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Item 3(c) of the provisional agenda\*

**Review of issues pertinent to the subsidiary structure of the  
Commission, including the work of the regional institutions:  
Transport****Report of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport on its  
second session***Summary*

The second session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport was held in Bangkok. It consisted of two segments: the senior officials segment (4-6 November 2013); and the ministerial segment (7-8 November 2013). The Forum was attended by 168 representatives, including 22 ministerial-level officials from 26 members of the Commission and 1 non-member, as well as representatives of United Nations and other international organizations, non-governmental organizations, and private sector associations from Asia and the Pacific.

The Forum reviewed the progress achieved in the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016), and deliberated on the emerging issues affecting the development of transport in the region. It highlighted the role of transport and culminated in the adoption of the Ministerial Declaration on Transport as a Key to Sustainable Development and Regional Integration, which contains a broad framework for the future direction of the secretariat's work, especially in terms of continuing to implement the Regional Action Programme, phase II, and promoting the use of the three intergovernmental agreements (namely, those on the Asian Highway Network, the Trans-Asian Railway Network and Dry Ports) in planning and upgrading regional transport networks.

The Forum featured a major milestone in the development of transport in the region when the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports was opened for signature. It was signed by the following countries: Armenia; Cambodia; China; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Lao People's Democratic Republic; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Tajikistan; Thailand; and Viet Nam. In addition, Thailand became the first country to ratify it. The Forum also successfully served as a platform for key transport organizations to present their work and share the latest innovations in sustainable transport during the special sessions and exhibition.

The Commission may wish to review and endorse the Ministerial Declaration and provide the secretariat with future guidance on its implementation and on any other matters contained in the report of the second session of the Forum.

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\* E/ESCAP/70/L.1/Rev.1.

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## **I. Matters calling for action by the Commission or brought to its attention**

### **A. Ministerial Declaration on Transport as a Key to Sustainable Development and Regional Integration**

The Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport recommends to the Commission the endorsement of the following outcome adopted at its second session.

*We, the Ministers of Transport and representatives of the members and associate members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific attending the second session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport, held in Bangkok from 4 to 8 November 2013,*

*Recognizing the important role of safe, efficient, clean, reliable and affordable transport systems in supporting sustainable economic growth,*

improving social welfare of people and enhancing regional integration in Asia and the Pacific,

*Reaffirming* our commitment to the implementation of 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,<sup>1</sup>

*Recalling* the outcome document, entitled “The future we want”,<sup>2</sup> of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, in which the Conference noted that transport and mobility are central to sustainable development,

*Convinced* of the importance of efficient movement of people and goods, and access to environmentally sound, safe and affordable transportation as a means to improve social equity, health, the resilience of cities, urban-rural linkages and the productivity of rural areas,

*Emphasizing* the importance of addressing physical and non-physical barriers to using and developing the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks in respective member countries,

*Recalling* General Assembly resolution 64/255 of 2 March 2010 on improving global road safety, in which the Assembly proclaimed the period 2011-2020 as the Decade of Action for Road Safety, and resolution 66/260 of 19 April 2012 on improving road safety, in which it encouraged Member States that had not yet done so to develop national plans in line with the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020,

*Welcoming* the adoption of the Joint Statement on Improving Road Safety in Asia and the Pacific at the Expert Group Meeting on Progress in Road Safety Improvement in Asia and the Pacific, held in Seoul from 8 to 10 May 2013, which recognized the importance of road safety as a sustainable development issue,<sup>3</sup>

*Recalling* Commission resolution 68/10 of 23 May 2012 on enhancing regional economic integration in Asia and the Pacific, in which the Commission emphasized that regional economic integration could play a critical role in driving the Asian and Pacific region’s march to an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future,

*Stressing* that the special development needs of least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States need to be taken into account while establishing sustainable transport systems,

*Recalling* Commission resolution 69/6 of 1 May 2013 on the implementation of the Tehran Declaration to promote public-private partnerships in infrastructure development in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development, in which the Commission welcomed the Tehran Declaration on Public-Private Partnerships on Infrastructure Development in Asia and the Pacific as the successful outcome of the Third Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Public-Private Partnerships for Infrastructure Development,

<sup>1</sup> See E/ESCAP/68/9, chap. I.

<sup>2</sup> General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

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

*Welcoming* the adoption of the Suva Declaration on Improving Maritime Transport and Related Services in the Pacific at the High-level Meeting on Strengthening Inter-island Shipping and Logistics in the Pacific Countries, held in Suva from 23 to 25 July 2013,<sup>4</sup>

*Encouraged* by the successful regional cooperation that led to the formalization of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports,<sup>5</sup> which will facilitate the development of more sustainable and inclusive transport systems by integrating modes of transport, facilitating border-crossing and transit transport, promoting the use of energy-efficient and lower-emission means of transport and creating new development opportunities in inland areas,

1. *Resolve* to develop and implement transport policies and strategies at the national and regional levels that will support sustainable development and regional integration by:

(a) Promoting an integrated approach to transport planning and policymaking, taking into account economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development;

(b) Strengthening regional cooperation to develop and operationalize regional and interregional transport infrastructure;

(c) Enhancing transport access to inland rural and remote areas, particularly those in landlocked developing countries and small island developing States;

(d) Continuing to place road safety high on the sustainable development agenda;

2. *Invite* member States to take into account sustainable transport in the discussion of the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015;

3. *Encourage* member States that have not yet done so to consider signing the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports<sup>5</sup> and thereafter accede to, ratify, accept or approve the Agreement with a view to ensuring its early entry into force;

4. *Request* the Executive Secretary to continue to accord priority to the implementation of the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016),<sup>6</sup> especially to assist regional members and associate members in their efforts:

(a) To develop and operationalize the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks and dry ports of international importance;

(b) To take measures to facilitate cross-border and transit transport along regional and interregional transport networks;

(c) To strengthen inter-island shipping in archipelagic and island countries through the implementation of the Suva Declaration on Improving Maritime Transport and Related Services in the Pacific;<sup>4</sup>

(d) To develop and implement sustainable transport policies and strategies, in particular to promote energy efficient multi-modal transport, to develop integrated urban public transport systems, including promotion of non-motorized mobility, and to improve transport access to rural and remote areas;

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<sup>4</sup> See E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/6.

<sup>5</sup> Commission resolution 69/7, annex.

<sup>6</sup> Commission resolution 68/4, appendix I.

(e) To continue to improve road safety, including through the implementation of the Joint Statement on Improving Road Safety in Asia and the Pacific,<sup>3</sup> in which the needs of vulnerable road users were highlighted in particular;

5. *Also request* the Executive Secretary to continue:

(a) To ensure effective coordination with other United Nations and specialized multilateral agencies as well as relevant subregional organizations;

(b) To collaborate with international and regional financing institutions, multilateral and bilateral donors, the private sector, and international organizations to mobilize financial and technical support for sustainable and inclusive transport development in Asia and the Pacific.

## **B. Recommendations**

1. The Forum expresses its appreciation for the various activities conducted by the secretariat and requests that the secretariat continue to support members and associate members in their efforts to further implement the Regional Action Programme, phase II.

2. The Forum requests that the secretariat continue to promote the intergovernmental agreements on the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks and the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports, which form the basis for an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system in the region.

3. The Forum requests that the secretariat continue its assistance in building national capacity pertaining to various aspects of transport facilitation and logistics.

4. Recognizing the key role of information and communications technology (ICT) in the development of efficient logistics systems, the Forum requests that the secretariat enhance its research in that area, including the study on logistics information systems recommended by the Regional Seminar on Development of Efficient and Effective Logistics Systems, held in Hangzhou, China, in May 2013, and that it assist in building regional and subregional capacity towards the achievement of coordinated logistics service systems in the region through effective application of ICT.

5. Recognizing that urban and rural transport are among the key elements of sustainable transport, the Forum invites the secretariat to do more work in promoting and sharing knowledge in these areas.

6. The Forum requests that the secretariat continue its work on the implementation of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020.

## **II. Proceedings**

### **A. 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) (agenda item 2)**

1. The meeting had before it the document entitled “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)” (E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/1). The document was accompanied by an information paper entitled “Activities implemented under the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase II (2012-2016)” (E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/INF/4).

2. Statements were made by the representatives of the following countries: Armenia; Bangladesh; China; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Mongolia; Russian Federation; and Turkey. The representatives of the Asian Institute of Transport Development (AITD) and the International Road Transport Union (IRU) also made statements.

3. The Forum noted with satisfaction progress in the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme, phase II (2012-2016). It expressed its appreciation for the various activities conducted by the secretariat.

4. The Forum noted the commitment of countries to the implementation of the Regional Action Programme, phase II. Several delegations also expressed their continued support to the secretariat for organizing activities under the Regional Action Programme, phase II.

5. The Forum appreciated the secretariat’s effort to establish an integrated regional transport network, in particular by providing member States with policy options for the development of transport infrastructure in the region.

6. The Forum welcomed the participation of the secretariat in the Inland Transport Committee and Ministerial Meeting on Euro-Asian Transport Links, which had been organized by the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) in Geneva on 26 February 2013, and noted that the Joint Statement on Future Development of Euro-Asian Transport Links would make an important contribution to the development of Euro-Asian transport linkages.

7. The Forum took note of the outcomes of the Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing and commended the secretariats of ESCAP and ECE for their support of its activities. It expressed its desire that the ESCAP Subregional Office for North and Central Asia continue to play an important role in that area of work.

8. The Forum expressed its interest in the exploration of the legal aspects of inter-subregional connectivity. In that regard, it expressed the hope that a seminar on that topic planned to be held in Bangkok in December 2013 could become a starting point for further work by the Commission.

9. The Forum noted the priorities accorded by China on strengthening transport facilitation and logistics with its neighbouring countries, in particular through cooperation under the frameworks of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) and North-east Asian transport and logistics cooperation, including the Northeast Asia Logistics Information Service Network (NEAL-NET).

10. The representatives of AITD and IRU expressed the full support of their organizations in the implementation of the Regional Action Programme and noted that many of the objectives of it were aligned with their own.

## **B. Major issues in transport (agenda item 3)**

### **1. Strengthening connectivity of regional and interregional transport networks**

11. The meeting had before it the documents entitled “Strengthening connectivity of regional and interregional transport networks” (E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/2) and “Outcome of the High-level Meeting on Strengthening Inter-island Shipping and Logistics in the Pacific Island Countries” (E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/6).

12. Statements were made by the representatives of the following countries: Armenia; Bangladesh; China; India; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Malaysia; Myanmar; Nepal; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Turkey; and Thailand. The representatives of AITD and IRU also made statements.

13. The Forum noted with satisfaction that many countries had taken initiatives to enhance connectivity with their neighbouring countries with a view to enhancing transport connectivity across the region. In addition to various bilateral initiatives between neighbouring countries, several countries were also using subregional cooperation frameworks, such as those of the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Aeyawady-Chaophraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation, the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Forum for Regional Cooperation, the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, GMS, the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and the Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia, as foundations for the development of regional transport networks and enhancing transport connectivity in the region.

14. The Forum reaffirmed the importance of regional connectivity and recognized the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports<sup>7</sup> as a useful tool towards that goal. The Forum also recognized that the Agreement would facilitate the integration of the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks and be a positive step towards the realization of an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system for the region. It also noted that the Agreement had the potential to be a vehicle for improved logistics in the region.

15. The Forum observed that connectivity was of particular importance for landlocked countries and noted that transit countries were increasingly developing their transport infrastructure with a view to offering transit opportunities to their neighbours. It also noted the transit potential of Bangladesh, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Myanmar along the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway corridors.

16. The Forum was apprised of a number of ongoing projects. In that regard, it noted the implementation by Turkey of a number of projects that were aimed at establishing connectivity with neighbouring countries and regions. It noted with interest the completion and recent inauguration of the Marmaray Project linking Asia and Europe by rail. It also noted the technical assistance offered by the Government of India to Bhutan, Myanmar and Nepal to develop intercountry connectivity. It further noted the completion of the feasibility study for the railway project “Armenian Southern Railway”, which would connect the existing railway network with the southern border of Armenia.

<sup>7</sup> Commission resolution 69/7.

17. Many delegations provided details of road infrastructure development in their respective countries. In that respect, the Forum noted the Asian Highway development initiatives of Armenia, Bangladesh, China, India, Islamic Republic of Iran, Mongolia, Nepal, Myanmar and Turkey, including progress in upgrading the Asian Highway and other national highways and road links to neighbouring countries.

18. In the area of capacity-building, the Forum noted that AITD had organized three training workshops for railway managers of the region on the operationalization of the Trans-Asian Railway and more recently a two-week training programme for railway personnel of South and South-East Asia on the planning, design, development and operation of dry ports. The representative of AITD highlighted the need for practical training for railway managers on the costing and pricing of transport services and expressed the institute's willingness to collaborate with ESCAP on that.

19. The Forum also noted that the Model Highway Initiative of IRU would facilitate international road transport, as well as improve road safety in the region. The representative of IRU informed the Forum that the organization had recently organized two high-level conferences on transport and transit in Central Asia, jointly with the Governments of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

20. The Forum was informed that the Suva Declaration on Improving Maritime and Related Services in the Pacific was adopted at the High-level Meeting on Strengthening Inter-island Shipping and Logistics in the Pacific Island Countries, which was held in Suva from 23 to 25 July 2013. It noted that the implementation of the Suva Declaration would enhance connectivity for archipelagic and small island developing States and territories.

## **2. Creating an enabling environment for facilitating international transport and logistics**

21. The meeting had before it the document entitled "Creating an enabling environment for facilitating international transport and logistics" (E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/3).

22. Statements were made by the representatives of the following countries: Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Japan; Nepal; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Turkey; and Viet Nam. The representatives of AITD and IRU also made statements.

23. The Forum emphasized the importance of effective transport facilitation for member countries to be integrated with regional and global markets, increase their competitiveness, attract foreign direct investment and tourists, and enhance regional cooperation in development of transport sector.

24. The Forum noted the existence of non-physical barriers impeding international road transport, including complicated border-crossing formalities and procedures, duplication of inspections, restrictive road transport permits, lack of coordination among border agencies behind and across the border and high transit charges.

25. The Forum also noted the measures put in place by countries to remove non-physical barriers, such as electronic pre-declaration of goods, use of satellite positioning system for vehicles, development of combined transport, construction of integrated check posts at border crossings, deployment of information technology-based traffic information systems,



joint customs checkpoints, modernization of border crossings using public private partnership schemes, accession to international transport facilitation conventions and entering into bilateral and subregional agreements.

26. The Forum further noted the efforts made by the member countries of the Customs Union and the Common Economic Space of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russian Federation for the establishment of the Eurasian Union, under which the coordinated transport policy could be implemented to contribute to the development of regional transport connectivity.

27. The Forum reaffirmed the substantive contribution of the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport in addressing the challenges to the development of international road transport in the region.

28. The Forum welcomed the transport facilitation models developed by the secretariat to address the operational challenges to international land transport. The delegation of Bhutan requested the secretariat to organize workshops/seminars to enhance understanding of potential benefits and costs of their implementation for the stakeholders.

29. The Forum stressed the importance of harmonization of legal regimes for international road and rail transport, in particular through accession to the conventions recommended by the Commission in its resolution 48/11 on road and rail transport modes in relation to facilitation measures.

30. The Forum noted the importance of building an effective legal regime for international railway transport and expressed its appreciation to the secretariat for preparing a comprehensive study on railway facilitation. It supported a plan to develop the regional framework for the facilitation of international railway transport.

31. The Forum expressed its appreciation to the secretariat for the technical and financial support it provided in the formulation of the Intergovernmental Agreement of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Member States on Facilitation of International Road Transport, and noted with satisfaction the expected signing of the agreement in November 2013.

32. The Forum noted the outcome of the Seminar on Cross-border Transport among China, Mongolia and Russian Federation, which was held in Bangkok on 23 and 24 April 2013, and supported the recommendation of the Seminar to negotiate a trilateral legal instrument on transit transport by road with a focus on the AH4 route among the three countries.

33. The Forum recognized the importance of the development of a sustainable accredited training system for freight forwarders, multimodal transport operators and logistics service providers in the region, and encouraged the secretariat to cooperate with the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA) in the implementation of such system.

34. The Forum noted the continuing efforts to promote efficient international intermodal transport under the framework of the China-Japan-Republic of Korea Ministerial Conference on Transport and Logistics, including the sea-land intermodal transport system between China and the Republic of Korea, and a pilot project on mutual access of vehicles carried by ships to each other's roads between Japan and the Republic of Korea. In that regard, the Forum noted the offer of the Republic of Korea to share experience and knowledge in that area with other member countries.

35. The Forum noted the adoption of a national logistics policy of Japan in June 2013, which included the expansion of the logistics functions of airports and ports in Japan, development of roll-on/roll-off services, standardization of pallet systems and human resources development, especially for the ASEAN region. The Forum also noted the willingness of Japan to share their experience and technologies with other member countries to develop efficient logistics systems.

36. The representative of IRU expressed its organization's gratitude to the Commission for the adoption of the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport and welcomed the planned signing of the Intergovernmental Agreement of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Member States on Facilitation of International Road Transport. The representative stressed the need to accede to multilateral legal instruments as recommended by the Commission in its resolution 48/11 and informed the Forum of a planned study on permit systems used in international road transport.

37. The representative of AITD commended the secretariat for the information contained in E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/3 on the latest developments in the use of new technologies in creating an enabling environment for transport facilitation and on harmonization of technical, operational, legal, regulatory and commercial frameworks for hassle-free transportation of goods across the borders.

### **3. Innovative financing options for regional infrastructure development and maintenance**

38. The meeting had before it the document entitled "Innovative financing options for regional infrastructure development and maintenance" (E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/4).

39. Statements were made by the representatives of the following countries: Bangladesh; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Nepal; Russian Federation; Tajikistan; and Thailand. The representatives of AITD and IRU also made statements.

40. The Forum recognized the work of the secretariat in identifying options for funding transport development and in particular, the work on public-private partnerships (PPPs). The Forum noted that the considerable transport investment needs of the region require alternative sources and methodologies for funding. In that respect, the Forum supported Commission 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 and encouraged the secretariat to continue to promote knowledge-sharing and capacity-building activities in that area. The representative of Nepal requested the secretariat to provide the Government of Nepal with assistance in developing institutional frameworks and building capacity in order to help the country attract more private investment in transport projects.

41. The Forum noted that a significant number of projects have already been implemented in the region through the PPP modality and that many countries had taken measures to improve their investment conditions to attract private resources, for instance, through the development of a conducive legal framework.

42. The Forum noted that attracting private sector to finance and share risk in developing transport infrastructure remained challenging and further noted that countries could learn by sharing their experiences with projects implemented through PPPs or by exchanging data on projects in the region. In that respect, IRU also offered to share information on the Model Highway Initiative, which considered PPPs as an implementation mechanism.

43. The Forum also noted the effort made by countries to use road user fees, fuel levies and registration fees to finance the necessary investments to preserve and maintain existing assets. The representative of AITD mentioned, in that respect, that the maintenance budget was usually the first one to be reduced if savings were sought, and therefore, finding innovative finance mechanisms for ensuring adequate maintenance funding was critical.

44. The Forum noted that regional infrastructure funds were particularly relevant for developing cross-border infrastructure and that there was a need to activate some existing instruments for transport infrastructure development.

#### **4. Promoting sustainable and inclusive transport**

45. The meeting had before it the document entitled “Promoting sustainable and inclusive transport” (E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/5).

46. Statements were made by the representatives of the following countries: Bhutan; China; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Malaysia; Nepal; Russian Federation; and Thailand. Representatives of AITD and the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD) also made statements.

47. The Forum emphasized the need for collaboration among United Nations and other development agencies to develop a sustainable transport agenda. The Forum took note of the successful collaboration among the regional commissions to develop the For Future Inland Transport Systems (ForFITS) model in order to measure inland transport emissions. It also noted the model’s application in evaluating sustainable transport policy options.

48. The Forum noted the initiatives of member States to develop national master plans that incorporated sustainable transport policies, such as the promotion of higher speed trains and other fuel-efficient modes. The Forum took note of the plan of the Government of Nepal to develop an environmentally sustainable transport strategy covering the period 2015-2040, with the assistance of UNCRD, and the request of the delegation of Nepal for support from the secretariat in that regard.

49. The Forum noted various national policy measures being implemented by member States to improve quality, accessibility, and efficiency of urban public transportation systems through the development and improvement of mass public transportation systems, such as heavy rail, bus rapid transit, light rapid transit, tram and urban railways, and construction of integrated transport terminals, and the use of ICT for intelligent transport systems (ITS).

50. The Forum emphasized the need to improve the quality of transport systems in Asia and the Pacific in order to be able to provide safe, environmentally friendly and convenient transport to the society. It noted the importance of addressing the mobility needs of the elderly population and disadvantaged persons. In that regard, the Forum welcomed the offer made by Japan to share its experience in that area.

51. The Forum noted the need to promote modal shift to rail and increase the efficiency of railways. In that regard, it took note of initiatives of the Government of India to develop two dedicated rail freight corridors, which would improve the sustainability of freight transport.

52. The Forum noted various policies being taken for maintenance of transport infrastructure. One delegation called on member States to allocate sufficient resources to ensure sustainable funding for maintenance.

53. The Forum stressed that the issues related to connectivity, integration of transport, transport facilitation, and logistics, should be seen as high priorities in programmes and projects on sustainable and inclusive transport development.

54. Highlighting the importance of having energy efficient freight transportation systems in line with goal 12 of the Bangkok Declaration for 2020 — Sustainable Transport Goals for 2010-2020,<sup>8</sup> the Forum noted the concept of a voluntary regional agreement on green freight initiatives discussed at the seventh Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport Forum, which had been held in Bali, Indonesia, from 23 to 25 April 2013, and the need to pursue it further through interagency collaboration among ASEAN, ESCAP, SAARC, the South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme, and UNCRD.

55. The Forum stressed the importance of rural roads for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly as half of the world's population still lived in rural areas. Some delegates updated the meeting on the expansion of road networks in rural as well as public transport connectivity and the provision of transport services. In that regard, the Forum noted the potential role of non-governmental organizations and the private sector to improve the maintenance of rural roads and welcomed further exchange of information on the topic.

56. The Forum stressed the need to improve road safety, and noted that many countries had initiated actions to improve road safety, including defining goals and targets, developing road safety national plans and strategies, incorporating safety audits in road design and construction, placing appropriate road signs and implementing educational and awareness programmes. In that regard, several delegations informed the Forum of the successful reduction of fatalities and improving road safety through implementation of road safety intervention measures.

57. The Forum noted that the application of ITS and high-quality transport systems could reduce road crashes.

58. The Forum welcomed the Joint Statement on Improving Road Safety in Asia and the Pacific, adopted by the regional Expert Group Meeting on Progress in Road Safety Improvement in Asia and the Pacific, which was held in Seoul from 8 to 10 May 2013 during the Second UN Global Road Safety Week.

59. The Forum expressed its appreciation of the secretariat's work on the implementation of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020.

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<sup>8</sup> E/CN.17/2011/18, annex, attachment.

60. The representative of the Russian Federation informed the Forum of his government's intention to submit a draft resolution on road safety for the consideration of the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session.

**C. Draft ministerial declaration** (agenda item 4)

61. The senior officials had before them the draft ministerial declaration on transport as a key to sustainable development and regional integration (E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/WP.1).

62. After some deliberations, the senior officials recommended that the draft ministerial declaration be submitted for consideration and adoption by the ministers.

**D. Adoption of the report of the senior officials** (agenda item 6)

63. The senior officials adopted the draft report covering agenda items 1 to 6 on 6 November 2013 (E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/CRP.1).

**E. Policy debate on “transport as a key to sustainable development and regional integration”** (agenda item 7)

64. The Forum recognized the important role of transport connectivity as a tool for regional integration, economic growth and sustainable development and noted with satisfaction the increased level of participation of member States in international forums at which related issues were discussed. In that respect, it noted that putting in place the infrastructure needed to enhance transport connectivity posed particular challenges for landlocked countries which needed to be addressed.

65. Recognizing the benefits of intercountry connectivity, a number of member States had been implementing projects to enhance infrastructure along the routes of the Trans-Asian Railway and Asian Highway networks to neighbouring countries. In that regard, the Forum acknowledged that the Regional Action Programme, phase II (2012-2016), which had been adopted at the second session of the Ministerial Conference on Transport, in 2012, provided a useful framework within which countries could plan their infrastructure development.

66. The Forum acknowledged the increasing importance given to the development of intermodal facilities, including dry ports. In that regard, it was of the opinion that dry ports played an essential role in integrating the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks.

67. The Forum emphasized that regional cooperation was essential for achieving intercountry connectivity, and held the view that the secretariat should continue to play an important role in that regard. It also expressed its appreciation for the policies and measures that many countries had put in place to enhance connectivity with their neighbours.

68. The Forum noted the existence of a large number of bilateral and multilateral legal instruments relating to cross-border and transit transport, and stressed the important role they played in facilitating transport and promoting trade, investment and tourism.

69. The Forum was informed of various measures being undertaken by countries to implement bilateral and multilateral legal instruments, including amendments to domestic laws and regulations, promulgation of new laws and

regulations, dissemination of information to all stakeholders, capacity-building, coordination, and financing support.

70. The Forum suggested that the Regional Network of Legal and Technical Experts on Transport Facilitation serve as a platform for sharing experiences and good practices related to bilateral arrangements on cross-border and transit transport, in addition to those relating to international conventions and subregional agreements.

71. The Forum recognized the importance of the harmonization of legal regimes in the field of transport and the formulation of regional agreements on international transport development and facilitation for the further development of the transport sector in the region and its integration into the global transport system.

72. The Forum noted that considerable resources were needed for regional transport infrastructure development and the importance of finding alternative funding mechanisms, such as PPPs. In that regard, the Forum expressed its appreciation for the convening of the Third Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Public-Private Partnership for Infrastructure Development, held in Tehran on 14 November 2012,<sup>9</sup> which had helped raise awareness about PPPs and ways to remove barriers for private sector involvement.

73. The Forum recognized the important role of sustainable, inclusive and high quality transportation systems in supporting sustainable economic growth, improving the social welfare of people and enhancing regional integration. In that regard, the Forum took note of various policy measures taken by member States, such as the development of urban transport master plans, improvement of urban public transport, promotion of non-motorized transport, green technology to reduce emissions and the use of alternative fuels and ITS. In that regard, it welcomed the theme of the session, which had been “Transport as a key to sustainable development and regional integration”.

74. The Forum recognized the need to consider energy saving and emission reduction in planning and designing transport infrastructure, as well as the need to adapt and develop resilient transport infrastructure.

75. Recognizing the transport needs of remote and dispersed rural populations, the Forum stressed the importance of improving rural access. It noted that improving rural accessibility has been a major contributor towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

76. The Forum expressed its deep appreciation to the Governments of China, the Republic of Korea, and the Russian Federation for their technical and financial support for the implementation of the Regional Action Programme, phase II.

77. The Republic of Korea invited countries to participate in the Regional Expert Group Meeting on Policy Options for Sustainable Transport Development, which had been scheduled to be held in Incheon, Republic of Korea, from 27 to 29 November 2013.

78. In statements made during the policy debate of the Forum, delegates and representatives provided details of their respective transport policies, development experiences and other initiatives.

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<sup>9</sup> See E/ESCAP/69/24.

79. **Armenia** continued to focus on improving its transport infrastructure, including construction of new road and rail links and improvement of existing road and rail links along the North-South Transport Corridor, rehabilitation of major international road links in the northern direction, as well as the plan to build a dry port near Yerevan International Airport. It also planned to launch new projects to develop road and rail links in the southern direction to increase the country's transit potential through connection with the railway network of West Asia.

80. **Azerbaijan** had implemented a national programme of work for the sustainable development and efficient operation of its transport system, which included the ongoing construction of the Baku-Tblisi-Kars railway line that will connect the railway networks of Europe and Asia, the development of the new international sea trade port of Baku for increased cargo capacity in the Caspian Basin and the construction and upgrading of key highways and railway lines. Over the past five years, the transport sector had accounted for 20 per cent of total investments in the country.

81. The delegation of Azerbaijan expressed its regret that its Government was not in a position to implement the provisions of the Ministerial Declaration on Transport as a Key to Sustainable Development and Regional Integration to the full extent due to the occupation of the territories of Azerbaijan — Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven other adjacent provinces — by Armenia. The delegation of Armenia expressed its opinion that such political issues were beyond the purview of the Forum and the statement did not reflect an accurate portrayal of the situation.

82. **Bhutan** had increased its road network coverage significantly with most of its rural settlements currently connected to the wider road network. The construction of a dry port was planned to start in 2014. Urban congestion would be addressed through improving public and non-motorized transport and the implementation of ITS to aid traffic management. The possibility of consolidating transport activities under a single administration to improve planning, coordination and implementation of transport policies was currently being studied.

83. **Cambodia** was building 145.5 km of road links and two bridges across the Mekong River; upgrading the road from Phnom Penh to the Cambodian-Thai border into class I and constructing a railway line from Serei Saophoan to Poipet on the Singapore-Kunming Railway link. It had also upgraded the country's two main seaports of Phnom Penh and Sihanouk Ville and had operationalized a new container terminal in 2012 to meet present and future growth in traffic.

84. **China** had been promoting sustainable development, regional integration and connectivity by accelerating the development of comprehensive transport systems that were convenient, safe, economical, efficient and green and the development of ITS, implementing a strategy which prioritized public transport and strongly promoting the development of transport logistics. It had targeted "zero-distance transfer" for passenger transport and "seamless connection" for freight transport as part of the country's comprehensive transport systems and had substantially increased financing support for the development of public transport. Furthermore, it had implemented pilot "public transport city" projects.

85. **India** had planned the following: 25,000 km of new railway lines; 30,000 km of route doubling/multiple railway lines; speed increases for passenger and freight trains on average by 60 per cent and 30 per cent,

respectively; and an increase in the production of freight wagons from 25,000 to 75,000 and passenger coaches from 2,500 to 10,000 per annum by 2020. It was developing dedicated freight corridors to increase the efficiency of freight transport. To improve connectivity with its neighbours, it was laying new lines, Jogbani-Biratnagar with Nepal and Agartala-Akhaura with Bangladesh.

86. **Indonesia** remained committed to the development of an integrated intermodal transport and logistics system. In recent years, substantial progress had been made in the following areas: constructing and expanding its road and railways network; improving maritime ports, dry ports and airports; enhancing mass transport systems; implementing ITS; and improving road safety. With regard to improving road safety, a presidential instruction on Implementation of Decade of Action for Road Safety had been issued in April 2013. Indonesia had hosted the seventh Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport Forum in Asia in April 2013, which produced the Bali Declaration on Vision Three Zeroes — Zero Congestion, Zero Pollution and Zero Accidents towards Next Generation Transport Systems in Asia, to support the promotion of environmentally sustainable transport in Asia as well as the concept of green freight as one of the essential elements of sustainable transport. Indonesia was looking to develop maritime connectivity as part of its continuation of trans-Asian transport innovation.

87. The **Islamic Republic of Iran** had signed 120 bilateral and multilateral agreements related to transport, acceded to more than 10 regional multilateral agreements, including the intergovernmental agreements on the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks, and implemented many transport projects to improve connectivity with neighbouring countries. Considering rail a relatively safe, efficient and affordable mode of transportation, the country had implemented a number of rail projects, including building missing links along the Trans-Asian Railway network in its territory, and was developing transit corridors, namely, the North-South transport corridor, the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA) and the East-West transport corridor.

88. **Japan** was promoting the concept of “quality transport” as an important aspect of regional connectivity. It had succeeded in reducing congestion and expanding access by promoting public transport, especially railways, and involving the private sector. The Government was currently concentrating on making public transport more accessible for the elderly. Japan noted that high-quality connectivity between mega-cities and local cities improved the manufacturing and tourism opportunities in local cities.

89. The **Lao People’s Democratic Republic**, as the only landlocked country in South-East Asia and geographically located in the centre of both the ASEAN region and GMS, had continued to upgrade and develop transport infrastructure, with special attention to the routes along the East-West and North-South Economic Corridors. A task force had been established for the improvement of transport facilitation at all border crossings in the country. It had signed the Cambodia-Lao People’s Democratic Republic-Myanmar-Viet Nam “Open Skies” Agreement, in addition to over 30 bilateral and multilateral air service agreements.

90. **Malaysia** aimed to reduce its carbon emissions by up to 40 per cent by 2020. To achieve that, the country had formulated and implemented national policies to promote green technology, renewable energy and energy efficiency. It had begun implementing the Government Transformation Programme Phase II in 2013 with the goal of achieving a modal share of 50 per cent for public transport journeys by 2020. Through a programme of



double-tracking and electrification, the country was increasing the capacity on its rail line to Thailand and currently planning for the construction of a high-speed line between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur.

91. **Myanmar** had been implementing infrastructure development projects in an effort to realize its potential to become a gateway to Europe for certain ASEAN countries and the border areas of China and India. Infrastructure achievements had provided (a) 148,689 km of road; (b) 5,922 km of rail line with 2,847 km under construction; (c) three international deep seaport projects in Kyaukphyu, Dawei and Kalagauk; and (d) 33 airports in operation, including 3 for international services.

92. **Nepal** was working to strengthen connectivity through the upgrading of the Asian Highway, the development of the east-west railway as part of the Trans-Asian Railway Network, and the construction of inland container depots and integrated checkpoints. Roads connecting the remaining two district headquarters would be completed by 2014, while existing road assets were being preserved and maintained with funding from road-user charges. Nepal planned to develop mass rapid transit in Kathmandu Valley and cable car systems to connect tourist destinations.

93. The **Republic of Korea** was implementing transport and logistics policies that promote low-carbon green-growth, including: improving technologies to make cars more fuel efficient; facilitating public transport use; curbing the use of private cars; introducing a national transport card that can be used on all transport modes; and expanding pedestrian zones and bicycle paths. In support of the goal of enhancing connectivity in the region, the Government had supported a project to conduct pre-feasibility studies of sections of the Asian Highway.

94. The **Russian Federation** had taken steps to increase the efficiency of international transport links so as to develop regional integrated transport systems and transport connections between Europe and Asia. It planned to invest US\$ 25 billion for railway transport projects in the Asian part of the country in order to increase transport capacity and reduce the transit time along the Trans-Siberian Railway to seven days. It had also prioritized the establishment of the road transport corridor from Europe to the western part of China, and development of seaports and air transport in the Asian part of the country.

95. **Tajikistan** has been expanding the legal regime for the development of transport and logistics by signing new intergovernmental agreements, acceding to international conventions and agreements, as well as developing domestic legislation. It had completed several major infrastructure projects on the construction and renovation of roads, bridges and tunnels, which had helped overcome its isolation as a landlocked country. It planned to develop rail links with neighbouring countries and logistics facilities through using PPP.

96. With the aim of becoming the region's logistics hub, **Thailand** prioritized investment in infrastructure. Its infrastructure development plan included the construction of four-lane highways linking to nine border crossing points, the expansion of a high-quality public transport system in urban areas and the improvement of rail networks. The Government had also approved a bill authorizing the Ministry of Finance to borrow 2 trillion baht to finance four new higher-speed trains.

97. **Turkey** had invested about US\$ 71 billion in the preceding decade to develop its transport and communications sector, which included US\$ 46 billion on highways and US\$ 12 billion on railways. Additional investments had also been made by the private sector and other organizations in many transport projects. With the opening of the Marmaray project on 29 October 2013, Turkey's transport networks between Europe and Asia were directly linked, and uninterrupted railway communication between Beijing and London was now possible. Turkey had also initiated a number of other projects to improve connectivity with landlocked countries, providing them with direct access to its ports.

98. **Viet Nam** had upgraded AH1 and planned to upgrade the entire Asian-Highway Network in the country to class III standard or higher. The country had been modernizing its rail infrastructure on the Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City main line and Hanoi to Lao Cai section, and also collaborating with Cambodia to construct the missing link between Ho Chi Minh City and Phnom Penh. The Government had approved a master plan for developing a dry port network and had signed bilateral and multilateral road transport agreements to promote trade, investment and tourism among the country and its neighbours.

99. The representative of the **Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)** briefed the Forum on several legal instruments related to road safety, transport infrastructure, vehicle regulations and border-crossing facilitations. He highlighted recent joint ECE-ESCAP activities, and informed the Forum of the Europe-Asia Road Safety Forum to be jointly organized by ECE-ESCAP in partnership with the Government of India and the Institute of Road Traffic Education in New Delhi on 4 December 2013. He also apprised the Forum of the Joint Declaration on the promotion of Euro-Asian rail transport and activities towards unified railway law,<sup>10</sup> which had been signed in Geneva earlier this year by 37 States.

100. The representative of the **International Road Transport Union** noted that the role of IRU was to simplify and harmonize international road transport. In this regard, he apprised the Forum of the New Eurasian Land Transport Initiative, the Model Highway Initiative and the TIR electronic pre-declaration tool, which aimed to improve the efficiency of international road transport.

101. The representative of the **Asian Institute of Transport Development** indicated that building human capital, fostering regional cooperation and promoting sustainable and inclusive growth for all people of the region were three key elements for the development of transport in Asia, and expressed his organization's support for these areas.

102. The representative from the **United Nations Centre for Regional Development** outlined the key features of the seventh Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport Forum in Asia and reminded the Forum of some milestones achieved under the Asian Environmentally Sustainable Transport Initiative. In particular, he mentioned the Bangkok Declaration for 2020 — Sustainable Transport Goals for 2010-2020,<sup>8</sup> which had been adopted in 2010, and the Bali Declaration on Vision Three Zeros — Zero Congestion, Zero Pollution, and Zero Accidents towards Next Generation Transport Systems in Asia, which had been adopted earlier in 2013. He also highlighted the importance of moving towards a regional

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<sup>10</sup> ECE/TRANS/2013/2.

agreement on green freight as a key contribution towards sustainable development.

103. The representative of the **International Union of Railways (UIC)** informed the Forum that “greener transport” had been one of his organization’s six priorities since 2009 and that they had published many studies to promote this idea. He also mentioned the recent work of UIC in developing international railway standards with the objective of optimizing life cycle costs and ensuring the reliability, availability, maintainability and safety of railway operations.

**F. Other matters** (agenda items 5 and 8)

104. No other matters were discussed.

**G. Adoption of the ministerial declaration** (agenda item 9)

105. The Forum had before it the draft ministerial declaration on transport as a key to sustainable development and regional integration (E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/L.3).

106. The Forum adopted by acclamation the Ministerial Declaration on Transport as a Key to Sustainable Development and Regional Integration.

**H. Adoption of the report of the Forum** (agenda item 10)

107. The report of the Forum on its second session was adopted on 8 November 2013.

### **III. Organization**

**A. Opening, duration and organization of the Forum**

108. The second session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport was held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok from 4 to 8 November 2013. The Forum comprised two segments: the senior officials segment (4-6 November 2013) and the ministerial segment (7-8 November 2013).

109. The ministerial segment was opened by Mr. Chadchart Sittipunt, Minister of Transport, Government of Thailand. The Executive Secretary of ESCAP read out the message of the Secretary-General and delivered her opening statement.

110. The senior officials segment was opened by Mr. Somchai Siriwanachoke, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Transport of Thailand. A statement was also made by the Chief of the Transport Division of ESCAP to welcome the delegations.

**B. Attendance**

111. The session was attended by representatives of the following members and associate members of ESCAP: Armenia; Azerbaijan; Bangladesh; Bhutan; Cambodia; China; Democratic People’s Republic of Korea; India; Indonesia; Iran (Islamic Republic of); Japan; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Lao People’s Democratic Republic; Malaysia; Mongolia; Myanmar; Nepal; Philippines; Republic of Korea; Russian Federation; Sri Lanka; Tajikistan; Thailand; Turkey; and Viet Nam.

112. A representative of Austria also attended.

113. Representatives of the following United Nations bodies and specialized agencies attended: Office of Legal Affairs; Economic Commission for Europe; United Nations Centre for Regional Development; and World Health Organization.

114. Representatives of the following intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and other organizations were present: Asian Development Bank; Asia Injury Prevention Foundation; Asian Institute of Transport Development; Clean Air Asia; German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ); Global Infrastructure Fund Research Foundation Japan; Institution for Transport Policy Studies; International Road Transport Union; International Union of Railways; Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport; Secretariat of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia; and Transport Research Laboratory.

### C. Election of officers

115. The Forum elected the following officers:

Chair: Mr. Chadchart Sittipunt (Thailand)

Vice-Chairs: Mr. Hrant Beglaryan (Armenia)  
 Mr. D.N. Dungyel (Bhutan)  
 Mr. Tauch Chankosol (Cambodia)  
 Mr. Fukui Ning (China)  
 Mr. Bambang Susantono (Indonesia)  
 Mr. Abbas Ahmad Akhoundi (Islamic Republic of Iran)  
 Mr. Yoshitaka Toui (Japan)  
 Mr. Sommad Pholsena (Lao People's Democratic Republic)  
 Mr. Ab. Aziz Kaprawi (Malaysia)  
 Mr. Gansukh Amarjargal (Mongolia)  
 Mr. Myint Thein (Myanmar)  
 Mr. Chhabi Raj Pant (Nepal)  
 Mr. Hyung Koo Yeo (Republic of Korea)  
 Mr. Alexey Tsydenov (Russian Federation)  
 Mr. Nizom Hakimov (Tajikistan)  
 Mr. Nguyen Hong Truong (Viet Nam)

Rapporteur: Mr. Abul Kashem Md. Badrul Majid (Bangladesh)

116. For the senior officials segment, the following officers were elected:

Chair: Mr. Sudarshan Ram Bhandary (Nepal)

Vice-Chairs: Mr. Vasim Sorya (Cambodia)  
 Mr. Erdem Direkler (Turkey)

Rapporteur: Mr. Farid Valiyev (Azerbaijan)

### D. Agenda

117. The Forum adopted the following agenda:

#### *Senior officials segment*

1. Opening of the session:
  - (a) Opening addresses;

- (b) Election of officers;
  - (c) Adoption of the agenda.
2. 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).
  3. Major issues in transport:
    - (a) Strengthening connectivity of regional and interregional transport networks;
    - (b) Creating an enabling environment for facilitating international transport and logistics;
    - (c) Innovative financing options for regional infrastructure development and maintenance;
    - (d) Promoting sustainable and inclusive transport.
  4. Draft ministerial declaration.
  5. Other matters.
  6. Adoption of the report of the senior officials.

*Ministerial segment*

7. Policy debate on “transport as a key to sustainable development and regional integration”.
8. Other matters.
9. Adoption of the ministerial declaration.
10. Adoption of the report of the Forum.
11. Closing of the Forum.

**E. Side events**

118. The following special events were held:

- (a) Signing ceremony of the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports was held on 7 November 2013. A total of 14 countries signed the Agreement, and the Government of Thailand deposited an instrument of ratification, becoming the first country to ratify the Agreement;
- (b) Special sessions on the role of transport organizations in the region and targets and indicators for a possible transport sustainable development goal were held on 6 November 2013;
- (c) Marketplace for Sustainable Transport Solutions was held from 6 to 8 November 2013.

## Annex

### List of documents

Symbol	Title	Agenda item
<i>General series</i>		
E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/1	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)	2
E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/2	Strengthening connectivity of regional and interregional transport networks	3(a)
E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/3	Creating an enabling environment for facilitating international transport and logistics	3(b)
E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/4	Innovative financing options for regional infrastructure development and maintenance	3(c)
E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/5	Promoting sustainable and inclusive transport	3(d)
E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/6	Outcome of the High-level Meeting on Strengthening Inter-island Shipping and Logistics in the Pacific Island Countries	3(a)
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E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/L.1/Rev.1	Annotated provisional agenda (revised)	1(c)
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<i>Conference room paper series</i>		
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<i>Working paper series</i>		
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<i>Information series</i>		
E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/INF/1	Information for participants	
E/ESCAP/FAMT(2)/INF/2	List of participants	
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