

## **ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION PREPARATION**

**Q 1:** Many countries in Asia and the Pacific are not on track in achieving their SDGs, especially those that are related to transport, by 2030. What are some key challenges that are delaying the achievement of sustainable transport development in the region?

I don't prefer to say countries in Asia and Pacific are not on track toward SDGs especially in our transport, but may be behind the schedule.

Since the launch of SDGs, each country has put a lot of efforts to develop a quality transport infrastructure, expand transport network, improve transport services, transform digitalization and promote decarbonization, women empowerment, gender equality, inclusion of disability and marginalized community for transport, all of which are to ensure that our transport is safe, convenient, efficient, resilient, sustainable and inclusive.

As a result of these efforts, we witnessed the Asia GDP growth of around 4.5% before covid-19, 6.5% in 2021, and it is expected to moderate to 4.0 percent in 2022 and rise to 4.3 percent in 2023. We have also seen the increase of life expectancy in Asia and Pacific from 68.8 in 2000 to around 74.2 in 2019. In just 2 years from the launch of SDGs, Asia extreme poverty was also reduced to 29.1% and it would be further declined to around 15% if COVID-19 pandemic had not happened.

However, we still have challenges to face given our limited capability and capacity, which cause delay to achieve the SDGs goals.

One of the challenges is financing the sheer ambition of the SDG agenda and public expectations of improved public services, along with limited funding available. The 2030 Agenda sets twin global priorities of delivering environmental sustainability, specifically mitigating the threat posed by climate change, and the ongoing priority of eradicating poverty, and emphasize the

centrality of securing equity, under the strapline leaving no one behind, while public expectation of public services is geographically diversified.

The second is the overarching threat posed by climate change, which challenges the progress of many SDGs goals. Amidst embarking on many measures to mitigate and adapt to these global pressures, we remain exposed to the impacts of unprecedented severe climate events and global warming. Along with the need to combat environmental degradation in a rapidly developing middle income country, this is a key priority for every one of us.

The third challenge is a host of questions posed by the governance aspects of the goals, including the mobilization of all stakeholders to support SDGs achievement. While we have made significant efforts in public sector management reform and systems strengthening, gaps remain, especially with regard to data and Monitoring and Evaluation. Despite we are making a significant effort to build effective tools to oversee and deliver the goal, it needs to reach out beyond government given the SDGs delivery must be involved by all stakeholders including civil society and private sectors.

Last but not least is the impact of COVID-19 pandemic which caused us unprecedented scales of economic and financial losses with uncertainties. Despite Covid-19 is no longer a significant issue, we are still experiencing global supply chain disruption as demand has skyrocketed and the supply chains during the pandemic are struggling to bounce back, while the surge in energy price as a result of the war in Ukraine has put additional pressure. This disruption has become the biggest challenge that we are now facing in achieving SDGs goals, as some experts said that it takes time for it to get back to pre Covid-19 level.

**Q2:** Public transport serves as the backbone of many Asia-Pacific cities' mobility systems and forms the foundation of sustainable urban transport.

How has Cambodia developed more accessible, sustainable and inclusive public transport?

Cambodia recognized the importance of public transport as a foundation of sustainable urban transport, helping alleviate traffic congestion, CO<sub>2</sub> emission and traffic accident, and saving time and cost.

Against this background, in late 2014, we have launched the most widely used public transit option - the Phnom Penh City Bus, operating on 3 lines of 54 km with 57 second-hand buses. In 2017, it rapidly increased to 13 lines of 300 km with 178 new buses. Before Covid-19, the daily rider rate was around 23,000, which is marginal when compared to total commute numbers in the city, and being far too small to alleviate traffic congestion.

In 2018, we have launched the water taxi along Phnom Penh's riverfront running from north to south, with stops along the way at important locations. It should have greatly eased pressure on the city's main boulevards. Even though there was early interest due to its novelty, it was then suspended after many months until now. This was because each stop was disconnected from other transit, effectively stranding passengers after they left the station.

Around the same time, we also launched the Airport Rail Link to create a critical connection from the city's centre to the international airport. But the old colonial train station proved ill-suited to serve as a hub for a wide variety of transport options. Hence, passengers are required to take another means of transport just to reach the station, while travellers arriving from the airport are also left stranded. Moreover, the rail was forced to share a route with other vehicles, which is dangerous. As a result, its operation was then suspended.

Given these lessons learnt, we are currently undertaking the ADB-TA project on Supporting Sustainable Integrated Urban Public Transport Development to develop a rapid bus system to accommodate travel demands and provide efficient mobility for people in Phnom Penh. Four proposed rapid bus corridors and modernization of the bus system are to be developed, including, but not limited to, i. a rapid bus system using dedicated/priority lanes, ii. bus stations with smart bus shelter, bench, CCTV, lighting and bollards, iii. signals at 25 intersections, iv. transfer terminus including a pedestrian bridge or underpass/overpass and v. new battery electric buses.

Furthermore, we also seek opportunities to integrate with other transport modes, such as water transport and para transit, through introducing transfer facilities and integrated fare collection system.

Additionally, we are reviewing the feasibility studies of the rail transit system alternatives, which were studied by Japan in 2014, including Linear Metro, Monorail, Automatic Guided Transit (AGT), Light Rail Transit and Tramway. Once completed, we will submit to the government for consideration and approval. Furthermore, we will also introduce ITS in the city of Phnom Penh. Its feasibility was completed and is now under review and will be submitted to the government for approval.

That's all my answer to the question. Thank you!