure development through effective policy, legal and institutional framework that would ensure appropriate level of authority to national, sub-national and city governments to promote sustainable transport.

It is predicted that by 2030 Asia will have nearly half of the global population, with approximately 60 percent of global growth, 40 percent of total world's GDP (in PPP), one third of global transport CO₂ emissions, and almost 60 percent of worldwide road accidents and fatalities.² With growing car ownership, Asian cities are in forefront of facing a number of challenges such as air pollution, traffic congestion, road accidents and fatalities and rising level of GHG emissions. To sustain ongoing economic growth, prosperity, and to achieve SDG 11, among others, Asian countries and cities will need a massive transformation in their transport sector. New innovations and technological advancement in recent years and innovative responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have provided opportunities for Asian countries, to not only recover from the pandemic, but also to transform their transport system (both passenger and freight) to achieving greater safety, affordability, accessibility, GHG emission reduction and resilience.

Currently there is no agreed mechanism to implement the various global agreements on sustainable development and climate change at the regional and sectoral level in Asia. The Bangkok 2020 Declaration (2010-2020), adopted at 5th Regional EST Forum in Asia (Bangkok, Thailand, 2010), was the first regional

¹ Sources: World Economic Forum - <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/07/the-dawn-of-the-asian-century/>

² Sources: World Economic Forum, World Bank, SLoCaT Partnership and World Health Organization.

declaration on the strengthening of environmentally sustainable land transport in Asia. Considering that a number of international agenda and agreements are in place (such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDGs, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the New Urban Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the second UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030, and the Nairobi Mandate, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030, etc.), the past three Regional EST Forums in Asia (11th Forum in Mongolia in 2018; 12th Forum in Viet Nam in 2019 and 13th Forum in 2020) unanimously recommended to develop a successor to the Bangkok 2020 Declaration to support the ongoing need for Asian countries to improve the safety, accessibility, inclusiveness, and sustainability of their transport systems. Acknowledging that the required transformation in the transport sector in Asia will require a significant effort that will not happen instantly, and that there is a need for collective, focused, and coordinated action among all the Member Countries. The EST member countries agreed that the new EST Declaration (2021-2030) is aligned with the SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement, among others.

The new EST Declaration (2021-2030) will act both as a catalyst and a framework for transformational change in the transport sector in Asia. This will include enabling changes to policy, institutional frameworks, funding and financing mechanisms, data management approaches, and support the application of innovative state-of-the-art technologies, foster communities of interest around each goal of the Declaration, catalyse strong collaboration between governments, donor, and international organizations, including MDBs and private sectors. The new Declaration will also provide a potential platform for achieving synergies in their capacity building programmes and activities in transport sector of Asia towards achieving the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, among others.

The Regional EST Forum in Asia with its new 2030 EST Declaration (2021-2030) aims to place Asia in the forefront of new collaboration approaches to improve reporting on progress towards the SDGs and the Paris Agreement on transport. The Asian EST experience could be the foundation for a future global platform and common reporting framework on transport, climate and sustainable development in an integrated manner. This future process and reporting can serve as an example for other regions for possible replication. The new Declaration also aims to build communities of interest around each Goal, including reaching out to multilateral & bilateral development community with an objective to aligning their development assistance with the objectives of the new Declaration. The emerging partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) through the Asian Transport Outlook (ATO) and its robust data and indicator framework, will lay the foundation for future country reporting as well as tracking of implementation of the new Declaration. <https://data.adb.org/dataset/asian-transport-outlook-database>

With the above background, the Ministry of the Environment, Government of Japan; Asian Development Bank (ADB); United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP), and the United Nations Centre for Regional Development of the Division for Sustainable Development Goals/United Nations Development of Economic and Social Affairs (UNCRD-DSDG/UN DESA) will co-organize the high-level Intergovernmental 14th Regional EST Forum in Asia from 18 to 20 October 2021 in Aichi Prefecture, Japan, with the theme of “*Next Generation Transport Systems for Achieving SDGs and Carbon Neutrality – for a Safer, Affordable, Accessible and Resilient Asia*”, and in conjunction with other events such as Japan-ASEAN Smart City Network, HELP, SDG promotional events and technical tours.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the 14th Regional EST Forum in Asia are to:

- Discuss sustainable transport policy options and their implementation, including sound institutional framework;
- Discuss various financing options towards implementation of sustainable transport, including role of bilateral, multilateral donor agencies, including MDBs;
- Discuss various technological inventions towards achieving sustainable transport;
- Build regional consensus on how the EST member countries can align their transport policy, planning, financing and infrastructure development with the international agendas and agreements, such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDGs, the Paris Agreement on climate change, the New Urban Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the second UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 and the Nairobi Mandate, etc..
- Discuss and agree on the new EST Declaration – *“Aichi 2030 Declaration (2021-2030): Making Transport in Asia Sustainable - Sustainable Transport Goals for achieving universally accessible, safe, affordable, clean and low-carbon-passenger and freight transport in Asia.”*
- Share knowledge, best practices and international experiences from member countries on implementation of various EST measures such as new policy initiatives, master plans, mega infrastructure projects such as expansion of railways, dedicated freight corridors and rural-urban connectivity, technological innovations (vehicle, alternate fuel, smart transport solutions), pilot and demonstration projects, bi-lateral and multilateral cooperation, nationally determined contributions (NDCs) in transport sector.

3. SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONS

The 14th Regional EST Forum in Asia is expected to be supported by various international organizations and donor agencies such as: German Technical Cooperation (GIZ), United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), World Bank (WB), World Health Organization (WHO), Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), ASUA - Japan, Busworld Foundation (BWF), China SUC Institute and JiaCui (P.R. China) Environmental Promotion Center, Carfree Cities Alliance, Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute, Eco-Mo Foundation, International Transport Forum at the OECD, International Association of Public Transport (UITP), ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability, Liechtenstein Institute for Strategic Development (LISD), SLOCAT Partnership for Sustainable Low Carbon Transport, SAFER-Vehicle and Traffic Safety Centre, Wuppertal Institute, Walk21, WRI India, among others (tbc).

4. GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE

The geographic coverage of the Forum encompasses 25 countries in Northeast, Southeast, and South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, People's Republic of China, Indonesia, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, the Philippines, Pakistan, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam) and Russian Federation. Several Central Asian and Pacific countries from ESCAP region are also expected to join the Intergovernmental 14th Regional EST Forum in Asia.

5. PARTICIPANTS

Participation in the Intergovernmental 14th Regional EST Forum in Asia is by invitation and registration only. It is expected that approximately 300 participants, including senior government representatives from Asia and the Pacific countries, City Mayors, international experts and resource persons, and others as listed below will be attending the forum:

- High-level government representatives and policy makers from the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Urban Development, the Ministry of Railways, and the Ministry of Health etc;
- Government officials from central, regional and local governments;
- Distinguished transport, environment and climate change experts and international resource persons;
- Representatives of relevant UN and international organizations, including international financial institutions, multi-lateral development banks and donor agencies; and
- Selected representatives of the private and business sectors, Academia, and NGOs etc.

6. REGISTRATION / OTHER INFORMATION

Participation in the UN Forum is free of charge. All participants are required to submit the completed and signed **UN Registration Form** in a prescribed format, register at the link- https://www.sec-information.com/srct2021_reg/contents/form_start.php

7. CONTACTS

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