

Second Expert Group Meeting on Developing Euro-Asian Transport Linkages  
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Odessa, Ukraine

## **Development of Euro-Asian Linkages**

**Message of Mr. Kim Hak-Su**  
**Under-secretary of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the**  
**United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

**delivered by Mr. John R. Moon**  
**Chief, Transport Infrastructure Section, Transport and Tourism Division**

H.E. Mr. Georgiy Kirpa,

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Enormous political, economic and social changes have taken place in Asia and Europe over the past two decades. In Asia, we have seen countries adopt more outward-looking visions and embrace more market-oriented policies. Many have developed more efficient transport linkages and have already benefited from the globalization process.

The worldwide consequence of these political and economic changes are obvious. Countries are now engaged in constructive dialogue to foster cultural exchanges, promote technical and scientific cooperation, and pursue economic integration aiming to improve the living standards of their people.

However, countries will not fully enjoy the social and economic advantages of improved trade and the creation of jobs in industry and agriculture if the international movements of goods are restricted by insufficient transport infrastructure and inadequate services. Individual countries have already made substantial investments to develop their transport infrastructure. However, this has often been done taking into consideration national needs and priorities without fully addressing issues of international integration and interoperability. For the landlocked countries this has meant higher transportation cost that seriously diminish their ability to compete effectively in the world's markets. At the same time, however landlocked countries are playing an important role in providing opportunities for efficient transit transport infrastructure and services to their neighbours.

To assist member countries address these issues UNESCAP and UNECE are implementing a project titled 'Capacity-building in developing interregional land and land-cum-sea transport linkages'. The main aim of the project is to help countries connect national infrastructures into a network of international freight corridors that will eventually meet the demand for fast, reliable and safe Euro-Asian transport connections.

UNESCAP, like UNECE is already promoting the integration of national transport systems into regional networks. For example, the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network including 140,000 km of highways in Asia and connecting to the European continent was adopted by 32 member States in November 2003. Already 27 countries have signed the Agreement and it is expected to come into force in the first half of 2005. At the end of November 2004, the secretariat will initiate a first round of negotiations to develop a similar Agreement for the TAR.

The two Agreements will play a catalytic role in the construction and upgrading of road and rail networks, and will assist member countries in making better use of their infrastructure. Above all, the Agreements will form the basis for an international integrated intermodal transport system that will strengthen regional economic integration and provide more efficient Euro-Asian transport linkages.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At a time when globalization is an inescapable fact of modern life, transport has a major role to play in ensuring that the benefits can be shared by people of all regions of the world. By bringing goods to people and offering them mobility, transport creates opportunities for greater access to employment, health care and education. In this respect, the deliberations that you will engage in over the course of the next three days will directly assist in the definition of a common transport plan for the further promotion of Euro-Asian transport linkages.

In closing I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of Ukraine for the warm welcome extended to all delegations and to wish all participants success in their deliberations.

Thank you for your attention.