

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION
FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC**

**TOURISM DEVELOPMENT
ALONG THE
ASIAN HIGHWAY**



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INTRODUCTION

Cooperative efforts to develop international road transport in Asia began in 1959 as the Asian Highway project. The aim has been to facilitate international trade and tourism. The member countries of ESCAP participating in the project had an active interest in the Asian Highway project based on a keen understanding of the benefits for economic growth and sustained regional cooperation.

Facilitating travel along the Asian Highway for tourism purposes could clearly make a major contribution to economic development, increased social interactions and better understanding among a great number of Asian countries. Progress on the Asian Highway project has had a varied pace over the last 40 years, but since the late 1980s, the demand for reliable and efficient transport by road to facilitate tourism and trade has been growing.

Starting in the early 1990s, ESCAP has been undertaking a number of activities to promote international road transport along the Asian Highway under a regional project that aims to assist in providing transport infrastructure linking Asia to Europe, thereby promoting regional and international cooperation.

Countries linked by the Asian Highway share a wealth of historical and cultural heritage and unspoiled natural beauty. These countries could join hands in promoting tourism along the highway under a common tourism banner. Promotion of tourism along the Asian Highway would provide excellent opportunities to strengthen regional cooperation and contribute to social and economic development.

The Commission at its fifty-second session suggested that ESCAP should initiate activities to promote tourism along the Asian Highway. In pursuance of this suggestion, a questionnaire survey was conducted by the secretariat to identify major tourism attractions along the Asian Highway. The purpose of this paper is to present the results of that survey, analyze the various opportunities and obstacles encountered by various countries and suggest actions that might be taken at the national and regional levels to promote tourism along the highway.

At the country level, government agencies responsible for road construction and tourism could more closely coordinate their efforts in order to take the steps necessary to improve the network and promote tourism along the Asian Highway. Such inter-agency cooperation and coordination is important because improved road conditions represent a crucial infrastructure element for tourism development. In some countries, government investment to support tourism development has already focused on improvement of road conditions through close coordination among tourism and road construction agencies.

The social and economic benefits from tourism could help to rationalize the government budget allocations that are required to improve road conditions. In this context, it is thus worthwhile to consider the economic benefits of tourism. The tourism industry can make a significant contribution by earning foreign exchange. As a service industry, tourism is labour-intensive, plays a significant role in generating employment opportunities and helps reduce unemployment rates. Tourism provides an important way to expand a country's economic base through linkages with the agricultural, industrial and service sectors. Tourism can also help reduce regional disparities in income and employment, since areas suitable for tourism development are often situated far from the main centres of economic activity.

Against this background, the ESCAP questionnaire survey identified major tourist attractions along the Asian Highway in eighteen countries, namely Armenia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Turkmenistan and Viet Nam. Government tourism agencies responding to the survey have selected tourist attractions that are now accessible or have the potential to be accessible by the Asian Highway. Various actions that could be taken at national and regional levels to further promote tourism were also identified by the tourism agencies which completed the questionnaire. There is also information on major problems related to the Asian Highway and access routes to important tourist attractions. Actions are also suggested for promoting tourism along the highway in the future.

I. TOURISM ATTRACTIONS ALONG THE ASIAN HIGHWAY

A. Profile of major tourist attractions

Government tourism agencies in eighteen countries have identified major tourist attractions that are now accessible or have the potential for access by the Asian Highway. The profiles are based on information from responses to questionnaires received from the government tourism agencies.

1. Armenia

(a) *Lake Sevan*

(Asian Highway route number: A 68, road number M 4)

Lake Sevan is located 66 km from the capital city of Armenia, Yerevan. It can be reached by air from Yerevan, and by road from Yerevan and other towns. Lake Sevan is located 1,900 meters above sea level and is a lake famous for having some of the sweetest water in the world. The territory around Lake Sevan is rich in historical and archaeological monuments and it has been made a national park. Along the shore there are a number of bungalows and rest houses. The ancient Lchashen Settlement, with its mausoleums, is one of the most visited tourist sites in the Lake Sevan region. Its abundant archaeological materials consist of arms, ornaments and various tools dating to the second and third millennium B.C. A wooden doorway built in 1486 at Gavith and the churches of the Sevan Monastery Complex are of outstanding interest relating to the history of Armenian art. A well-known fish, the Ishrhan, is considered to be the queen of Lake Sevan. The climate is cool and dry, making it an ideal place to relax.

(b) *Tathev Monastery*

(Asian Highway route number: A 69, road number H 45)

Tathev Monastery is located in Siunik Province and is 35 km from the major provincial city of Goris. It can be reached by road from Yerevan and other towns. It was founded in the fourth century and was considered as a religious and education centre for the region from the ninth century. Tathev Monastery was more than a spiritual centre as an episcopate; it was also a scientific institution with its famous university founded over a period from 1390 to 1435. A major church of the Monastery dedicated to the Apostles Poghos (Paul) and Petros (Peter) was constructed between 895 and 906.

In 1770, this major church was invaded by the Turkish Seljuks. Tathev Monastery was destroyed during an earthquake in 1936 and has been under reconstruction until the present.

(c) Gladzor University and Noravank

(Asian Highway route number: A 69, road number H 47)

Gladzor is 3 km and Noravank is 16 km from Yegeonadzor. Both can be reached by road from Yerevan and other towns, as well as by rail from Yerevan. Gladzor University was well-known historically as an educational and scientific academy. Its name was mentioned in writings dating from 1291 and study at the University continued until 1390. The miniature of Gladzor is one of the schools of medieval Armenia which had close links with other examples of monumental art and culture.

Noravank was a well-known spiritual centre of Siunik, one of the 15 provinces of historic Armenia. There were two churches built at Noravank in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but they do not exist today. The present monuments were built in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The territory of Noravank is rich in numerous carved cross stones (Khachkar) and interesting engravings.

(d) Garni and Geghard

(Asian Highway route number: A 68, road number H 3)

Garni and Geghard are located 32 km from Abovvan town and 45 km from Yerevan. They are accessible by road from Yerevan. The pagan temple of Garni was built in the second millennium B.C. and it was the most ancient fortress of Armenia. It represented power as the headquarters of Armenian forces and as a summer residence for kings. The remains of its ramparts are preserved today and date from the second and third centuries B.C. There are remnants of mosaics of the palace and the bath rooms which are of great interest. The ancient pagan temple of Garni was destroyed by an earthquake in 1679.

Geghard Monastery was founded after Christianity was adopted as the state religion. It took its name from a Sacred Spear kept there in the thirteenth century. A chapel and a tomb hall are among the most memorable constructions representing architecture from the Armenian middle ages, with carved cross-stones and rock-cut chambers. These monuments attract numerous tourists. The territory is characterized by unspoiled natural beauty with surrounding mountain ranges.

(e) Sanahin and Haghpat Monasteries

(Asian Highway route number: A 79, road number M 3)

Sanahin is 2 km and Haghpat is 12 km from Alaveroi, and both are easily accessible by land from Yerevan and other towns. For 900 years, the Monastery of Sanahin was the largest and most famous spiritual centre of northern Armenia since it was founded in 966. Sanahin Monastery complex is composed of three churches and three gavitsh. The whole complex of Haghpat

Monastery dates back to the period from the tenth to the thirteenth century. It comprises several churches, gaviths, column halls, carved walls and many noteworthy cross-stones. The walls of the monuments are covered with ancient inscriptions and memorials from ancient Armenian literature. Famous spiritual leaders and secular scientists are buried there. The territory of Sanahin and Haghpat Monasteries are also rich in various medieval monuments.

2. Bangladesh

(a) *Cox's Bazaar (Sea resort on the Bay of Bengal)*

(Asian Highway route number: A 41 south-eastern end of Dhaka-Chittagong-Cox's Bazaar section)

Cox's Bazaar town is accessible by road and air from Dhaka, Chittagong Port City and the rest of the country. Cox's Bazaar is a long, unbroken sandy beach 120 km long, said to be the longest in the world. Major tourist attractions include Buddhist temples at Cox's Bazaar town, Ramu and Hindu and Buddhist temples on Moheshkhali Island; as well as tribal life and culture in and around Cox's Bazaar town, adjoining areas and off-shore islands.

(b) *Port city of Chittagong—city of shrines*

(Asian Highway route number: A 41 Dhaka-Chittagong section)

Chittagong is located in the south-eastern part of the country. The city has easy accessibility from different directions by road, rail, water and air transport. Chittagong is the second largest city and major port city of the country. Major attractions include panoramic Foy's lake, religious shrines of Bayazid Bostami, Shah Amant Shah, Ethnological Museum, Court Building, Second World War Cemetery, etc. The beach at Patenga on the Bay of Bengal, 16 km from the city centre and the Temple of Chandranath on the Sitakunda Hill, 40 km from the city, are worth a visit.

(c) *Mainamati (archaeological site of a seventh century Buddhist Monastery)*

(Asian Highway route number: A 41 Dhaka-Chittagong Section)

Minamati is located in Comilla, which is easily accessible by road and rail from Dhaka, Chittagong and rest of the country. Major tourist attractions include archaeological evidence of Buddhist Vihara (monasteries) of the seventh to twelfth century A.D., namely Salban Vihara, Kotila Mura, Charpatra Mura, etc. A site museum near Salban Vihara has a rich collection of terra cotta plaques, bronze statues and caskets, coins, jewellery utensils of Chandra and Deva dynasties. The Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) is also worth a visit.

(d) *Sylhet (land of tea, orange groves, holy shrines and hill-tribes)*
(Asian Highway route number: A 1 Dhaka-Sylhet Section)

Sylhet town is accessible by road, rail and air transport, and is located in the north-east of the country. The district is dotted with hills and hillocks, tea-estates and orange groves and sanctified by the holy shrines of Hazrat Shah Jalal and Hazrat Shah Paran. Hill-tribes such as the Tipprās, the Monipuris, the Khashia and Garoes bear testimony to the ancient quality of the place. The religious shrine of Hazrat Shah Jalal, the temple of Sri Chaitanya Dev and rich tribal culture, including the famous Monipuri Dance are major tourist attractions. Other attractions are Madhabkunda water fall, the splendid scenic beauty of Tamabil-Jaflong and Srimongal, the tea capital of Bangladesh.

(e) *Mahasthangarh*
(Asian Highway route number: A 2 Dinajpur-Dhaka Section)

Mahasthangarh, located 18 km from Bogra town, is an archaeological site of the third century B.C. It is a Buddhist citadel which is the most ancient of its type in this part of the world. Mahasthangarh is accessible by road and rail. This site features ruins of a huge citadel measuring 1,524 meters long by 1,371 meters wide, with an average height 4.5 meters above the surrounding paddy fields. Other archaeological remains include Govinda Bhita Temple, Khodai Pathar Mound, Mankalir Kunda, Parsuramer Bedi, Jiyat Kunda, etc. The famous Buddhist monastery, Vasu Bihara, is located 6 km west of Mohasthan. The Mohasthangarh site museum collection has a variety of antiquities.

3. Cambodia

(a) *Angkor Complex*
(Asian Highway route number: A 1, road number 6)

The Angkor Complex is located in Siem Reap Province and is accessible by air and road. Angkor Complex features archeological treasures and natural beauty, offers a rich cultural and religious heritage and has been proclaimed a World Heritage Site. Angkor Wat and its hundred temples, including Angkor Thom, Ta Prohm and Banteay Srei covering an area of 300 square km are major attractions.

(b) *Tonle Sap Lake*
(Asian Highway route number: A 1, road numbers 5 and 6)

Tonle Sap Lake is accessible by road from Bang, Pursat, Khampong Chhnang, Khampong Thom and Siem Reap. Tonle Sap Lake area is endowed with natural resources, including fisheries, a diversity of agro-ecological zones

and rich biological resources. The area provides one of the most important economic and natural resources of Cambodia with yearly fish production estimated at about 50,000 tons.

(c) Phnom Penh

(Asian Highway route numbers: A 1, A 11, road numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6)

Phnom Penh is accessible by air and road. Phnom Penh offers a number of tourist attractions, including the Royal Palace, Silver Pagoda, National Museum, Wat Botum, Wat Lingka, Wat Ounalom and the Central Market. Oudong, the ancient capital city, Tonle Bati and Phnom Chiso are worth a visit. Tourists can enjoy boat trips along the Mekong River, Tonle Sap and Bassac River.

(d) Sihanouk Ville

(Asian Highway route number: A 11, road number 4)

Sihanouk Ville is accessible by air and road. It offers beach resorts along a white sandy coast. The seafood specialities are famous.

(e) Thalaborivath

(Asian Highway route number: A 11, road number 7)

Thalaborivath, situated in Stung Treng Province, is accessible by road. The ruins of Prah Ko are major attractions.

4. China

(a) Beijing

(Asian Highway route number: A 3)

Beijing is the capital of China and the centre of government, economic activity, culture and international activities. The city has a long history, and as early as 500,000 years ago, Peking Man lived there. Beijing is now known as a tourist city for its many places of interest. The Great Wall is a symbol of the ancient Chinese civilization. The Palace Museum of Beijing, formerly known as the Forbidden City, lies in the centre of Beijing and served as the imperial palace for the Ming and Qing dynasties.

(b) Zhengzhou

(Asian Highway route number: A 3)

Zhengzhou is the capital of Henan Province, lying on the West bank of the Yellow River. It is one of China's three main hubs for railway transportation

and is situated between the famous ancient cities of Kaifeng and Louyang. The White Horse Temple, Shaolin Temple and Longmen Grottoes are the major tourist attractions.

(c) Wuhan

(Asian Highway route number: A 3)

A famous historical city, Wuhan first became a township at the beginning of the Ming dynasty and is one of the four famous townships in China's history. It is an important water and land transport hub in the central part of China and has been a cargo distribution centre for central China since early times. The East Lake and the Yellow Crane Pavilion are major tourist attractions.

(d) Guangzhou

(Asian Highway route number: A 82)

Guangzhou is the capital of Guangdong Province and the largest city in southern China. It has been a famous port in the world since the Tang dynasty and has opened as the commercial Silk Road on the sea, with links to Middle Eastern and European countries. It is now an important gateway and trading port in the South and a major trade and tourism centre. Guangzhou boasts beautiful mountains and waters. There are 10 state and provincial protection sites. Places of interest are Yuexiu Mountain, Baiyun Mountain, Guangxiao Temple, Huaisheng Temples and so forth.

(e) Shenzhen

(Asian Highway route number: A 82)

Shenzhen is a new industrial city and an important city for foreign trade. It became a city in 1979 and a Special Economic Zone in 1980. It developed rapidly from a small town to a modern city. The tourist attractions include Splendid China, China Folk Culture Village and Window of the World.

5. India

(a) Red Fort

(Asian Highway route number: A 1)

The Red Fort is in Delhi, which is connected with cities around the world. Delhi is also connected by an extensive network of roads with the main cities of India. The Red Fort was built by the great Mughal Emperor, Shah Jahan, when he moved his capital from Agra to Delhi. This fabulous fort houses the Diwan-i-Am, the Hall of Public Audience and the Diwan-i-Khas, the Hall of Private Audience, the Moti Masjid or Pearl Mosque, Rang Mahal and Hammam (royal baths).

(b) Elephanta Caves

(Asian Highway route number: A 47)

Elephanta Caves are located 9 km from Bombay, the gateway of India. A one-hour journey by launch takes one to the cave temple of Elephanta dating back to the seventh century.

(c) Taj Mahal

(Asian Highway route number: A 1)

Taj Mahal in Agra is the world's greatest monument to the love of an emperor for his queen. It took 22 years to build and was completed in 1653 A.D. Agra is connected by air with Delhi, Bombay, Jaipur and Varansi. Agra is also connected by good roads. It is 204 km from Delhi, 237 km from Jaipur, 54 km from Bharatpur, 54 km from Mathura and 395 km from Khajuraho.

(d) Meenakshi Temple

(Asian Highway route number: A 43)

Madurai, where Meenakshi Temple is located, is connected by air with Madras, Bangalore and Cochin. There are excellent roads connecting Madurai to all parts of the South. It is 140 km from Tricity, 158 km from Thanjavur, 136 km from Periyar, 232 km from Kanniyakumari and 480 km from Madras. Meenakshi Temple, a superb example of the Dravida School of architecture, is famous for its gigantic gateways or gopurams profusely carved and reaching massive proportions, the most famous gateway being 49 meters high. The temple has exquisite sculptures, ornate pillars and painted ceilings.

(e) Sun Temple at Konark

(Asian Highway route number: A 45)

Sun Temple is located 35 km from Puri and 65 km from Bhubaneswar. The nearest airport is at Bhubaneswar. Indian Airlines has flights to Calcutta, Delhi, Bombay, Hyderabad, Nagpur and Raipur. It is connected to Puri and Bhubaneswar by good roads. The Sun Temple at Konark, one of the world's greatest marvels and a priceless gem of Orissan art, has drawn a veil of mystery around itself. Built in honour of Surya, the Sun God, in the thirteenth century, the temple is built in the image of the chariot of the Sun with seven horses (for the seven days of the week) and 12 pairs of wheels (for 12 months). What remains today is a small portion of the original massive temple; only the entrance hall, which is 39 meters high; the Dancing Hall and a ruined temple.

6. Indonesia

(a) Lake Toba - Parapat (North Sumatera)
(Asian Highway route number: A 25)

Lake Toba is situated 176 km from Medan. Lake Toba can be reached from Medan by land transport in four hours. There are regular flights to Medan from Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Amsterdam and Vienna. In addition, there are several air connections between Medan and Jakarta and other destinations in Sumatera. The town of Parapat is the main tourist resort and lies on the shore of Lake Toba. This lake is about 80 km long and 26 km across, with a depth of about 427 meters. The climate in Parapat is cool, and dry, making it an ideal place to relax. There are a number of hotels, bungalows, villas and rest houses. Souvenirs such as ulos (local woven cloths) and specific fruits locally grown are sold at small shops.

(b) Way Kambas Elephant Training Centre, Lampung
(Asian Highway route number: A 25)

Way Kambas Elephant Training Centre is located 80 km from the city of Bandar Lampung, the capital of Lampung Province. There are direct air and land connections to Bandar Lampung from major cities in Indonesia. From Bandar Lampung, Way Kambas can be reached by private or public transportation. Way Kambas is mainly lowlands with some hills and a varied height of 0.98 meters above sea level. It has natural beauty, such as ecosystem beach forests, mangrove forests and lowland rainforests. It became the training centre for elephants in 1985, and one can see the Sumateran elephants perform duties such as lifting and transporting. Tricks or games that the elephants have been trained to perform are: giving a welcome salute, giving of garlands, tug of war, swimming contest, football, lifting people with their trunks, holding hands with their trunks, sitting on the floor, lifting their feet and many other tricks.

(c) Borobudur Temple (Central Java)
(Asian Highway route number: A 2)

Borobudur Temple is situated 42 km north-west of Yogyakarta. There are direct flights from major cities in Indonesia to Yogyakarta or regular bus services from cities within Java and Bali. Visitors have the option of going by taxi or public bus to reach this temple. The name "Borobudur" is believed to have been derived from the Sanskrit words "Vihara Budha Uhr", the Buddhist monastery on the hill. The Borobudur Temple was built in the eighth century by the Ceilendra dynasty. Borobudur is built of grey andesite stone. It rises to seven terraces, each smaller than the one below it. The top is the Great Stupa, standing 40 meters above the ground. The walls of Borobudur are sculptured in bas-relief extending over a total length of 6 km. It has been hailed as the largest and most

complete ensemble of Buddhist reliefs in the world. Unsurpassed in artistic merit, each scene is an individual masterpiece.

(d) Mount Bromo (East Java)

(Asian Highway route number: A 2)

Mount Bromo can be reached from Malang and Surabaya. There are direct flights from major cities in Indonesia. From Surabaya there are regular bus services from the village of Ngadisari by a pony ride over a sea of sand to the foot of the volcano. One of the most exciting experiences is watching the sun rise from the crest of the Bromo volcano. Volcanic sulphur fumes and smoke still emanate from its depth, while the intense rumbling sounds make the surrounding population who believe in the god of Bromo quickly bring offerings. A colourful event is Kasada, where villagers from the surrounding areas bring their produce for sacrifice to the holy volcano.

(e) Kuta (Bali)

(Asian Highway route number: A 2)

Kuta is one of the most popular tourist resorts in Bali. There are many air connections to Bali from Singapore, Malaysia, Japan, the United States of America, Australia, New Zealand, China and many other countries. Regular flights from major cities in Indonesia and bus services are available from cities within Java, Sumatera and Lombok. Kuta is now a thriving tourist resort, popular mainly among young people. It is a popular beach for surfing and swimming. Kuta faces toward the west offering a beautiful sunset. It is easier to find regular performances of Balinese music in Kuta, staged especially for tourists, than anywhere else in Bali. Some performances are staged nightly.

7. Islamic Republic of Iran

(a) Imam Square (Naghshe Jahan Square)

(Asian Highway route number: A 79)

Imam Square is located at the centre of the city of Isfahan, one of the most important cities in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Transportation by road and air from Tehran and other main cities is available. In the Safavid dynasty, Isfahan was the capital city. Naghshe Jahan Square, as well as monuments nearby, such as Ali Ghapo palace, Imam Khomeini Mosque (formerly named the Shah Mosque), Sheikh lot Follah Mosque are considered as the main parts of the urban design. Tourists who have visited the square in the Safavid period were quoted as saying that it was one of the greatest and most beautiful squares in the world. The square is 510 meters long and 163 meters wide and is reserved for playing different games, especially hockey.

(b) Chogha Zanbil

(Asian Highway route number: A 79)

Chogha Zanbil is situated at Shoush in Khouzestan Province. Transportation by road, rail and air from Tehran and other main cities is available. Private car and taxi services can be used in the province to see Chogha Zanbil. It was an ancient town called Dur Untash, established by Untash Gal, the Iyamid king and it was a religious town located near a river. Zygurat of Chogha Zanbil determined the eastern border of religions. The Saint Tower of Zygurat was indicative of the linkage between the earth and the sky.

(c) Alisard Cave

(Asian Highway route number: A 2)

Alisard Cave is located near Hamedan. Major access to this tourist attraction is by road with private cars, hired cars and buses. Alisard Cave is one of the most wonderful natural phenomena in the world. It consists of beautiful lakes containing limpid water. The walls and ceiling of the cave are made of pretty stalactites and stalagmites. The water in Alisard is warm in winter and cold in summer. Alisard attracts many local and international tourists.

(d) Imam Reza Shrine

(Asian Highway route number: A 1)

The Imam Reza Shrine is located in Mashhad, Khorasan Province, and is one of the most important religious cities in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Road, rail and airway links connect Mashhad to Tehran and other cities. Khorasan Railway links Mashhad to Tehran. The Asian Highway crosses Afghanistan and Mashhad before reaching Turkey. Imam Reza was the eighth Imam of Shiite Muslims, and the shrine of Imam Reza attracts many pilgrims from around the world. The magnificent holy shrine of Imam Reza and the Goharshad Mosque are the most significant sights to be seen by visitors and pilgrims.

(e) Takhte Jamshid

(Asian Highway route number: A 2)

Takhte Jamshid is located in Marvdasht near Shiraz. From Tehran and other main cities, tourists can travel by road and air. From Shiraz to Takhte Jamshid, private cars and buses can be used. Around Marvdasht and near Shiraz in Fars Province, Darius first commanded to sculpt a stone plate 450 meters long and 300 meters wide in Rahmat Mountain, establishing Darius and his successors' palaces on it. Takhte Jamshid complex came into existence in 521 B.C. The Achaemenian kings used it for ceremonies and official events. The most significant features of the complex include 110 two-sided stairs, Melal Gateway, Apadana Palace, Council Hall, a one-hundred pillar palace, the Achaemenian Treasury and so forth.

8. Lao People's Democratic Republic

(a) Khone Phapheng Waterfall

(Asian Highway route number: A 11)

Khone Phapheng Waterfall is located 161 km from Pakse District. Khone Phapheng Waterfall is accessible from Pakse District by land in four hours travel and by boat in eight hours. Khone Phapheng is one of the greatest and most beautiful waterfalls in South-East Asia. It formed a great natural barrier against foreign aggression in the past.

(b) Lak Xao (Bolikhamsay Province)

(Asian Highway route number: A 15)

Lak Xao is located 190 km from Paksane District and is accessible by road in four hours. Cave, fauna, waterfall, hot spring and forest stone are some major attractions.

(c) Vientiane Municipality

(Asian Highway route numbers: A 11 and A 12)

Vientiane is accessible by air and road. Major attractions of Vientiane include historical monuments and ancient pagodas, shopping, special events and handicrafts.

(d) Luang Prabang

(Asian Highway route number: A 12)

Luang Prabang has become a tourist attraction because of its historic temples and scenic setting encircled by mountains. Luang Prabang is accessible by air and road. Ancient pagodas, nature, a national museum, handicrafts, events and festivals, the life styles of minority groups and the landscape are major attractions.

(e) Vangvieng

(Asian Highway route number: A 12)

Vangvieng is situated 15 km from Vientiane. Vangvieng is accessible from Vientiane by road in three hours. Major attractions of Vangvieng include natural scenery, caves and ethnic minorities.

9. Malaysia

(a) Pedu Lake and Golf Resort, Kedah

(Asian Highway route number: A 2)

Pedu Lake is located 90 km east of Alor Setar and can be reached by driving to Alor Setar, then going east through the towns of Langgar, Pokok Sena and Kuala Nerang. Travelling time is about 1.5 hours from Alor Setar. Nearby jungles offer birdwatching and jungle-trekking. Golf is the prime sporting activity. The 18-hole course built near the lake's edge has several holes extending into the jungle.

(b) Ayer Keroh Recreational Area, Malacca

(Asian Highway route number: A 2)

Ayer Keroh is about 147 km from Kuala Lumpur and is located 13 km from Melaka town on the new North-South highway. Travelling time from Kuala Lumpur is about three hours. Major attractions include the recreational forest, the Malacca Zoo, Tranquerah Mosque, Reptile Park, Mini Malaysia, Mini ASEAN, the Butterfly Farm, the Crocodile Farm and Malacca Fish World.

(c) Desaru, Johor

(Asian Highway route number: A 18)

Desaru is located north-east of Johor Bahru. There are three first class hotels, an 18-hole golf course and facilities for fishing, windsurfing, snorkeling, swimming, boating and canoeing. There are also cascading waterfalls, jungles and natural lakes.

(d) Kenyir Lake, Terengganu

(Asian Highway route number: A 18)

Kenyir Lake is about 55 km from Kuala Terengganu and a one-hour drive from Kuala Berang, with a further 15-minutes drive to the lake. Kenyir is Malaysia's biggest rock-filled hydroelectric dam, thus creating a lake with over 300 islands which occupies an area of about 369 square km. It is surrounded by lush jungles, rugged terrain and numerous waterfalls. For the outdoor adventure, the lake offers a challenging experience with activities like canoeing, boating, trekking and fishing.

(e) Cherating, Pahang

(Asian Highway route number: A 18)

Cherating is about 74 km north of Kuantan and Asia's first Club Mediterranee is located here. The sun-soaked golden beaches are excellent for a

variety of leisure activities such as windsurfing, swimming, snorkeling and parasailing. Among the beach's attractions are the rustic atmosphere in the kampongs, where friendly people play hosts to visitors.

10. Myanmar

(a) Shwedagon Pagoda

(Asian Highway route number: A 1)

Shwedagon Pagoda is an important religious site in Yangon, the capital of Myanmar. Yangon is the major gateway and has many links with cities in Asia, Australia and Europe. Shwedagon Pagoda is considered a wonder of the world. It was built over 2,500 years ago and enshrines strands of the Lord Buddha's hair and relics of three previous Buddhas.

(b) Bagan

(Asian Highway route number: A 1)

Bagan is located 193 km south of Mandalay and can be reached by plane or train from Yangon or Mandalay. It is also possible to go by water from Mandalay to Bagan. Bagan is the city of pagodas and one of the richest archaeological sites in Asia, with an impressive heritage dating from the eleventh to the thirteenth century. Many places of interest are located within the Bagan archaeological area, including the Ananda Temple, the 66-meter high Thabyinyu Temple, Gawdawpalin Temple, Shwegugyi Temple, Kubyaukgyi Temple, Htilominlo Temple, Sulamani Temple, Shwezigon Pagoda and Bupaya Pagoda.

(c) Mandalay

(Asian Highway route number: A 1)

Mandalay is located in central Myanmar, about 700 km north of Yangon. It takes about one hour and thirty minutes by air, with daily flights. Trains between Yangon and Mandalay take about 14 hours. The Yangon-Mandalay highway is over 700 km and travellers by road can break their journey at Toungoo (280 km) or Meiktila (540 km) where there are hotels for overnight stays. Mandalay was the last capital of the Myanmar Kingdom in central Myanmar, 688 km due north of Yangon. It is the second largest city and one place where tourists can come closest to a centre of authentic Myanmar culture. It is rich in monasteries and pagodas, with ample resources showing Myanmar arts and architecture. Places of interest include Mandalay Palace, Shwenandaw Monastery, Mahamuni Pagoda, Kathodaw Pagoda and Atumashi Grand Monastery. Mandalay is also known for handicrafts such as wood carvings, silverware, gold leaf, embroidery and so forth.

(d) Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda

(Asian Highway route number: A 1)

The pagoda is located about 160 km from Yangon in Kyaik Hto Township, Mon State. Visitors can reach Kinpun Base Camp at the foot of the hill by car. Tourists can also travel to Kyaik Hto by train. Kyaikhtiyo Pagoda stands on a gold-gilded boulder precariously perched on the edge of a hill over 1,100 km above sea level. There are many legends about the pagoda and nat (spirit gods) shrines along the uphill hike of 11 km from the base camp to the pagoda.

(e) Inlay Lake

(Asian Highway route number: A 2)

Inlay Lake is located about 30 km south of Taunggyi, the capital city of Shan State. Myanmar Airways and Air Mandalay fly to Heho, from where tourists can go by car to Nyaungshwe, the access point for the lake. Inlay Lake is surrounded by hazy blue mountains at 900 m above sea level. It is 22 km long and 10 km wide, with a floating island. The lake is famous for its beauty, the Inthas (native lake dwellers) who have a unique way of rowing and a colourful floating market.

11. Nepal

(a) Kathmandu Valley's seven heritage sites

(Asian Highway route number: A 2)

Kathmandu is accessible by air and all seven sites are accessible by road. Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur are three ancient durbar squares containing palaces, temples, courtyards, works of art and icons. Swayambhunath and Boudhanath are two ancient Buddhist stupas. Pashupatinath is one of the holiest Hindu temples. Changunarayan is the most ancient Hindu temple.

(b) Chitwan National Park

(Asian Highway route number: A 2)

The park is accessible by air from Kathmandu and by road from various major cities of Nepal. The Chitwan National Park covers an area of 932 square km and is on the World Heritage List. It has a fabulous collection of wild animals; 43 species of mammals, including the one-horned rhinoceros and royal Bengal tiger; 450 species of amphibians and reptiles and equally rich vegetation.

(c) Lumbini

(Asian Highway route number: A 2)

Lumbini is accessible by air from Kathmandu and by road from all major cities. Three square miles of area surrounding the birthplace of the Lord Buddha are being developed as a tourist attraction. The inner sanctuary contains the Ashokan pillar as proof of the birthplace of the apostle of peace, the Mayadevi temple depicting the birth in stone image and a number of ruins of various monasteries built over the ages. The middle zone is being developed as a world centre for Buddhist learning and the outer zone is for commercial activities.

(d) Janakpur

(Asian Highway route number: A 2)

Janakpur is accessible by air from Kathmandu and by road from all major cities. Janakpur is an ancient city in the Terai region of Nepal. It is the birthplace of the Goddess Sita, the consort of Lord Rama from the epic tale Ramayana. It has a number of temples dedicated to Sita, Rama, their mythical marriage and various other shrines, mythical ponds, art and architecture of the Mithila civilization. Mithila is the legendary kingdom of King Janak, the father of the Goddess Sita.

(e) Bardiya National Park

(Asian Highway route number: A 2)

The park is accessible by road from Mahendranagar or Nepalgunj. Mahendra Highway bissects the national park. Covering an area of 968 square km, the park is the most undisturbed wilderness in the Terai region of Nepal. It contains rare animals like rhinoceros, wild elephant, swamp deer, gharial crocodile, marsh muggler crocodile, Gangetic dolphin, etc. Many species of native and migratory birds and several species of reptiles are also found there here. A couple of wildlife resorts are located inside the park or on its periphery.

12. Pakistan

(a) Islamabad

(Asian Highway route numbers: A1 and A4)

Road, rail and air transportation is available to reach Islamabad. The lush green, spacious and peaceful Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, has an archaeological and historical background. Shah Faisal Mosque, Federal Government Offices Blocks, Parliament House, Awan-e-Sadar, Prime Minister's House, Shakarparian Hill Garden, Rawal Lake, Constitution Avenue, Lok Virsa Museum, Rose and Jasmine Garden, Sports Complex, Natural History Museum,

art galleries and Daman-e-Koh viewpoint in Margalla hills and shrines are sights worth seeing for cultural and tourist interest in the city. Around Islamabad, forts, lakes and dams, Salt Range and Murree hills, Taxila, Hssanabdal, Abbottabad are all places which are attractive to a variety of tourist tastes.

Mountain grandeur and breath-taking panorama of beauty are part of the superb landscape through which the Karakoram Highway snakes. The highway passes along the Battura glaciers, rated among the world's seven largest. The Khunjerab Pass, which the highway crosses, and nearby Mintake Pass lie astride the ancient Silk Road that led from Europe to Asia and over which history's most famous tourists (Venetian trader Marco Polo, the Chinese Monk Fa Hiew and Arab historian Al Berumi) once travelled.

A new all-weather road, the Karakoram Highway connects Rawalpindi/ Islamabad with China's Xinjiang Province through the Northern Areas. This paradise for tourists has 805 km of metalled road starting from Havelian 100 km from Islamabad and winds through Abbottabad, Mansehra, Thakot, Besham, Pattan, Sazin, Chilas, Gilgit and Hunza to the Chinese frontier across Khunjerab Pass. The Gilgit Valley is surrounded by lakes, rivers, big glaciers and the high mountains of the Karakoram and Himalayan ranges. This is where some of the world's highest peaks, such as Nanga Parbat (8,126 meters) and snow-covered majestic Rakaposhi (7,788 meters) are found. There is a rock engraving of Buddha, Chinnar Bagh, Hargah, Naltar, Nagar, Punial, Gakutch, Gupis, Yasin, Plander and Saudur Pass and valleys in and around the Gilgit. Khunjerab Pass is at a distance of 321 km from Gilgit and is 4,602 meters high. The pass remains open for tourists to cross between May and October each year, subject to valid visas for both Pakistan and China.

(b) Peshawar

(Asian Highway route numbers: A 1 and A 71)

Peshawar is located 174 km from Islamabad. Road, rail and air transportation is available to reach Peshawar. The ancient and legendary Peshawar has the following places of interest: legendary Khyber Pass, old city, Qissa Khawan-i-Bazar, Chowk Yadgar, Mahbat Khan Mosque, Fort Balahisar, Peshawar Museum, New Peshawar, Darra Admn Khel, Takht-i- Bhal, Shahbaz Garhi, Char Sadda, and so forth. Around the Peshawar Chartral Valley, Kalash Valley and Garam Chashma are many tourist assets. Trekking, mountaineering, camping, fishing, flora and fauna provide much to see and do.

(c) Lahore

(Asian Highway route numbers: A 1 and A 2)

Lahore is located 288 km from Islamabad and is accessible by road, rail and air transportation. Lahore is the city of gardens, parks, schools, colleges and universities. It is the capital of Punjab Province and as an ancient town, it is rich in historical monuments, including Mughal architecture. Lahore is considered to be the cultural capital of Pakistan. Places of interest are the Badshahi Mosque, Lahore Fort, the Old City Shrine of Data Ghanj Bukhsh, Anarkani Bazaar, Wazir Khan's Mosque, the National Museum, the Sikh monument, Minar-e-Pakistan, Jahangir/Nur Jahan/Asif Khan's Mausoleum, Shalimar Garden, Jallo National Park, Chhanga Manga Forest and Hiran Minar.

(d) Karachi

(Asian Highway route numbers: A 4 and A 74)

Karachi is located 1,293 km from Lahore. Accessible by road, rail and air, Karachi is the capital of Sindh Province and the largest metropolis in Pakistan. It is the country's bustling centre of commerce and industry. The historical buildings related to the founding of the nation are Wazir Mansion, Sindh Madressah-tul-Islam, Flag Staff house, Qasr-e-Fatima (Mohatta Palace) and Quaid-e-Azam's Mazar. Interesting historic buildings are Mangho Pir's Mazaar, Cathedral of the Holy Trinity, Empress market, Mereweather Tower, St. Patrick's Cathedral and Sindh high court. Places to see are Masjid-e-Tooba, Karachi University, School of Art, Shrine of Abdullah Shah Ghazi, art galleries, Liaquat Hall (Frere Hall), the golf and race club, the National Museum, PIA Planetarium, the zoological garden, beaches like French and Clifton, water sports such as yachting, the fish harbour, bazaars and boutiques. Places around Karachi are Moenjodaro, Chaukandi Tombs, Banbhore, Haleji and Keenjer lakes, Kirthar National Park, Khadeji Falls and Thatta.

(e) Quetta

(Asian Highway route numbers: A 2, A 71, A 74)

Quetta is located 715 km from Karachi, with road, rail and air transportation giving access. Quetta is the fruit basket of Pakistan and the capital of Baluchistan. It lies at the mouth of Bolan Pass and has two large mountains (Zarghun and Koh-e-Murdar). Quetta is a natural fort surrounded by the hills on all sides. The main attractions of the city are its bazaars. There is also an archaeological museum. Other tourist attractions include Hazarganji, Chiltan National Park, Urak Valley, Hanna Lake and Pishin Valley. Lak Pass, Bolan Pass and Khojak Pass are near Quetta, Ziarat. A visit to Quetta is incomplete without a trip to the picturesque Ziarat, which has large juniper forests.

13. Philippines

(a) Intramuros

(Asian Highway route number: A 26)

Intramuros is situated in Manila, which is readily accessible by air from major cities around the world. Manila is also connected by road with major cities in the country. Intramuros (within the wall) was built along the southern banks of the Pasig River in the sixteenth century by the Spaniards as a defense against foreign invaders. A pentagon-shaped structure with a perimeter of 4.4 km, the city fortress included monasteries, churches, and nunneries. It was partly destroyed during the Second World War, but reconstruction efforts have restored the magnificence of Intramuros. Located on the north-western corner of Intramuros is Fort Santiago which served as the headquarters of the Spanish forces, but has now been converted into a park. There is a museum which houses a collection of antique furniture and some memorabilia of the country's national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal. In an open-air courtyard is the Rajah Sulayman Theater, where a theater group carries on a season of plays in Tagalog. From Fort Santiago, one can cross over to the Manila Cathedral, an imposing romanesque structure made entirely of Philippine adobe. The cathedral has been continuously reconstructed due to the ravages of war, fire and earthquakes and its main door is made of bronze with eight panels depicting the cathedral's history in bas-relief. The remains of Spanish archbishops are entombed in a crypt beneath the main altar. Stained glass windows depicting the various Philippine Madonnas are on both sides of the cathedral which is dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary.

Fronting the Manila Cathedral is a square named Plaza Roma, formerly known as the Plaza de Armas. Bullfights were known to have been staged there during the eighteenth century. Adjacent to the square is the Palacio del Gobernador building which used to house the seat of government during the Spanish regime.

Four blocks from Plaza Roma at the intersection of General Luna and Calle Real is the San Agustin Church and Museum. Built of bamboo and nipa, the original structure on this site was the first church in Intramuros, constructed after Legazpi defeated Sulayman in 1571. The facade of the church combines Doric and Corinthian columns and the absence of one of its two original twin columns was due to earthquakes in the nineteenth century. The main door of the church is carved out of a Philippine hardwood called molave and depicts Augustinian symbols and figures. Inside the church are fourteen chapels dedicated to various saints. The remains of illustrious conquistadores are buried in some of the chapels. Adjoining the church is a monastery-museum which contains Philippine artifacts and religious art. Aside from a collection of paintings and engravings, it also houses the Luis Araneta Collection of Philippine religious artifacts. On permanent exhibit in the museum is a vast artifact

collection amassed by the Augustinians. Another interesting sight in Intramuros is Casa Manila, a reconstructed nineteenth century mansion with furniture and furnishings from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century.

(b) Vigan, Ilocos Sur

(Asian Highway route number: A 26)

Vigan is the provincial capital of Ilocos Sur. Philippine Airlines flies to Laoag, the provincial capital of Ilocos Norte, three times a week, covering the distance of 487 km in one hour and 25 minutes. Laoag's international airport also services chartered flights. From the airport, tourists can rent a car or take a bus to other points in the Ilocos region. It is recommended to take a car or air-conditioned bus ride. The trip is a pleasant eight-hour ride over splendid roads to Vigan, the provincial capital of Ilocos Sur. Philippine Rabbit, Times Transit and Farinas Transit operate on the major bus routes of the north. The ecclesiastical and political capital of Northern Luzon towards the end of the sixteenth century, Vigan was founded by a 22-year old conquistador named Juan de Salcedo. With its spacious plazas, cobblestoned streets and graceful old houses, it is often referred to as "the Intramuros of the North."

In Vigan, the following are tourist attractions: (1) Archbishop's Palace, an eighteenth century building that housed the ecclesiastical court of the Diocese of Nueva Segovia. This elaborate palace, featuring capiz windows and cutout decorations, was occupied by Filipino revolutionaries in 1896 and American forces in 1899. (2) Ayala Museum of Vigan is the birthplace of the martyr-priest Father Jose Burgos. The colonial two-story house has become a well-maintained repository of antiques, Tinguian (a local tribe) and Ilocano artifacts, dioramas of Ilocano history, paintings and various memorabilia. (3) Salcedo Plaza fronts on the Vigan Cathedral and serves as a park with a manmade lagoon surrounding a broken obelisk dedicated to the young conquistador. (4) Syquia Mansion is a splendid example of nineteenth century Vigan colonial architecture which houses elegant period pieces and memorabilia of the late President Elpidio Quirino, the country's second president. (5) Vigan Cathedral, also known as St. Paul's Cathedral, has a facade that features Chinese lion-dog ornaments and above the main doorway is an alcove depicting the conversion of St. Paul. Inside, dazzling panels of beaten silver grace the main altar. The church's construction began in 1574. It was rebuilt two centuries later and completed in 1800.

(c) Mayon Volcano

(Asian Highway route number: A 26)

Region V or the Bicol Region from which Mayon Volcano can be reached, is located at the southern part of Luzon. It has five airports located at Legazpi City, Albay/Masbate, Masbate/Bagasbas, Daet, Camarines Norte/Pili, Camarines Sur/and Virac, Catanduanes. It may also be accessed through less expensive travel by ships that sail through its five national ports, 36 municipal

commercial ports and 19 municipal fishing ports. Travellers coming from Manila can take either the commercial buses or train. There are three railway stations and 12 railway substations in the Bicol Region.

The world's nearly perfect cone volcano, it stands majestically at 2,422 meters from the broad base of about 10 km radius. The crater is 2,451 meters above sea level with a diameter of 5 km. It has a notched rim where a pool of building hot lava boils and rich coal deposits could be found. Sulfuric steams and gases continually emit from these craters. It derived its name from the word magayon, meaning beautiful. Its name has been regarded as the symbol not only of Albay but also of the Philippines. Since 1616, Mt. Mayon was recorded to have erupted 40 times and the worst eruption was on 2 February 1814 when the settlements of Cagsawa and Budiao in the town of Daraga were buried. The latest recorded eruption was on 2 February 1993.

(d) Tacloban

(Asian Highway route number: A 26)

Tacloban is located in Leyte, which is Region VIII. Philippine Airlines maintains regular flights from Manila and Cebu to Tacloban. By land, the PhilTranco bus operates on the Tacloban and Manila routes. The more adventurous travellers might enjoy the simpler and less expensive travel on board ships that sail to Tacloban from Manila, Catbalogan and Cebu. The city of Tacloban is the capital of Leyte, a Visayan Province between Samar and Mindanao. It is situated along the San Juanico Strait, considered as the narrowest but most navigable in the world. Tacloban is a showcase of history and culture. One important place is where General Douglas MacArthur fulfilled his "I shall return" pledge. Tacloban depicts the General's historic return to the Philippines in a large relief at the provincial capitol building. Tourists interested in history will probably want to make a trip to Red Beach near Palo to see the spot where the General and the Liberation Forces landed. Another point of interest is the CAP Building which served as General MacArthur's official headquarters and residence during the liberation. Those wishing to learn more about the culture of the people may visit the St. Nino Shrine and Heritage Museum which serves as a heritage centre for the natives of Leyte and Samar.

(e) Davao Del Sur

(Asian Highway route number: A 26)

Davao Del Sur is situated in Region XI and is 1,545 km from Manila. Considered the premier gateway to the south, Davao is serviced by an international airport. Direct flights from Manila are available via Philippine Airlines, Grand Air and Air Philippines. Travel time is approximately one hour and 35 minutes. There are also flights from Cebu (55 minutes), Zamboanga (one hour and 20 minutes), and Cagayan de Oro (35 minutes). From Manado, Indonesia, Boraq Indonesia Airlines flies to Davao twice weekly. Inter-island

vessels dock at Sasa Pier, the city's major sea port, Santa Ana Pier, and other ports. Local transport is provided by jeepneys and small meterless taxicabs popularly known as P.U.'s (public utility vehicles).

Sprawled along the shores of south-eastern Mindanao, Davao del Sur is a place of natural wonders and rarities. It boasts the country's highest peak, Mt. Apo, the most prized Philippine orchid species like the vanda sanderiana, some of the most exotic fruits and the endangered Philippine eagle.

Davao Del Sur is home to a number of ethnic groups whose culture and way of life have been preserved. These are the Bagobos, the Mandayas, the Mansakas, the Atas, the Kalagans, the Tagakaolos and the Manguangas. Their arts and crafts are on display in museums and shops. There is a wide choice of sand beaches and resorts. In the city, there are numerous hotels and inns. Dining is good and varied and night life is fun. Some of the popular sports activities are golf, water sports and mountain climbing.

14. Singapore

(a) Singapore Zoological Gardens/Night Safari/Mandai Orchid Gardens/Sungei Buloh Nature Reserve/Kranji War Memorial
(Asian Highway route number: A 2)

These many attractions are located in the Northern Belt and are accessible by road and public transport — bus, taxi, and Mass Rapid Transit (MRT). The Singapore Zoological Gardens with its lush jungle setting is Singapore's renowned open zoo, a haven for both animals and visitors. There are more than 2,000 animals housed in landscaped enclosures. It has the world's largest colony of Orang Utans with whom visitors can enjoy breakfast or afternoon tea. The Night Safari has 1,200 nocturnal animals of over 100 exotic species in open enclosures. The Mandai Orchid Gardens which is Singapore's largest commercial orchid garden provides a colourful display of orchid blooms. The 87 hectare Sungei Buloh Nature Park is Singapore's first designated wetland nature reserve. It is a major stop-over point for birds migrating along the East Asian Flyway. Kranji War Memorial is dedicated to the allied troops who died in the battle for Singapore during the Second World War.

(b) Chinatown, Little India and Arab Street Ethnic Area/Civic and Heritage District/Boat Quay and Clarke Quay
(Asian Highway route number: A 2)

These sites are located in the Central Southern district. Access to these tourism attractions are by road and public transport — bus, taxi, and MRT. Chinatown, Little India and Arab Street are Singapore's ethnic areas where one can see narrow streets of picturesque shophouses and restaurants brimming with

life. Little India embodies the vibrant and colourful culture of the Indian community in Singapore. Small shops abound, selling bolts of glittering silks, temple garlands, gold jewelry and spices. Arab Street is famous for its batik, basketry, leather goods and a host of other treasures. This area provides a glimpse into the Malay/Muslim way of life. The Civic/Heritage District has many colonial buildings and memorials reminiscent of the colonial past when Singapore was under the British authority. Prominent landmarks are the eight-meter high Merlion statue and Raffles Hotel, one of the most famous hotels in the world. Other landmarks and buildings are the Supreme Court and the City Hall, the Civilian War Memorial, the statue of Sir Stamford Raffles (founder of modern Singapore) and the Singapore Cricket Club. Boat Quay/Singapore River/Clarke Quay are the city's newest leisure and entertainment centres. Boat Quay features al fresco dining along the riverbank. Clarke Quay has 40 push-carts selling unique knickknacks, pubs and restaurants and a Disney-style adventure ride.

(c) Jurong Bird Park/Singapore Science Centre/Tang Dynasty Village
(Asian Highway route number: A 2)

These sites are located in the Western Belt of Singapore. Major access is by road and public transport — bus, taxi, and MRT. Jurong Bird Park is South-East Asia's largest bird park, with over 8,000 birds of 600 species from all over the world. Highlights include a walk-in aviary, a man-made waterfall, breakfast with the birds, birds of prey and BP all Stars Birdshow and the Parrots Paradise. Singapore Science Centre has more than 600 exhibits. The Centre has an omnitheatre with massive screens and wrap-around sound. The 70 mm omnimax movies are screened in the dome-shaped theatre which is 5 storeys high. It enables the viewers to have a 270-degree fish-eye view. Next to the theatre is an observatory which has a 40 cm cassegrain telescope. The observatory allows the public to view the night sky every Friday evening. Tang Dynasty Village is Asia's largest cultural and historical theme park. Attraction highlights include the Great Wall, terra cotta replicas of the Xian warriors and a display of over 100 life-sized historical figures and underground palaces.

(d) Haw Par Villa
(Asian Highway route number: A 2)

Haw Par Villa is situated in the South-western Belt. Access to the tourism attraction is by road and public transport — bus, taxi, and MRT. Formerly known as Tiger Balm Gardens, Haw Par Villa, is famous for its colourful statues depicting Chinese mythology. Tourists can watch a three-dimensional show on the creation of the world and then try the wrath of the water gods flame ride.

(e) Sentosa Island
(Asian Highway route number: A 2)

Sentosa Island is located in the Central Southern Belt, with access by ferry, cable car or public transport — bus and taxi. It is a holiday resort island located half a kilometer from Singapore. Attractions include the 37-meter tall Merlion Viewing Tower, two hotels (Shangri-La Rasa Sentosa Hotel and the Beaufort Hotel) and two golf courses. Tourist attractions include the Asian Village, the Pioneers of Singapore, Surrender Chambers, Festivals of Singapore, Fort Siloso, the Underwater World, Fantasy Island, Volcano-Land, a Mississippi riverboat, musical fountain and swimming lagoon. Nature lovers can visit the Butterfly Park, a Nature Walk and the Orchid Gardens. Visitors to Sentosa can watch the Raising of the Merlion Show, which is a 15-minute laser show, presented every evening and narrating the history of the Merlion.

15. Sri Lanka

(a) Kandy site (a UNESCO World Heritage Site)
(Asian Highway route number: A 43)

The town of Kandy is situated 116 km from Colombo, with major access by road and rail from Colombo or Kurunegala. At the “Temple of the Tooth”, where the tooth relic of the Lord Buddha is enshrined and rituals are enacted daily to venerate the relic. Public honour is paid to the relic when the Procession of the Sacred Tooth is held in July/August. The “Octagen” is one of the most photographed buildings in the world. A few kilometres from Kandy town are several ancient temples as well as the Royal Botanical Gardens, Peradeniya, 6 km from Kandy town. Paradeniya University is 1 km from the Gardens and is magnificently laid out based on the design by Sir Patrick Abercombie, the famous designer of Greater London. The Elephant Bath at Katugastota, where tame elephants are bathed is worth a visit.

(b) Anuradhapura site (a UNESCO World Heritage Site)
(Asian Highway route number: A 43)

Anuradhapura town is situated 205 km from Colombo, with access by road and rail. The Sri Mahabodhi tree, the oldest authenticated tree in the world (2,200 years), is a branch of the Bo tree beneath which the Lord Buddha attained Enlightenment. It was brought to Sri Lanka in the third century B.C. The Samadhi Buddha is acknowledged worldwide as a masterpiece and this statue of the Lord Buddha dates back to the fourth century A.D. Other attractions include ancient dagobas, the most famous being the Thuparama, Abhayagiri and the Miriswatte dagobas.

(c) Bays of Tangalle

(Asian Highway route number: A 43)

Bays of Tangalle is located in Tangalle town, 195 km from Colombo on the South-West coast of Sri Lanka. Major access to Tangalle town is by road and rail. Tangalle is the place to laze and soak up the sun, with a series of bays as the major attraction. Tangalle is popular with snorkellers and seekers of overall suntan. There may not be a coastline anywhere in the world endowed with so many beautiful beaches as the west coast of Sri Lanka, featuring palm trees, gold sands and blue waters.

(d) World's End in Horton Plains

(Asian Highway route number: A 43)

World's End in Horton Plains is located close to Nuwara Eliya which is 1,890 meters above sea level. Access is by road and rail to Sri Lanka's highest and most isolated plateau. Nature lovers will enjoy this wide, patna grass-covered plain, the haunt of wild animals and numerous species of birds. The precipice, popularly referred to as World's End, is a sheer drop of 1,050 meters. In the surrounding hill country there are acres of rich green foliage where thick tea bushes thrive, waterfalls cascade down mountain sides and steep hairpin bends overlook narrow mountain gaps.

(e) Ratnapura, the gem centre of Sri Lanka

(Asian Highway route number: A 43)

Ratnapura is situated 100 km from Colombo and is accessible by road and rail. It is the gem centre of Sri Lanka, and gems are still obtained by traditional methods. On the Colombo-Ratnapura road tourists will see countless gem and mining operations in paddy fields beside the road. It is a peculiarity of the Sri Lankan gem industry that a variety of different stones is almost always found in the same pit. Ratnapura is also reputed to be the best place for views of the mountain Adam's Peak.

16. Thailand

(a) Chiang Rai Province

(Asian Highway route numbers: A 2 and A 3)

Chiang Rai is Thailand's northern-most province and can be reached by car, bus, air and train. The train leaves Hualampong Station in Bangkok and travels to Chiang Mai. Tourists must then change to a bus or plane in order to reach Chiang Rai. Chiang Rai Province is 785 kms from Bangkok and shares the border with Myanmar to the north and Lao People's Democratic Republic to the north and northeast in an area mostly covered with mountains. Chiang Rai

was founded in 1262 A.D. and was formerly the capital of the Lanna Kingdom. Tourism involves many types of attractions, including natural, cultural and historical experiences. Phra That Doi Tung and Phra Tamnak Doi Tung are the most outstanding tourist spots, where there is the holy relic for annual Buddhism worship and a royal residence for the Princess Mother with an extremely beautiful garden decorated with many kinds of plants and flowers. The Golden Triangle is another famous attraction where the borders of the three countries; Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand and Myanmar meet. It is about 9 km. north of Chiang Saen, another tourist spot on the Mae Khong River which strongly enchants by the charm of its old temples.

(b) Ban Chiang

(Asian Highway route numbers: A 12, A 15 and local highway number 22 from Udon Thani)

Ban Chiang is situated in Udon Thani Province, where the one airport in Udon Thani has a daily flight from Bangkok. It is also easily accessible by car, bus and train. Ban Chiang is 56 km from Amphoe Muang. The route runs along Highway 22 and turns left onto Highway 2225 at km 50, where a road sign indicates the way to Ban Chiang which is another 6 km. The Ban Chiang National Museum is comprised of two parts. The first part contains antiques. Inside the building there are artifacts of the ancient Ban Chiang culture, with tools and utensils that show ancient technology and surroundings, as well as earthenware pots dating from 4,000 to 7,500 years. The second part comprises an open museum in the compound of Wat Po Si Nai. The Fine Arts Department has retained the conditions of archaeological excavations to show how earthenware pots and other items were buried along with the dead. Ban Chiang National Museum is considered the first open museum in Thailand. The "Ban Chiang" earthenware pots are known world wide because "Ban Chiang" was the origin of a pre-historic civilization. Archaeologists believe the designs on Ban Chiang earthenware are the oldest pot designs in the world.

(c) Sukhothai Historical Park

(Asian Highway route numbers: A 1, A 2 and local highway 12 directly from Tak)

The Sukhothai Historical Park is situated in Sukhothai Province and is easily accessible by car, bus or plane. There is no direct train to Sukhothai, but tourists may travel by train to Phitsanulok and then take a local bus to Sukhothai, 50 km away. Sukhothai was the first capital of Thailand, founded in 1238 A.D. It is approximately 427 km north of Bangkok. The Sukhothai Historical Park is located 12 km from town on the Sukhothai-Tak Highway. The former greatness of Sukhothai has been preserved with ruins of royal palaces, Buddhist temples, city gates, walls, moats, dams, ditches, ponds, canals and the water dyke control system which was the magical and spiritual centre of the kingdom. It has been

preserved and restored by the Fine Arts Department with the cooperation of UNESCO, not only with a view of fostering Thailand's national identity but of safeguarding a fine example of mankind's cultural heritage.

(d) The Old Royal City (Rattanakosin Island)
(Asian Highway route numbers: A 1, A 2)

The Old Royal City is located in Bangkok and is accessible by various kinds of local transport (public buses, taxis, express boats and long-tail boats). The Old Royal City is situated on the eastern side of the Chao Phraya River and was founded as the Thai capital in 1782 by the first monarch of the present Chakri Dynasty. It contains all sorts of attractions, especially historical places, such as the Grand Palace and Wat Phra Kaeo where the Emerald Buddha is housed, Wat Po, Wat Arun (the Temple of Dawn), Wat Suthat, many old buildings in Western style and so forth.

(e) Phi Phi Island, Noppharat Thara and Ao Nang Area
(Asian Highway route numbers: A 1, A 2)

Phi Phi Island is located in Krabi Province in southern Thailand. It is easily accessible by car and bus from Bangkok. There are also daily flights to Phuket Province from where a bus travels to Krabi. Phi Phi Island, Noppharat Thara and Ao Nang areas are famous, beautiful islands and beaches located on the coastline of the India Ocean in Krabi Province, 814 km from Bangkok. Phi Phi Island comprises six islands which lie at some distance off the coastline. The superb scenery of the islands includes high hills with jutting cliffs surrounded by beaches of silvery sand and emerald green sea. Noppharat Thara and Ao Nang (Nang Bay) consist of 83 small islands in the bay having various sizes and shapes. The attractions in this area also include Phranang Beach, Rai Le Beach, Poda Island and Phranang Cave. Fossil Shell Beach is also located in this area, with a large number of shells of various types imbedded near the seashore. It is estimated to be approximately 75 million years old.

17. Turkmenistan

(a) Parthian Capital of Nisa (a UNESCO World Heritage Site)
(Asian Highway route number: A 5)

Nisa is situated on a good road about 12 km from Ashgabat. Nisa consists of two impressive archaeological sites called Old Nisa (Mitridatkert) and New Nisa (Parthanisa). The Parthian Capital of Nisa dates from the third century B.C. and was inhabited until the nineteenth century. Diggings have revealed a grandiose architectural complex consisting of an extensive palace with ceremonial hall, treasure house and residences.

(b) The Bakharden Underground Lake (hot lake Kov-Ata)
(Asian Highway route number: A 5)

The lake is located in a cave 90 km north-east from Ashgabat on the northern slopes of Kopetdag Mountains. The nearest major city is Bakharden (15 km). The Kov-Ata can be reached by National Road M-37 (Ashgabat Turkmenbashi) and then by paved road for about 6 km. The lake is inside a cave at a depth 52 m from the cave entrance. The special place for visitor's to bathe has a surface area 2,700 sq m and is up to 3 m deep. The lake is 72 m long and 30 m wide. The water has a constant temperature (36 to 38 degrees Celsius) and contains a complex of chemicals which are considered by local people to promote good health.

(c) Kugitan Natural Reserve (Natural Reserve and Geological Research Centre,
(Asian Highway route number: A 5)

Kugitan Natural Reserve is located on the eastern border of the country with Uzbekistan and on the south with Afghanistan. It can be accessed by paved road from Chardjew. An airport at Kerki (120 km away) can receive national aircraft with a capacity of 35 passengers. Another airport with the same capacity is at Gourdak (85 km away). The internal system of roads is unpaved.

The Reserve covers an area of 27,137 hectares. There are high mountains and deep canyons, unique caves with beautiful stalactites and stalagmites, many grottos and underground lakes, flat irrigated valleys and a large surface lake in the Kugitan Natural Reserve. Many thousand years ago in the Jurassic period, dinosaurs passed through the wet surface of the lagoon, leaving their trails to dry in the sun. The landscape of the Reserve can be described as a geological book opened before the visitors. Furthermore, the variety of peaks, gorges, small rivers, canyons and green valleys make the tour circuit a relaxing exercise for which visitors can use the local donkeys for transport.

(d) Merv Archaeological Site (a UNESCO World Heritage Site)
(Asian Highway route number: A 5)

The site is located in the Karakum desert in the central part of Turkmenistan and lies to the east of the Modern Mary (30 km) and close to the smaller town of Bairam Ali. There is a good paved road connecting the site with Bairam Ali and Mary. At present there is one paved internal road which connects to the main monument areas. The state historical and cultural reserve Ancient Merv is now one of the principal tourist sites that is part of the Great Silk Road of Turkmenistan. The site contains the archaeological remains of at least five cities over different periods and covers 130 sq. m. The main cities are Sultan-Kala (ninth to twelfth century A.D.), Erk-Kala (the first millenium B.C.), Gyaaur-Kala (third century B.C. to ninth century A.D.) and Abdullah Khan-Kala

(fifteenth to eighteenth century A.D.). The most ancient excavated site of Merv is Yonur-depe which dates to the middle of the second millennium B.C. At one point of its history, Merv was called the Pearl of the East. It reached its zenith as one of the Silk Road's major staging posts in the eleventh and twelfth centuries when the Seljuks made Merv their capital. The most ancient monuments from the country of Margush are lost in the desert and difficult to reach. It is better to restrict sightseeing to those architectural monuments concentrated around the Pearl of ancient Merv, where Sultan Sandjar Mausoleum rises high above the centre of Sultan-Kala. There are fifteen existing monuments of impressive size scattered around the site. Along with the walls of the different cities, there is a clear impression and richness of the old capitals. The average tour of ancient Merv consists of a visit to the monuments, a trip that lasts about two hours by car.

(e) Kunya Urgench (Gurgandj) (a UNESCO World Heritage Site)
(Asian Highway route number: A 5)

The modern city Kunya Urgench is situated 150 km from Dashkhowuz. There is State Historical Museum Reserve covering an area of 640 hectares in its outskirts. It can be accessed by good paved road from Dashkhowuz and Ashgabat, or by train from Dashkhowuz. The internal road network consists of a single paved road crossing the site from north to south. Kunya Urgench was established in the first century A.D., and in 995 became the capital of old Khorezm, the largest independent Muslim state in Central Asia in the eighth century. The city reached its peak in the first two centuries of the current millennium, but was destroyed by the Mongols in 1221. However, it was re-established as an important trading centre on the Silk Road. The present site covers the whole area of the ancient city and contains 16 different monuments which are still visible. Others are under excavation. Today, pre-Mongol monuments mausoleums, minarets and fortresses attract visitors.

18. Viet Nam

(a) Hanoi, Hoa Binh, Dien Bien Phu
(Asian Highway route number: A 1, number 6)

Tourist attractions in Hanoi include the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, the Literature Temple, the One Pillar Temple and museums. Hoa Binh is the capital of Hoa Binh Province, an area that is home to various hill tribe people. The Da River hydroelectric power plant and Mai Chau-ethnic minority village is worth visiting. Dien Bien Phu is an old battlefield site. Major access to these places are from Hanoi, by going along Highway Number 1 linking from the north and the south; to Hoa Binh, Dien Bien Phu by starting at Hanoi and going along route number 6.

(b) Cat Ba Island, Do Son Beach, Ha Long Bay
(Asian Highway route number: A 1, number 5)

Do Son Beach is one of the most attractive beach resorts in Viet Nam with a 5 km long promontory dotted with hills and forests. Cat Ba Island (National Park) is of great value for its interrelated diverse ecosystem of forest and sea. Ha Long Bay lies in the middle of the waters of Quang Ninh about 180 km from Hanoi. The bay covers an area of 1,500 km with more than 1,000 islands. Major access to these places is: going to Do Son, follow route number 5, pass Hai Phong about 18 km away; going to Cat Ba Island, take a boat for about 4 hours from Hai Phong; going to Ha Long from Hai Phong, travel about two to three hours northward.

(c) Hue (ancient capital city), Hoi An, Nha Trang Beach
(Asian Highway route numbers: A 1, A 17, number 1)

These three attractions lie along highway route number 1 which runs down the country from the central area to southern Viet Nam. Hue is the ancient imperial capital with many palaces and royal tombs that have been kept intact, and features the Perfume River running through the city. Da Nang is the central province of Viet Nam with famous tourist attractions like Hoi, an ancient town; the Cham Museum, the My Son Sanctuary and Non Nuoc Beach. Nha Trang is a beautiful seaside resort city. The coastline borders the city to the sea on a stretch of 7 km.

(d) Ho Chi Minh City, Vung Tau, Con Dao Islands
(Asian Highway route numbers: A 1, A 17)

Major access to these sites are: going to Ho Chi Minh City and Vung Tau involves travel along route number 1. Going to Con Dao Island from Vung Tau takes half a day by boat, but it is also accessible by helicopter.

Ho Chi Minh City is the second most important city in Viet Nam. It is a commercial centre and a scientific, technological, industrial and tourist location. Tourist attractions include the Reunification Conference Hall, the Zoo and Botanical Garden, Notre Dame Cathedral, Nhe Rong Wharf, Cu Chi Tunnel and Lai Thieu Fruit Tree Garden. Vung Tau is a beach city with five beautiful beaches, a royal palace and the Binh Chau Hot Spring.

(e) Lam Dong — Da Lat
(Asian Highway route number: A 1, number 20)

Da Lat City is a mountain resort accessible by air or by road from Ho Chi Minh City. The climate is like that of a temperate zone with an average temperature of about 16 Celsius in the winter and 20 Celsius in the summer. Tourist attractions include Prenn Waterfall, Datanla Waterfall, Guga Waterfall, Cam Ly Waterfall, Pongua Waterfall, Lake of Sighs, golf courses, palaces and Da Lat Flower Park.

B. Major problems related to access to tourism attractions along the Asian Highway

Tourism agencies from several countries have provided information on major problems related to access to tourism attractions along the Asian Highway. The types of problems were found to vary widely, but there was also one main problem that seemed to be common to all. The main common problem relates to infrastructure conditions.

In Cambodia, security problems were also cited as well as lack of information on road conditions along the highway. Accommodations and restaurants along the highway were considered to be insufficient as were petrol service stations.

India reported that the roads giving access to major sites were mostly overcrowded and congested. In Lao People's Democratic Republic, infrastructure was considered to be inadequate. The hilly terrain in Nepal meant that most roads were quite narrow with several bends, but this was considered to make driving a sense of adventure.

Some archaeological sites that could be tourist attractions in Pakistan are located off the main highways and the access roads are not of international standard. Since the Philippines is an archipelago, land travel via the Asian Highway may not be the best option for visitors. Although there is a bus operating on the Luzon-Visayas-Mindanao (LUZVIMINDA) route, travellers might experience inconveniences during the trip, as the bus has to be ferried from one island to the other.

Sri Lanka reported that it is upgrading existing highways throughout the island and a major road construction programme is underway. Thailand's highways are considered to be narrow. Generally, some parts of many Asian Highway routes are rather narrow, particularly those that are north bound and south bound.

There are a limited number of rest areas and service points, information centres and some public service facilities, such as public telephones along many parts of the Asian Highway. For a number of countries, more highway police and security check points were needed.

In Turkmenistan, some archaeological sites of interest to tourists are located off the main highways and access roads are not of international standard. At the same time, the infrastructure in more distant regions was considered to be inadequate. There was also a lack of information on road conditions along the highway.

II. SUGGESTED ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN TO PROMOTE TOURISM ALONG THE ASIAN HIGHWAY

Several countries have suggested actions to be taken to promote tourism along the Asian Highway in their response to the ESCAP questionnaire. Actions that could be taken at the national and regional level and by the secretariat to promote tourism along the Asian Highway are presented in this section.

A. Suggested actions to be taken at the national level

Thirteen countries suggested various actions to be taken at the national level.

Armenia recommended action to increase transportation links to each region as well as the need to improve the communication system. It was also suggested that ways needed to be found to secure the necessary budget resources in order to maintain and repair roads. Infrastructure and tourist facilities need to be developed and tourist maps and travel guidebooks should be produced. An internet homepage of major tourism attractions in Armenia was also considered as a requirement for better promoting tourism along the Asian Highway.

Bangladesh emphasized the need for efforts to develop more tourism services and facilities, including sports facilities such as modern golf courses, water sports and other recreational facilities at Cox's Bazaar. It would also be beneficial to develop a cruise service between Cox's Bazaar Teknaf/St. Martin Island. In order to develop Patenga Beach and introduce tourist facilities at Chittagong, guided tours, excursions, day-trips to Rangamati and/or Kaptai and neighbouring tribal villages should be introduced, Lake cruises and aquatic sports could be introduced and organized at Kaptai Lake.

Bangladesh also recommended the development of some tourist amenities such as stop-over facilities for tourists in transit through Comilla. A guide-lecture service should be developed on Mainamati. Appropriate accommodation and catering facilities should be developed in selected tea estates in Sylhet and necessary tourist facilities should be introduced at major tourist attractions in the tea district.

In Bangladesh, Mohasthanagarh should be developed as a product for archaeological and educational tourism. Infrastructure was still needed for areas such as Badal Gachchi-Paharpur Road and Jamalgonj-Paharpur Road in Paharpur.

A number of actions were suggested to promote tourism along the Asian Highway in Cambodia. One action would be to increase all kinds of transportation along the highway to maintain links to each region and to install

a traffic light system along the highway. It was also recommended to plant trees and develop communication systems.

Facilities could be established in Cambodia to repair vehicles in case they break down while driving along the highway. Marks were needed to show road conditions and related information. Parking areas were needed at each important point. It was also considered necessary to establish a control commission to check on tourist passengers at entry and exit points. Cambodia also emphasized the need to secure budgetary resources for maintaining and repairing the highway.

India recommended action to widen and strengthen roads and provide wayside amenities for travellers.

Similarly, the Islamic Republic of Iran said there was a need to put up guideposts for travellers. Local maps, brochures and information should also be produced for distribution to travellers. Tourism facilities around tourist attractions should be developed as well.

Several actions were suggested by the Lao People's Democratic Republic. These included development of infrastructure, tourist facilities and tourist sites. Action was also needed to produce tourist maps and a travel guide book. Sign boards of tourist sites should be installed.

Malaysia recommended action to develop publicity exposure through the most effective medium and tools. Cooperative marketing activities could be taken with other entities. Better consumer understanding and awareness about tourism products should be imparted and disseminated.

Action to be taken in Nepal should emphasize the need to improve road networks at a fast rate.

Pakistan suggested that action was needed to maintain the highway for the use in all weather and to establish standard accommodations along the Asian Highway. Utilities such as telephones, telegraph, hospitals, toilets, restaurants, filling stations, tourism information centres and mini-shopping centres should be provided. It was also necessary to ensure that highway safety and security codes are followed. Access routes to the nearest airports and railway stations should be developed as well.

The Philippines recommended action to promote use of the existing "Jeepney Highway Adventure" programme to make this Asian Highway project successful. At present, the Department of Tourism's regional offices had their own lead tour packages for the Jeepney Highway Adventures. There should also be action to offer a variety of attractions (nature, man-made, festivals, etc.) in

order to sustain visitors' interest in each destination. At the same time, this action requires making tourist facilities available.

Sri Lanka emphasized the need for action to maintain the highway for bump-free driving and roads without potholes. Mountains of garbage along the roads should also be cleared away and pavements should be cleared of beggars. It was also important to keep public places such as markets and bus/railway stations at a high level of cleanliness. Sales outlets for handicrafts should be established as well.

Thailand proposed the need for action to undertake highway expansion throughout the country. While some parts of the Asian Highway are eight lanes wide, most of the highway routes still have only two lanes. The number of highway police should be increased. Rest areas should be provided and information centres and service points should be established in order to provide information and services to tourists.

Turkmenistan recommended action to increase the quality of road networks. Standard accommodations and other facilities should be established along the highway. The communication system needed development, and tourist maps and guide books should be produced.

B. Suggested regional actions to promote international tourism

Nine countries have suggested several regional actions to promote regional and international tourism. Attracting international tourists to travel along the Asian Highway should be one of the priority areas which needs to be addressed. Some of the common areas where attention is required includes preparation of promotional materials.

Armenia proposed regional action to develop tourist sites, provide rest areas and establish information centres. The purpose would be to provide information and services to tourists. Promotional materials such as brochures and effective use of mass media were also required.

Bangladesh supported regional action to develop promotional campaigns of attractions that exist along the Asian Highway. There could be regional action to open the Asian Highway Section A 41 to tourist traffic all the way to Bangkok and back through Myanmar.

India supported action to develop wider publicity about roads near important tourist attractions.

The Islamic Republic of Iran recommended regional action to prepare a tourist guide introducing attractions along the Asian Highway.

Proposals for regional action made by the Lao People's Democratic Republic included organizing seminars on promotion of tourism along the Asian Highway. Tourism trade shows should be used to promote tourism along the Asian Highway. Special events organized regionally along the Asian Highway could be organized and promoted.

Malaysia suggested developing promotional activities through various advertising media at the regional level. Promotional materials could also be produced covering the region. Regional cooperation within the tourist trade could be one way to introduce a variety of packages for targeted markets.

Nepal observed that road networks were plentiful in the plains of the South Asian sub-continent. Establishing more links between these networks and the mountainous highways of Nepal could help tourism promotion in the subregion.

Sri Lanka recommended regional efforts to produce an Asian Highway tourism map.

Viet Nam recommended coordinated regional action in resolving matters related to border entry-exit procedures for tourists along the highway. Regional action and cooperation was needed in order to solve issues related to different traffic systems, such as left and right-hand drive in different countries. A common network of signposts for tourists along the various highways should be set up.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The potential for tourism along the Asian Highway throughout the region is readily apparent from the response by eighteen member countries of ESCAP to the questionnaire survey designed to identify major tourism attractions. A wide variety of attractions along the Asian Highway point to the possibility of socio-economic benefits that could be created at national levels and the regional level based on the development of tourism and related infrastructure and tourism-related services.

The survey questionnaire showed that a diversity of natural sites and scenic areas made travel along the highway a unique tourism and travelling experience. Based on the questionnaire, there is now a profile of the major attractions. This information can help to guide future action at both the national and regional level in the areas of marketing, allocating tourism development budgets and setting some priorities for the tourism industry.

Moreover, the country responses to the questionnaire indicated that tourism agencies were aware of the tourism potential while also recognizing several types of problems related to access. Based on the major tourism attractions that have been identified in each country, there was also a potential for countries to join hands and cooperate to promote tourism by sharing their diverse cultural heritage, history and natural environments. In this context, the Asian Highway could be considered as a means to promote intraregional tourism, which has been one of the fastest growing segments of the Asian tourism market.

Once the major problems related to access and development of tourism attractions have been described in response to the questionnaire, possible solutions at the national and regional level can be considered. One of the most serious problems has been identified as inadequate infrastructure, involving road conditions, road links, communications, accommodations and other tourism facilities. Another problem is lack of information to clearly designate attractions along the highway and lack of awareness in many tourist markets. Several countries have recognized the need to upgrade and maintain road conditions; improve the safety and security situation; and improve environmental conditions along the highway. However, there are problems with finding adequate resources and financial support to take action that is not only necessary, but also urgent in some cases.

Once the countries identified various problems that impede access or limit the potential for future tourism development along the Asian Highway, their responses have shown that they are very interested to find solutions at the national and regional level. For the purposes of suggesting future directions in the work of ESCAP and other international and regional organizations, several actions at the regional level can help promote international tourism along the Asian Highway. These actions could focus on developing wider publicity and promotional campaigns; encouraging greater road linkages among neighbouring countries; producing a regional tourist map and related information; and coordinating efforts to facilitate travel formalities at borders. Overall, the potential for the Asian Highway to expand opportunities for regional and international cooperation remains strong and ESCAP-member countries have responded positively to the opportunities for greater cooperation.