

26th SESSION OF SPECA WG-STTC

COVID-19 in the SPECA region: Lessons learned and the way forward



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Section



Transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific

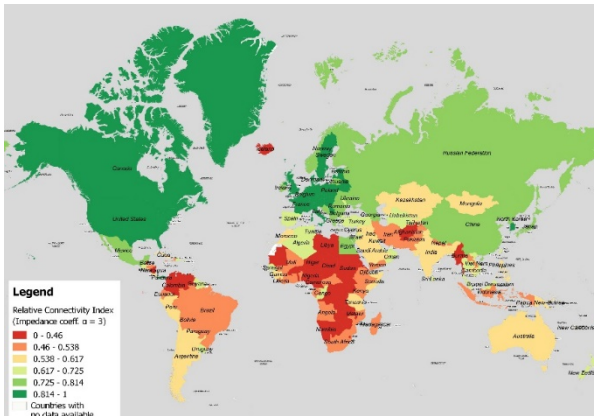
AH, TAR and DP coverage: 2021

- a. Extensions and upgrades to the regional land transport network composed of Trans-Asian Railways, Asian Highways and Dry ports.
- b. Intensified shipping and port links and new transport corridors and major projects developed or being developed;
- c. Increased trade volume carried by regional transport networks, such as China-Central Asia/Europe container rail express, seaborne trade among ESCAP MSs, etc.

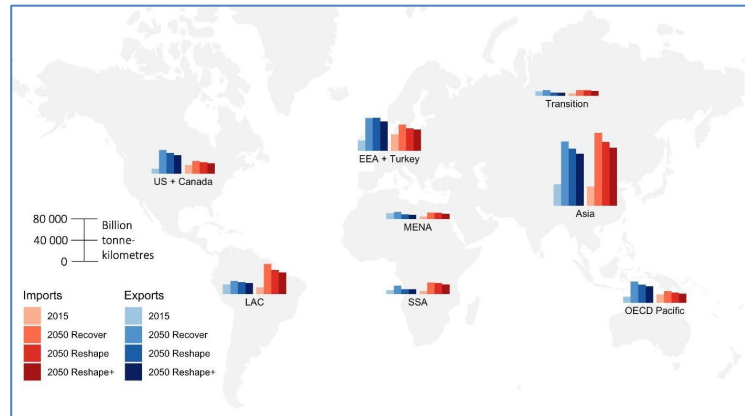


Present and Future: supporting regional and global freight flows

Global Transport Connectivity Estimates, 2021

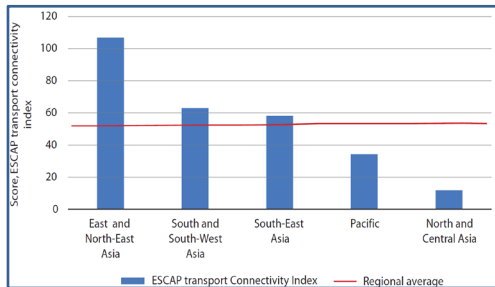


Import- and export-related freight transport by world region in 2050
(Under three policy scenarios, billion tonne-kilometres)



SPECA countries as a priority for transport work

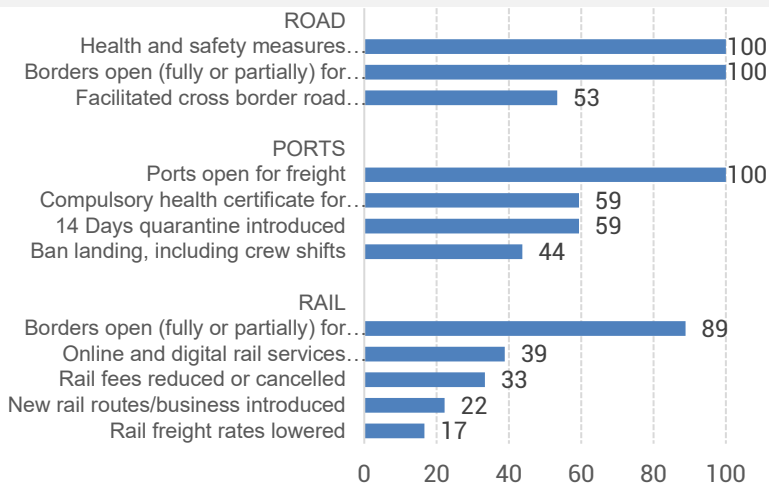
Regional Transport Connectivity Estimates, 2019



ESCAP, "Review of Sustainable Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2019

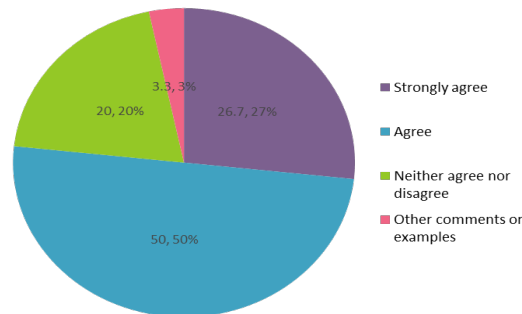
- a) Facilitate a coordinated development of transport systems through engagement in the Asian Highways, Trans-Asian Railways and Dry Ports.
- b) Promote operational connectivity through policy and capacity building work and dissemination of best practices
- c) Strategic regional cooperation: encourage the convergence of national/sub-regional/corridor initiatives to achieve tangible results
- d) Participate in a coordinated approach by development actors: MDBs, think tanks (ITF), UN system (UNECE, UNCTAD, OHRLLS, etc).

Impact of COVID-19 on Regional Transport Connectivity



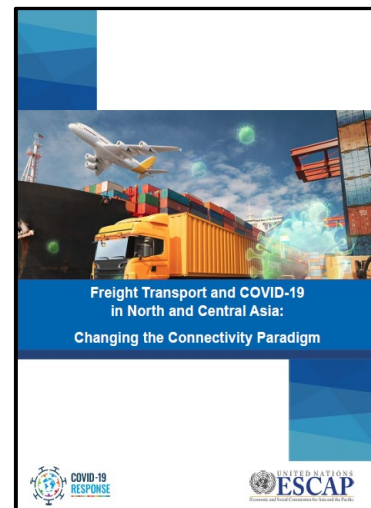
■ Percentage of surveyed countries, who implemented the measure

Cross-border freight operations have become more costly and / or time consuming due to COVID-19.



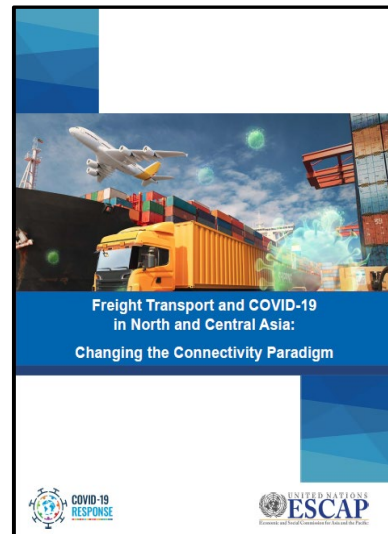
Factors exacerbating the impact in SPECA countries

- ❑ Insufficient levels of digital trade/transport documentation processes
- ❑ Unbalanced freight transport modal split
- ❑ Inefficient or fragile transit arrangements
- ❑ Infrastructure bottlenecks
- ❑ Divergent standards on vehicles, drivers and transit, which lead to multiple controls
- ❑ Repercussion of the trade and transport restrictions or disruptions of the region's large economies.



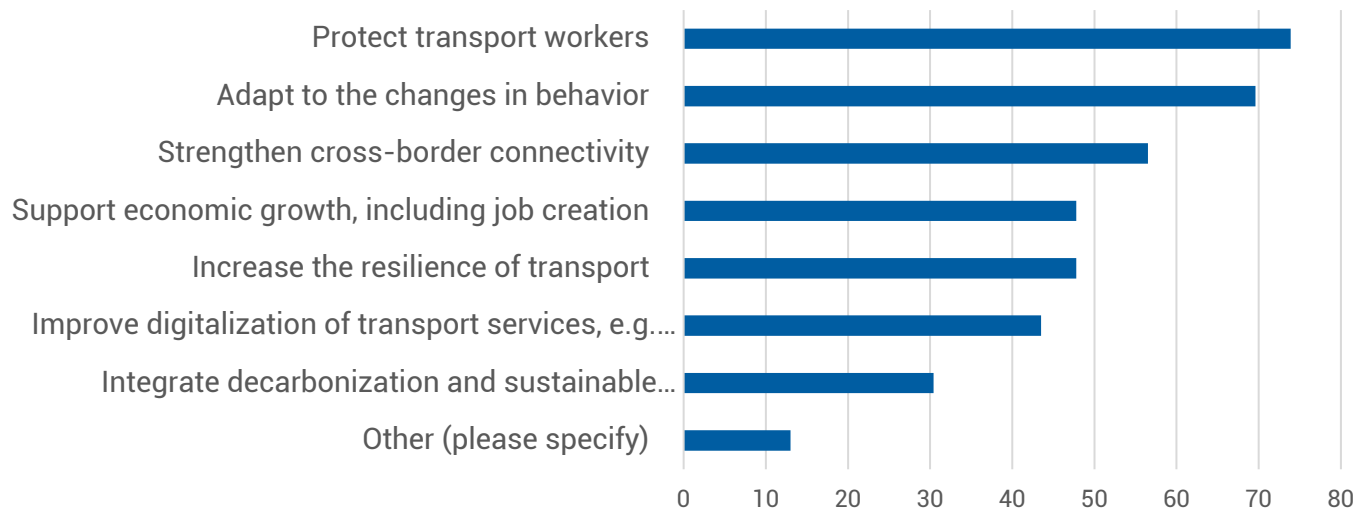
Dynamic response in SPECA countries and their transit partners

COVID-19 special transport facilitation measures in selected NCA countries	
Country	Special facilitation measures
Armenia	Agreements were reached that both Georgia and Russia will provide the green corridor for the cargo of the EAEU countries, i.e. a separate cargo area of Armenia will be allocated across Georgia and at border crossing point Verhny Lar.
Azerbaijan	Fast and smooth movement of goods required for COVID-19 treatment has a special priority. A transit corridor for freight vehicles has been established.
Georgia	To ensure uninterrupted freight movement, 24-hour customs clearance services for freight vehicles arranged at the border-crossing points.
Kazakhstan	Road transport carriers do not need to carry paper permits as of 15 April 2020. Verification will be carried out using the information and analytical system of the transport database. All railways-related processes in Kazakhstan are carried out remotely in electronic form. The system allows customers to pay fees, fines without leaving home. In addition, for the period of the state of emergency, JSC NC KTZ (JSC "National Company Kazakhstan Temir Zholy") abolished fines, fees and charges associated with the carriage of goods. A decision was made to cancel special permits for trucks and ensure their unhindered movement. A green corridor was organized for all freight vehicles that transport medicines and essential goods.
Kyrgyzstan	In order to help in the current situation with the pandemic, Kyrgyz Temir Zholu does not charge or charge fees or penalties for storing cargo on the container site and on the wagon located at Kyrgyz Temir Zholu railway stations. The company also reduced the cost of transportation by rail for coal exporters by 30 percent, at a distance of up to 30 km for the Southern branch of the State Enterprise "NK Kyrgyz Temir Zholu".
Russian Federation	Simplified duty-free import of medical products to combat COVID-19 were introduced. They include COVID-19 tests, mechanical ventilation apparatus, medical masks, protective suits etc. A "green corridor" has been introduced in relation to the import of essential goods and foodstuffs. Russian Railways has set up an Emergency Response Center to support shippers and enhance coordination of all links in the transport chain.
Uzbekistan	Until the end of 2020, import of basic 20 types of foodstuffs goods which include meat, milk, butter, onions, flour, sugar, gauze, hygiene products, ventilation devices and others are exempt from customs duties and excise taxes. Imported medicines, medical substances and equipment and other necessary goods imported into the country are also exempt from customs payments and value added tax. Uzbekistan Railways has developed a software for processing and providing preliminary electronic information to customs authorities for goods transported by rail. In addition, Uzbek Railways extended until the end of 2020 a 30 percent discount on the transportation of all goods transported through Uzbekistan to the south of the Kyrgyz Republic and in the opposite direction.



Source: ESCAP (2020) Monitoring the Transport Policy Response to COVID-19 along the Regional Transport Networks in Asia and the Pacific.

Preparing for recovery: priorities in Asia and the Pacific

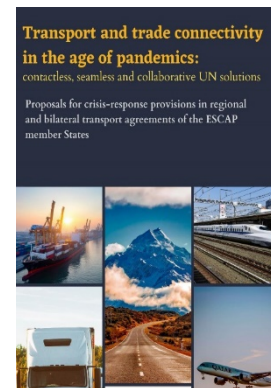
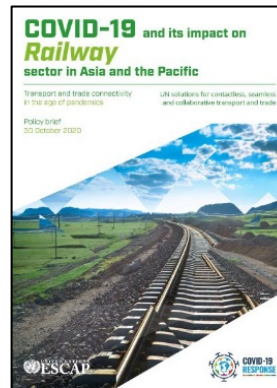
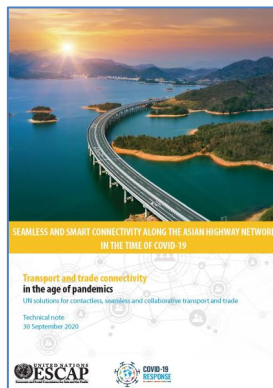
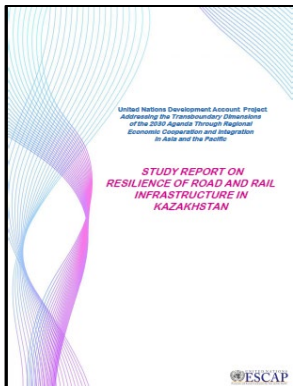


Source: UNESCAP survey on Freight Transport Policy Responses to COVID-19, 2020.



Seizing the opportunities for building back better in transport connectivity in SPECA countries

- ❑ Monitoring freight transport response to COVID and drawing lessons learned on Resilience of road and rail infrastructure in selected countries in Central Asia
- ❑ Promoting smart road and rail solutions along the Asian Highways and Trans-Asian Railways
- ❑ Mobilizing transport agreements for a better crisis response
- ❑ Mobilizing existing intergovernmental platforms on transport cooperation in Asia and the Pacific



ESCAP 4th Ministerial Conference on Transport

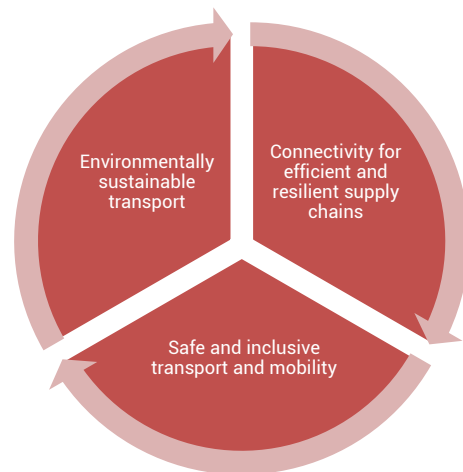
Key expected outcomes of the Ministerial Conference

- To review the implementation of the Regional Action Programme, phase I (2017-2021)
- To consider and adopt a new Regional Action Programme (2022-2026)

Schedule and format

- Two days senior official segment and two days ministerial segment
- 14-17 December, Bangkok and online

From 2022: Leveraging synergies and integrating thematic activities to support Building Back Better and the implementation of SDGs



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