



Speaking Notes

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**UNESCAP - Seventh Session of the
Committee on Transport**

**High-Level Roundtable on “Achieving
transport-related Sustainable
Development Goals through
sustainable, inclusive and resilient
transport development in the region”**

Bangkok
10:30-12:00, 23 November 2022

I. Background information

The High-Level Roundtable will consist of a small group of Transport Ministers and leaders of international organisations who will highlight achievements, experiences and best practices, as well as a vision on strategic directions on how best to achieve different sustainable transport development goals.

There will be 2-3 rounds of questions and each intervention should be within the time limit of 2-3 minutes. This facilitated discussion will be focused on the following three overarching topics, as reflected in the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific (2022–2026)

The UNESCAP Secretariat has requested that no slides are shown.

Question

How has IRU promoted sustainable development road transport in Asia and the Pacific?

Answer

[Short intro to IRU]

IRU is the world road transport organisation. As the voice of more than 3.5 million companies operating mobility and logistics services in over 100 countries, we lead solutions to help the world move better. IRU's work supports trade, economic growth, jobs, safety, the environment and communities.

IRU has a long-standing commitment to sustainable development and already in 1997, all IRU members signed a Charter for Sustainable Development which provided guidance on sustainable development strategies and practices.

Three pillars of sustainable development: economy, social equity and environment

Enhancing economic development:

- IRU is the implementing partner of TIR Convention.

- UN transport facilitation instruments, notably the TIR and Harmonization Conventions, facilitate road transport, trade and thus progress (TIR benefits).
- Concrete benefits of using TIR in South Asia (Greater Mekong Subregion). Implementing TIR will save 35 billion in transit costs over 5 years and the overall economic benefit of implementing TIR is up to 1.31% of national GDP.
- In particular, GMS countries should accede to the TIR UN Convention (last remaining countries in UNESCAP).

Social development:

- Our industry is facing a serious driver shortage. 2.6 mio driver positions are currently unfilled.
- IRU promotes the attractiveness of the profession by working with regional partners on improving the working conditions of drivers.
- Promote the development of safe and secure truck parking areas along the Asian Highway Network and around dry ports.
- Adapting driver profiles and training curricula, allowing them to drive a truck from the age of 18 and improving the image of the profession.
- Formalising the industry by developing skills through our RoadMasters programme (DB Schenker is currently looking into applying RoadMasters in GMS countries).

Environment

- IRU and its members launched the Green Compact with the goal to decarbonise road transport by 2050. The Green Compact pillars are:
 - o Broad implementation of low and zero carbon fuels
 - o More efficient logistics with Eco-trucks
 - o Increased use of collective passenger transport with buses and coaches
 - o More efficient and latest vehicle technologies
 - o Improved driving behaviour through training and education

- IRU works with the respective national associations and partners on the implementation of the Green Compact

Question

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

Answer

- A tailored approach is needed for different regions and countries.
- Battery electric vehicles can't be used in countries without adequate recharging infrastructure.
- Overly ambitious targets should be replaced with applying simple, readily available solutions such as Eco-trucks (longer and heavier vehicles whereby one can replace 3 trucks with 2).
- A 30% market penetration of Eco-trucks would lead to an annual emissions reduction of more than 700 million tons of CO₂ by 2050.

Question

Measures related to COVID-19 and other ongoing geopolitical developments have disrupted global supply chains. What have the countries in Asia and the Pacific learned from their recent and ongoing efforts to strengthen the resilience of freight transport networks?

Answer

- Commercial road transport operators in both mobility and logistics were severely impacted by COVID-19.
- Cumulative losses of freight and passenger transport operators totalled more than 2 trillion USD.
- road transport operators, 80% of which are SMEs, could barely withstand the impact, and many went out of business.

- 72% of government measures were restricting transport, and rules and restrictions, especially regarding border crossing, changed rapidly. Their uncoordinated implementation caused serious disruptions (and are still causing disruptions in both Turkmenistan and China)

What is needed:

- That countries coordinate both regionally and globally.
- Keep national and international mobility and supply chains operational, while ensuring safe working conditions for transport workers.
- Resilience is not about building roads. It is about processes and coordination, and we believe that countries in Asia Pacific need to take more action.
- As a response to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, the UN Secretary General, António Guterres, called on all governments to use “innovative tools such as UN eTIR and e-CMR systems and other tools that allow to exchange electronic information without physical contact and facilitate the flow of goods across borders.” Only Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have signed the e-CMR protocol. No other UNESCAP countries have signed the TIR Convention.

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Moderator: tbc

Other speakers: tbc

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