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Sustainable Cities And Human Settlements

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The Role of Urban Transport in Sustainable Development

Keynote Address
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- Your excellencies, distinguished dignitaries, ladies and gentlemen.
Good morning.
- It is a great pleasure to provide these remarks and I would like to thank the Global Forum on Human Settlements for this opportunity.
- Please allow me to provide a perspective from the Asian-Pacific region as I represent the Asian Development Bank. I will also focus more on the role transport as an integral part of human settlements.
- In this regard ADB is pleased to partner with UNCRD on the Environmentally Sustainable Transport Forum for Asia which started in 2004 and recently held its 15th regional event in Malaysia. The Ministry of Environment, Japan has been instrumental in supporting and for the great success of EST over the years.
- The Aichi 2030 Declaration is the central delivery of the EST process and was adopted in 2021 with 6 clear goals on:
 - Environment sustainability
 - Road safety

- Economic sustainability
 - Rural access
 - Urban access
 - National access and connectivity
- Many of these goals are of direct importance for sustainable cities and human settlements. This clearly demonstrate the need for integrated multi sector collaboration and it is events such as this one that bring together a wide range of key decision makers and ensures we share our respective perspectives and ultimately to the delivery of more sustainable human settlements.
 - Transport is not an end by itself, it is a means for people, cities, societies, and countries to develop economically and socially. It is not possible to imagine our world without the transport systems that we have come to know and which we are using on a daily basis. At the same time there is a danger that we take the flaws that are associated with some urban transport systems for granted.
 - The growth and use of urban transport infrastructure and services is required to stimulate development, but we should refuse to accept that transport pollutes and kills people. We must strive for better and more sustainable urban transport systems.
 - Urban accessibility is key to sustainable cities. SDG indicator 11.2.1 is the “proportion of population that has convenient access to public transport is critical in this regard. The ADB is supporting the measurement of transport related SDGs through the Asian Transport Outlook database. Our estimates show that 1.3 billion

urban residents across Asia and the Pacific are without proper access to either transport infrastructure or services.

- We are in Dubai this week for the climate discussions of COP28. Sustainable low-carbon solutions are uniquely suited to secure economic and social development IF we make the right choices. For example, we should not oversimplify the discussion by just talking about electric vehicles replacing gasoline or diesel powered vehicles. While such a change addresses climate change it does not increase access, reduce congestion, or improve public transport services; nor does it make transport more safe.
- The sad reality is that climate change is already happening and its effects will become stronger in Asia. 60% of the global annual damage to infrastructure due to hazards is expected to happen in Asia while it has only about 30% of global transport infrastructure. Disasters are costing the region over \$30 billion annually and it is clear that we must look for ways to deliver more climate resilient transport systems.
- Road safety is also a series sustainability issue for urban areas. The latest available figures indicated an estimated 700,000 fatalities and 10.6 million serious injuries because of road crashes. Someone dies on our roads every 45 seconds.
- Urban air quality is also an important issue. Here we have some cautious optimism. We have passed the tipping point when it comes to road transport related air pollution which has improved

considerably because of effective policy action on vehicle emission standards and fuel quality.

- The recent global COVID pandemic had a major and direct impact on urban mobility, transport activity and emissions. COVID impacted the purchase and use of private vehicles and seriously hampered the use of public transportation. The impact of COVID on transport related CO2 emissions was that profound that till now in 50% of Asian countries transport related CO2 emissions have not rebounded to the 2019 levels.
- How can the transport sector support sustainable human settlements? We need to grow transport infrastructure and services to increase accessibility and we need to intensify our efforts to further reduce negative externalities.
- I would like to end with sharing how the organization that I represent - the ADB – is approaching its assistance to the urban transport sector in Asia. I believe that some of these will also apply to other multi- and bilateral development organizations represented here.
- As the transport sector in Asia is changing and our member countries are putting in place policies aimed at greater sustainability of the sector we need to consider what are the best projects that we can support.
- In order to come up with the right assistance for Asia to develop the transport sector and making it more sustainable ADB needs to

have the right information on the sector. This is why the ADB, together with the AIIB, will continue to support the Asian Transport Outlook and support strengthening policy discussions at the Regional EST Forum in Asia towards implementation of the Aichi 2030 Declaration (2021-2030). This open access resource is available to all and we hope that all of you will make good use of it.

- We are proud to be seen and recognized as the Climate Change bank for Asia and the Pacific. Since July of this year all of our projects are aligned with the objectives of the SDGs and Paris Agreement and our transport sector assistance is delivering half of ADB's climate change finance targets. That does not take away that the key role of transport lending is the development and growth of transport infrastructure and services to lift people out of poverty and ensure continued and sustainable economic development.
- Events such as this one today are unique opportunities. They bring together key a wide range of stakeholders. When we talk to each other our minds are broadened and our creative juices flow. We find solutions to problems that we may not normally have found if we remained in our silos. I wish all an informative, inspirational and valuable days discussions.