

# Newsletter from the High-Level 15<sup>th</sup> Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport Forum in Asia, 24-26 October 2023, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia

## Breaking News: Prime Minister of Malaysia to open High-level 15th EST Forum on October 24

We are thrilled to announce a momentous development in the upcoming EST Forum! The Ministry of Transport is delighted to confirm that Malaysia's Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, will be inaugurating the upcoming High-Level 15th Environmentally Sustainable Transport Forum in Kuala Lumpur with the theme "Catalizing Economic and Social Development in the SDG's Era". This high-profile participation highlights Malaysia's commitment to sustainable transport and reinforces the EST Forum's role as a dynamic platform for driving regional engagement and progress.

The EST Forum is a key platform for advancing sustainable transport solutions. With the Prime Minister's presence, this year's forum promises valuable insights and opportunities to shape a greener transportation future.

Stay tuned for further updates as we prepare for this significant event. We look forward to welcoming you to the EST Forum in Kuala Lumpur.

The Ministry of Transport

Malaysia



Rt. Hon. Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim  
Prime Minister of Malaysia

## Participation of sixteen countries and nine ministers confirmed as nominations are still ongoing

To date, thirteen countries have confirmed their participation in the EST Forum, and seven of them will be represented by ministers. Organizers are honoured to welcome the Minister of Railways from Bangladesh, the Minister of Infrastructure and Transport from Bhutan, the Minister of Transport from Malaysia, the Minister of Urban Development from Nepal, the Minister of Highways and Transport and the Minister of the Environment from Sri Lanka, the Vice Minister for Public Works and Transport from Lao People's Democratic Republic, the Deputy Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation from Maldives, as well as the Undersecretary, Department of Public Works and Highways from the Philippines.

Other dignitaries to address the Forum include - Mr. Loke Siew Fook, Minister of Transport of Malaysia, Mr. Li Junhua, Under-Secretary-General for the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), Ms. Karima El Korri, UN Resident Coordinator for Malaysia, Mr. Akira Harita,

Councillor, Minister's Secretariat and Deputy Director-General, Environmental Management Bureau, Ministry of the Environment of Japan, and Mr. James Leather, Director of Transport Group, Asian Development Bank.

In addition, high-level government representatives from Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, Lao PDR, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Timor-Leste, and Vietnam have confirmed their participation. In total, 60 official delegates are expected to take part in this first in-person meeting since the adoption of the Aichi 2030 Declaration in 2021.

## Three Aichi Goals in Focus

The three forthcoming annual EST Forums will each review and discuss three of the goals from the Aichi 2030 Declaration.

The High-level 15th EST Forum will focus on



**1A Climate Change Mitigation:** *By 2030, aim to peak transport CO2 emissions and initiate reductions in transport-related CO2 emissions with the intention to move towards decarbonization of the transport sector by 2050, or shortly thereafter (Based on SDG 7.2, 9.1, 13.2, Paris Agreement).*



**2 Road Safety:** *By 2030, halve the number of deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents in Asia compared to 2020, with specific attention to vulnerable road users. (Based on SDG 3.6 and the second UN Decade of Action on Road Safety 2021 2030, Stockholm Declaration on Road Safety).*



**6 National Access and Connectivity:** *By 2030, realize sustainable economic and employment growth by leveraging science, technology and innovation and green investments in quality passenger and freight transport infrastructure and services in a manner that fully incorporates environmental and social impacts throughout the lifecycle of the transport infrastructure and services, (Based on SDG 8.4, SDG 9.1, 12.1 and 12.c).*

For each of these goals, internationally recognized organizations with vast expertise in their area have proposed Policy Action Recommendations that can help EST Forum participating countries achieve the Aichi 2030 Declaration. The EST Forum Secretariat will run country consultations on the Policy Action Recommendations in the forthcoming weeks to facilitate their endorsement at the High-level 15th EST Forum.

Organizers would like to thank the volunteering organizations for their valuable input and support to the EST Forum Initiative:

- For Aichi Goal 1A Climate Change Mitigation: the NDC-Transport Initiative Asia represented through Deutsche Gesellschaft für International Zusammenarbeit GIZ, the SLOCAT Partnership, and the Climate Compatible Growth Programme CCG.
- For Aichi Goal 2 Road Safety: the group led by the Asian Development Bank, comprising iRap, the Towards Zero Foundation, the Asian Pacific Road Safety Observatory, the World Health Organization WHO, and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific UN ESCAP.

- For Aichi Goal 6 National Access and Connectivity - Roads: the group led by the International Road Federation IRF, comprising the World Bank, the High-Volume Transport Programme HVT, and the Asian Development Bank.
- For Aichi Goal 6 National Access and Connectivity - Rail: the International Union of Railways UIC.

## Spotlight on Aichi Goal 2 Road Safety

With the Aichi 2030 Declaration, countries aim to *'halve the number of deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents in Asia in 2030 compared to 2020, with specific attention to vulnerable road users'*. Chaired by the Secretary General of the Ministry of Transport, Malaysia, the dedicated session on October 26 will provide insights on progress made and discuss options for increasing actions.

Adopting the Safe System approach, safety standards for safe vehicles as well as design and maintenance standards for safer roads figure among the key actions highlighted by the group of experts in their Policy Action Recommendations; ways to strengthen legislation and enforcement, to prioritize safe transport modes and better protect vulnerable road users, as well as the use and share of road safety data are also on the agenda for discussion. Countries will share their challenges and successes.

Jean Todt, the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for Road Safety will open the session with an inspirational message.

## Spotlight on Aichi Goal 6 National Access and Connectivity - Roads

Aichi Goal 6 formulates the objective to *'facilitate, by 2030, inclusive multi-modal national (including rural-urban) and regional (cross-border) connectivity through the provision of sustainable multi-modal freight and passenger transport infrastructure and services'*. On October 25, countries come together in the dedicated session *'Realizing Sustainable, Inclusive Economic Growth through Enhanced National Access and Connectivity'* to discuss actions to achieve this goal.

In its latest assessment, the Asian Transport Outlook finds that road infrastructure is disproportionately distributed globally: Asia and the Pacific region constitute about 58% of the global population and 47% of global GDP, but they only account for 31% of global road infrastructure. Road networks, when designed effectively and in complementarity with other modes, can be an engine of economic and social development by linking cities, rural areas, regions, and countries across borders.

Policy Actions Recommendations for the road sector provided by the group of experts revolve around five key areas: strengthening of road asset management; improved rural accessibility through better road networks, services, and integrated planning for rural development; the promotion of sustainable and green initiatives; strengthening resilience and disaster preparedness and monitoring and evaluation.

**Stay tuned for spotlights on Aichi Goal 6 National Access and Connectivity - Rail and Aichi Goal 1a Climate Change Mitigation in the October newsletter.**

## Countries preparing 'Call for Greater International Support'

The adoption of the Aichi 2030 Declaration by 21 EST Forum participating countries in 2021 constitutes an unprecedented regional commitment with time-bound targets toward safe, secure, reliable, affordable, efficient, people-centric, clean, and low-carbon passenger and freight transport in Asia.

While countries are committed to delivering their best efforts to achieve the Aichi 2030 Declaration, it seems unlikely that they can do so solely by their resources: the ambition of the declaration, the starting point of many countries with limited resources and capacities at their disposal, and only six years left suggest that they require greater international support.

“Already today, the transport sector in the EST Forum region cannot provide the level of access needed for countries’ sustainable development”, says C. R. C. Mohanty, Environment Programme Coordinator at UNCRD who acts as the Secretariat to the EST Forum. “Growing the sector and reducing its externalities at the same time is a particular challenge”.

At the occasion of the High-level 15th EST Forum, countries are expected to jointly appeal to the international community to significantly increase efforts in providing financial as well as capacity and policy development support that will help enable achieving the goals of the Aichi 2030 Declaration.

Asia plays a key role in achieving both the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, not just for its own growth but also for the benefit of the entire global community.

## Now available: Country-specific mapping of international activities supporting capacity and policy development in EST Forum participating countries

In late 2022, UNCRD carried out a first-of-its-kind mapping of the thematic and geographic scope of transport policy and capacity development support activities (PSA) run by international organizations in countries participating in the Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) Forum Asia. Among the key findings: Two-thirds of the 490 identified activities are run in seven out of 21 analyzed countries.

In preparation of the High-Level 15th EST Forum, UNCRD, with the support of ADB, provides a new country-specific analysis of international transport policy and capacity development support activities in EST Forum participating countries; the analysis intends to serve as a basis for discussions on how international support can be strengthened in line with the Aichi 2030 Declaration.

The country-specific analysis, the full report “*Mapping of International Transport Policy Support Activities in EST Forum Participating Countries: Scope and Alignment with the Aichi 2030 Declaration*”, the database and an interactive visualization tool are publicly available on the [UNCRD website](#).

## '2030 UIC Asia-Pacific Vision for Sustainable Rail Development' expected as a key outcome of the First Asia-Pacific Rails Summit

The first Asia-Pacific Rail Summit (APRS) jointly organized by the Ministry of Transport, Government of Malaysia, International Union of Railways (UIC), UNCRD and ADB will take place on October 23 in Kuala Lumpur as an integrated pre-event to the High-Level 15th Regional EST Forum.

As a key outcome of this summit, it is expected that countries will rally around a joint declaration of support for forward-looking policy actions that can make rail the backbone of the future of sustainable transport in Asia. The declaration will also feed into the High-level 15th EST Forum and its Chairman Summary.

The full-day event will host thematic sessions on: Railway Sustainable Development and Long-Term Planning, Railway Gender Equality, and Railway Project Funding and Financing.

For further information on the APRS, please contact [UIC\\_Asean\\_representative@uic.org](mailto:UIC_Asean_representative@uic.org)

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