

“Safe and inclusive transport and mobility”

Seventh Session of the Committee on Transport

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Mr. Chair,

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good afternoon.

And thank you for providing me the chance to deliver a speech in the occasion today.

Excellencies

Just after gaining independence in 1971 with the leadership of the father of the nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh was a country ravaged by war. Even then, he allocated almost half of the first budget for the new nation to transportation sector and rightly so. As a result, per capita income grew from 94 USD in 1972 to 278 USD in 1975. The country continues to invest in the sector and sustained this economic growth for more than half a century.

Distinguished Delegates

Under the dynamic leadership of Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of the Father of the Nation, Bangladesh has transformed itself into one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Along with the development of the transport infrastructure, the focus on safety and inclusiveness came forward. Also, road infrastructures gradually have become far safer which is in Arena 1 of road safety invention. For example, the government initiated construction of 4 lane highway with service lane (for slow moving vehicle) and plans for a network of 2,342 kilometers with service lane on both sides. Major ferry crossings are bridged and there are no river gaps in the National Highways. These bridges are now being built with modern safety features and modern technology.

Distinguished Participants

For Arena 2. Safe vehicles; Bangladesh Road Transport Authority (BRTA) has significant contribution ensuring safety on road since its inception. The government is going to construct Vehicle Inspection Center for all Divisional towns, establish Motor Driving Testing, Training and Multipurpose Center (MDTTC) for all metropolitan area and circle offices and introduce Research and Development section. Moreover, BRTA has started providing Vehicle

Registration-Ownership Transfer online, Retro-reflective Number Plate, RFID Tag, Digital Registration Certificate (RC), Biometrics based Smart Card Driving License etc. for better accountability. As per Arena 3: Safe road use; all the infrastructures are being designed utilizing ‘forgiving design’ principle to lessen or avoid the impact of “run off the road” crashes. It has been incorporation in the design manuals, guidelines etc. Corresponding to Arena 5. Safe speed: the speed for national highways are restricted to 80 kmph and the limit for urban roads is 30 kmph.

Dear Delegates

In line with Arena 6: Modal shift, land use planning and reduced road use exposure; government drafted a National Integrated Multimodal Transport Policy. Bangladesh would like to shift its’ passenger and freight movement to other efficient and cheaper modes like rail, waterways etc. In case of urban transport strategy government acknowledged the need to take immediate and concrete steps to improve the traffic situation in Greater Dhaka area and formulated Revised Strategic Transport Plan (RSTP) in 2015. The first metro will operate from December 2022 and the BRT will operate from June 2022. We hope to shift steadily from private to public transport.

Distinguished Delegates

Bangladesh as a member of UN has been persistent to attain Sustainable Development Goals. To assist greater participation of women, the elderly and disabled in economic, social and cultural affairs, the policies put greater emphasis on integrated transport, including more accessible buses, and better information. Reservation of seats for elderly people, children, and physically challenged people is being ensured. Practicing the use of ramps at railway stations and bus stops to aid access and facilitating waterway transportation through some special arrangements. The government is trying to improve the quality of the pedestrians’ environment, e.g., making it easier for women, children, the elderly and the physically challenged to move.

Excellencies

We know and understand, reducing road traffic deaths and injuries by at least 50 per cent from 2021 to 2030 is a daunting task. Government has been putting immense effort by drafting and passing acts, laws, policies, guidelines and manuals regularly. It has also taken necessary steps for implementing and enforcing them. Trend in Fatality Rate in road crashes per 100,000 is decreasing by around 4%. Slowly but surely, we are moving towards our goal. UNESCAP has

been continuously assisting us achieving our objectives together. We would like to request the ESCAP secretariat to organize a capacity development workshops on road safety in Bangladesh.

Both government officials and policymakers are very much committed to make Bangladesh's roads safer and inclusive. Civil society organizations have also played a key role in focusing attention on road safety, by sensitizing the public, providing community training, and raising media awareness about the cause. As Bangladesh recovers from the COVID pandemic, and economic activity increases, improving road safety and inclusive mobility are of paramount importance to the country's development.

Hence, we wholeheartedly endorse the Regional Plan of Action for Asia and the Pacific for the Second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030.

I wish the success of this event and the meeting.

Thank you everyone.