

Policy Dialogue with ITF

Collaboration towards Inclusive and Resilient Transport

5 September 2025

Tokyo, Japan



POLICY HIGHLIGHTS
(Summary Record)

Notes

This document summarizes the key messages of “Policy Dialogue with ITF”, held on 5 September 2025, Tokyo, Japan. This policy dialogue was organized by Japanese government (Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, or MLIT) as a hybrid meeting. It has brought together international organisations (ITF), business and academia. It built on the discussion of previous collaborative activities among the ITF, MLIT, international organisations, business, and academia, particularly the discussion during the Side Event at ITF Summit 2025 (i.e., “Transport system resilience, connectivity and diversification in the face of climate change and other global shocks” and “ITF in Focus: “Driving Gender Equality for Resilient Transport”). The results will be taken forward to ITF Summit 2026 and related meetings.

For more information: “ITF: International Transport Forum (国際交通フォーラム)”(MLIT website, in Japanese)
https://www.mlit.go.jp/kokusai/kokusai_tk1_000023.html

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Preface

Inclusiveness and resilience are interconnected and essential elements in addressing the challenges faced by global communities, such as climate change, vulnerabilities and disruptions in global supply chains.

To make transport work even in times of crisis and make sure that no one is left behind, it is necessary to consider both inclusive and resilient aspects together. To achieve this, we need better policies for inclusive and resilient transport with enhanced public–private partnerships.

This policy dialogue focuses on inclusive and resilient aspects of key transport initiatives, namely:

- Part I: Building inclusive and resilient supply chains,
- Part II: Inclusive and resilient gender mainstreaming.

Key questions for discussion include:

- What kind of opportunities exist in terms of sustainable development in Central Asia through the middle-corridor development?(Part I:)
- How can we encourage stakeholders to utilize the middle corridor? (Part I:)
- How do transport disruptions affect different groups of transport users? What are the specific effects on women?(Part II)
- What role does women's representation in leading positions play in building more inclusive and resilient systems? (Part II)



Introduction

Opening Remarks: Importance of Inclusive and Resilient Transport

Mr. Yasaburo Hikasa, Director General for International Affairs at MLIT, welcomed participants and emphasized that inclusivity and resilience are interconnected and essential elements for addressing global challenges. He highlighted two key initiatives of MLIT: building inclusive and resilient supply chains, and inclusive and resilient gender mainstreaming. Mr. Hikasa noted that international logistics has been disrupted by global shocks such as pandemics, conflicts and disasters, making resilient transport networks crucial. He also mentioned that MLIT established a headquarters in May to advance gender mainstreaming initiatives, learning from practices abroad to enhance inclusiveness in transport in Japan.

Dr. Young Tae Kim, Secretary-General of ITF, first expressed appreciation for Japan's strong support for ITF activities. He emphasized that resilience has become a crucial topic due to challenges like COVID-19, geopolitical risks, and the current trade conflicts.

Dr. Kim announced that the ITF 2026 Summit would focus on "financing resilience" and mentioned upcoming high-level dialogues in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in November and Baku, Azerbaijan, in April 2026 on resilient systems and corridor development. He also expressed appreciation for Japan's progress on gender mainstreaming in the transport sector, noting that traditionally in Asia, the transport sector has been male dominated.



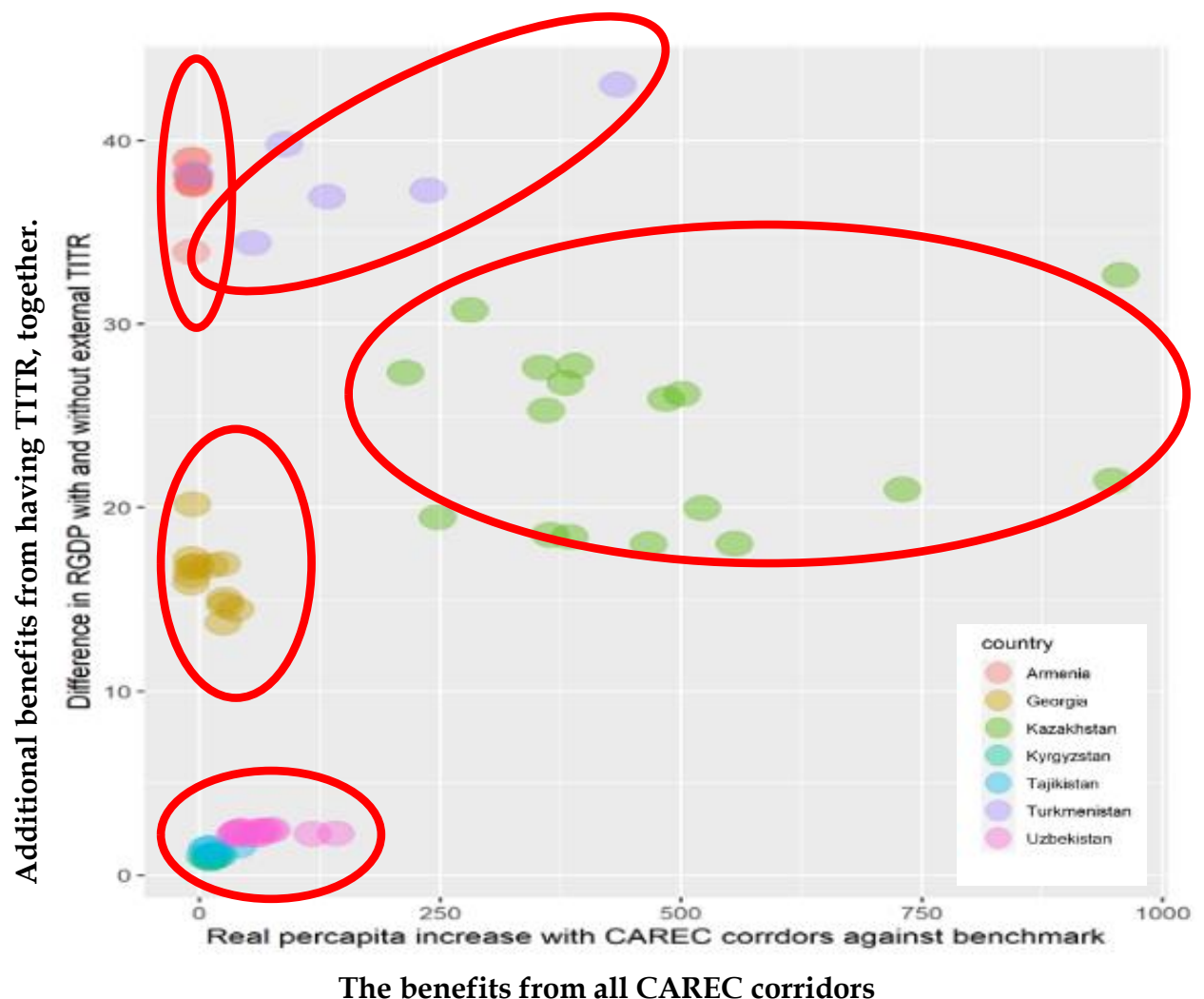
Part I: Building Inclusive and Resilient Supply Chains

Transport Corridors in Central Asia: Competition and Diversification

Professor Kenmei Tsubota, Toyo University, presented transport corridors in Central Asia, emphasizing the importance of competition within and beyond the region. He highlighted that route diversification brings healthy competition and that both transit demand and regional demand are important factors.

Professor Tsubota noted that the competitiveness of the Middle Corridor in central Asia has increased due to global conditions such as the current situation at the Suez Canal and the increased geopolitical tensions in the world.

Figures 1. Economic impacts



Source: Presentation materials by Professor Kenmei Tsubota at Policy Dialogue with ITF, 5 September 2025, Tokyo, Japan

Significant economic benefits extend beyond Central Asia

Professor Tsubota pointed out the technical challenges in developing cross-border corridors such as rail gauge differences among countries.

He emphasized that investing in multiple corridors rather than just one was ideal for budling resilience, highlighting the significant economic benefits that extend beyond Central Asia to other regions including China and Türkiye.



MLIT's Pilot Transportation Project on the Middle Corridor

Mr. Taketo Makino from MLIT presented findings from a 2024 pilot transportation project on the Middle Corridor. The project aimed to verify the feasibility of using the Middle Corridor as a new option for transportation between Japan and Europe. Five containers' cargos were transported between August and December, with journey times ranging from 60 to 171 days.

The project identified three major challenges: delays during transshipment at ports, container leasing delays due to longer transportation times, and waiting for ships due to severe weather conditions at ports in Kazakhstan.

Mr. Makino noted that the Middle Corridor the Caspian Sea route tended to be vulnerable to winter weather, with port closures from late November to late December and again after the early January. The wind seems to be relatively calm in summer in Aktau and Baku.

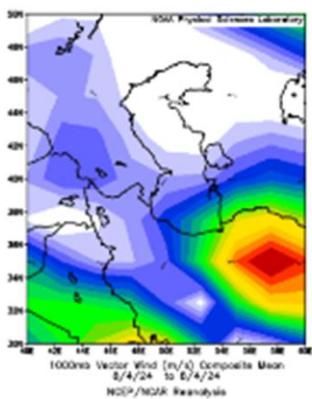
Despite these challenges, MLIT plans to conduct joint public-private sector business visits to the Caspian Sea route in fiscal year 2025 to enhance initiatives, encouraging Public-Private Partnerships including business matching activities.



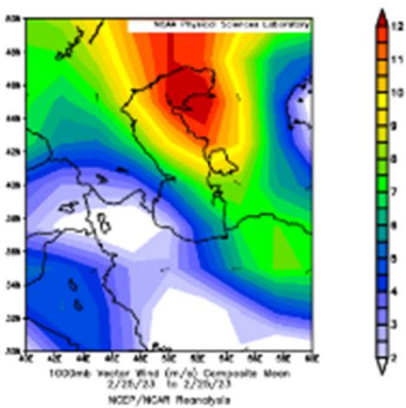
Figures 2. Difference in wind intensity between Aktau and Baku in summer and winter

単位:m/s	2024/01 AVG	2024/02 AVG	2024/08 AVG	2025/01 AVG	2025/02 AVG
Aktau	6.0	6.4	4.5	6.3	6.0
Baku	4.9	5.4	5.0	3.7	4.4

Summer wind intensity image



Winter wind intensity image



Note: Data/image provided by the NOAA/OAR/PSL, Boulder, Colorado, USA, from their Web site at <https://psl.noaa.gov/>

Source: NOAA Physical Sciences Laboratory

Nissin Corporation's Experience with Middle Corridor Pilot Shipments

Mr. Makoto Ozeki from Nissin Corporation shared experience with the Middle Corridor from the pilot transportation project, based on the findings from their two pilot shipments. One shipment from Nagoya to Kocaeli, Türkiye took 98 days, while another from Nagoya to Ghent, Belgium took 143 days.

He emphasized that cargo was not moving for about 60% of the total transit time, indicating potentials for further advancements in reducing transportation time in the future.

Despite current inefficiencies, Mr. Ozeki highlighted that the Middle Corridor is the only available transportation route for his company regarding land transportation services from Japan to Europe on the Eurasian continent, making it important as a Business Continuity Planning route; in case of emergencies with the maritime route via the Cape of Good Hope.

He suggests that a public-private partnership platform is necessary to share information about the Middle Corridor among Japanese companies to draw

their attentions on the importance of the corridor development.

He also introduced some of their activities related to the Middle Corridor, which included participating in the international conferences as a speaker of side event on “Transport system resilience, connectivity and diversification in the face of climate change and other global shocks” at ITF Summit 2025.



Participation in the side event of ITF 2025(@Leipzig, Germany) with MLIT



17th ITF(international Transport Forum) Summit



The International Transport Forum (ITF) is an organization under the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), established in 2006 as a more globalized version of the European Transport Ministers' Meeting. Its 69 member countries, private companies, and experts exchange high-level, open opinions on transport policy and conduct transport-related research. It is the only international organization dealing with all modes of transport, including land, sea, and air. The Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) invited Nissin, representing Japanese logistics companies, to a side event at the 17th ITF Summit, held in Leipzig, Germany on May 21, 2025.



(Audience of the Side Event)



(Kazuhito Yoda from Nissin Corporation)



(Panel Discussion between ITF, MLIT, MoESD of Georgia, Toyota Tsusho and Nissin)

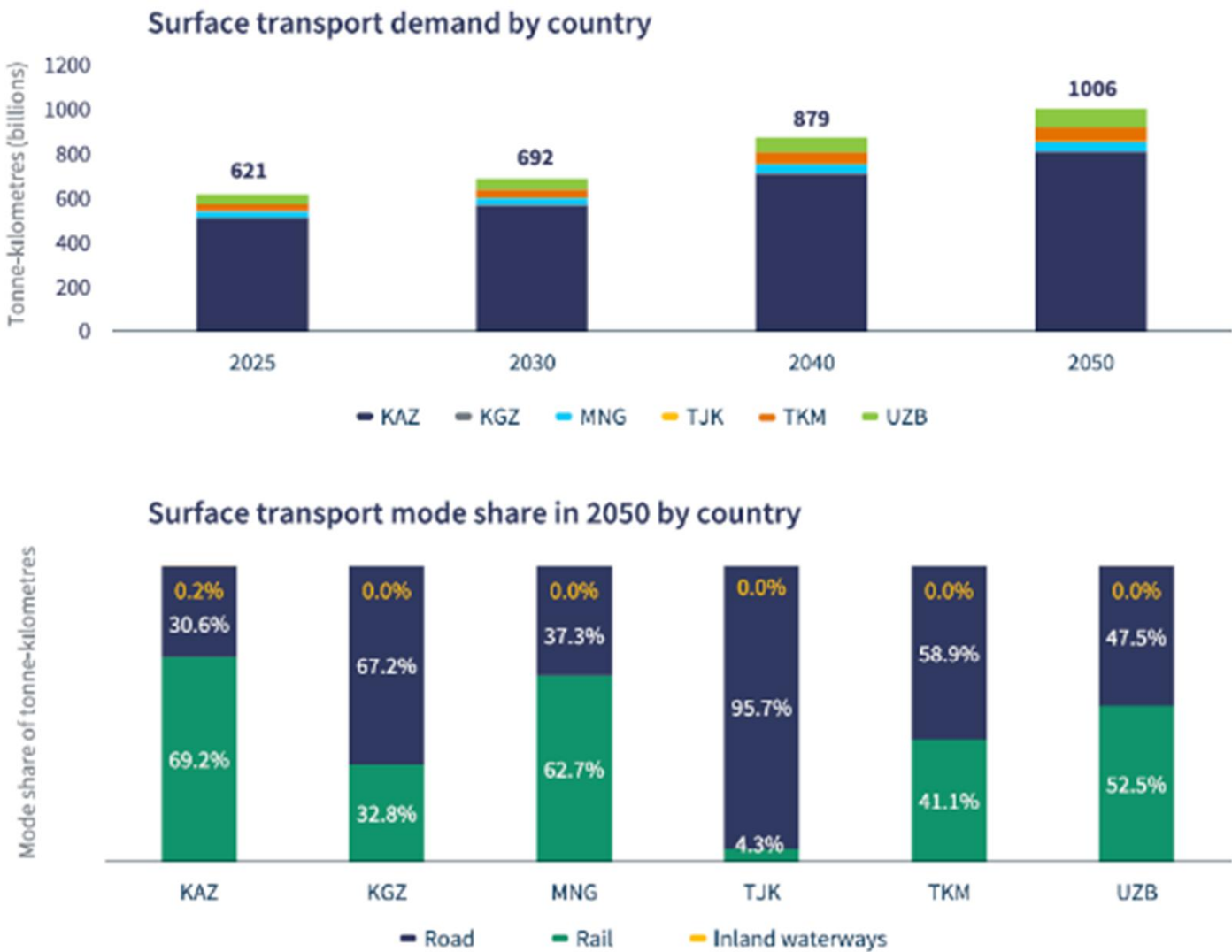
ITF Research on Freight Transport in Central Asia

Mr. Yaroslav Kholodov, Policy Analyst of ITF, presented research on enhancing connectivity, sustainability, and resilience of regional freight transport in Central Asia. The study, part of the SIPA (Sustainable Infrastructure Program in Asia), examined three policy scenarios: business as usual, high ambition connectivity, and high ambition connectivity with decarbonization.

The research showed that freight demand in Central Asia is set to rise sharply, reaching one billion ton-kilometers by 2050, with Kazakhstan covering around 70% of total trade volume.



Figures 3. Baseline transport demand projections



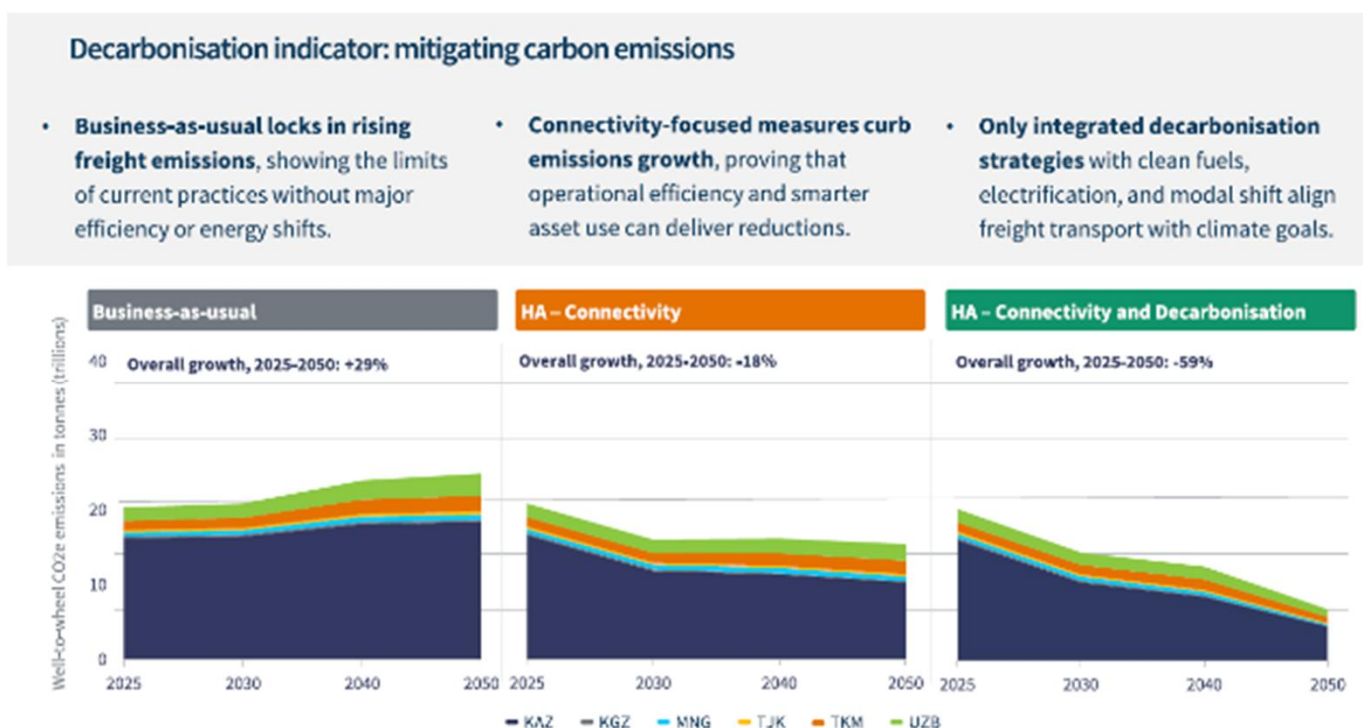
Source: “Enhancing the connectivity, sustainability, and resilience of regional freight transport in Central Asia”, International Transport Forum Policy Papers (2025) , OECD Publishing, Paris.

Connectivity and decarbonization policies could reduce transport costs

The study found that implementing connectivity and decarbonization policies could reduce transport costs by around 35% and cut emissions by around 60% by 2050.

Mr. Kholodov recommended strengthening cross-border rail corridors, expanding dry ports and logistics hubs, digitalization of cargo tracking and border procedures, increasing rail electrification, and building resilience into transport networks.

Figures 4. Decarbonisation indicator: mitigating carbon emissions



Figures 5. Highlighted policy recommendations: regional level



Source: "Enhancing the connectivity, sustainability, and resilience of regional freight transport in Central Asia", International Transport Forum Policy Papers (2025), OECD Publishing, Paris.

Box1. Towards resilient and inclusive freight transport policies

The discussion session of Part I: “Building Inclusive and Resilient Supply Chains” included comments from various participants.

- What kind of opportunities exist in terms of sustainable development in Central Asia through the middle-corridor development?

■ Mr. Yaroslav Kholodov, Policy Analyst of ITF

The Middle Corridor is not only important for Central Asia’s development, but also a strategic opportunity for Japan. As Central Asian economies grow, with rising purchasing power and a shift towards higher-value production, demand for imported consumer goods, machinery, and advanced technologies will increase. At present, a large share of these imports come from Russia, China, and Korea, but the development of efficient Middle Corridor routes could also make Japanese goods more competitive in the region.

For Japan, the Corridor offers a dual opportunity. It provides a resilient transit link to Europe, reducing reliance on longer and more vulnerable maritime routes.

At the same time, it opens direct access to Central Asia’s expanding consumer and industrial markets, while also creating reliable channels for Central Asian exports—from energy and minerals to agricultural products—to reach Japan and global markets more efficiently. This two-way flow strengthens trade interdependence and makes the corridor more commercially viable.

Equally important, Japan has the technological expertise to help build the corridor on sustainable foundations. Rail electrification, clean fuels including hydrogen, digital logistics platforms, and climate-resilient infrastructure are all areas where Japanese knowledge and innovation can make a decisive difference. Supporting this development would not only facilitate greener, more reliable trade flows, but also position Japan as a long-term partner in shaping sustainable connectivity between Europe and Asia.

- How can we encourage stakeholders to utilize the middle corridor?

■ Mr. Taketo Makino, Director, MLIT

To increase the convenience of the Middle Corridor, it is essential to reduce costs and transportation times of the corridor. It is necessary to make the Middle Corridor more widely known to shippers.

For Japanese shippers and logistics companies to consider the Middle Corridor as an option, MLIT plans to establish a consortium for encouraging information sharing among shippers, logistics companies, and other related parties.

■ Dr. Young Tae Kim, Secretary-General of ITF

ITF has focused on the Central Asian connectivity issue within the overarching framework established by the SIPA initiative. The discourse previously centered on efficiency, specifically the number of days required for transportation from one point to another. However, recently, the ITF has shifted its focus to decarbonizing transport.

The traditional maritime route accounts for about 90% of global logistics transportation and generates a significant amount of CO2 emissions. Furthermore, developing the Middle Corridor in a sustainable way would not only result in more economic benefits by reducing transport time, but also potentially contribute to decarbonizing our future society from a global perspective. It is important to consider integrating diverse viewpoints when addressing the Middle Corridor.

■ Mr. Yasaburo Hikasa, Director General for International Affairs at MLIT

The Middle Corridor holds great significance as it enhances international logistics diversification and strength. In addition to the user perspective of the corridor, exploring Japan's contribution to this region is essential, including the road improvement process etc. It is also necessary to balance out efficiency, decarbonization and cost.

The development of the Middle Corridor requires strong collaboration with partner countries and relevant organizations, involving a wide range of stakeholders.

Part II: Inclusive and Resilient Gender Mainstreaming

ITF Project on Transport Network Resilience from a Gender Perspective

Ms. Yukari Kasahara presented a new ITF project on transport network resilience to critical events from a gender perspective. The project aims to improve understanding of the intersection between gender equality and transport resilience, identify knowledge gaps, and develop policy recommendations.

Ms. Kasahara explained that the ITF has worked on gender issues for more than 10 years and has published reports and discussion papers. The previous ITF research has shown that mobility is gendered, with women performing a greater share of care work and house tasks, which influences their travel patterns. In many countries, women adapt job choices to accommodate domestic responsibilities—working closer to home or part-time. These overlapping responsibilities often result in complex mobility routines marked by trip chaining.

The new project will examine how crises affect women's mobility differently due to their different travel patterns, responsibilities, and access to resources.



Figure 6. Transport Network Resilience to Critical events: A Gender Perspective

Transport Network Resilience to Critical events: A Gender Perspective

- **Gender influences transport resilience:**

Women's mobility patterns differ due to greater care responsibilities, time constraints, and trip chaining, which affect their mode choices and adaptation strategies during crises.

- **Crises amplify gender inequalities:**

Extreme events often worsen pre-existing disparities by limiting women's ability to move freely and safely, influenced by unequal power relations and intersecting factors.

- **Innovative gender-sensitive approaches needed:**

Traditional crisis management overlooks gendered impacts. Qualitative data is necessary to capture these effects adequately.

Gender Mainstreaming Initiatives for Inclusive and Resilient Transport

Ms. Emiko Araki, MLIT briefed the meeting on Japan’s policy trend on Gender mainstreaming for inclusive and Resilient transport.

She shared collaborative efforts with the ITF and its impact on policy making trends. The successful seminar on gender and transport in July last year in Tokyo with the ITF encouraged the ministry to set up a task force composed of female staff at MLIT to exchange ideas and integrate gender perspectives into policy formulations. This effort fed into the final report on the team discussion published last March.

Ms. Araki introduced a few key policy agendas in Japan, highlighting the importance of addressing "transport deserts" in rural and low-density areas, where inadequate transport options can exacerbate inequality. She emphasized that user-focused design considering gender perspectives is essential for building transport resilience in the region and contributing to regional revitalization by bridging gaps in public transport. This can be achieved through a flexible approach such as Demand-Responsive services where fixed routes are not feasible.

She also discussed the importance of incorporating gender perspectives in disaster response planning. Drawing on Japan's extensive experience with natural disaster, it strongly supports Women, Peace, and Security(WPS) and emphasizes the integration of Disaster Risk Reduction and reconstruction perspectives into WPS efforts.

Encouraging women to assume leadership roles in enhancing resilience in community is crucial for systematically incorporating resilience into transport, considering gender-specific impacts. Meaningful participation of diverse women in decision-making processes and leadership roles throughout crisis planning, response, and recovery stages is essential for achieving these goals.



Figure 7. Building transport resilience in a transport desert

➤ Regional Revitalization 2.0

➤ Utilizing a lens of gender



Source(photos, images):
White Paper on land, infrastructure, transport and tourism, Japan 2024(MLIT),
https://www.mlit.go.jp/sogoseisaku/transport/sosei_transport_tk_000237.html

Analysis of Trip Patterns from a Gender Perspective: Japanese Case Studies

Ms. Yuki Tanaka, former Director General for International Affairs at MLIT, presented an analysis of trip patterns from a gender perspective using Japanese examples.

She highlighted that "care mobility", such as trips for shopping, picking up children, is a significant burden for women in Japan. Ms. Tanaka noted that the burden of pickup and drop-off of children was overwhelmingly biased towards young women. She argued that the transport policy should focus not only on commuting and going to school, but also on care work and care mobility.

Ms. Tanaka has stated that women are always more impacted than men by a crisis. She has emphasized the importance of considering the theme of resilience, highlighting that women, who have different trip patterns and usually bear the burden of care mobility, suffer even without a crisis in terms of transport, so the situation will worsen if a disaster occurs. She has emphasized that building resilience during an emergency should be followed by understanding the normal situation and the situation of care mobility, which is one of the major challenges we must face.



Box2. Towards gender mainstreaming transport policies

The discussion session Part II: "Inclusive and Resilient Gender Mainstreaming" included comments from various participants.

■ Ms. Magdalena Olczak, Senior Manager of ITF

The new project at ITF on gender looks at how crisis affects women's mobility differently from other transport users because of women's different travel patterns and responsibilities and access to resources.

In times of crisis, household roles shift dramatically, often reshaping traditional gender responsibilities, and that women face specific challenges in disaster contexts.

Gender roles shape transport vulnerabilities, and women face specific and greater challenges in disaster contexts. When women's needs are recognized, recovery efforts become more inclusive and effective.

Creating tools to capture women's mobility experience and incorporating gender considerations systematically is essential. Experience in developing resilient policies in Japan has a potential to contribute to shape this work.

■ Dr. Haruki Sawamura, research officer of the PRILIT (PRILIT)

PRILIT has initiated a research project analyzing the most updated available mobility data to better understand the mobility pattern of woman, child raising family and young people in Japan to give concrete and visible data. PRILIT also learns from policies in other OECD member countries to understand and collect best practices in this field.

■ Mr. Akihiro Obata, Director of the Policy Division for Inclusive Society at MLIT

The transportation sector has achieved significant development, including the expansion of subways, the increase of Shinkansen networks, and the establishment of more airports. At the same time, the actual business situation remains unchanged, with a male-dominated society, which has not been adequately addressed in the past and must be addressed moving forward.



Final discussion before Closing

Dr. Kim emphasized that transport ministries need to broaden their scope beyond physical infrastructure to address societal issues like decarbonization and gender equality.

Mr. Hikasa acknowledged that the concept of gender mainstreaming, initially introduced through international discussions, is progressively transforming the ministry and enhancing policy development. He expressed his appreciation of maintaining a close collaboration with the ITF, anticipating a positive future for all stakeholders.



Closing Remarks

Mr. Shigeru Yoneyama, President of the Policy Research Institute for Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (PRILIT), delivered closing remarks, thanking participants and emphasizing the importance of strengthening collaboration among ITF, private sector, academic experts, and MLIT in pursuit of inclusive and resilient transport.

He also shared some of the Japan's engagement with the Transport Research Committee (TRC), hoping for the outcomes of TRC's activities will continue to be reflected in ITF's initiative and will foster high-level and open dialogue on transport policy.



Acknowledgements

MLIT is grateful for collaborative activities among the ITF, business, and academia.

MLIT is particularly grateful to the ITF for its informational support as well as its engagement with Japan at stages in the process of “Policy Dialogue with ITF”, held on 5 September 2025, Tokyo, Japan. The speakers of this policy dialogue from the ITF side include Young Tae KIM (Secretary-General, ITF), Magdalena OLCZAK (Senior Manager, Summit Preparation, ITF (Online)), Yukari KASAHARA (Senior Policy Analyst, ITF) and Yaroslav KHOLODOV (Policy Analyst, ITF (Online)).

The speakers of this policy dialogue from the Japanese side include Yasaburo HIKASA (Director-General for International Affairs, MLIT), Kenmei TSUBOTA (Professor at Department of Regional Development Studies, Faculty of Global and Regional Studies, Toyo University), Taketo MAKINO (Director, International Logistics Office, Logistics and Road Transport Bureau, MLIT), Akihiro OBATA (Director, Policy Division for Inclusive Society, MLIT), Emiko ARAKI (Director, International Cooperation Office, MLIT), Shigeru YONEYAMA (President, PRILIT), Haruki SAWAMURA (Research officer, PRILIT), Yuki TANAKA (the former Director-General for International Affairs, MLIT) and Makoto OZEKI (Deputy General Manager, Global Business Department (Deputy Secretary General of Coordinating Council on TransEurasian Transportation), NISSIN CORPORATION). The moderator of the policy dialogue is Hisashi HARAGUCHI (Director for International Negotiations, International Policy Division, Policy Bureau, MLIT).



This document summarises the key messages of “Policy Dialogue with ITF”, held on 5 September 2025, Tokyo, Japan.

Consult this document online at https://www.mlit.go.jp/kokusai/kokusai_tk1_000023.html (in Japanese) .

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