|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | United Nations | ECE/TRANS/2021/25 | |
| _unlogo | **Economic and Social Council** | | Distr.: General  22 January 2021  Original: English |

**Economic Commission for Europe**

Inland Transport Committee

**Eighty-third session**

Geneva, 23–26 February 2021  
Item 9 (d) of the provisional agenda  
**Strategic questions of partnerships and technical assistance:  
Draft Annual Report of activities undertaken by   
the Committee’s subsidiary bodies in 2020**

2020 Draft Annual Report of the Sustainable Transport Division of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Note by the secretariat[[1]](#footnote-2)\*

I. Introduction

1. The year 2020 was marked by unprecedented challenges and unique accomplishments for the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division.

2. On the challenges front, the first unprecedented challenge in 2020 was the COVID-19 global pandemic, which affected the work of the division by impacting the entire inland transport sector and associated industries, as well as by limiting the division’s ability to hold meetings and process ongoing projects. The second major challenge is a profound liquidity crisis for the United Nations which, as of this publication, is still ongoing and has, among other problems, limited the division’s ability to hold meetings and provide simultaneous interpretation. The combined impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the liquidity crisis is further documented in ECE/TRANS/2021/5.

3. However, despite these challenges, the Division was able to rise to the challenge in this unprecedented year. While every country dealt with the pandemic independently, the need for continued international cooperation in the transport sector persisted, and the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division was able to assist member States in dealing with the impact of COVID-19 in several areas.

4. This document provides an accounting of the accomplishments of the Sustainable Transport Division in 2020. It also documents where appropriate the instances where the Division was able to assist in dealing with the impacts of COVID-19.

II. Accomplishments of the Inland Transport Committee in 2020

5. The Inland Transport Committee (ITC) is the UN platform for inland transport to help efficiently address global and regional needs in inland transport. In the course of the last 74 years, together with its subsidiary bodies, the ITC has provided an intergovernmental forum, where UNECE and United Nations Member States come together to forge tools for economic cooperation and negotiate and adopt international legal instruments on inland transport.

6. In 2020, the secretariat serviced 20 Working Parties, 14 Administrative Committees and 6 Groups of experts for amending, acceding to and implementing the existing 59 UN conventions/agreements on inland transport administered by UNECE, and forging new conventions/agreements, protocols and resolutions. The conventions/agreements cover safety, vehicle regulations, transport of dangerous goods and perishable foodstuffs, environmental performance, cross-border facilitation and transboundary infrastructure networks to provide regulatory support for countries to implement SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 16.

7. The unique role and impact of the Committee are best highlighted in the following three indicative areas of accomplishments in 2020:

A. Inland Transport Committee plenary session in 2020

8. The 82nd session of the ITC kick-started with the high-level policy segment on “Environmental challenges for sustainable inland transport”, with the participation of Transport ministers from Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East, alongside with close to 400 participants from 72 countries, including 36 non-ECE ones, and the heads and high-level representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and key inland transport stakeholders.

9. Of the several highlights of the plenary session, the most impactful ones include:

* The adoption at the end of the high-level policy segment of the ITC Ministerial Declaration, “Enhancing inland transport solutions to global climate and environmental challenges – a united call to action” by Ministers and heads of delegations of countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Middle East and Latin America.
* High-impact side events on cutting-edge topics for the future of mobility and sustainable development:
* ITC side event “Safer and Cleaner Used Vehicles”, organized by UNECE;
* ITC side-event “Road Safety Post-Stockholm”, jointly organized by the European Union (EU), UNECE, the United Nations Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for Road Safety and the UN Road Safety Fund;
* ITC side-event “Transport Connectivity of the Caspian Sea Region”, jointly organized by the Governments of Azerbaijan and Turkmenistan, and UNECE;
* ITC side-event “2030 Agenda along Eurasian Transport Corridors”, jointly organized by UNECE and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

B. COVID-19 response and support to United Nations Member States and key transport stakeholders

10. At its eighty-second session in February 2020, the Committee decided to conduct necessary research on provisions in existing frameworks and new needed areas of work, with the support of interested governments and key stakeholders. The purpose was to promote cooperation between transport authorities in the field of counteracting the effects of emergency situations of cross-country nature, including epidemics and pandemics. In response to this tasking, and as the pandemic further evolved, the secretariat established an Informal Multidisciplinary Advisory Group on Transport Responses to the COVID-19 Crisis which had its first virtual meeting on 26 June 2020 and its second one on 8 September 2020 as part of the 33rd session of WP.5. Based on inputs received from governments and other stakeholders during these Multidisciplinary Advisory Group sessions and based on guidance received from WP.5 in September 2020 and the ITC Bureau at its session in November 2020, a working document has been prepared by the secretariat and submitted to Inland Transport Committee for consideration and possible endorsement of next steps.

C. Road Safety

11. There were three milestones in 2020 for the global community’s and United Nations’ efforts to recognize the shortcomings and address this challenge. First, the international community came together at the third Global Ministerial Conference (Stockholm, 19–20 February 2020), in order to reach global consensus through the Stockholm Declaration on continued international collaboration on road safety up to 2030. Second, the ITC adopted at its eighty-second session (Geneva, 25–28 February 2020), effective 1 April 2020, the ITC recommendations on enhancing national road safety systems, providing much needed direction and guidelines to member States on how to strengthen systematic improvement of road safety in a sustainable manner. Third, the General Assembly adopted on 31 August 2020 Resolution A/RES/74/299 on improving global road safety, inaugurating the second Decade of Action for road safety, setting new ambitious goals and calling for the preparation of a plan of action of the second decade as a guiding document to support the implementation of its objectives. All three milestones recognize the unique and critical role of UNECE and ITC, and its subsidiary bodies.

III. Accomplishments of the Sustainable Transport Division in 2020

A. Annual Session of the Inland Transport Committee

12. The high-level policy segment of the 82nd session of the ITC focused on “Environmental challenges to sustainable inland transport”. Discussions covered adaptation measures to climate change, emissions mitigation and the role of the Committee to harness international cooperation to fight climate change. At the end of the high-level segment, Transport Ministers and high-level officials from across the globe signed a declaration to make a united call for universal action to address the climate and environmental emergencies. [The Declaration](http://www.unece.org/DAM/trans/doc/2020/itc/ECE-TRANS-2020-2e.pdf) recognizes the Committee’s relevance as a main avenue of the international efforts to find solutions for these challenges and by acknowledging that, through the United Nations conventions under its purview, the ITC is a key actor in improving the environmental performance of road transport, supporting the energy transition in the sector and accelerating the shift to more environmentally friendly modes of transport. Most importantly, the declaration articulates a united call to transport leaders and global initiatives, to further strengthen the sustainable development of global transport and catalyse the commitment to the implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

B. Horizontal activities

1. United Nations Road Safety Fund (UNRSF)

13. Since its establishment in April 2018, the UN Road Safety Fund (UNRSF) is hosted by UNECE. 2020 marked the second anniversary of the launch of the UNRSF. Key results are already evident for the five UNRSF pilot projects that started their implementation in May 2019 in eight countries: Côte d’Ivoire, Egypt, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Paraguay, Philippines, Senegal and South Africa with an overall budget of US$ 940,928. Through these projects, legal frameworks and policies are being designed and implemented, road traffic fatality data were being improved, and capacities were being built.

14. An additional ten high impact projects were approved by the Steering Committee in February 2020 from the 2019 Call for Proposals. These projects were scheduled to start in the third quarter of 2020 in twelve low- and middle-income countries, targeting key gaps in their national road safety systems. With a total budget of nearly US$ 4 million, these projects were significantly scaling up the Fund’s geographical and programmatic footprint. For more details on the fifteen projects, see: https://unece.org/projects-2, as well as the Fund's 2019 Annual Report and newsletters, available at: https://unece.org/un-road-safety-fund.

15. On 31 August 2020, the most recent UN General Assembly Resolution on improving global road safety (A/RES/74/299), has been adopted by Member States, calling for a second Decade of Action for Road Safety, and setting a new target to halve deaths and injuries by 2030. The drafting process of the resolution was led by the Russian Federation, reflecting key elements from the Stockholm Declaration which was the outcome document from the Third Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, hosted by Sweden in February 2020. These high-level developments have strengthened the campaigns and government efforts on road safety despite the impact of COVID-19.

2. The Transport Health and Environment Pan-European Programme THE PEP

16. In 2020, while much of the work of the secretariat focused on finalising the preparations for the upcoming fifth High-level meeting on Transport, Health and Environment, with several studies being completed including on managed mobility and the infrastructure component of the masterplan on cycling promotion that will have a direct impact on the development of sustainable mobility. The fifth High-level meeting of THE PEP is scheduled for Spring 2021.

17. As a response to the COVID-19 situation, THE PEP created in April 2020 a special task force on the creation of recommendations for green and healthy sustainable transport. The aim of this task force is to provide recommendations to member States on how best to switch to sustainable transport solutions in urban, suburban and rural areas building on the lessons learnt from COVD-19’s impact on the transport sector. These recommendations will become a key part of the Vienna Declaration being prepared for the fifth High-level meeting of THE PEP.

C. The Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (WP.1)

18. The Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) has continued to be busy with the ongoing, direct and indirect impacts of new technology on road traffic rules. It is worth pointing out that the August 2020 General Assembly resolution on improving global road safety (A/RES/74/299) noted “with appreciation the adoption under the auspices of the Economic Commission for Europe of a Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety resolution on the deployment of highly and fully automated vehicles in road traffic”. In the context of technological change and road traffic rules, the Forum made steady progress on amendment proposals related to harmonizing the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic provisions related to lights and light-signalling. It also considered extensively the issues on domestic and international driving permits such as security features and digital (mobile) driving permits. In addition, the Forum held preliminary discussions on personal mobility devices (e.g., e-scooters). It is likely micro-mobility issues will become more prominent at WP.1 in a near future. Finally, the Forum adopted an important amendment proposal which, when it enters into force, is expected to facilitate automated driving in contracting parties to the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic.

D. The Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1)

19. There was much interest by countries in 2020 in the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR) and its two protocols (Protocol to CMR, and Additional Protocol to CMR concerning the electronic consignment note (e-CMR)) as the basis for a contractual framework governing the international carriage of goods by road.

20. To date, there have been two accessions to CMR, three accessions to the Protocol to CMR and six accessions to e-CMR. For the latter, this brings the total number of contracting parties to 29, more than doubling the number of contracting parties since 2016.

21. The SC.1 informal group of experts on e-CMR held meetings to discuss and commence work on a paper for ITC detailing the research and other actions recommended for the operationalization of e-CMR.

22. The secretariat become involved in a project of the Islamic Development Bank in promoting accession to, and implementing the operationalization of, e-CMR in Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan.

23. SC.1 continued to be a regional platform for the sharing of information on smart roads and other aspects of digitalization, including those related to road transport services and documents.

24. Finally, driving times and rest periods for professional drivers remained an important element of SC.1’s work. The Government of Greece proposed an amendment to Article 14 of the European Agreement Concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles Engaged in International Road Transport (AETR) to make Egypt eligible for accession. SC.1 and its subsidiary body (the AETR Group of Experts) continued to work towards reconciliation of the AETR regime in EU and non-EU AETR contracting parties following the introduction of the smart tachograph in the European Union in June 2019.

25. SC.1 also proposed that the mandate of the AETR Group of Experts be extended until 30 June 2023, and supported the extension of the Memorandum of Understanding with the Joint Research Centre (JRC) which recognizes JRC as the AETR authority for root certification and for interoperability certification for the non-EU contracting parties to AETR until 31 December 2022.

E. Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2)

26. Building on the successes of previous years, the Working Party on Rail Transport continued to provide cutting-edge policy and regulatory contributions to the sector. During the Working Party session, a workshop was held titled “The development of international passenger rail transport in the context of ITC Resolution No. 264”. Over sixty delegates exchanged views, best practices and concrete examples on how best to develop international passenger rail transport, especially in the post-COVID-19 period.

27. The European Agreement on Main and International Railway Lines (AGC) is being updated to facilitate the use by member States and generate more accessions. In this regard, a guide has been prepared for member States which will make accession and implementation of the agreement easier. In 2020, Turkmenistan became the 28th contracting party to the AGC.

28. The Group of Experts on the Permanent Identification of Railway Rolling Stock started its work in 2020. The Group is working towards the development of a standards that will facilitate the financing of new rolling stock.

29. The Convention for facilitating the crossing of national frontiers by rail transport for passengers and their luggage was finalised and opened for signature. This 59th UNECE Convention will facilitate the international movement of passengers on the network, thus leading to increased market share for the sector and facilitate the further reduction of CO2 emissions and the achievement of Sustainable Development Agenda.

30. Significant progress was made in the work of the Trans European Railway Project. The TER High Speed Railway Master Plan Phase II has been completed. This work will provide the region with a concrete tool to assist member States in identifying the most appropriate areas for investment in High Speed Rail.

F. Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3)

31. The Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) adopted Addendum No. 3 to the third revision of the Inventory of Main Standards and Parameters of E Waterway Network (the Blue Book) with an updated information of the E 80-12 waterway (the Sava river) and an amendment to the inventory of most important bottlenecks and missing links which contains the updated list of basic and strategic bottlenecks on the sections of the Danube, the Sava and the Drava rivers.

32. Responding to Sustainable Development Goals 6, 9 and 14, SC.3 and its subsidiary bodies in 2020 delivered the following outputs:

(a) The implementation and updating of the fifth revised edition of the European Code for Inland Waterways (CEVNI). The CEVNI Expert Group held four meetings in 2020 with a view to harmonize the CEVNI provisions with the navigation rules of river commissions, international standards and recent developments in the sector. The outcome of this work was preliminarily approved at the fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh sessions of the Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation (SC.3/WP.3) followed by the final approval by SC.3 as Amendment No. 4;

(b) In terms of prevention of pollution from inland vessels, SC.3 adopted the updated list of reception facilities for the transfer of waste generated on board of vessels on European inland waterways as its resolution No. 99, which is attached as an appendix to the annex to resolution No. 21, revision 2.

33. As a part of its work on ensuring safety of inland navigation, SC.3 adopted Amendment No. 2 to the Recommendations on Harmonized Europe-Wide Technical Requirements for Inland Navigation Vessels (Resolution No. 61, revision 2), which contains provisions for power electronics, updates to appendix 1, List of European inland waterways divided geographically into zones 1, 2 and 3 and other modifications, as resolution No. 98.

34. Addressing Sustainable Development Goal 9 in terms of the development of River Information Services, in 2020 SC.3 adopted:

(a) Revised International Standard for Tracking and Tracing on Inland Waterways (annex to resolution No. 63) as resolution No. 100;

(b) Revised International Standard for Electronic Ship Reporting in Inland Navigation (annex to resolution No. 79) as resolution No. 101; and

(c) An amendment to the annex of resolution No. 80, revised.

G. Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5)

1. Inland Transport Security

35. On 8 September 2020, in conjunction with the thirty-third session of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5), a Round Table was held on “Intelligent Transport Systems and Cyber Security”.

36. Panellists and participants in the discussions recognized that the increasingly digitalized, interconnected and automated transport system functionalities create a range of new security risks and threats to intelligent transport systems. They also agreed that the creation of a set of binding cyber security norms would require a strong inter-governmental dialogue and political will as well as a common understanding of the challenges at hand, the threat actions and threat vectors and the readiness to find an agreement on a performance model for cyber defence in the inland transport sector. More information on the event is available in document [ECE/TRANS/2021/16](https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/ECE-TRANS-2021-16e.pdf). All presentations are available on the [UNECE webpage](https://unece.org/transport/events/round-table-intelligent-transport-systems-and-cyber-security).

2. WP.5 Informal Multidisciplinary Advisory Group on Transport Responses to COVID-19 Crisis

37. As discussed earlier in the report, in response to the tasks assigned to WP.5 by the ITC at its eighty-second session, and as the pandemic further evolved, the secretariat established an Informal Multidisciplinary Advisory Group on Transport Responses to the COVID-19 Crisis which had its first virtual meeting on 26 June 2020 and its second on 8 September 2020 as part of the 33rd session of WP.5. Based on inputs received from governments and other stakeholders during these Multidisciplinary Advisory Group sessions and based on guidance received from WP.5 in September 2020 and the ITC Bureau at its session in November 2020, working document [ECE/TRANS/2021/4](https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/ECE-TRANS-2021-4e.pdf) has been prepared. The report identifies as set of lessons learned for international inland transport as well as lessons for customs and border management. The report also identified several possible recommendations for consideration and possible endorsement by the ITC.

3. Urban Mobility

38. On 9 September 2020, further to a request of the Working Party at its thirty-second session, the secretariat organized an expert round table on economic analysis of the transformation of urban transport systems. The workshop featured speakers on selected case studies as well as policy makers and academia from a varied group of countries, including the United States of America, Belgium, Italy, New Zealand, the Russian Federation and Switzerland. All presentations are available on the [UNECE website](ttps://unece.org/transporttrends-and-economics/workshop-economic-analysis-transformation-urban-transport-systems). A summary of the findings of the workshop is available in ECE/TRANS/2021/16.

39. At the outset of the workshop, the secretariat launched the **Handbook on Sustainable Urban Mobility and Spatial Planning – Promoting Active Mobility**. This publication has been designed to assist member States in integrating transport, health, quality of life and environmental objectives into urban and spatial planning policies. The Handbook, which was funded by the Government of the Russian Federation, was prepared under the auspices of the WP.5 and THE PEP Steering Committee. It is available in English and Russian languages on the [UNECE website](https://unece.org/transport/publications/handbook-sustainable-urban-mobility-and-spatial-planning).

4. Euro-Asian Transport Links

40. The ECE`s Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) Project, which was launched in 2002, contributed significantly towards making Euro-Asian inland transport a reality. The number of container block trains between Europe and Asia witnessed a tremendous increase as container volumes grew by almost 30 per cent year over the year to 324,700 TEU in 2018. At the same time the overall transit time has been reduced by more than 50 per cent and more.

41. On 26 November 2020, under the auspices of WP.5 which serves as the parent body to the UNECE's work on [Euro-Asian Transport](https://www.unece.org/trans/main/eatl.html) operationalization, a virtual round of “Consultations on next steps in the Operationalization of Euro-Asian Transport” were held jointly by the WP.5 secretariat and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

42. The event gathered over 155 representatives from 32 countries in the UNECE region and beyond engaged in transport corridor management as well as private sector practitioners determining and managing freight flows and independent corridor management experts, researchers and academia participated. All presentations are available on the [UNECE website](https://unece.org/transport/events/consultations-next-steps-operationalization-euro-asian-transport-corridors).

43. Participants in the consultations agreed on an outcome including a set of conclusions and recommendations. A summary of discussions is available in document [ECE/TRANS/2021/17](https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-01/ECE-TRANS-2021-17e.pdf).

5. International Transport Infrastructure Observatory

44. Recognizing that financing of Euro-Asian transport links remains a major obstacle, UNECE is taking the lead in developing an International Transport Infrastructure Observatory.

45. The Observatory is being devised as an online platform in a Geographic Information System (GIS) environment where (a) Governments find all the relevant data to prepare, benchmark and present their transport infrastructure projects and (b) International Financial Institutions (IFIs) can consider, analyse and compare projects from a regional/international perspective and identify projects they wish to finance.

46. In 2020, the development of the Observatory has reached its final stage:

• With the support of a senior GIS expert, GIS maps visualising actual road, rail, inland waterway and inter-modal infrastructure networks have been developed.

• Different user profiles have been produced: e.g. for Regional Cooperation Organizations, International Financial Institutions, Governments and the broader public each having access to specific, specialized functionalities of the GIS platform in accordance with their needs and expectations.

47. The project’s end date has been extended until March 2021, after which the Observatory should be officially launched.

6. Sustainable Inland Transport Connectivity Indicators

48. A United Nations Development Account (UNDA) funded project entitled “Sustainable transport connectivity and implementation of transport related Sustainable Development Goals in selected landlocked and transit/bridging countries” is currently underway. The project, which is led by the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division and implemented with the support of its two sister regional commissions ESCWA and ECLAC aims at developing a set of Sustainable Inland Transport Connectivity Indicators (SITCIN). In the first phase, the project involves the following pilot countries: Georgia, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Jordan and Paraguay.

49. In 2020, the indicators have been tested in the context of the five pilot countries and based on feedback received have been further improved and strengthened. At this stage 220+ indicators and sub-indicators have been produced for piloting and testing purposes covering road, rail, inland waterway and inter-modal transport sectors, including a cluster of indicators on «pandemics preparedness». The finalised set will be presented to 2021 annual session of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics.

H. Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6)

50. Inland Transport Statistics in Europe and North America was planned for release by the end of 2019. This publication compares road, rail and inland waterway statistics across countries, with tables covering infrastructure, transport equipment, traffic and transport measurement. These data are crucial for understanding sustainable transport in general as part of the 2030 Development Agenda, and the transport volumes data provided can directly measure Sustainable Development Goal indicator 9.1.2 on transport modal split.

51. WP.6 continued to cement its place as the forum for transport-related Sustainable Development Goal discussions, in line with the ITC strategy to 2030. In the June 2020 meeting (exceptionally held virtually and informally):

• Transport’s inclusions in country Sustainable Development Goal Voluntary National Reviews was demonstrated, in order to better understand how sustainable transport can be tracked at the national level and allow countries to learn from one another.

• The secretariat shared its informal guidance on monitoring Sustainable Development Goal indicator 9.1.2 on transport modal split, to allow countries to consider this in their own national reporting on Sustainable Development Goal progress.

52. After an assessment of data availability last year, the secretariat published the results of a pilot tram and metro statistics questionnaire, giving data for over 140 cities in the UNECE region which were not previously reported (tracking public transport use for Sustainable Development Goal target 11.2.).

53. Given the extraordinary changes in transport use due to COVID-19, timely transport statistics were therefore even more crucial. The secretariat decided to create a wiki page collating all known country-level sources for transport data, allowing policy makers to make decisions based on the very latest reliable information.

I. Working Party on Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs (WP.11)

54. The Working Party on Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs (WP.11) supported in 2020 the implementation and updating of the Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be Used for such Carriage (ATP), which is intended to ensure that deep-frozen and chilled foodstuffs are transported efficiently, safely and hygienically and do not pose a danger to human health. ATP contributes to the overall reduction of food waste due to inadequate transport conditions. Millions of tonnes of foodstuffs going to waste contributes to global warming while also wasting very scarce or non-renewable resources required to produce foods, such as land, water, energy, and chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Food security is also affected by wastage of foodstuffs.

55. In 2020, the UNECE secretariat prepared a revised consolidated edition of the ATP agreement, that entered into force on 6 July 2020 to take account accepted amendments during 2017–2018.

J. Transport of dangerous goods and classification and labelling of chemicals, including the Work of ECOSOC bodies serviced by the Sustainable Transport Division

56. The Sustainable Transport Division work on administering and making available legal instruments as well as the related ECOSOC recommendations for transport of dangerous goods by all modes, and for the classification and labelling of chemicals contribute to the safe management of chemicals through their life cycle (production, storage, transport, workplace and consumer use).

57. In 2020, the international legal instruments regulating air, maritime and land transport of dangerous goods were updated following the transposition of the provisions contained in the Model Regulations (21st revised edition) and the GHS (8th revised edition) prepared by UNECE secretariat.

58. The secretariat also prepared the eighth revised edition of the “Manual of Tests and Criteria”. The Manual supplements national or international regulations derived from the Model Regulations or the GHS and provides competent authorities and testing laboratories worldwide with the test methods and procedures to be used for the classification of chemicals in accordance with the Model Regulations and the GHS.

59. The update of international legal instruments was done in a coordinated way by the international organisations involved, to ensure that provisions may be applied simultaneously for all modes of transport as of 1 January 2021, as follows:

• For air and maritime transport, publication by ICAO and IMO of updated versions of the ICAO Technical Instructions and the IMDG Code;

• For rail transport, publication by OTIF of the 2021 edition of the Regulations Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail (RID);

• For road and inland waterways transport, publication by UNECE of the 2021 editions of the Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR) and the European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways (ADN).

60. Thanks to these harmonization mechanisms and efforts, companies, countries, workers and consumers have consistent and appropriate information on the chemicals and goods they import, produce, handle, transport or use, as well as information about their physical, health and environmental hazards through their life cycle.

61. The Sustainable Transport Division services an ECOSOC body (the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of chemicals (GHS)) dealing with worldwide harmonization of classification and hazard communication tools for hazardous chemicals.

62. At national level, many countries have issued national legislation or standards implementing the GHS or allowing its application. Work on the development or revision of national legislation, standards or guidelines to implement it continues in other countries.

63. In 2020:

• In Chile, a draft regulation for implementation of the 7th revised edition of the GHS for industrial chemicals is on the final stages of consideration for final approval and its publication on the Official Journal is expected before the end of 2020.

• In Colombia, a draft resolution by the Ministry of Labour for implementation of the GHS at the workplace was open for public consultation/comments until 30 April 2020.

• In New Zealand, the governing body at the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) signed on 15 October 2020 a new legislative instrument adopting by incorporation by reference, the 7th revised edition of the GHS. The new instrument will become the new hazard classification framework replacing the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (HSNO) Act 1996 and related regulations that were in force since 2001.

• The European Commission released on 18 February 2020 a new Adaptation to Technical Progress (ATP) of the CLP regulation (Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2020/217), which implements the GHS in all States members of the European Union (EU) and the European Economic Area (EEA) (i.e.: overall 30 countries). These provisions are also applicable in Switzerland, who implements the GHS through a Chemicals Ordinance (SR 813.11) based on the provisions of the EU CLP regulation. The 14th ATP to CLP addressed, among other matters, harmonized classifications for several chemicals in accordance with GHS criteria. It entered into force on 1 April 2020.

• In Serbia, an ordinance establishing a list of classified substances (“Rulebook of list of classified substances”) corresponding to the list in the CLP regulation, in line with the 13th ATP that was issued on 10 February 2020. The rulebook is applicable from 1 October 2020. The CLP regulation implements the GHS provisions in all countries of the EU and the EEA. Candidate countries for accession to the EU are required to align their legislation with that of the EU as part of the accession process.

• Viet Nam released a draft version of its national chemical inventory (NCI) in March 2020. The Inventory contains GHS classification results, inventories and lists of regulated chemicals in other countries/regions such as Japan, the United States of America and the EU.

• In the Republic of Korea, the Ministry of Employment and Labour published for comments on 2 June 2020 a draft revision of the standards for classification and labelling and safety data sheets. Some of the amendments align the standards with more recent revised editions of the GHS.

• In Ukraine a draft law on “chemical safety and security” establishing a regulatory framework for chemicals management is under development and is expected to be circulated for public consultation before the end of 2020. The draft law is supplemented by draft technical regulations “on safety of chemicals products” and “on hazard classification precautionary labelling and packaging of chemical products” mirroring the EU Directives on REACH and CLP and thus implementing the GHS.

64. Detailed information on implementation of the GHS worldwide is compiled by the secretariat and made publicly on the website.

65. Regarding the provision of technical advice and expertise, the secretariat was invited to deliver information:

• about the GHS on a webinar on 22 September, organised by UNIDO and industry representatives in Colombia;

• about the updates on the 21st revised edition of the UN Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods in an online seminar for the Latin America region on 7 May; and

• about the transport of hydrogen in the Hydrogen Innovation Forum organized by UNECE and the World Energy Council on 25 March.

66. At its 107th session in November 2019, the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods had requested the secretariat to prepare a consolidated list of all the amendments which it had adopted for entry into force on 1 January 2021 so that they could be made the subject of an official proposal in accordance with the procedure set out in article 14 of ADR. This list was published in February 2020 as document ECE/TRANS/WP.15/249.

67. Due to the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), the 108th session of the Working Party initially scheduled in May 2020 was postponed to 10–13 November 2020. Considering that some corrections to the adopted draft amendments and consequential draft amendments were necessary and that it would be too late to discuss them at the November session, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods requested the secretariat to circulate them in the form of a corrigendum and an addendum to document ECE/TRANS/WP.15/249. These documents also contained the corrections and amendments proposed by the Working Group on Tanks and the Working Group on Standards of the Joint Meeting which had met in virtual sessions. Before publication, these documents were circulated in English, French and Russian to the Working Party participants in writing and the Working Party participants did not raise objection.

68. This procedure is in accordance with the ADR amendment procedure. In the protocol of signature of ADR it is recommended that, before submission in accordance with article 14 (1) or article 13 (2), proposed amendments to ADR or its Annexes shall as far as possible first be discussed at meetings of experts of the Contracting Parties and, if necessary, of the other countries mentioned in article 6 (1) of the Agreement and of the international organizations mentioned in article 14 of the Agreement. Any country can propose amendments in accordance with the procedure set out in article 14 of ADR even if they are not discussed first by the Working Party. Considering the circumstances, and after consultation with the secretariat, the Chair and Vice-Chair concluded this was the best solution to ensure consistency within ADR and between RID, ADR and ADN. Indeed, the RID Committee of Experts also adopted these amendments and corrections through their correspondence procedure.

69. The ADN Safety and Administrative Committees adopted, at their thirty-sixth and twenty-fourth sessions in January 2020, respectively, proposals of amendments for entry into force on 1 January 2021 including amendments intended to harmonize ADN provisions with those of ADR and RID. These proposals of amendments were published in document ECE/ADN/54.

70. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the thirty-seventh and twenty-fifth sessions of the ADN Safety and Administrative Committees scheduled to take place in August 2020, were postponed to January 2021. Remaining proposals of amendments and corrections for harmonization with ADR/RID, were adopted by silence procedure and published in documents ECE/ADN/54/Add.1 and ECE/ADN/54/Corr.1.

71. The Chair transmitted the proposal of amendments contained in ECE/TRANS/WP.15/249, ‑/249/Corr.1 and ‑/249/Add.1 to Contracting Parties through his Government for acceptance in accordance with the procedure set out in article 14 of ADR (Depositary notification C.N.274.2020.TREATIES-XI.B.14). None of the ADR Contracting Parties raised any objection to the Secretary-General. In accordance with the provisions of article 14 (3) of ADR, the proposed amendments to annexes A and B, as amended, will enter into force for all Contracting Parties on 1 January 2021 with a 6-month transitional period.

72. Consequently, and upon request of the Working Party, the secretariat has published the 2021 edition of ADR. This revised edition contains new and revised provisions, some of which serve to align it with the twenty-first revised edition of the Model Regulations to ensure harmonization with other modes of transport. ADR 2021 will also be the first edition of ADR including a symbolic change to the title of the Agreement entering into force on 1 January 2021. Indeed, following the decision of the Contracting Parties, the word "European" is removed in this new edition to acknowledge the global status of ADR and as an encouragement to all United Nations Member States to join and fully implement it, supporting progress towards road safety targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.

73. The accession of Uzbekistan to ADR on 24 January 2020 brought the number of Contracting Parties to fifty-two (among which three are non-ECE countries: Morocco, Nigeria and Tunisia).

K. Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24)

74. The Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24) continued through its 2020 efforts to further strengthen the frameworks for sustainable intermodal transport and logistics operations and the intermodal transport and logistics policies in the UNECE region as well as enhance cooperation of UNECE member countries on intermodal transport and logistics through the exchange of experiences and good practices.

75. WP.24 recognizes that 2020 was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused not only an immense pressure on health systems and production lines but, due to mobility restrictions and border closures, it also had disrupted the international transport of essential supplies among UNECE member countries, particularly in the first phase of the pandemic response. WP.24 warns of COVID-19 recovery measures that undermine competitiveness of intermodal transport, as such measures would slow the transformation of transport system to a more sustainable one. WP.24 recognizes that the pandemic influenced governments on the necessity to digitalize transport documents. Digitalization should be part of the very needed transport optimization process in both operations and infrastructure.

76. WP.24 showcases such optimisation processes in its newly developed Handbook for national master plans for freight transport and logistics. The Handbook further presents the role that the freight transport and logistics sector plays in the development of national economies, as well as actions in support of the sector’s development in a sustainable way.

77. WP.24 worked on solutions for making urban freight transport and logistics more sustainable. Logistics physical internet appears as a promising concept which could further transform logistics and facilitate city logistics.

L. The World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29)

1. Vehicle automation

78. Following the restructuring of WP.29 in June 2018 to implement ITC Decision No. 19 of 2018 and the establishment of the Working Party on Automated/Autonomous and Connected Vehicles (GRVA), the framework document on Automated/Autonomous Vehicles (ECE/TRANS/WP.29/2019/34/Rev.1) guided the work on automated vehicles as endorsed by ITC at its eighty-second session.

79. The first set of UN Regulations for automated vehicles adopted at the June 2020 session of WP.29 entered into force on 22 January 2021. These new UN Regulations not only include the UN Regulation No. 157 on Automated Lane Keeping Systems – the first application of vehicle automatization of SAE levels 3, but also UN Regulations Nos. 155 and 156 on Cyber Security and on Over the Air Software Updates respectively. These new UN regulations address the safety and security of automated vehicles with performance based and technology neutral provisions.

2. 1958 Agreement

80. In addition to the three new UN Regulations related to automated vehicles two new UN Regulations, aimed at improving vehicle safety and environmental performance, entered into force:

(a) UN Regulation No. 153 on Fuel System Integrity and Electric Power Train Safety at rear-end collision in 2020; and

(b) UN Regulation No. 154 on Worldwide harmonized Light vehicles Test Procedure (WLTP Regulation) on 22 January 2021.

81. WP.29 adopted two more new UN Regulations in 2020 aiming at the protection of vulnerable road users. Existing UN Regulations were updated by 96 amendments, which adapt the regulations to the most recent technological innovations and introduce more stringent limits aimed at increasing both the safety and environmental performance of vehicles. The new UN Regulation No. 158 on devices for reversing motion and motor vehicles with regard to the driver’s awareness of vulnerable road users behind vehicles and new UN Regulation No. 159 on the Moving Off Information System for the detection of pedestrians and cyclists were adopted at the November 2020 session of WP.29 and would enter into force in June 2021.

82. As funding for the hosting of DETA at UNECE could not be secured so far under both regular budget or extra-budget, WP.29 was grateful to Germany who is currently hosting the system on an intermediate basis. WP.29 would further consider possibilities for sustained solutions for the funding of the hosting of DETA.

83. As regards the development of additional functionalities/modules of DETA, the International Motor Vehicle Inspection Committee reconfirmed its readiness to finance the development of the module for Declaration of Conformity. The industry associations: International Organization of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers, the European Association of Automotive Suppliers and the European Tyre and Rim Technical Organization confirmed their intention to finance the module for the Unique Identifier, where current contractual issues would need to be solved with a possible involvement of the secretariat.

3. 1997 Agreement

84. At the 182nd session of WP.29 the Resolution R.E.6 related to requirements for testing equipment, for skills and training of inspectors as well as for supervision of test centres was amended by introduction of elements for enforcement of the roadworthiness and environmental behaviour of vehicles in use via guidelines for roadside technical inspections.

85. These guidelines cover inter alia innovative approaches for the selection of vehicles to be controlled at the roadside. These may cover elements like remote sensing of pollutants, temperature of brakes or axle loads as well as intelligence-based approaches such as risk-profiling of operators and will help to reduce administrative burden and costs both for well performing operators but also for the inspection bodies.

4. 1998 Agreement

86. In 2020, WP.29 concluded several years of work on a new Global Technical Regulation (UN GTR) No. 21 on the Determination of Electrified Vehicle Power, that was adopted by the Executive Committee of the 1998 Agreement at its November 2020 session.

87. Eight amendments to Global Technical Regulations No. 3 (Motorcycle braking), No. 6 (Safety glazing), No. 7 (Head restraints), No. 15 (Worldwide harmonized Light vehicle Test Procedure), No. 16 (Tyres), No. 18 (On-Board Diagnostic (OBD) systems for L-category vehicles) and to No. 19 (Evaporate Emission Test Worldwide harmonized Light Duty Test Procedure) were adopted during 2020. This will adapt the UN GTRs to the most recent technological innovations and introduce more stringent requirements aimed at increasing both the safety and environmental performance of vehicles.

5. Link with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

88. Accession to United Nations vehicle agreements and adherence to annexed UN Regulations, Rules and UN GTRs can contribute to progress in achieving targets 3.6, 3.9, 7.3, 9.1, 11.2 and 13.2 of the Sustainable Development Goals.

6. COVID-19 and United Nations Fiscal Crisis Impacts

89. The work of WP.29 and its subsidiary bodies have been heavily impacted by both the COVID-19 pandemic and the United Nations financial crisis. Following the March 2020 session of WP.29 in-person sessions were no longer possible and interpretation services for virtual meetings were only provided as of late June 2020 and to a very limited content. Furthermore, and to accommodate participation of delegates from all continents, timing of the sessions needed to be limited to early afternoons. This resulted in restraint sessions so e.g. that the June 2020 WP.29 session had to be limited to a two hours session only and thus the agenda had to be reduced to the necessary minimum to accommodate decision taking/voting. Furthermore, for several sessions of its subsidiary bodies no interpretation was provided by UNOG Conference Services and, therefore, these sessions were not counted as official ones. In addition, necessary silence procedures, imposed by EXCOM, needed to be followed leading to a considerable administrative burden.

M. Working Party on Customs Questions Affecting Transport (WP.30)

90. In the field of border crossing facilitation, the main focus in 2020 has been on the upcoming computerization of the TIR procedure, eTIR. The first milestone was achieved in February 2020 when the TIR Administrative Committee adopted an extensive package of amendment proposals, introducing eTIR in the legal text of the TIR Convention (1975), in particular new Annex 11. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his capacity of depositary, has now circulated the amendment proposals for acceptance by all TIR contracting parties. If no objection is raised by 25 February 2021, the proposals enter into force on 25 May 2021. To accompany and facilitate the introduction of eTIR, the TIR secretariat engaged in a number of important activities, such as, but not limited to, the continued conduction of eTIR pilot projects between countries (Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Turkey) and the preparation of extensive technical guidelines (eTIR specifications) to assist interested countries to link up to the so-called “eTIR international system” which aims to ensure the secure exchange of data between national customs systems and to allow customs to manage the data on guarantees, issued by guarantee chains to authorized TIR Carnet holders.

91. On 7 April 2020, the UNECE Executive Secretary sent a letter to all contracting parties to the TIR Convention inviting them to contact the TIR secretariat in case they were interested to connect their national customs system to the eTIR international system, in preparation of the entry into force of Annex 11. The following countries indicated an interest in such interconnection project, either in the form of a request for additional information or the willingness to start a connection project: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Lebanon, Montenegro, Morocco, Pakistan, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Tunisia, Turkey and Ukraine. The secretariat has been working with the European Commission and some of the European Union member States on an NCTS[[2]](#footnote-3)-eTIR Proof of Concept, aimed at identifying the most effective method to connect European Union customs administrations to the eTIR international system.

92. At the outset of the COVID-19 crisis, the secretariat, with the support of other regional commissions and the private sector, established the Observatory on Border Crossings Status due to COVID-19, with information from almost all United Nations Member States. Since its inception, on 18 March 2020, the Observatory has become the only source worldwide, inside and outside the United Nations system, providing daily updates on the status of inland transport border crossing. In the course of time, the Observatory webpage had more than 110,000 page views, with peaks of more than 2,000 unique page views per day in April and May. Updated information was collected and provided for 174 UN Member States. The Observatory is officially supported by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), World Customs Organization (WCO), International Transport Forum (ITF), International Road Transport Union (IRU), Federation International de l automobile (FIA), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and International Union of Railways (UIC).

N. ITC Capacity Development Plan – initial experiences

93. To date, ITC lacked a comprehensive programme of work on capacity development. Therefore, the ITC Strategy until 2030 defined as one of its first priorities the preparation of a comprehensive plan to define, integrate and frame all capacity development activities by the Sustainable Transport Division. The ITC Capacity Development Action Plan was presented and adopted at the 82nd session of ITC held in February 2020.

94. In 2020 planning and implementation of activities defined by the Plan was seriously affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In-person capacity development events were not possible, therefore the Secretariat focused on the following demand-driven remote capacity development activities: (i) assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina in preparation of the draft Framework Road Safety Strategy, (ii) assistance to Turkmenistan to accede and efficiently implement six UN transport-related legal instruments and (iii) substantial support to SPECA countries on regional transport connectivity.

95. Activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina were initiated with sub-regional capacity building event (Sarajevo, 4–5 March 2020) organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Transport and Communications and UNDP BiH and continued with advisory services for preparation of the draft Framework Road Safety Strategy (FRSS) by external consultants guided by UNECE staff. Final draft FRSS will be presented to national stakeholders on joint capacity development seminar.

96. Assistance to Turkmenistan was initiated by two capacity development events (online 14 April 2020 and 15 May 2020). Following the successful accession of Turkmenistan to six UN Legal Instruments, tailor-made capacity development events for Turkmenistan national stakeholders were scheduled for November.

97. Assistance to SPECA countries has been directed towards: (i) organization of the Regional Dialogue “Strengthening transport connectivity in the SPECA region and beyond in the era of COVID-19” and (ii) continuation of activities in the SPECA Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity. More than 90 participants, including nine Ministers and Deputy Ministers of Transport from Central Asia and the Caucasus, members of United Nations system, Multi Development Banks and international organizations joined the Regional Dialogue (29 September 2020). The ECE-led Regional Dialogue facilitated an inclusive discussion and coordinated actions and plans on harmonization of international inland transport procedures to enhance connectivity in the SPECA region. Conclusions of the Dialogue, which promoted regional transport connectivity cooperation, emphasizing immediate transport measures for COVID-19 recovery, were adopted by the participating countries.

98. The 25th session of the SPECA Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity (WG-STTC) was held on 23–24 October 2020. Member States shared the experiences and information on latest developments in the improvement of regional connectivity (infrastructure development, removing of bottlenecks), international transit (border crossing facilitation and corridor management) as well as road safety. Furthermore, countries shared information on COVID-19 measures and responses and discussed operationalization of the conclusions of the SPECA Regional Dialogue. All of them were presented in the context of transport-related Sustainable Development Goals and assistance to SPECA member countries in implementing and monitoring SDGs. SPECA countries agreed on starting points for preparation of the SPECA Transport Connectivity Strategy – with a main goal to set-up realistic WG-STTC work programme which will be focused on transport and connectivity topics of great importance for the SPECA subregion.

1. \* The present document was submitted late due to delayed inputs from other sources. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. NCTS stands for New Computerized Transit System [↑](#footnote-ref-3)