

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT The Republic of Cuba

## **Project for Formulation of** National Transport Master Plan in the Republic of Cuba



Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

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## 01 Project Background

A marked decline in Cuba's transport infrastructure after 1991 emerged as a significant impediment to the nation's development. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 added to the challenges, although there has been a notable upswing in foreign tourist arrivals since early 2022.

This surge in tourism highlights an urgent imperative to revitalize and restore Cuba's transport infrastructure in order to bolster the tourism sector and facilitate exports of agricultural and other products. But Cuba's economic and national financial circumstances remain challenging due to multiple factors, including U.S. economic sanctions. Consequently, investments to renew and rehabilitate transport infrastructure and facilities have been constrained.

Even though the population has been decreasing in the last few years, the National Statistics and Information Office (ONEI)

predicts that Cuba's population will slightly increase until 2025, followed by a subsequent decline towards 2030. Besides, the workingage population is expected to decrease gradually as the overall population ages. Coping with this demographic shift will require creating appealing employment opportunities for youth while simultaneously addressing the reality of an aging workforce. This will emerge as a pivotal consideration in future economic policy.

Given the prevailing conditions within Cuba, and anticipating projected economic and industrial trends, the National Transport Master Plan has been formulated with a target year of 2030. It is important to note that this planning initiative was conducted between September 2018 and March 2023, although with a hiatus caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Following the higher-level policy frameworks, a vision is presented for the direction of transport-sector development. In accordance with this vision, objectives are defined across six major planning areas. Multiple strategies are formulated to achieve these objectives, quantified where possible to illustrate the intended goals. These encompass specific actions and elemental projects crucial to fulfilling Master Plan objectives.



#### (1) Planning and Coordination

The Ministry of Transport (MITRANS) includes directorates responsible for planning and coordinating roads & road transport; railways; ports & maritime transport; airports & civil aviation; and logistics. Each directorate formulates plans within its respective domain, which the Planning Directorate then consolidates. This Master Plan underscores enhancing

## 02 Structure of the Master Plan

The National Transport Master Plan is based on the "Conceptualization of the Economic & Social Model" (updated by the 2021 Cuban National Assembly of People's Power), the "National Economic & Social Development Plan 2030" and "Cuba and its Economic & Social Challenges, September 2020." These serve as the overarching policies guiding the National Transport Master Plan.

In alignment with these higher-level policies, and considering current socio-economic conditions and plans, the National Transport Master Plan outlines the strategies and action plans necessary to achieve transportsector objectives by 2030. The structure of the Plan adheres to the hierarchical format shown in the following diagram.



the planning and coordination functions across the various directorates (modes of transport).

The Superior Business Management Organizations (OSDE: Organización Superior de Dirección Empresarial) operate independently, subordinated to the Council of Ministers, and attended by MITRANS, overseeing and supervising state-owned transport service providers Empresas. Organizational design aligned with the above principles is essential to effectively plan, implement, report and guide vertical relationships from MITRANS to implementing entities.

This also necessitates coordination among OSDEs and horizontal cooperation among various ministries. Thus, it is imperative to effectively organize administrative roles/ responsibilities, vertical & horizontal connections and to bolster interorganizational coordination systems.

#### (2) Transport Infrastructure Development

Developing Transport infrastructure (capital investment) involves a series of investment projects based on the strategies and the goals. These include renovation, renewal, new construction, and installation projects.

Considering budgetary and time constraints, projects are prepared to be implementable within the planning period.

During the Master Plan period, project progress is monitored and reported using output indicators and other indices.

#### (3) Environment, Safety and Security

As the transport sector is a major source of  $CO_2$  emissions, reducing these emissions is a high priority, along with ensuring that transportation development is consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Consequently, it is essential to address environmental, safety, and security concerns in formulating objectives, strategies, goals, and projects of the Master Plan. Since safety is a primary concern, incremental measures can be proposed and adopted within existing budget limits. Besides, public health strategies to counter diseases are duly considered.

#### (4) Enhancing Transport Services and Industry Development

State-owned manufacturing enterprises typically handle their own freight transport needs or rely on transport entities linked to OSDEs to which they belong. But when that capacity falls short, transportation is outsourced to state-owned transport entities affiliated with MITRANS. This is done through the "Balance de Cargas" mechanism. Strengthening this mechanism is vital to achieving more efficient transport services and reducing fuel consumption.

The Master Plan also points to the need to expand and enhance transport service capabilities by involving non-state entities in transport services and introducing thirdparty logistics (3PL).

MITRANS and Provincial Directorates of Transport (DPTs) play crucial roles in domestic passenger transport. MITRANS should focus on bolstering transport capacity and services at the national level, particularly in intercity public transport. Concurrently, urban public transport capacity-building (bus procurement, staff training, route planning, transport monitoring, etc.) should align with each province's situation.

The Ministry of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (MINFAR) plays a key role in bus transport for international tourists. This sector contributes to foreign exchange earnings and is expected to include the nongovernment sector in future. Encouraging the entry of non-state enterprises and foreign investment is also worth considering.

#### (5) Transport Pricing and Resource Allocation

Each transport-related organization should review its fee structure to ensure financial and operational autonomy and sustainability. Charges (beneficiary-pays principle) for using infrastructure such as roads, bridges, airports, railways and ports should be considered. While toll roads have been partially introduced, charging for other transport infrastructure should also be considered. Other financing options for transport infrastructure development include concession systems, collaborations with foreign investors, involving institutional investors (e.g., sovereign wealth and pension funds) and Official Development Assistance (ODA).

#### (6) Regulatory and Institutional Development

Effective implementation of strategies across the areas (1) to (5) requires parallel development and enhancement of legal frameworks, organizational capacity and human resources. Administrative and institutional reforms are essential to achieve the objectives set out. This includes reforms within MITRANS and other transport-related entities in MITRANS' s sector.

## **Direction of** the Transport Sector Plan

If adequate transport infrastructure investments are not made by 2030 (final year of this Master Plan) much of Cuba's infrastructure and facilities will have deteriorated, leading to greater technical challenges and higher costs for rehabilitation. This will also result in a steep decline in transport safety and service quality. While rehabilitation and renewal of transport infrastructure is essential, certain constraints must be considered:

- Tourism, a key source of foreign currency. will likely continue facing negative impacts from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- Ongoing U.S. economic sanctions will hinder investment in transport infrastructure & services and other industrial sectors.
- Due to a lack of foreign currency reserves, Cuba may face power and fuel shortages.
- An aging population will lead to a shortage of human resources in the transport sector.
- Cubans' purchasing power is not expected to improve substantially by 2030.

Given these constraints, the National Transport Master Plan 2030 has been formulated within a policy framework that selectively incorporates market-driven economic mechanisms while upholding socialist principles.

Aligned with the above, the following guiding principles are threaded throughout the entire Master Plan, shaping the strategies and project identification for each transport sector:

- I. Selection and concentration: Focus investments on transport infrastructure, facilities and equipment that will contribute to foreign currency earnings.
- II. Digital transformation (DX): Leverage Information & Communication Technology (ICT) to enhance efficiency of transport infrastructure, facilities, equipment and resource utilization.
- III. Renewal over repair: Prioritize renewal of deteriorated transport infrastructure, facilities and equipment to reduce operation & maintenance costs and minimize environmental impact.
- IV. Optimization of resources: Consider disposing of underutilized transport infrastructure, facilities and equipment.
- V. Promoting "clean transportation:" Enhance the appeal of tourist destinations and contribute to climate change mitigation by introducing environmentally friendly transport options.
- VI. Advanced technology adoption: Adopt advanced technology to prepare for future challenges posed by aging infrastructure and potential human-resource shortages.
- VII.Recognize the crucial need to support development of both state-owned and small/medium-sized enterprises in the transport sector.

## **04** Vision for Transport Development

A collective vision was crafted to address planning challenges across six key sectors. This entailed creating a unified vision for the entire transport sector while technical working groups developed specific visions for each of the following sectors: 1) road & bridge; 2) road passenger transport (bus); 3) rail & rail transport; 4) port & maritime transport; 5) airport & civil aviation; and 6) logistics.

### Vision for comprehensive transport sector development

"To develop an efficient, modern, safe, environmentally friendly transport system in a coordinated/sustainable manner that embraces all transport modes for the benefit of Cuba and its people."





### Development vision for port & maritime sector

"To develop maritime port activity and provide competitive maritime transport services, with worldclass national/international ports equipped with modern and environmentally friendly technologies and systems to guarantee the quality and efficiency of intermodal operations."



### Development vision for the road & bridge sector

"To develop safe and resilient infrastructure for a multimodal, efficient and environmentally friendly automotive transport system to meet Cuba's socio-economic needs."



### Development vision for road passenger transport (bus) sector

"To provide safe, efficient, sustainable and environmentally friendly bus services that guarantee inclusive mobility, improving the population's quality of life and high-quality transport services to support the tourism industry."



### Declaración de la vision del sector logístico

"Create a Caribbean logistics platform focused on meeting customer needs with services that ensure cargoes reach customers just in time at minimal monetary & environmental cost."

### Development vision for rail & rail transport sector

"To develop a safe, efficient, sustainable and environmentally friendly rail system along the main economic corridors, coordinated with other transport modes, in order to achieve greater intermodality via provision of high-quality services."



### Vision for airport & aviation sector development

"To turn Cuba into one of the main Caribbean hubs: with efficient, safe and secure airport and aeronautical infrastructure; with high standards of quality, capacity, sustainability and environmental friendliness; to satisfy the socioeconomic transport needs of the nation, in coordination with other transport modes."



## 05 Development Framework

#### 5.1 Total population

The total population of Cuba in 2022 is 11.1 million, of which 8.6 million (77.1%) are urban and 2.5 million (22.9%) are rural.

Although the total population is declining, the National Statistics and Information Office (ONEI) projects that it will increase slightly to 11.2 million in 2025, then begin to decline, reaching 11.1 million in 2030, about the same as today.

In addition, due to the aging of the population, the proportion of the population aged 60 and over in 2030 will be 24%, indicating that the population is expected to age further toward 2030.

### 5.2 Distribución de la población

Future population growth rates reveal several spatial characteristics:

- Population in and around Havana is projected to remain relatively stable.
- Regional centers (cities) are expected to have relatively high population growth rates.
- Provinces with or near tourist destinations such as Cardenas, Nuevitas (including northern island region) and Cienaga de Zapata will likely see heightened population growth.







Figure 5.2 Future Population Growth and Density

 Population concentration follows cities along Cuba's east-west national highways, with fewer inhabitants residing in mountainous and wetland regions.

This pattern underscores the likelihood of increased population concentration and urbanization as tourism and related employment opportunities expand.

#### 5.3 Macroeconomic Growth Scenarios

The Cuban economy is highly vulnerable to shifts in the global environment. Escalating U.S. economic sanctions, including limitations on direct investments and remittances under the Helms-Burton Act, have further impacted an already challenged Cuban economy. Moreover, COVID-19 has led to a sluggish tourism sector since March 2020, resulting in negative income growth in 2021. Given these dynamics, the following assumptions have shaped the economic framework for Master Plan development:



Figure 5.3 Spatial Development Suitability Map

- Global economic recovery from COVID-19 began as projected in early 2022.
- Ongoing U.S. economic sanctions will persist.
- Post-pandemic, the tourism industry is expected to recover gradually.
- Exports of medical products will show steady growth.

As per MEP's post-2022 forecast, the Cuban economy started to recover in 2022, achieving an annual growth rate of 4% in real terms.

#### 5.4 Constraints on Spatial Development

Comprehensive evaluations are conducted in crafting transport infrastructure plans, encompassing environmental vulnerability and exposure to natural disasters. Environmental vulnerability is assessed using data on land coverage, mangroves and protected areas. Natural disaster risk is gauged using data on flooding, landslide potential, historical hurricane paths/ intensities and earthquake records. These



Figure 5.4 National Territorial Planning Scheme of Cuba

parameters are integrated using GIS to produce a Spatial Development Suitability map, which was used in carrying out strategic environmental assessments (SEAs) during transport policy formulation and infrastructure planning.

#### 5.5 Spatial Development Policies and Transport Networks

The National Institute of Spatial Ordering & Town Planning (INOTU) prepares the National Scheme of Territorial Planning (ENOT: Esquema Nacional de Ordenamiento Territorial) as a guideline for translating national economic and social policies into spatial realities. MITRANS contributes transport-sector documents, data and analyses to ENOT, which INOTU integrates with information from other sectors to craft a unified national land development policy.

Within the ENOT framework, provincial-level spatial development policies, known as EPOTs, are established. However, the absence of intermediate-scale planning and administrative systems between ENOT and EPOTs, spanning multiple provinces, calls for an approach considering transport network development from a broad regional development perspective. This Master Plan proposes dividing Cuba into four regions (Eastern, Central-Eastern, Central and Western) anticipating future regional planning and administrative systems. Trunk transport network development strategies align with regional characteristics.

#### (1) Eastern Region (4 provinces: Holguín, Granma, Santiago de Cuba, Guantánamo)

Santiago de Cuba is a Class II city and a key international gateway, situated at the heart of the eastern region. Moa has a nickel export port, and mining and manufacturing operations are expanding to cater to burgeoning demand for electric vehicle batteries. Tourism, agriculture and manufacturing industries contribute to the regional economy.

#### (2) Central Eastern Region (3 provinces: Ciego de Avila, Camagüey, Las Tunas)

Camagüey, a Class II city, is the regional hub. Tourism development, especially around the northern island region, is expected to catalyze



Figure 5.5 Regional Development and Transport Network

economic growth. Agriculture is thriving, and the Ramsar Convention mandates the protection of wetlands along the north coast.

#### (3) Central Region (3 provinces: Villa Clara, Cienfuegos, Sancti Spiritus)

Santa Clara, another Class II city, is the regional hub, along with Cienfuegos, a key international gateway and major port. Tourism revolves around UNESCO World Heritage sites in Cienfuegos and Trinidad, with additional resort developments planned.

#### (4) West Region (4 provinces: Havana, Artemisa, Matanzas, Pinar del Rio, and Isla de la Juventud)

Havana is the western region's focal point and primary international gateway. Mariel is the nation's gateway port for international trade and industry, while tourism development and the Mariel Special Development Zone (ZED Mariel) are expected to draw foreign investment. Cultural/ecological tourism, agriculture and manufacturing add to the regional economy.

## 06 Demand Forecast

Assessing the transport network's performance involved a four-step procedure method to predict transport demand.

Passenger demand projections were made for Cuban residents (based on ONEI population forecasts) and non-residents (informed by international passenger trend analysis).

For cargo demand, estimates were derived by applying GDP growth rate scenarios by industry sector, utilizing a 23-item cargo Origin-Destination (OD) table developed from 2018 BC-4 data (Balance de Cargas Form 4).

To estimate the distribution pattern of future OD matrices, the Frater method was employed.



Figure 5.6 Highway Traffic Volume (2030)



Figura 5.7 Passenger Traffic Volume (2030)

Figure 5.6 shows the distribution of road traffic demand in 2030 relative to the 2018 network. Notably, higher traffic volumes are anticipated on highways and arterial roads near Havana. Nonetheless, the traffic volume capacity ratio (V/C) predominantly falls below 0.5 across most sections, indicating that significant traffic congestion (capacity shortage) at the arterial level is unlikely to occur in 2030, even with the existing network. This simulation underscores the importance of sustaining and efficiently managing the existing network rather than focusing on new network construction.

Figure 5.7 shows the results of passenger demand assignment across the transport network (bus, rail, air and ferry). While there is a slight expected increase in bus and rail



Figura 5.8 Cargo Traffic Volume (2030)

JICA survey team members and CIMAB staff visited each province to provide training on traffic surveys, which were then conducted by staff from each province.



Training for traffic survey

ridership along primary overland routes, no substantial surge in passenger transit demand is anticipated. However, it is imperative to renew and modernize intercity bus fleets to cater to existing demand, considering there are already waiting lists for reservations.

Figure 5.8 shows cargo demand assignment results for 2030 in the freight network, categorized by mode of transport. Trucking is expected to be pivotal in Cuba's western region, especially around Mariel, Havana, Mayabegue and Santa Clara. Mainline railways, such as Mariel-Havana-Santiago de Cuba and Santa Clara-Cienfuegos, are projected to play a larger role in long-distance east-west transport, particularly in Cuba's central eastern regions.



Roadside OD interview survey

## 07 Impact of Highway Enhancement

Figure 5.9 shows areas reachable within an equal time from the central city in each region, under two scenarios: one where the highway remains unfinished east of Santa Clara, the other with the highway extended to Santiago de Cuba.

This shows that the highway's completion will yield substantial enhancements in accessibility for the Eastern and Central Eastern regions. Plus, it will foster heightened overall connectivity across Cuba. Consequently, completion of the highway project must be seen as a matter of utmost significance.



Figura 5.9 Effect of Autopista Improvement (top: uncompleted, bottom: completed)

- Critical revitalization of road bridges leading to tourist hubs (e.g., Varadero) (RB003).
- Refurbish causeway links to northeast beach island resorts (RB011).
- Procure essential equipment for road rehabilitation (RB004).
- Improve sightseeing bus and inter-provincial bus services (RT001<sup>~</sup>RT008).
- Overhaul provincial bus terminals (RT009, RT013).
- Continue production of Diana buses (RT014).
- Rehabilitate central railway mainline (RW014, RW015).
- Hershey Line track improvement and renewal of rolling stock (RW029).
- Advancement of Biran Project (RW028).
- Airport rail line development (Jose Marti Airport - Havana - Varadero) (RW006, RW007).

### **08** Key Investment Initiatives

To spur further development around key tourist destinations, transport network enhancements will be essential. Improvements should link airports, hotels and tourist attractions around Havana, Varadero, Pinar del Rio, Santiago de Cuba, northeastern beach resorts and cities boasting World Heritage sites such as Sancti Spiritus.

Strategic transport sector investments to support tourism include:

 Havana to Santiago de Cuba Highway completion/enhancement, including lighting, pavement and amenities such as Michi-no-Eki (rest areas) (RB002, RB008).



- Procure track maintenance & repair equipment/workshop upgrades (RW012, RW013).
- Improve passenger rail services, incl. fare & reservation systems and catering (RW040).
- Enhance major rail stations (RW020, RW021).
- Revitalize tram systems in Havana & Santiago de Cuba for domestic and tourist use.
- Revamp international airports (capacity expansion, GSE procurement, control system upgrades) (A001<sup>~</sup>A003, A005, A011, A012, A018).
- Renew aircraft for domestic routes (A010).
- Modernize cargo vessels and ferries serving Isla de la Juventud and northern islands (M016, M017, M018).
- Transform ports to support tourism (including cruise terminals) (MO01, M008).

To support export industries and optimize nation-wide distribution of imported commodities, the key intervention involves promoting intermodal transport links to Mariel and Santiago de Cuba ports and the Mariel Special Development Zone. This strategy links production sites for agricultural and marine products (e.g., tobacco, sugar cane, mangoes, lobster) with processing units and fortifies transport networks between factories. storage facilities, consumption zones and end-user deliveries (e.g., fresh seafood to tourist hotels).

In the pursuit of these goals, the following are highlighted as potential strategic investments:

• Enhancement of the BC System (LG001, LG002, LG003).

- Modernize collection, storage and distribution centers in each province. including frozen food and grain storage facilities (LG010, LG011).
- Establish agricultural/marine product export storage facilities near ports & airports (LG012, LG013).
- Introduce third-party logistics (3PL) services (LG023, LG024).
- Construct bulk terminal at Mariel.
- Modernize oil import terminals and augment coastal shipping capacities.

# Enhancing the Balance de Cargas System

The "Balance de Cargas" system functions as a mechanism to allocate fuel for freight transport among state-owned enterprises. It achieves this by balancing freight transport demand and supply and implementing strategies to optimize fuel consumption.

Although producers generally use their own trucks to move intermediate and final goods, they often lack sufficient vehicles or loads are too small to justify long journeys (for which rail or sea modes are recommended).

The main purpose of the Balance de Cargas system is to pre-plan and coordinate all freight transport demand with available transport resources in order to minimize fuel consumption.

State-owned enterprises with their own means of transport submit BC Form 1 listing transport-related information to MITRANS.

BC Form 4, which combines BC Form 2 and BC Form 3, outlines the overall origin, destination and volume of freight shipments. This freight transport supply and demand coordination is pivotal in minimizing fuel consumption.

Although Balance de Cargas operations are currently manual, implementation of ICT is envisaged to enhance the system.



BC Form 2:

Figura 5.10 Advancement of Balance de Cargas



- Cargo transport demand (order) information is shared with cargo transport service providers.
- Cargo transport service providers' information (available cargo transport services) is shared with cargo owners (shippers).
- Cargo transport demand and supply (transport services) are balanced through a matching service.

#### [Improvement]

A Cloud Database System is introduced.

• By filling BC-forms, necessary information (fuel consumption, etc.) is

• A logical error-checking system is developed as a part of BC forms

## Immediate Bridge Enhancement

Apart from ensuring general travel and transport safety, assuring safe travel on main roads is of utmost urgency to bolster the tourism sector, a key foreign currency generator.

One glaring example is the dire state of a bridge on the Via Blanca main road from Havana to Varadero (see Figure 5.11) that urgently requires immediate replacement.

Swift action is needed to inspect all road and rail bridges nationwide. Following these assessments, programs for repair and replacement must be formulated. Plus, reinforcing technical capabilities for repair, upkeep and management is a crucial shortterm priority.



1 Tarara Bridge(210m)

2 Monumental sobre Via Blanca(78.3m)

5 Puente sobe el Rio Boca e Jaruco (254m)



7 Puente sobre el Rio Puerto Escondido (185m)



8 Puente sobre el Rio Jibacoa (554m) Figura 5.11 Condition of Road Bridges on Via Blanca



Efforts have been made to build the capacity of Cuban government entities in developing and maintaining the National Transport Master Plan for the future. These measures include:

- Collaborative planning through technical working group activities (on-the-job training)
- Workshops (July 2019) and seminars (September 2019 and February 2022)
- On-the-job training in traffic survey methodology (June 2019)

## 12 Training in Japan

In 2019, JICA facilitated two training programs in Japan to transfer Japan's knowhow and expertise in planning, operating and managing disaster-resilient and efficient social infrastructure.

#### First session (March 2019)

In addition to Cuba's aging transportation infrastructure, the risk of natural disasters such as hurricanes is high. In light of this, the training aimed to acquire and utilize experience and knowledge in planning, operating, and managing technologies to develop disaster-resistant and efficient social infrastructure.

#### Second session (November-December 2019)

The second training aimed to acquire knowledge on the inspection, maintenance, and management of transportation infrastructure and tourism promotion.



Naha Container Terminal

**Okinawa Prefectural Government** 

- On-the-job training for road surface condition survey (February 2019)
- GIS data maintenance and utilization training (July 2019)



Final Seminar (Feb 2022)



Tokyo International Airport (Narita)



Group photo



Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism





Yui Rail (monorail)

## **13** Master Plan implementation schedule

The initial five years (2022-2026) will serve as a preparatory phase, succeeded by a four-year investment period (2027-2030) grounded in the investment program developed during the preparatory phase. Subsequently, accelerated economic growth is anticipated.

Cumulative investment by 2030 will amount to 135 billion CUP (approx. 700 billion yen). Of this, 41% (55.8 billion CUP, approx. 290 billion yen) will be invested within the first five years, with the remaining 59% (79.2 billion CUP, approx. 410 billion yen) allocated for the ensuing four years.

For each transport sector, the first five years will be dedicated to ledger data compilation, diverse studies, feasibility assessments, education and training. Simultaneously, essential repairs and upgrades to infrastructure will be carried out.



## 14 Master Plan Positioning and Implementation Mechanisms

The National Plan for Socio-economic Development (PNDES-2030), a guiding document for Cuba's socio-economic progress up to 2030, has been ratified by the National Assembly of People's Power (ANPP). The Transport Master Plan and PNDES-2030 have been developed almost concurrently, with insights from the Transport Master Plan supplementing the transport and logistics segment of PNDES-2030.

PNDES 2030 has three tiers: macroprograms, programs, and projects. Within the Infrastructure Macro Program, the Transport



Infrastructure and Logistics Program, helmed by the Minister of MITRANS, is a priority. The Transport Master Plan is executed within this framework.

The Transport Infrastructure and Logistics Program encompasses seven sectoral projects, with respective directors furnishing progress updates to the Minister of MITRANS. The Cross-Ministerial Council of the Infrastructure Macro Program will evaluate progress of the plan as reported by MITRANS, followed by submission to the Council of Ministers for review.



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