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## ONE: INTRODUCTION

Recent political, economic and social developments in North-East Asia have highlighted the benefit of intensifying regional cooperation. In particular, the emergence of China as an active participant in the world market has substantially changed the size and structure of interregional transactions of commodity and capital in North-East Asia. Furthermore, the Russian Federation is expected to become a more important participant in North-East Asia's economy.

In the current international environment characterized by globalization and regionalization, transport and logistics system integration is a prerequisite for countries to maintain competitiveness and has become a key factor for sustained employment creation and economic growth. The case of the European Union (EU) provides an excellent example of transport integration that supports economic integration. The EU has been seeking to provide an integrated transport and logistics network throughout Europe by eliminating missing links, alleviating bottlenecks and securing interoperability of the network.

Although some of the countries in North-East Asia are the most economically active in the world, the transport and logistics network is neither sufficient nor well integrated at the international level.

In order to assist countries in the subregion in addressing these issues, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) jointly with the UNDP Tumen Secretariat and in collaboration with participating countries (China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Mongolia, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation) and with assistance of the Korea Transport Institute (KOTI) have initiated a project entitled *Integrated international transport and logistics system for North-East Asia*.

The main purpose of this project is to assist the member countries in North-East Asia in promoting an integrated approach to international transport and logistics planning and policy formulation. The project is focused on the following four areas:

- 1 formulation of an integrated international transport network in North-East Asia
- 2 review of existing transport and logistics infrastructure and development plans along the major transport routes in the North-East Asia
- 3 evaluation of performance of the Network and identification of infrastructure and institutional bottlenecks
- 4 the development of guidelines and action plans in collaboration with the participating countries for the operationalization and development of the Network.

The project will contribute to the development of a reliable and efficient international transport and logistics system in North-East Asia to improve efficiency, reduce costs and improve the level of services and thereby enhance the competitiveness of products of North-East Asian countries in the world market.

The present study summarizes the major findings of the project and consists of six chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2 reviews the existing international transport and logistics facilities in North-East Asia. In Chapter 3, an integrated international transport network is proposed. Chapter 4 evaluates performance and identifies bottlenecks in selected international transport corridors. Chapter 5 discusses the current international transport framework in North-East Asia. Finally, Chapter 6 proposes strategies and actions for the development of the integrated international transport and logistics system for North-East Asia.

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