

## Summary Assessment

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### **Second session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport** Bangkok 4-8 November 2013

#### **I. Introduction**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> session of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport was held in Bangkok, Thailand, from 4-8 November 2013.

A questionnaire assessing the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness of the Session was distributed to participating delegations of ESCAP members and associate members. The total number of submitted questionnaires was 19. The overall response rate is therefore 76% (N=19/25). The present assessment was on the basis of these questionnaire responses.

In line with the secretariat's efforts to reduce the use of paper and move towards paper smart meetings, an online version of the questionnaire was offered alongside the traditional paper version.

The main purpose of this assessment is to support the secretariat's ongoing efforts to improve its servicing of the sessions.

#### **II. Attendance**

The session was attended by 40% (N=25/62) of ESCAP members and associate members, with a total number of 132 participants. The Session was also attended by 36 participants from other entities.

More than half of delegations were headed by officials from the respective Capital (76%, N=19/25) – fourteen of which (73%) at ministerial level – whereas the remaining 24% (N=6/25) were represented through their embassies in Bangkok.

### III. Relevance of the session

Respondents overwhelmingly felt that the session was relevant to the needs of the region. As presented with the aggregate ratings<sup>1</sup> in Table 1, there was very high agreement that the agenda items reflected the development trends and issues in the transport sector in the Asian and Pacific region (91), and that they also reflected the needs and priorities of their respective countries (83).

There were some suggestions on how to improve the relevance of the session to the needs and priorities of the Asian and Pacific region: firstly, to consider adequate financing for the development of transport infrastructure in the region as an urgent matter; secondly, to include considerations of the direct and indirect effects of the economic crisis in Europe on the economic activities in Asia; thirdly, to consider providing a comprehensive framework for joint venture projects in accordance with the public-private partnerships model; fourthly, to continuously organize related ESCAP workshops; and finally, to consider lessening administrative barriers for members to participate.

**Table 1**

EVALUATED STATEMENT	SCORE (0-100)
The agenda items reflected the development trends/issues in the transport sector in the Asian and Pacific region.	91
The agenda items reflected the needs and priorities of my country/territory.	83

### IV. Effectiveness of the session

Overall, as can be seen from Table 2, most respondents found the session to be highly effective in highlighting regional transport development trends and issues (95). Respondents also felt that the session very effectively identified priority areas and emerging issues in the region (89), promoted dialogue on regional and subregional approaches (87), and promoted a collaborative approach to addressing the development challenges at the regional and subregional levels (87). Furthermore, the session documents were found to be of high quality, concise, and stating the issues clearly (88).

<sup>1</sup> The scores presented in this report are indices calculated according to the below formula, (actual value of all aggregated responses - minimum value of all aggregated responses) / (maximum value of all aggregated responses - minimum value of all aggregated responses). This allows transforming a raw variable, e. g.  $x$ , into a unit-free index between 0 and 1, and for the different indices to be added together.  $\text{Min}(x)$  and  $\text{max}(x)$  are the lowest and highest values the variable  $x$  can attain, respectively.

$$x\text{-index} = \frac{x - \text{min}(x)}{\text{max}(x) - \text{min}(x)}$$

It was suggested that the session’s effectiveness in achieving its mandate could have been improved by following up the results through different channels. A focus on the following challenges and options was suggested: promoting a more integrated approach to transport planning and policymaking; further strengthening regional cooperation for developing regional and interregional transport infrastructure; and not losing sight of road safety as an important part of a sustainable development agenda.

Finally, it was also mentioned that political tension between member countries may have had an impact on the session’s effectiveness, and that therefore any encouragement to solve the issues and facilitate cooperation would have been beneficial.

**Table 2**

EVALUATED STATEMENT	SCORE (0-100)
The session effectively highlighted regional transport development trends and issues.	95
The session effectively identified priority areas and emerging issues in the region.	89
The session successfully promoted dialogue on regional and subregional approaches to transport development.	87
The session effectively promoted a collaborative approach to addressing the development challenges at the regional and subregional levels.	87
The session documents were of high quality, concise, and state the issues clearly.	88

## V. Efficiency of the organizational aspects of the session

The efficiency of the organizational aspects of the session was rated very positively. In particular, respondents felt that the communications from the secretariat to the member States on the preparations for the session were effective (94), that the secretariat’s servicing of the session was highly efficient (93), and that the organization of work prior and in between sessions enabled the session to proceed efficiently (93). The adequacy of the time available for discussion during the meetings was also rated very positively, but slightly less so (85).

EVALUATED STATEMENT	SCORE (0-100)
The time available for discussion during the meetings was adequate.	85
The servicing by the secretariat was efficient and effective.	93
The communications from the secretariat to the member States on the preparations for the session were effective.	94
The organization of work prior and in between sessions enabled the session to proceed efficiently.	93

## VI. Most and least successful features

### a. Most successful features

According to respondents, the highlights of this session of the session were: the senior official segments, the signing of the intergovernmental agreement on dry ports; the interactive nature of the session; the strengthened connectivity of regional and interregional transport networks; and that the main transport issues affecting the region were identified.

### b. Least successful features

There were no specific indications in response to this question.

## VII. Conclusion

Overall, in conclusion, responding delegates felt that the 2<sup>nd</sup> session the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport was a success.

To summarize the main trends highlighted above, the session was overwhelmingly seen as relevant to the needs of the region, and effective at promoting dialogue and collaboration. The efficiency of the session received highly positive feedback. There was very high agreement that the session succeeded in highlighting regional trends and issues in the transport sector in the Asia-Pacific region.