

## **Policy Recommendations to be submitted to the Exchange of Views Session of 33<sup>rd</sup> COMCEC Session**

The 32<sup>nd</sup> COMCEC Session agreed on “Improving Transnational Transport Corridors in the OIC Member Countries” as the theme of the Exchange of Views of 33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the COMCEC and requested the COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group (TCWG) to come up with policy recommendations on the aforementioned topic and report it to the 33<sup>rd</sup> COMCEC Ministerial Session. In this framework, the Working Group, come up with the following challenges and problems as well as the possible policy options with regards to improving transnational transport corridors in the member countries.

### **Challenges and Problems:**

The TCWG, in line with the discussions during the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the COMCEC TCWG, highlighted the following possible challenges and problems:

- Limited awareness of relevant stakeholders, especially at the decision maker level, about the economic benefits of smooth functioning of international transport corridors,
- Weak political will among the enroute countries,
- Inadequate cooperation and coordination among the enroute countries including lack of a common framework and management system. This leads to ineffective coordination in terms of allocation of tasks and responsibilities, including planning and financial aspects, among the enroute countries as well as participating donor agencies,
- Lack of diversified Transnational Transport Strategies/Policies targeting the various needs of private sector,
- Inadequate, inaccurate, or outdated information about the operations concerning transnational transport corridors and effective data collection system,
- Low interoperability and lack of interconnections. In this respect, the main challenges are;
  - Inadequate interoperability among the road, rail and maritime modes of transport,
  - Insufficient harmonized business procedures among the enroute countries throughout the transport corridors,
  - Lack of ICT interconnectivity for travel planning, information and management
  - Mismatch between international conventions, national laws and regulations, and operational issues,

- The problems in addressing environmental challenges and providing seamless as well as reliable transport,
- Sub-optimal balance of traffic between road and rail,
- Political issues between the countries that result in trade restrictions and bottlenecks at border crossing points,
- Ensuring the sustainability of transport corridor infrastructure in terms of road maintenance and crucially averting significant losses in asset value,
- The high cost of insuring cargo in transit.

### **Policy Recommendations:**

In light of the above-mentioned challenges and problems, TCWG came up with a set of policy recommendations, which are critical for ensuring the smooth functioning of the existing transnational transport corridors in the OIC Member Countries.

#### **1. Political and institutional factors**

- Transforming transport routes to transport corridors with a permanent secretariat or strengthening the capacity of the established Secretariats,
- Developing a Corridor Treaty template as a benchmark for the utilization of enroute countries,
- Increasing awareness of the decision makers regarding the need for enhanced cooperation and coordination as well as shared responsibilities to improve the overall performance of the transnational transport corridors,
- Establishing national committees for trade and transport facilitation, comprising different ministries and stakeholders.

#### **2. Economic, financial and social factors:**

- Promoting simplification and streamlining of business processes/procedures among the enroute member countries including payments at the border crossing points or pre-payments in advance of reaching the borders,
- Increasing awareness of public and private stakeholders about the potential economic benefits of transnational transport corridors,
- Utilizing international resources including COMCEC Project Funding Mechanism to promote establishing corridor secretariats,
- Promoting “through railway tariff” among the countries along the corridor,
- Preparation of a master plan for the development of transport corridors including short, medium, and long term financing requirements,

- Engaging the private sector to develop, finance and manage transport corridor infrastructure in partnership with the public sector,
- Encouraging intra-trade and investments with a view to enhancing movement of people and work opportunities as well as reducing poverty along transport corridors.

### **3. Trade Facilitation:**

- Reviewing the existing trade agreements to identify relevant factors to remove non-physical barriers to trade,
- Stimulating intra-trade to increase demand towards the transnational transport corridors in the OIC region,
- Increasing the efficiency of customs inspection by creating One Stop Border Posts, utilizing risk management techniques (such as ASYCUDA system), green channeling and new technologies in customs,
- Developing an efficient trade statistic collection system,
- Promoting Single Window Systems,
- Facilitating visa issuance for business people and visa stickers for drivers.

### **4. Safety, security and legal liability:**

- Implementing the security-building measures/programs throughout transport corridors,
- Enhancing sharing experiences in road safety,
- Building road side service stations including rest areas to improve drivers' welfare and minimize fatigue,
- Promoting multimodal legal liability.

### **5. Technical and operational factors:**

- Improving the design standards of road and rail infrastructure including road/rail transfer nodes, gauge changing system, and border crossings,
- Ensuring the sustainability of transport corridor infrastructure including the maintenance of roads through the application of appropriate user charges,
- Harmonization of vehicle/operational standards, e.g. vehicle weights and dimension, and gross vehicle mass,
- Improving rail interoperability including a common driver licensing/certification and common conditions of carriage,
- Improving communications along the corridor including fibre optic cable and cargo tracking,
- Improving logistics infrastructure, such as multiple-user warehouses through enhanced coordination and cooperation among the relevant stakeholders,

- Increasing the number and quality of logistics centres along the corridors.

## **6. Environmental and energy factors**

- Promoting intermodal transport particularly encouraging the use of rail and maritime transport through investments in efficient mode transfer facilities,
- Stimulating the use of more environmentally friendly vehicles and vessels through incentives and regulation, for reducing carbon emissions and air pollutions along the corridor.

## **7. Corridor Performance Monitoring**

- Developing a data collection system along the corridors including but not limited to:
  - trade volumes and composition, including the movement of hazardous cargos
  - traffic flow and composition
  - journey time and vehicle speed
  - border crossing processing times
  - transit costs and fees
  - road accidents,
- Analyzing and disseminating the above-mentioned data for reporting on the performance of transport corridors and the implementation of the above policies.