

Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great privilege and honor to convey the thoughts of Sri Lanka Delegation at the 7th Committee of Transport of the UNESCAP. The importance of this conference to Sri Lanka is immense at this juncture in the time of great resilience by fellow countrymen and the policy makers alike. Promoting economic and social development through regional cooperation and integration is indeed a great opportunity for a better tomorrow.

Present transport systems in many countries in the region are in need of rapid transformation to more sustainable ways since transport systems are by and large characterized by unsustainable practices that could lead to hamper access to services and markets and deepen social inequities.

Having said that let me briefly navigate you through the progress work of Sri Lanka in relation to the Regional Action program.

First, National Transport Policy for Sri Lanka has been reviewed to incorporate outcome-based mobility demand fulfilment. Preparation of strategic transport action plan is being discussed to avoid ad hoc policy implementation. It is observed that implicit transport policy recommendations are creating deep rooted malaise.

Then, being a country with a highest level of access road density, International Road Safety Assessment Program – commonly referred to as IRAP - is underway in the form of structured road audit for the purpose of improving quality standards of the national highway grid. The expressway network was on track with the completion of Sothern Expressway with a direct

access to Katanayaka International airport and to the Colombo Port. Central Expressway is being partly completed due to the recent economic crisis.

Realizing the commitment to have a sustainable transport system in Sri Lanka with a minimum emission status to combat air pollution, to address traffic congestion and to deliver outstanding road safety practices, it should be highlighted here that the first recent collaboration with UNESCAP produced the report for sustainable freight transport for Sri Lanka aiming on enhancing shift towards sustainable freight transport. Recommendations that are put forward in the report will be institutionalized as appropriate.

It has been well observed that the new normal situation demanded major shift in the transport sector towards E-Mobility and Intelligent Transport Systems. Therefore, introducing E-mobility and promoting non-motorized transport modes are of actual concerns at the highest level of policy administration. Paradoxically, the UN new development order creates a conducive environment for the governments to establishing systems and infrastructures that brings inalienable three dimensions of development together namely social, economic and environmental in a sustainable manner.

A policy stand is up to stay on the development of missing link in railways to connect ports and possible dry port stations. Construction of multi modal transport hubs with transport regulatory policy is yet another action undertaken to improve rail connectivity in a sustainable manner all of which pave the way for achieving overarching objectives of Regional Action Program.

Preparation of Road Safety Action plan based on the five-pillar approach of the World Health Organization together with Sri Lanka Accident Data Management System is a considerable movement towards having an explicit transport policy implementation in the country.

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Ladies and gentlemen,

Sri Lanka has been keen on introducing efficient, clean, reliable affordable and accessible transport systems that connects economic centers in the country and pave the way for linking regional centers as set out in the regional agreements. Our shared future will depend on environmentally-friendly, energy efficient, inclusive, safe and sustainable transport systems. Key challenges that might come across along the way could not easily be ignored. Investment attraction, institutional capacity development in terms of physical and human resources, policy & regulatory instrument formulation, integrating transport & environment and more importantly, communicating the perceived benefits to the general public so that influencing their choices on sustainable transport systems could be real issues to be dealt with.

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Ladies and gentlemen,

Having presented the progress and commitment by Sri Lanka, with all the good wishes let me conclude my presentation.

Thank you