

FOR PARTICIPANTS ONLY
14 March 2017
ENGLISH ONLY

UNITED NATIONS
CENTRE FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In collaboration with

Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Lao People's Democratic Republic
Ministry of the Environment (MOE), Japan
Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport
United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and
United Nations Office for Sustainable Development

TENTH REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT (EST) FORUM IN ASIA,
14-16 MARCH 2017, VIENTIANE, LAO PDR

**Introducing the Vientiane Declaration on Sustainable Rural Transport towards Achieving the 2030
Agenda for Sustainable Development**

(Presentation for EST Plenary Session 4 of the Provisional Programme)

Final Draft

This presentation has been prepared by H.E. Mr. Viengsavath Siphandone, Ministry of Public Works and Transport, Lao PDR for the Tenth Regional EST Forum in Asia. The views expressed herein are those of the author only and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations.

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10th Regional EST Forum in Asia

Introducing the
Vientiane Declaration
on Sustainable Rural Transport
towards
Achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

by

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Preamble – Importance of Rural Transport

- Rural transport remains a grossly neglected sector in Asia, yet sustainable rural transport is a key driver for improving rural wellbeing, economic development, community empowerment as well as livelihood - and food security.
- Poverty, under nutrition, lack of access to agricultural markets, basic utilities and services (e.g. drinking water, energy, education and employment opportunities, health care facilities, and recreation sites) remain formidable challenges in the development of most of the rural areas in Asia.
- Environmental problems arising from vehicular emissions, lack of proper vehicle inspection and maintenance, fuel adulteration significantly affect rural inhabitants and ecosystems.
- Improved rural transport infrastructure and services are a key enabler to increased rural resiliency, rural empowerment and rural socio-economic transformation through poverty eradication, hunger elimination, social integration, increased food security and improved supply chain logistics.

Preamble - – Importance of Rural Transport

- Due to increasing frequency and magnitude of natural and climate-driven disasters (e.g. floods, cyclones, earthquakes, landslides, avalanches and droughts), rural transport systems require strategic investment and design to help increase resilience of rural communities.
- Climate adaptive and disaster resilient transport investments in rural areas can help secure all-season access to markets and essential services and prevent isolation of fragile or remote communities, thus contributing to economic development and well-being.
- Sustainable rural transport has vital implications towards achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs
- Developing and maintaining rural transport infrastructure (e.g. footpaths, tracks, trails, farm and feeder roads, railroads, waterways, bridges and drainage systems), expanding rural transport service networks to promote education and health in isolated areas, and improving rural transport access to provide enabling environments for trade and commerce are critical to achieve the SDGs.

Vientiane Declaration aims to complement major international agendas, goals and processes...

- Bangkok 2020 Declaration on EST (2010-2020) agreed upon at the Fifth Regional EST Forum in Asia (2010)
- Bali Declaration on Vision Three Zeros-Zero Congestion, Zero Pollution, and Zero Accidents towards Next Generation Transport Systems in Asia adopted at the Seventh Regional EST Forum in Asia and Global Consultation on Sustainable Transport in the Post-2015 Development Agenda (2013)
- the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030,
- the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Ethiopia in 2015
- the Istanbul Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020,
- the 2030 Agenda / Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- outcome of the Global Sustainable Transport Conference held on 26-27 November 2016 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

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- Transport Conference held on 26-27 November 2016 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
- the outcome of the UNESCAP Ministerial Conference on Transport held on 5-9 December 2016 in Moscow, Russian Federation, that adopted the Regional Action Programme on Sustainable Transport Connectivity, Phase I (2017-2021) including achieving greater rural connectivity as one of the core themes,

Voluntarily express our commitments to ...

- promote inclusive, affordable, accessible and sustainable rural transport infrastructure and services
- improve access to basic utilities and services including health and education by the rural poor, farmers, agricultural workers, girls and women, youth, and physically disabled and vulnerable groups
- Improve investments in new rural roads and ensure adequate maintenance of rural roads
- explore climate adaptive road and infrastructure investments in rural areas to enhance resilience of local communities
- promote EST in rural areas by introducing low-carbon transport system and avoiding road development without environmental consideration
- improve rural transport connectivity to wider local, national and regional transport networks;
- improve transport safety, sustainability and efficiency in rural areas
- explore innovative solutions to improve rural-urban connectivity; to improve and green supply chain logistics (from producers to consumers); to achieve safe and sustainable rural access; to achieve resource and energy efficiency in rural transport services; and to reduce local air and water pollution as well as mitigate, and adapt to climate change.

In the interest of the rural communities of Asia, Lao People's Democratic Republic makes an appeal to all the participating Member Countries of the 10th Regional EST Forum in Asia to support the adoption of the

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