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**Review of the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016)****Review of the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016)****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

The Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016) and the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport, were adopted by ministers and senior government officials at the second session of the Ministerial Conference on Transport, which was held in Bangkok from 12 to 16 March 2012. The present document contains highlights of the major activities implemented by the secretariat during the current biennium (2012-2013). It should be read in conjunction with information paper E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/INF/4 on activities implemented under the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016). Ministers are invited to review the activities described in the present document and share information on progress in their countries in the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development, phase II.

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### **I. Introduction**

1. The Regional Action Programme (RAP) serves as a joint medium-term (five-year) plan of activities led by ESCAP with the active participation of member and associate member States and other development partners to achieve the shared vision of a sustainable international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system for the region. Phase II of the Regional Action Plan is being implemented over the period 2012-2016. It consists of ten priority areas of work which together contribute to “the pivotal role of transport in pursuing continued economic growth and achieving sustainable and inclusive development”, as noted by the Committee on Transport at its third session, which was held in Bangkok from 10 to 12 October 2012.<sup>1</sup> These areas are the following: (a) policy guidance at the ministerial level; (b) transport infrastructure development; (c) transport facilitation; (d) transport logistics; (e) finance and private sector participation; (f) sustainable transport development; (g) road safety; (h) transport and the Millennium Development Goals; (i) inter-island shipping; and (j) connecting subregional transport networks.

2. The present document contains highlights of the major achievements and activities implemented under each thematic area of phase II of the Regional Action Programme. It should be read in conjunction with information paper E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/INF/4 on activities implemented under the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016).

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<sup>1</sup> See the report of the Committee on Transport on its third session (E/ESCAP/CTR(3)/6).

## **II. Progress made in the Regional Action Programme, phase II (2012-2016)**

### **A. Policy guidance at the ministerial level**

Immediate objective: to promote regional cooperation and policy leadership at the ministerial level for the advancement of transport as a key to regional development.

3. The Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport in Asia was established to serve as a formal, high-level regional mechanism to facilitate collaboration and address emerging transport demands of the region in a timely manner. The first session of the Forum met in 2009 with the participation of more than 150 representatives of 27 members and associate members of ESCAP and partner organizations. The current session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport will review progress made on the Regional Action Programme as well as provide guidance to the secretariat for the future direction of work.

### **B. Transport infrastructure development**

Immediate objective: to promote regional and interregional connectivity and cooperation through the further development and upgrading of the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks as well as Euro-Asian transport linkages and dry ports.

4. One of the major achievements in 2012 was the development and adoption of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports. In line with resolution 66/4 on the implementation of the Bangkok Declaration on Transport Development in Asia, over the course of 2011 and 2012, the secretariat worked with member countries and stakeholders towards the development of an intergovernmental agreement on dry ports, including through subregional consultation meetings, the Ad hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on an Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports and the Committee on Transport on its third session. After extensive negotiations, the Commission adopted the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports at its sixty-ninth session through resolution 69/7 of 1 May 2013. The resolution is entitled “Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports”.

5. The secretariat also continued to work on the promotion of the intergovernmental agreements on the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks. In 2012, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea became the latest country to become Party to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network and to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network, bringing the total number of parties to 29 and 18, respectively.

6. A series of activities were implemented to assist member countries between 2012 and 2013. Under the project entitled “Promotion of Investment in the Asian Highway Network: Prefeasibility Studies of Priority Sections”, the secretariat, with funding from the Korea Expressway Corporation, has provided technical assistance to Bangladesh, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia and Myanmar to undertake prefeasibility studies of selected priority routes and promote investment in the Asian Highway. Field visits were undertaken and country-level workshops were organized to build capacity in conducting prefeasibility and investment studies in these countries. A total of 132 officials attended the workshops, of which 32 participants were women. The outcome of the prefeasibility studies and other potential investment

opportunities in the Asian Highway network were to be presented at the Asian Highway Investment Forum, which was scheduled to be held in Bangkok on 8 and 9 October 2013.

7. The secretariat is implementing, in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Joint Project on Developing Euro-Asian Transport Linkages. As part of this collaboration, the secretariat participated in the ministerial meeting organized in conjunction with the seventy-fifth session of the ECE Inland Transport Committee. Held in Geneva from 26 to 28 February 2013, the theme of the ministerial meeting was “Making the Euro-Asian Transport Network operational”.

8. During the third session of the Committee on Transport, China, India, Kazakhstan, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, the Philippines and Viet Nam were among the delegations that reported on their country’s progress in developing new sections of the Asian Highway network to improve connectivity with their neighbours, as well developing their own national network.<sup>2</sup> Highlights of some of these developments were as follows: (a) the proposal by Turkey to include 5,247 km of highway network as part of the Eurasian Highway network, and its plan to carry out an extensive programme to enhance the standards of the current highways, including increasing the length of its dual carriageway highways; (b) installation of harmonized Asian Highway route signs in Thailand; (c) completion of road signs and equipment inventory along Asian Highway routes in Indonesia on the island of Sumatra (south Sumatra border – Jamoi – Pekanbaru – Dumai) and Java (Surabaya – Surakarta – Semarang) in 2012; and (d) a plan for a similar exercise in 2013 in the Dumai – Medan – Banda Aceh and Semarang – Cikampek – Jakarta – Merak sections of the Asian Highway in Indonesia.

9. With regard to the railways, under a project funded by the Russian Federation to promote the use of the Trans-Asian Railway network through improved commercial awareness, the secretariat conducted a survey of railway authorities to assess marketing and sales practices across the region. The results of the survey were presented at a seminar entitled “Promoting the use of the Trans-Asian Railway through improved awareness of commercial requirements”, which was held in Bangkok on 23 and 24 October 2012.

10. A follow-up project, entitled “Enhancing the operationalization of the Trans-Asian Railway — Costing, marketing and facilitation of railway services”, also supported by the Russian Federation, is currently being implemented. It entails conducting a study aimed at enhancing the operationalization of the Trans-Asian Railway. The project focuses on costing and marketing of railway services, as well as the facilitation of rail transport. The costing and marketing part of the study will include a review of the service level, marketing practices and the tariff-setting mechanism applied by concerned member countries along selected Trans-Asian Railway routes serving intra and interregional trade. The study is expected to be completed by the end of July 2014. As part of this project, the secretariat will also organize workshops for railway managers to develop their skills in costing and pricing services.

11. The secretariat also continued to support the implementation of a project that aims to promote regional and economic cooperation in North-East Asia with particular focus on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea. As part of this project, the secretariat designed a training programme for railway officials of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea on designing and manufacturing freight wagons and passenger coaches and improved

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<sup>2</sup> See E/ESCAP/CTR(3)/6, para.6.

signaling and telecommunications, which were delivered by the Railway Vocational College of Vietnam Railways over a six-week period in 2012.

12. Based on country reports, examples of some of the progress made in the development of the Trans-Asian Railway were as follows: (a) the ongoing construction of a missing link between Georgia and Turkey which, when completed in 2013, will provide Azerbaijan and Georgia with access to the Mediterranean ports of Iskenderun and Mersin; (b) the ongoing work to complete the Marmaray project in Turkey, which would rail-connect Asia and Europe across the Istanbul Strait; and (c) the plan of the Government of Thailand to build the 6-km missing link, which, when completed, would connect the rail networks of Cambodia and Thailand.

13. To complement its work in promoting dry ports, the secretariat, with financial and technical support from the Korea Maritime Institute, initiated a project on capacity-building for dry port planning using prefeasibility studies on selected dry ports in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) subregion. In 2012, national training workshops to enhance the capacity of government officials and transport planners in the development of dry ports were organized in Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar. Based on the outcome of joint research and prefeasibility studies, the secretariat organized a seminar on the development of an integrated transport and logistics system in ASEAN member countries and the Pacific subregion in Bangkok from 21 to 23 November 2012. In addition, as part of the secretariat's work to achieve the vision of an international intermodal transport and logistics system for Asia and the Pacific, the secretariat organized a seminar on the development of a comprehensive transport and logistics network in the North-East Asia subregion in Seoul on 21 and 22 March 2013.

14. The secretariat, with funding from the Russian Federation, organized a seminar for countries of North and Central Asia and East and North-East Asia on capacity-building development and operation of dry ports of international importance in Busan, Republic of Korea, on 11 and 12 June 2012. The seminar served as a networking event between government officials and experts from international institutions involved in the planning, design, development and operation of dry ports. A similar seminar for countries of South Asia and South-East Asia is planned in 2014.

15. The United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia Project Working Group on Transport and Border-Crossing (SPECA PWG-TBC) has provided valuable support for transport development in landlocked developing countries in Central Asia since its launch in 1998. To date, the Working Group has met 18 times under the leadership of Kazakhstan with assistance from the ESCAP and ECE secretariats. At the most recent session, which was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 2 and 3 May 2013, participants examined how key issues related to transport infrastructure development, transit transport and cross border movements could be better addressed. Among other things, the SPECA PWG-TBC agreed at that session to organize additional capacity-building activities later in the year to tackle specific transport challenges relevant to the region and to seek ways to increase its effectiveness, including through greater involvement of the newly established ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia.

### C. Transport facilitation

Immediate objective: to promote efficient and smooth movement of goods, passengers and vehicles by road and rail across the region, including at border crossings.

16. Under the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport, the secretariat has supported member States and their development partners in undertaking projects aimed at facilitating international land transport. In this regard, the secretariat, with funding support from the Russian Federation, established the Regional Network of Legal and Technical Experts on Transport Facilitation in 2012. The aim of the Regional Network is to assist member States to upgrade the professional level of their officials and experts involved in transport facilitation. As of June 2013, the secretariat has received more than 80 applications from legal and technical experts willing to join the Regional Network. A series of studies on major subregional agreements was launched in 2013 under the auspices of the Regional Network. The secretariat will bring together the members of the Regional Network for its first meeting in December 2013. It has also launched a webpage, on the Regional Strategic Framework, which is available from [www.unescap.org/ttdw/common/TFS/RSF/RSF.asp](http://www.unescap.org/ttdw/common/TFS/RSF/RSF.asp). The webpage contains answers to frequently asked questions about the Regional Strategic Framework.

17. As one of the key modalities under the Regional Strategic Framework, the secretariat has developed four mutually complementary models for facilitation of cross-border and transit transport along a corridor or among a group of countries, namely, the Secure Cross-border Transport Model, the Efficient Cross-border Transport Models, Model on Integrated Controls at Border Crossings and upgraded Time/Cost-Distance Methodology. In cooperation with the CAREC Institute and the Governments concerned, the secretariat organized two national workshops on possible application of the facilitation models in Beijing on 22 November 2012 and in Astana on 28 February 2013.

18. The secretariat, in cooperation with the Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies, organized the Policy Dialogue on Strengthening Transport Connectivity among South and South-West Asian Countries in Dhaka on 26 and 27 June 2013. At the meeting, a proposal was made to apply the four transport facilitation models together with the Regional Strategic Framework to the formulation of a subregional master plan for enhancing transport connectivity.

19. As part of the Enhancing the operationalization of the Trans-Asian Railway–Costing, marketing and facilitation of railway services project, referred in section B on transport infrastructure development, the secretariat, with funding from the Russian Federation, is preparing a study on the facilitation of international railway transport, including legal, institutional and technical issues, to improve the capacity of railway authorities, railway operators and border control authorities to formulate policies and plans for the facilitation of international railway transport. Based on the findings of the study and the recommendations of a regional meeting, tentatively scheduled to be held in 2014, the secretariat plans to develop a regional strategy/framework for the facilitation of international railway transport.

20. In order to promote another key modality in the Regional Strategic Framework, national coordination for transport facilitation, the secretariat, in cooperation with relevant Governments, organized national workshops on

establishing/strengthening trade and transport facilitation coordination mechanisms in Vientiane on 26 September 2012 and in Tbilisi on 7 March 2013, and provided advisory services for the two countries.

21. Under a project aimed at improving the efficiency of control authorities and transport operators of cross-border transport in landlocked and transit developing countries, the secretariat, in cooperation with the United Nations Conference of Trade and Development (UNCTAD), developed the Cross-Border and Transit Transport Process Management Toolkit (CT-TPM). National training workshops on the application of the toolkit and follow-up activities on transport-related clusters at the national level and on specific corridors were held in Astana on 27 February 2013, in Bishkek on 18 and 19 December 2012 and in Dushanbe on 11 and 12 December 2012. The practical application of the toolkit is being undertaken in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan with a view to further elaborate cluster action plans at both national and inter-country levels.

22. To promote the use of regional transport networks and efficient cross-border and transit movement in the region, the secretariat continued to provide technical support for the formulation of the Agreement between the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Member States on the Facilitation of International Road Transport. In cooperation with the SCO secretariat, the secretariat organized the negotiating meeting on the agreement, which was held in Beijing from 26 May to 1 June 2012, and helped SCO member States reach consensus on the provisions of the agreement and its annexes. The SCO member States are planning to sign the agreement in Tashkent in November 2013.

23. The secretariat organized a seminar on cross-border transport among China, Mongolia and the Russian Federation in Bangkok on 23 and 24 April 2013 to promote experience sharing and facilitate a discussion on the use of the Asian Highway routes for transport. The participants of the seminar recognized that the formulation of a trilateral legal instrument on transit transport by road that focuses on one particular route of the Asian Highway would help accelerate the realization of transit transport by road among the three countries. They were also of the view that such a pilot route would, in turn, promote the development of the potential for the transit of freight in the three countries.

#### **D. Transport logistics**

Immediate objective: to assist countries in developing transport logistics policies and in enhancing the professionalism and competence of logistics service providers.

24. The secretariat organized the annual Regional Forum of Freight Forwarders, Multimodal Transport Operators and Logistics Service Providers, and the Meeting of Chief Executives of National Associations of Freight Forwarders, Multimodal Transport Operators and Logistics Service Providers in Negombo, Sri Lanka, on 6 June 2013 and 7 June 2013, respectively.

25. In conjunction with these meetings, the secretariat also organized the Workshop on Regional Study on Regulatory Frameworks for Logistics Service Providers on 7 June 2013. At the workshop, the initial findings of an ESCAP regional study on logistics policy and minimum standards for logistics service providers were discussed. The secretariat is developing a guide to the key issues in the development of logistics policy.

26. With funding support from China, the secretariat also organized, in cooperation with the China Ministry of Transport, the Regional Seminar on Development of Efficient and Effective Logistics Systems in Hangzhou, China, on 7 and 8 May 2013. At the seminar, which focused on the innovative use of technology and international cooperation to promote efficiency and reduce cost in the logistics industry, it was recommended that the secretariat support efforts to enhance regional cooperation and logistics performance through the promotion of best practices in developing logistics information systems. Taking into account the discussions from the seminar, the secretariat is currently undertaking a study on integrated logistics information systems.

## **E. Finance and private sector participation**

Immediate objective: to promote regional cooperation between the public and private sectors for financing and maintaining infrastructure.

27. The secretariat organized the High-level Expert Group Meeting on Infrastructure Public-Private Partnerships for Sustainable Development in Tehran on 11 and 12 November 2012. The meeting was held in conjunction with the third Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Public-Private Partnership for Infrastructure Development, which was hosted by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran. These meetings reaffirmed the commitment of Governments to increasing the role of the private sector in sustainable infrastructure development and agreed on a number of areas for further cooperation. The Commission in its resolution 69/6 on the implementation of the Tehran Declaration to promote public-private partnerships in infrastructure development in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development noted with appreciation the Declaration as the successful outcome of the Ministerial Conference and welcomed this Declaration.

28. The secretariat also organized a regional expert group meeting on road maintenance in Hanoi from 29 to 31 May 2013, which was jointly hosted by the World Bank office in Viet Nam and the Government of Viet Nam. Country experts, policymakers, international experts and representatives of the donor community participated in this event. The meeting reviewed such issues as the successful value-for-money systems in asset management and road maintenance in the Asia-Pacific region, and suggested possible areas relating to road maintenance that would benefit from further regional cooperation.

## **F. Road safety**

Immediate objective: to assist countries in the region in meeting their commitments under the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-2020).

29. In support of the Decade of Action for Road Safety, 2011-2020, which was proclaimed by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/255 on improving global road safety, as well as in support of Commission resolution 66/6 on improving road safety in Asia and the Pacific, the secretariat organized the Expert Group Meeting on Progress in Road Safety Improvement in Asia and the Pacific in Seoul on 8 and 9 May 2013. The theme of the meeting was vulnerable road users, which was in line with the theme of the second Global Road Safety Week. The meeting, organized in collaboration with the Korea Transportation Safety Authority, focused on issues and challenges related to road safety of vulnerable road users, and reviewed progress in improving the road safety situation in Asia and the

Pacific. The meeting adopted a joint statement on improving road safety in Asia and the Pacific.<sup>3</sup>

30. The secretariat has been organizing national workshops and furnishing advisory services to assist member countries in developing road safety strategies and in setting or refining national road safety goals and targets that are in line with the objectives of the Decade of Action for Road Safety. In this regard, a national road safety workshop was organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Transport, Sri Lanka in Colombo on 13 and 14 February 2013.

## **G. Sustainable transport development**

Immediate objective: to increase awareness and understanding of alternative freight transport policy options that can reduce energy consumption and emissions.

31. In line with the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, the secretariat has stepped up its activities in sustainable transport development and begun to actively participate in the global debate on the development agenda beyond 2015. To assist Governments in analysing the implications of different policy options and select optimal strategies for meeting carbon dioxide reduction targets for sustainable transport, the secretariat, together with ECE, has been implementing a three-year project entitled “Development and implementation of a monitoring and assessment tool for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in inland transport to facilitate climate change mitigation”. The aim of the project is to develop a monitoring and assessment tool for carbon dioxide emissions in inland transport. As part of the project, a global status report on inland transport carbon dioxide emissions was prepared and the development of an inland transport (road, rail and inland waterways) emission measurement model called For Future Inland Transport Systems (ForFITS)<sup>4</sup> was completed. The model is a useful planning tool for sustainable transport policies. In 2013, the secretariat plans to pilot ForFITS in each region and organize awareness-raising and capacity-building workshops related to the tool.

32. With funding support from the Government of the Republic of Korea, the secretariat is undertaking a study on policy options for sustainable transport development jointly with the Korea Transport Institute and Korea Maritime Institute. The study will contain a review of three broad themes, namely general transport policies, urban transport and port and maritime transport. A policy-level regional expert group meeting to disseminate the findings of the study is tentatively scheduled to be held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, in the second half of November 2013.

33. As noted in section E on finance and private sector participation, the secretariat, together with the Government of Viet Nam and the World Bank office in Viet Nam, organized a regional expert group meeting on road maintenance in Hanoi in May 2013. In addition to considering ways to finance road maintenance, the meeting also discussed the contribution of roads, particularly rural roads, to sustainable development and poverty reduction, as well as the importance of maintaining these roads in order to expand their lifespan.

<sup>3</sup> E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/5, annex.

<sup>4</sup> The model is available for download from [www.unece.org/trans/theme\\_forfits.html](http://www.unece.org/trans/theme_forfits.html).

## H. Transport and the Millennium Development Goals

Immediate objective: to encourage the inclusion of Millennium Development Goals considerations in the planning and implementation of regional transport interventions.

34. Transport infrastructure and services play an important role in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, as they provide physical access to domestic and international markets, jobs and social services. Under the Development Account project entitled “Strengthening capacities in countries with special needs on designing and implementing economic and social development policies to accelerate progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals”, the secretariat is planning to conduct a number of case studies in late 2013/early 2014 on farm-to-market logistics and access to social services. Countries targeted under the project are those with special needs, particularly the ones that are “off-track” and most likely will not meet the Millennium Development Goals targets by 2015.

35. The secretariat, jointly with ECE and the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and in collaboration with the Government of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, organized the Euro-Asian Final Regional Review of the Almaty Programme of Action from 5 to 7 March 2013 in Vientiane. In the area of transport, two discussions papers entitled “Bridging Infrastructure Gaps” and “Harmonization and Strengthening of the Regulatory and Legal Framework Pertaining to International Transport and Transit” were prepared for the Conference. These papers along with other documents and background materials served as the basis for drafting the Vientiane Consensus, which was issued by the Conference.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, the Commission in its resolution 69/2 requested countries of Asia and the Pacific to endorse the Vientiane Consensus and requested the Executive Secretary to assist Asia-Pacific landlocked developing countries in forwarding the Vientiane Consensus as the Asia-Pacific regional input to the final global review of the Almaty Programme of Action, to be held in 2014 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/214.

## I. Inter-island shipping

Immediate objective: to assist in identifying possible approaches to enhancing the regularity, reliability and affordability of the shipping services of archipelagic and island developing countries.

36. Inter-island shipping has been included in the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016) as one of the 10 thematic areas owing to the vital importance of the provision of an efficient, reliable and affordable shipping services for the Pacific and archipelagic countries. The secretariat held a seminar in Bangkok in November 2012 to discuss and identify policy measures to address a number of constraints and challenges facing inter-island shipping in the Pacific subregion. Some recommendations such as the application of a “hub and spoke” model were discussed.

37. Following the seminar, the secretariat, in collaboration with the International Maritime Organization, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, organized the High-level Meeting on Strengthening Inter-island Shipping and Logistics in the Pacific

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<sup>5</sup> E/ESCAP/69/1, annex.

Island Countries in Suva from 23 to 25 July 2013. The participants of the meeting included 33 delegates from 18 Pacific countries and 42 representatives of 19 specialized agencies and related organizations, intergovernmental organizations and other entities. The meeting adopted the Suva Declaration on Improving Maritime Transport and Related Services in the Pacific.<sup>6</sup>

#### **J. Connecting subregional transport networks**

Immediate objective: to identify physical and non-physical constraints to inter-subregional connectivity and to provide a platform for building closer collaboration among subregional entities in the development of transport.

38. The secretariat is conducting a series of comparative analysis of the agreements related to transport facilitation in different subregions. The study will be presented at a seminar on legal aspects of inter-subregional connectivity, which will be held in Bangkok on 11 December 2013.

### **III. Issues for consideration**

39. Delegations are invited to review the activities described in the current document and inform the Forum of the progress, at the national and regional levels, in the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development, phase II.

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<sup>6</sup> See E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/6.