Regional Dialogue
Strengthening transport connectivity in the SPECA region and beyond in the era of COVID-19
29 September 2020

DRAFT CONCLUSIONS

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Having in mind:

- The United Nations General Assembly resolutions (i) A/RES/70/1 - Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; (ii) A/RES/72/283 "Strengthening regional and international cooperation to ensure peace, stability and sustainable development in the Central Asian Region"; (iii) A/RES/69/213 "Role of Transport and transit corridors in ensuring international cooperation for sustainable development" which recognizes the importance of addressing the special needs of landlocked developing countries to establish and promote efficient transit transport systems that link to international markets; (iv) A/RES/70/197 "Towards comprehensive cooperation among all modes of transport for promoting sustainable multimodal transit corridors"; and (v) A/RES/72/212 "Strengthening the links between all modes of transport to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals" which calls for full implementation of the goals of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in the transport sector;
- Priorities defined in the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) for Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) for the Decade 2014-2024 (2014);
- The United Nations Conventions and Agreements related to inland transport;
- Outcomes of the first United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference (2016),
- The Ashgabat initiative on reducing barriers to trade and transport using United Nations legal instruments, norms, standards and recommendations while bolstering connectivity in the SPECA region (2019); and
- The United Nations framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19 (2020) and the United Nations General Assembly resolution on Comprehensive and Coordinated Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic (A/RES/74/306).

The participants of the Regional Dialogue

- Welcome the activities on enhancing regional cooperation and coordination in inland transport development to establish an efficient transport system, which is a prerequisite for dynamic and sustainable economic growth and social development in the SPECA sub-region;
- Stress the importance of regular exchange of information amongst the participating countries on plans, progress and challenges in promoting development of integrated multimodal transport systems (especially railways and intermodal connections), and

completing missing infrastructure links connecting the participating countries to regional and inter-regional networks;

- Underscore the necessity to work towards harmonization of transport infrastructure and operational standards for cross-border transport, increasing infrastructure resilience, identification and elimination of major physical and non-physical barriers, and promotion of sustainable and efficient operations for seamless international transport and better connectivity;
- Call on the participating countries that have not yet done so to consider acceding to and efficiently implementing the United Nations legal instruments on inland transport to enhance regional transport connectivity and maintain undisrupted supply-chains affected by the COVID-19 pandemic to further support economic recovery. The participating countries are invited to implement digital solutions for cross-border facilitation (especially e-TIR and e-CMR and cross-border transport facilitation tools) to minimize human contact and lower transport and trade costs and border crossing waiting times;
- Encourage the participating countries to keep transport supply chains going, especially for essentials – including medical supplies, food products and ICT goods and services.
- Encourage the participating countries to accelerate implementation of existing joint transport connectivity initiatives within the SPECA sub-region listed above and use already established sub-regional transport cooperation within the SPECA Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity to support regional transport connectivity and share information on transport system development activities and, in this regard, support the preparation of the Working Group's strategy and consider potential use of the SPECA Fund to support related activities;
- Welcome the discussion on the issues of safety and security of trade and transit corridors as an important topic for sustainable transport operations, and seamless international transit.
- Call on the participating countries, the United Nations system, International Financial Institutions and other development actors to enhance coordination and promote synergies in development of sustainable transport system and connectivity as an important factor of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in the SPECA sub-region and beyond.
- Undertake a dialogue with relevant private sector actors including representatives of the chamber of commerce and various trade associations to identify regulatory barriers to transport and develop appropriate solutions to improve efficiency, and regional business competitiveness.

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