ESCAP’s work on sustainable transport connectivity in relation to the Belt and Road Initiative
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Unless progress is accelerated, Asia and the Pacific are on course to miss all of the 17 Goals of the UN’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Executive Secretary of the UN regional commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), told UN News at the Organization’s Headquarters on Wednesday.

18 July 2019

Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific is key for delivering, regionally and globally, on the 2030 Agenda
Connectivity and Logistics Performance in Asia and the Pacific

- The Asia Pacific, as a whole, shows a steady performance and is positioned ahead of other developing regions.

- Asia being home to the frontrunners and quantitative leaps in terms of the transport connectivity (land and maritime).

- There is high heterogeneity of the performance across the region and the persistent gap between the best and the worst performance in terms of connectivity.

- The Asia-Pacific countries with special needs, such as the landlocked developing countries and the small island developing States, are lagging behind.

- There is an unexploited potential for a more sustainable transport connectivity, through combining the competitive advantages of all modes of transport and enhancing the operational connectivity along the existing infrastructure.
Three pillars of ESCAP work on sustainable transport connectivity

Platform for intergovernmental cooperation and policy dialogue

Committee on Transport Ministerial Conference
Working Groups on AH, TAR and DP

Comprehensive capacity building programme

Operational connectivity
Transport Facilitation Models
Private Public Dialogue

Analytical work and data collection

Specialized monographs, bulletins and periodic assessments of transport connectivity in the region
Advances in transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific

Asian Highway Network
- Intergovernmental Agreement on Asian Highway network
- Entered into force in July 2005
- 30 Contracting Parties
- 143,000 kms in 32 countries
- Working Group on the Asian Highway

Trans-Asian Railway Network
- Intergovernmental Agreement on Trans-Asian Railway network
- Entered into force in June 2009
- 20 Contracting Parties
- 118,000 kms in 28 countries
- Working Group on the Trans-Asian Railway Network

Dry Ports
- Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports
- Entered into force in April 2016
- 13 Contracting Parties
- 247 dry ports in 27 countries
- Working Party on Dry Ports

Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport
Cooperation Framework for the Facilitation of International Railway Transport
Regional Framework for Development, Design, Planning and Operation of Dry Ports of International Importance
## Regional challenges to Sustainable Transport Connectivity

### Infrastructure Connectivity
- Missing links along the transport networks,
- Sub-standard quality of the networks
- Uneven capacity along the same corridors

### Operational Connectivity
- Weak regulatory frameworks
- Lack of harmonization of standards
- Lack of coordination (domestic and regional level)

### Euro-Asian Connectivity
- Obstacles to inter-regional trade
- Lack of coordination and synergies

### Countries with Special Needs
- Least Developed Countries
- Landlocked Developing Countries
- Small Island Developing Countries

### Sustainable Urban Transport
- Congestion
- Pollution and Emissions
- Affordability and accessibility

### Rural transport connectivity
- Limited connection of rural roads to wider networks
- Quality of rural infrastructure

### Road safety
- 60% of global road safety fatalities happen in Asia and the Pacific
- 2020 Road Safety targets yet to be achieved

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**Regional Action Programme on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific**

*Phase I, 2017-2021*
Advancing transport connectivity through the Asian Highway Network

Infrastructure connectivity

Operational connectivity

- Road transport permits & traffic rights
- Visas for professional drivers & crews
- Temporary importation of road vehicles
- Insurance of vehicles
- Vehicle weights & dimensions
- Vehicle registration & inspection certificates

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- Asian Highway Total Length
- Asian Highway Route Density
Towards Smart, Green and Resilient Asian Highways

Agreements on traffic rights and other issues of transport facilitation

Deployment of intelligent transport systems along the Asian Highway Network

Use of technology in border-crossing procedures and synergies between the national logistics information systems

Resilience and climate change
ESCAP’s work on sustainable transport connectivity in relation to the Belt and Road Initiative
BRI and SDGs: synergies and common features

- Long-term, multi-scale, holistic, human-centered, and transformational global undertaking;
- The five BRI pillars are crosscutting the 2030 Agenda, while the latter is in turn crosscutting the BRI pillars;
- Focused on policy coordination, investment decisions, trade negotiations, and people-to-people exchanges across countries and regions;
- Major case of South-South Cooperation.
The BRI initiative is a key development given the financial efforts needed to support the transport components of SDGs in Asia and the Pacific.

- The developing Asia-Pacific region will have to invest an **additional $126 billion in transport infrastructure annually**, accounting for 0.4 per cent of the region’s GDP.

- The majority of transport spending will be for the building and maintenance of roads but with some diversity across the region.

- The transport sector accounts for 64 per cent of the total investment needed to enhance economic infrastructure in the region.

- Most of the available evidence shows that the transport sector is the area where resource optimization holds a high, if not the highest, promise.

Note: Three indicators were used to assess transport investment needs, reflecting population numbers with access to different modes of transport including: (i) paved roads (total route km per 1,000 people); (ii) unpaved roads (total route km per 1,000 people); and (iii) rail lines (total route km per 1,000,000 people).
BRI implementation: risks and opportunities

- Political and governance risks
- Macroeconomic stability and excessive debt burden
- Climate change risks and other negative environmental impacts
- Social impacts, often in specific localities
- Risks for the most vulnerable local groups

- Focus on areas where cooperation can deliver net gains to all countries concerned and provide positive externalities on other countries
- Financial size of China and BRI countries would allow a large-scale transformation
- Access to China’s know how and development experience
- Geopolitical support in major political fora
Mobilizing BRI for the implementation of SDGs in Asia and the Pacific

- Need for **sound applied research of a pluri-disciplinary nature** (economic, health, employment, land management, climate change) maximizing returns for SDGs;

- Support and promote **evidence-based policy effort in BRI recipient countries** and ensure **protection and transition** for the most vulnerable groups and localities;

- Strengthen **international cooperation** at global, regional, and national levels, coordinated with all stakeholders, also at sub-national level, and throughout society;

- Rely on and **further develop the existing achievements** in the regional transport connectivity, taking them further in support of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.
EXAMPLE: Operationalizing Sustainable Transport Connectivity along China-Central Asia-West Asia Economic Corridor to achieve 2030 Agenda

Challenges:
• Complex legal agreements- approximately 400 bilateral and 30 subregional agreements
• Under utilization of smart technologies in transport
• Lack of information on transport assets

Objective:
• Countries can identify and implement coordinated arrangements for efficient transport connectivity along the corridor

Output:
• Develop a strategy containing assessment of key regulatory barriers to operational transport connectivity, use of smart transport technology for international transport and indicators to measure progress of connectivity

Approach:
• Data collection, research, sustainable transport indicators and regional cooperation
Thank you for your kind attention!

For any further questions: azhar.jaimurzina@un.org