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Plenary Statement
Global Sustainable Transport Conference

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Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, I wish to thank the Secretary General for convening and the Government of Turkmenistan for hosting this timely event to facilitate action for sustainable transport development.

Transport – which connects people to economic opportunities, health services, and much more – can make or break our capacity to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Efforts to harness the potential contribution of the sector to sustainable development must ensure that transport is accessible, affordable, efficient, financially sustainable, environmentally friendly, and safe.

Inadequate transport has been a key reason for the persistence of poverty and inequality in the Asia-Pacific region. Illustrating this, over 600 million people in our region still lack access to an all-season road within 2 kilometers of their dwelling.[1] Increased motorization has heightened congestion and air pollution in our region. For example, traffic congestion in Bangkok costs roughly 6 per cent of GDP annually. Globally the transport sector is responsible for 23 per cent of global CO_2 emissions, and one-fifth of these emissions are from the Asia-Pacific region.[2] Road crashes continue to be a leading cause of death in our economies, killing over 700,000 people annually.[3]

Recognizing these challenges, ESCAP supports the development of sustainable transport in our region through promoting integrated intermodal transport and logistics systems. To further enable this work, we will table a new 5-year regional action programme on sustainable transport connectivity at our upcoming Ministerial Conference on Transport, which will be hosted by the Government of the Russian Federation in December 2016.

Allow me to highlight six ways in which our regional transport connectivity action programme will support the implementation of the 2030 Development Agenda:

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[1] Work Bank Report 2015.
[2] http://www.eco-business.com/opinion/time-to-scale-up-sustainable-transport-in-asia-and-the-pacific/
[3] TD calculation from WHO report.

1. **Enhancing regional connectivity** through facilitating intra-regional investment and trade especially in least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing states and other developing countries in our region.

2. **Promoting sustainable intermodal transport corridors** to reduce the use of high emission modes of transport and thereby to significantly cut greenhouse gas emissions by optimizing resources, improving modal choice and by being safe, environmentally sound and affordable.

3. **Enhancing road safety** through support to our member States in advocacy, policy, legislation, infrastructure development and cross-border operations to help the region meet SDG 3 target of halving road fatalities by 2020.

4. **Promoting rural and inter-country connectivity** through enhanced regional transport networks in order to help connect remote and rural communities to the wider Asian Highway and Trans Asian Railway networks, thereby improving access to markets, investment, health, education and social needs.

5. **Develop tools and provide capacity building in data collection and assessment** to enable cities to better understand urban traffic challenges, to support formulation of appropriate evidence-based plans and policies, and to enable them to measure the sustainability status and progress of their transport systems.

6. **Facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogues to promote policies on new technologies and intelligent transport systems** (ITS) to help increase the efficiency, safety and effectiveness of transport systems.

ESCAP is supporting countries to develop sustainable transport as an integral part of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

I thank you.