# Improving transport infrastructure for the purpose of enhanced transport connectivity and sustainability in the SPECA region
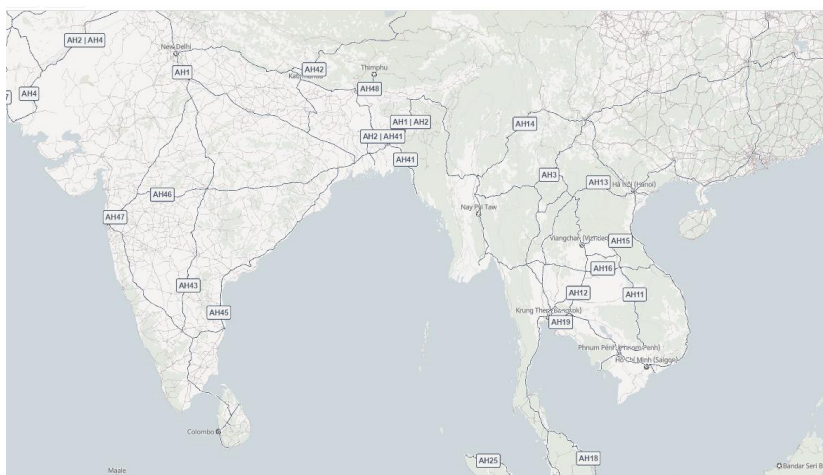
**Weimin Ren**

*Director
Transport Division
ESCAP*

Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific 2022–2026

# ESCAP's role in supporting seamless land transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific
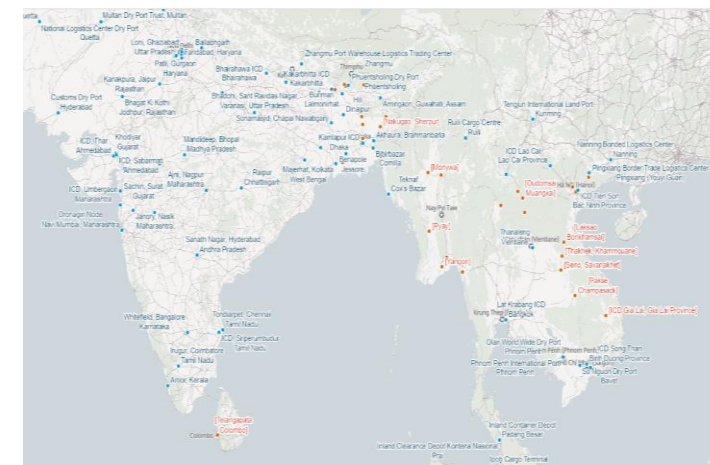
## Asian Highway Network



- Intergovernmental Agreement on Asian Highway network
- Entered into force in July 2005
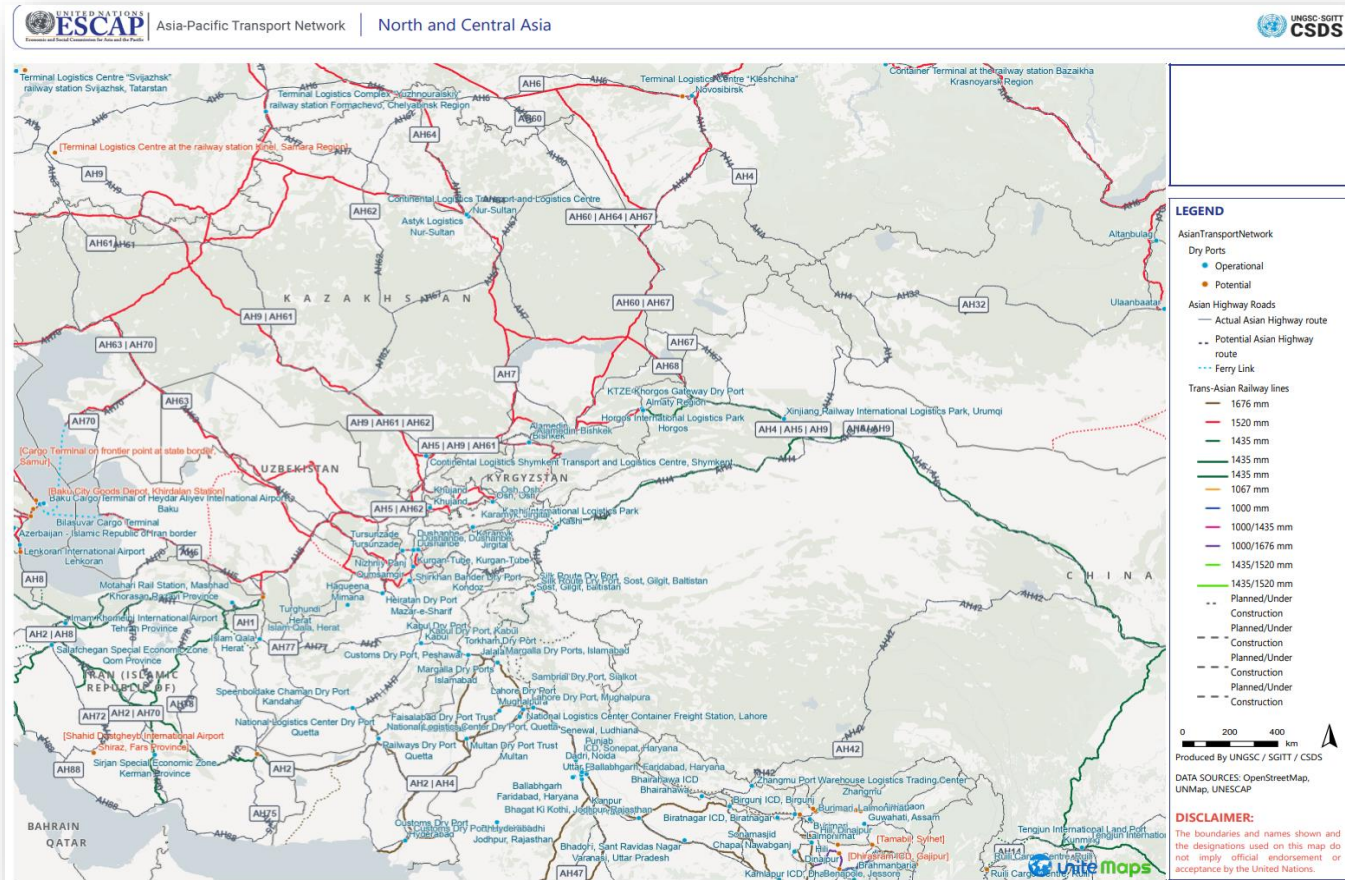- 30 Parties

## Trans-Asian Railway Network



- Intergovernmental Agreement on Trans-Asian Railway network
- Entered into force in June 2009
- 21 Parties

## Dry Ports



- Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports
- Entered into force in April 2016
- 17 Parties

# Status of the implementation of the ESCAP infrastructure Agreements in SPECA countries



| | Intergovernmental Agreement on Asian Highway Network | Intergovernmental Agreement on Trans-Asian Railway Network | Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports |
|---|---|---|---|
| Afghanistan | party | | party |
| Azerbaijan | party | signatory | party |
| Kazakhstan | party | signatory | party |
| Kyrgyzstan | party | | |
| Tajikistan | party | party | party |
| Turkmenistan | party | party | party |
| Uzbekistan | party | party | party |

| | AH routes (km) | TAR routes (km) | Dry Ports (units) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Afghanistan | 4,034 | | 8 |
| Azerbaijan | 1,385 | 1,404 | 21 |
| Kazakhstan | 13,261 | 9,485 | 4 |
| Kyrgyzstan | 1,597 | 868 | 2 |
| Tadjikistan | 1,908 | 575 | 7 |
| Turkmenistan | 2,185 | 1,957 | |
| Uzbekistan | 2,887 | 3,165 | |
| TOTAL | 147,859 | 121,434 | 268 |

# Major developments in 2023 in promoting infrastructure and operational connectivity

## Asian Highway Network

Updated AH routes in Sri Lanka and added three new AH in the Philippines

Discussed supporting environmentally sustainable and resilient transport infrastructure along the Asian Highway Network

Reiterated the importance of enhancing the infrastructure and operational connectivity of the Asian Highway Network, using, where appropriate, a corridor approach

## Trans-Asian Railway Network

Updated TAR routes in the Russian Federation and in Thailand

Adopted the new Annex to TAR on General principles on electronic information exchange/data interchange among railways and between railways and control agencies along the Trans-Asian Railway Network

Adopted Strategy 2030 on Accelerating Rail Digital Transformation in the Asia-Pacific Region
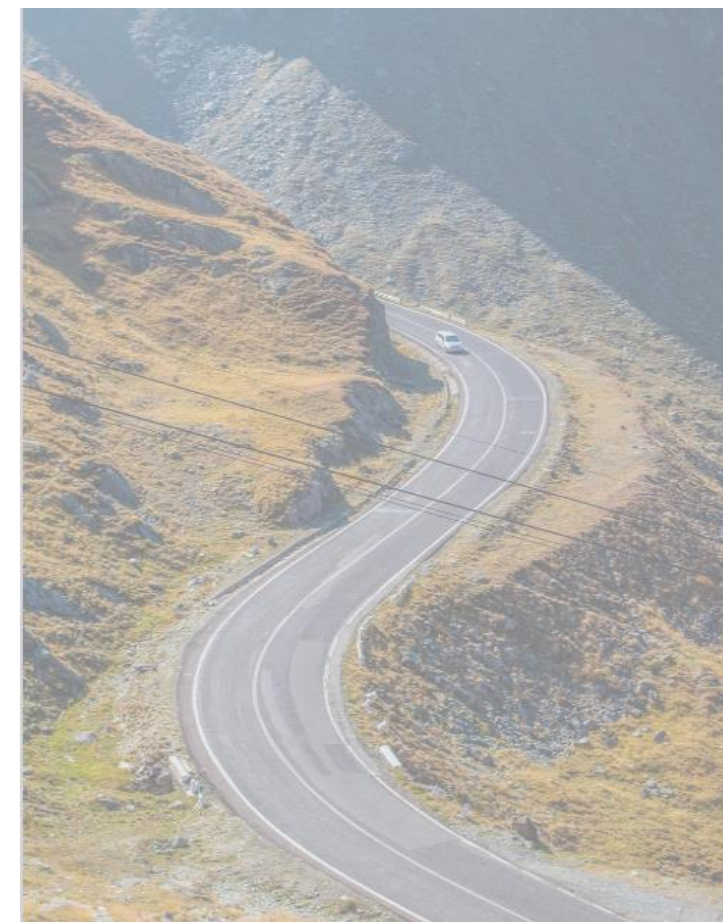
## Dry Ports

Updated dry ports in Islamic Republic of Iran, Mongolia and Thailand

Discussed digitalization of transport corridors and multimodal transport operations

Cooperation with ASEAN on development of the future ASEAN Dry Ports Database

# Highlight No.1 : Promoting low carbon and resilient Asian Highways

- ✓ ESCAP is working on strengthening sustainable transport connectivity by collecting and disseminating best practices in development of low carbon and resilient road infrastructure along the Asian Highway network

- ✓ National capacity building workshops on these issues were held in Kyrgyzstan on 5 July 2023; Kazakhstan on 6 September 2023; and the last one will be held in Azerbaijan on 30 November 2023

- ✓ ESCAP "inventory of best practices" for Asia and the Pacific, supported by the 10th meeting of the Working Group on Asian Highway, will present technical aspects of the low carbon and resilient road transport sector, notably development of roadside services and road safety, road funding issues, sustainable modes of transport and samples of national development strategies.

# Highlight No.2 : Supporting electronic information exchange and digitalization along the TAR network

**New annex to the TAR Agreement - "General principles on electronic information exchange/data interchange among railways and between railways and control agencies along the Trans-Asian Railway Network"**

✓ Adopted by Parties to the Agreement at the 8th meeting of the Working Group on TAR Network

✓ Provides grounds for the further harmonization of electronic information exchange/data interchange to increase the competitiveness of railway transport along the TAR Network

✓ Encourages the members of the Network to use standards and practices on electronic information exchange/data interchange developed by international railway organizations

✓ Serves as a basis for developing various agreements on harmonizing electronic information exchange/data interchange among railways and between railways and control agencies

**Strategy 2030 on Accelerating Rail Digital Transformation in the Asia-Pacific**

Adopted by the Working Group on the TAR Network at its 8th meeting

Resulting from a High-level Conference on Accelerating Rail Digital Transformation in Asia-Pacific held in New Delhi, 5-6 April 2023

The strategy is **designed to:**

✓ Give a big push to rail digitalization,

✓ Boost the competitiveness of rail transport

✓ Enhance the sustainability of transport, thus contributing to the realization of the SDGs

The strategy contains a guiding vision, five objectives, eight priority areas, five enablers, as well as an implementation and monitoring mechanism.

# Highlight No.3 : Supporting Dry Port and multimodal corridor development in NCA

**Technical assessment of transport and logistics centers in Uzbekistan** for compliance with the Guidelines for the Development and Operation of Dry Ports (Annex II to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports).
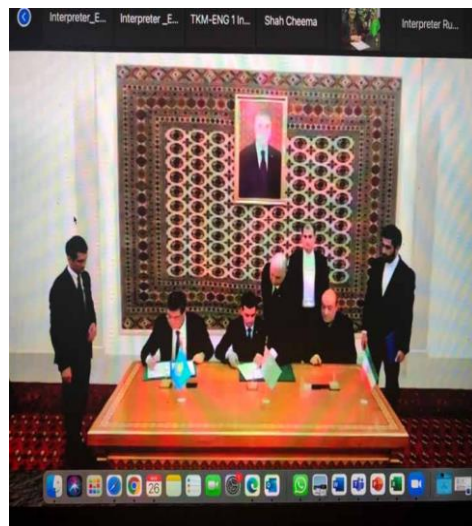
Formulation of proposals for the inclusion of transport and logistics centers in the **list of dry ports on the territory of Uzbekistan in Annex I** to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry ports to be submitted to the Working Group on Dry Ports for approval at its next meeting in 2025

Preliminary results presented during the **Uzbekistan's Transport Week in November 2023 in Tashkent**

# Supporting multimodal corridor development in SPECA countries



Support to the operationalization of the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Islamic Republic of Iran (KTI) rail corridor

Overview of technical and economic indicators of the proposed multimodal transport corridor "Uzbekistan - Turkmenistan – Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran) - India"

POLICY BRIEF

Southeast Asia-North and Central Asia transport corridors to support strengthening transport connectivity between the two subregions

TRANSPORT

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