

Expert Consultation Meeting on the Implementation Plan for the Decade of Sustainable Transport

1–2 July 2025

Bangkok, Thailand and Online

MAJOR CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Expert Consultation Meeting on the Implementation Plan for the Decade of Sustainable Transport was organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in collaboration with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) on 1–2 July 2025 in Bangkok, Thailand and online. It served as a key step toward shaping the Asia-Pacific region’s contribution to the Implementation Plan for the Decade of Sustainable Transport (2026–2035).
2. The objectives of the meeting were to identify regional recommendations for sustainable transport and advance a shared vision that supports the Decade of Sustainable Transport. Discussions focused on eight thematic areas, as listed in the current draft outline of the Implementation Plan. The Meeting also served as a platform for exchange among ESCAP member States and partners.
3. The Meeting was attended by representatives from 24 member States, including Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Russian Federation, Thailand, Turkmenistan, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uzbekistan, and Viet Nam, as well as 4 international and regional organizations: the Asian Development Bank, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, Asian Transport Outlook (ATO), and ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability. The programme is shown in Annex I, and the list of participants is in Annex II.
4. In the opening session, speakers emphasized the key role of sustainable transport in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The ESCAP secretariat outlined the structure and informal process leading up to the global Implementation Plan and highlighted the importance of aligning regional contributions with national policy contexts. These regional contributions will serve as an input to a separate, intergovernmental process, to be commenced in early 2026, which will lead to the development of the next Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development (RAP) 2027-2031¹, to be adopted at the 5th Ministerial Conference on Transport, to be held in late 2026.

¹ As per Decision 8, adopted at the Committee on Transport 8th Session (5-7 Nov 2024); ESCAP/CTR(8)/9

5. The secretariat presented the eight priority themes outlined in the draft implementation plan for the Decade of Sustainable Transport:
 1. Ensure access to sustainable transport for all
 2. Shape people-centred urban mobility and liveable cities
 3. Make transport safe and secure
 4. Decarbonize transport and reduce its environmental impacts
 5. Improve efficiency and smarter transport systems
 6. Leverage science, technology and innovation for transformation toward sustainable transport
 7. Enhance sustainable connectivity and freight
 8. Build resilient infrastructure and transport systems
6. As a partner of the meeting, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) shared its strategic approach to the transport sector and introduced the concept of Climate Policy-Based Financing (CPBF), a component of its Sovereign-Based Financing (SBF) instruments. CPBF is a flexible financing tool tailored to member countries' needs, supporting climate policy reforms, budgetary requirements, climate adaptation, private capital mobilization, and links to climate-related infrastructure. To enhance member States' understanding of transport sector financing, AIIB also presented a case study illustrating the practical application of CPBF.
7. Discussions on inclusive and safe mobility comprised the themes 1. Ensure access to sustainable transport for all, 2. Shape people-centred urban mobility and liveable cities and 3. Make transport safe and secure. The secretariat underscored the need to improve access in rural and peri-urban areas, integrate universal design, address road safety, and promote gender-responsive and disability-inclusive planning. The secretariat emphasized the importance of inclusive mobility and presented the need for disaggregated data and cross-sectoral partnerships.
8. Member States presented diverse transport initiatives. Indonesia shared its Teman Bus programme to improve inclusive urban mobility. China emphasized the importance of rural roads and digital freight solutions. Japan discussed gender mainstreaming in transport policy. The Russian Federation presented access- and digital-focused transport modernization in Moscow, while Bhutan and Nepal highlighted strategies to integrate electric mobility and inclusive design in mountainous areas.
9. Discussions on smart and sustainable transport included the themes 4. Decarbonize transport and reduce its environmental impacts, 5. Improve efficiency and smarter transport systems and 6. Leverage science, technology and innovation for transformation toward sustainable transport. The secretariat highlighted the critical role that smart and sustainable transport plays in achieving climate goals. It presented current data on transport-related emissions, congestion, and the economic costs of inefficiencies, while also emphasizing the potential of emerging and innovative technologies to address these challenges.

10. On smart and sustainable transport, countries reported efforts to reduce emissions and modernize their transport systems through Electric Vehicle (EV) promotion, charging infrastructure, green corridors, and integrated urban planning. The Philippines highlighted the Electric Vehicle Industry Development Act (EVIDA) and the Comprehensive Roadmap for the Electric Vehicle Industry (CREVI), as a resulting plan from EVIDA. Lao PDR, Maldives, Cambodia, and Nepal showcased e-bus and EV targets, while Uzbekistan reported on deploying over 1,000 electric buses and drafting urban mobility masterplans.
11. Under resilient and connected transport the topics 7. Enhance sustainable connectivity and freight and 8. Build Resilient Infrastructure and Transport Systems were discussed. The secretariat emphasized the importance of transport connectivity in promoting economic growth and facilitating trade. It also underscored the critical need for resilient transport systems, particularly in light of the growing frequency and severity of climate-related disasters.
12. Under the same agenda item, member States emphasized strengthening dry ports, intelligent logistics, and multimodal corridors. Thailand presented its 20-Year Transport System Development Strategy and major mass transit and port expansion projects. Bangladesh highlighted the Delta Plan 2100 as a model for climate-resilient planning. Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan stressed regional corridor development and digital integration.
13. Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, and Viet Nam shared significant progress in modernizing public transport and promoting green freight. Azerbaijan detailed commitments under its national green growth strategy, including railway electrification, electric buses, and its EcoPort initiative. Viet Nam highlighted its Action Program on Green Energy Conversion and its call for green finance and technology transfer.
14. The secretariat reiterated the vulnerability of Asia-Pacific's infrastructure to disasters and the need to climate-proof investments. Participants called for dedicated adaptation financing, disaster preparedness, and resilient design standards.
15. The secretariat proceeded to present on Countries in Special Situations, including landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), least developed countries (LDCs), and small island developing States (SIDS). The secretariat and ICLEI emphasized the importance of addressing structural challenges through tailored policy support, cross-border facilitation, disaster-resilient infrastructure, and affordable, inclusive mobility services.
16. In the following, more process-oriented sessions on "How to Get There" and "Assessing Progress" Pakistan and Viet Nam shared their national EV policies and action plans, highlighting efforts to scale up electric bus deployment, expand intelligent transport systems (ITS), implement road safety reforms, and strengthen institutional

capacity. Moreover, incentivizing local manufacturing, Review of conservative auto-finance regime for new EVs of commercial banks, and Viability Gap Financing (VGF) on PPP mode to attract initial investment for EV charging stations was also highlighted by Pakistan. Participants identified persistent challenges, including last-mile connectivity, financing gaps, and aging vehicle fleets. The discussion also emphasized the importance of enhancing institutional and digital capacity, improving governance, and promoting integrated planning aligned with national climate and development goals. Additional barriers identified included fragmented or underdeveloped legal and regulatory frameworks, limited coordination between national and local authorities, and weak institutional capacities. In this context, many member States, along with ATO, underscored the urgent need for a more advanced and comprehensive regional framework addressing legal harmonization, standardization, and cooperative mechanisms. Mongolia advocated for the enhancement of the International Motor Insurance Card System, while India, Fiji, and Indonesia emphasized the importance of aligning road and vehicle standards across countries. Such harmonization, they noted, could enable bulk procurement of electric buses, thereby lowering both upfront acquisition costs and long-term maintenance expenditures. ATO further recommended the establishment of a robust regional monitoring framework to support effective implementation and evaluation.

17. Under the session on “Smart and Sustainable Transport” and the thematic areas of "Countries in Special Situations" and “How to Get There,” ICLEI highlighted the critical role of cities in advancing green mobility and non-motorized transport solutions. The organization emphasized the value of local pilot projects, digital tools, and regional platforms for peer learning and data sharing. ICLEI presented case studies from Fiji, Tonga, and Papua New Guinea, showcasing scalable electric vehicle strategies, multimodal transport planning, and gender-responsive initiatives, while also underscoring the unique challenges and opportunities faced by Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and remote communities. Under the session on “How to Get There”, the ATO presented data showing rising emissions, increasing motorization, high road crash fatalities, and gaps in resilience planning. ICLEI also presented data and country case studies that underscored the challenges and opportunities in SIDS and remote communities.
18. Participants identified a set of common challenges across the eight priority themes, including persistent rural-urban divides and infrastructure gaps; rapid urbanization and limited non-motorized transport; high road fatality rates and enforcement issues; rising emissions and low EV uptake; fragmented services and poor data utilization; limited smart transport deployment; inefficient logistics; and climate vulnerability. In response, they proposed shared recommendations such as improving first- and last-mile access, accelerating decarbonization, advancing freight connectivity, enhancing transport safety, mainstreaming innovation and data systems, and developing climate-resilient and inclusive infrastructure.

19. The Meeting concluded with broad agreement on the importance of shaping a coherent and forward-looking regional contribution to the global Implementation Plan. Participants encouraged ESCAP to support member States through capacity-building, technical assistance, and intergovernmental platforms.
20. The secretariat informed participants that the recommendations from this Meeting will be relayed to the drafting group of the Implementation Plan for the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport (2026–2035).
21. Meeting materials and presentations are available on the ESCAP event webpage, <https://www.unescap.org/events/2025/expert-consultation-meeting-implementation-plan-decade-sustainable-transport>.

Annexes

- I. Workshop programme
- II. List of participants