

## Greater Tumen Initiative and its Activities in the Transport Sector

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The Greater Tumen Initiative (GTI) (originally known as the Tumen River Area Development Programme – TRADP) is a unique intergovernmental cooperation mechanism in Northeast Asia (NEA), supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with a membership of four countries: People's Republic of China, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, and Russian Federation. The main goal of GTI to promote economic cooperation in Northeast Asia, in particular the Greater Tumen Region, to achieve greater growth and sustainable development for the people and countries in the region.

The core decision-making body of the GTI is the Consultative Commission composed of government representatives from the member countries which meet on an annual basis. An executive office of the programme is the Tumen Secretariat, associated with UNDP.

According to the GTI Strategic Action Plan 2006 – 2015, the transport is one of the five priority sectors for the GTI.

At the 10th meeting of the Consultative Commission (March 2009, Ulaanbaatar), the government participants decided to establish the Transport Board to develop a proper transport infrastructure and logistical network. The Board is composed of one senior government official and two other officials from each GTI member country and will be convened once a year. The main tasks of the Board will be as follows:

- joint actions for promoting increased cargo flow,
- development of new transport corridors,
- support of cross-border transport projects,
- coordination of transport policies in the region.

The first meeting of the GTI Transport Board is scheduled to be held in July 2010.

As authorized by the GTI Consultative Commission, a number of concrete projects were identified as "GTI projects" for joint realization including 5 projects in the transport sector. The Tumen Secretariat is promoting these projects through facilitating communication among the parties concerned, advocating the projects for the public at large and identifying potential investors and partners. The GTI transport projects include NEA Ferry Route (Sokcho – Niigata – Zarubino – Hunchun), Modernization of Zarubino Port in Russia, Mongolia-China Railway Construction, Resumption of Hunchun-Makhalino railway, Road & Harbor project on China-DPRK border.

In the course of promotion activities for the GTI transport projects, on 18 December 2009, in Hunchun, China, the Tumen Secretariat in cooperation with Hunchun municipal government held the GTI Transport Workshop which brought together over 50 officials and business people from GTI countries and Japan. The participants discussed the pending issues of the implementation of the NEA Ferry Route project, also known as sea-land line Sokcho – Niigata – Zarubino – Hunchun, and the activation and development of the Tumen River Transportation Corridor.

Though the NEA Ferry Route project inaugurated in July 2009 is an outstanding example of the multilateral cooperation among four countries of NEA, it encounters a number of difficulties. To ensure smooth implementation of this project, it is essential for involved countries to make joint efforts

- to simplify border crossing procedures and formalities, in particular to facilitate visa issues,
- to optimize customs procedures and formalities for cargo transportation,

- to harmonize and simplify legal procedures of the GTI countries for cargo transit operations.

The Tumen River Transportation Corridor is attached with a high significance for the improvement of transport network in the region. In order to transform the potential of this corridor into reality, the multilateral cooperation in the region should be strengthened. The issues of the corridor's competitiveness and necessity to secure mutual benefits for the countries concerned are the most critical ones for its activation and further development. The joint projects on the integrated development of this corridor, including those for the assessment of potential demand for future cargo movements throughout the corridor, could contribute significantly to its promotion.

Serving as a secretariat for the GTI Transport Board, the Tumen Secretariat/UNDP will continue working closely with the central and local authorities, private sector and experts involved in order to improve the transportation system in NEA, to develop international transportation corridors within the region, and to increase cargo and passenger flows.