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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Road Traffic Safety

(Forty-fifth session, 27-30 September 2004,
agenda item 6)

FUTURE ROLE OF THE WORKING PARTY

**FOLLOW UP TO GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION ON
IMPROVING GLOBAL ROAD SAFETY**

Note by the secretariat

On 14 April 2004, as scheduled, the UN General Assembly held a Plenary Session on global road safety. About 80 countries attended the session. Most of them were represented by their Missions, with the following exceptions: Oman was represented by its Minister of Foreign Affairs, the United States by the Secretary of Transportation and the European Union by the Irish Minister of Transport. Mr. Javad Zarif (Iran), Acting President of the General Assembly, chaired the session. As requested by the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) at its 66th session, the Chairman of WP.1 and the Director of the UNECE Transport Division participated in the session.

Twenty-two countries, WHO, International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, UNICEF and the World Bank addressed the session. All welcomed the UN addressing global road safety issues. Some (United States, Russian Federation and Switzerland) mentioned and expressed support to WP.1 and/or WP.29. The Vienna Conventions on Road Traffic and on Road Signs and Signals were also mentioned as well as the Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6).

The session adopted Resolution A/58/289 (annexed), which invites the WHO, **working in close cooperation with the UN regional commissions**, to act as a coordinator on road safety issues within the United Nations system. It also requests the Secretary-General, in submitting his report to the GA at its 60th session, to draw upon the expertise of the UN regional commissions, WHO and the World Bank.

The final text was the result of long negotiations among countries. Soon after the 66th session of the ITC, the UNECE Transport Division had sent the decisions and Resolution adopted by the Committee to the Ambassador of Oman in New York. On this basis, he elaborated a first draft Resolution, which invited the Economic and Social Council, through WP.1, to act as the global coordinator on road safety under the conditions set up by the ITC. However, some developing countries opposed such a proposal. After considering other alternatives, the option of WHO in close cooperation with the UN regional commissions prevailed.

On 22 May 2004, the 57th World Health Assembly (WHA) adopted a Resolution on Road safety and health, accepting the invitation of the General Assembly and making various recommendations addressed to member States and requests for action to be taken by the WHO Director-General. The Director of the UNECE Transport Division was given the opportunity to address the WHA.

As a follow up to the Resolution, WHO and UNECE decided to hold a meeting with the other regional commissions at the time of the next session of WP.1. In light of this new context, it is expected that WP.1 considers how best to contribute to the implementation of the Resolution.

The secretariat has therefore, in consultation with the Chairman of WP.1, included in the agenda of the forty-fifth session of WP.1 (27-30 September 2004) consideration of the GA Resolution and the future role of the Working Party for discussion on 29 September (morning) with the representatives of the other regional commissions. In the afternoon of 30 September, WHO and the representatives of the regional commissions will meet again to map out of a strategy and a sound division of labour among the various players so that the Resolution is implemented in an efficient and cost-effective manner. This will be followed up on 1 October by a broader meeting at the WHO headquarters of representatives of WHO and representatives of the regional commissions and of other UN and non-governmental organizations.

The WP.1 is also informed that, in the light of the Resolution adopted by the General Assembly, the Bureau of the ITC, at its meeting of 7 June 2004, made the following comments:

- Acknowledged the unique expertise of WP.1 in the field of road traffic safety as a guardian of the Vienna Conventions and supported UNECE's role in disseminating the experience made with the application of these Conventions;
- Called on WP.1 and the secretariat, to establish close ties with WHO and to contribute fully to global work on the road safety by injecting achievements and experience made by WP.1;
- underlined the importance of providing the greatest support to WP.1 to ensure the highest possible visibility of its work within the UNECE region and beyond;
- Supported the proposal to open up participation in WP.1 to non-ECE member countries Contracting Parties to the Vienna Conventions on Road Traffic and on Road Signs and Signals.

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[without reference to a Main Committee (A/58/L.60/Rev.1 and Add.1)]

58/289. Improving global road safety

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 57/309 of 22 May 2003 and 58/9 of 5 November 2003,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the global road safety crisis,¹

Noting the recommendation contained in the report of the Secretary-General that a coordinating body be identified within the United Nations system to provide support in this field² and the recommendation that the United Nations regional commissions undertake certain activities,³

Convinced that responsibility for road safety rests at the local, municipal and national levels,

Recognizing that many developing countries and countries with economies in transition have limited capacities to address these issues, and underlining, in this context, the importance of international cooperation towards further supporting the efforts of developing countries, in particular, to build capacities in the field of road safety, and of providing financial and technical support for their efforts,

Commending the initiative of the Government of France, the World Health Organization and the World Bank in launching the *World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention* in Paris on 7 April 2004, in observance of World Health Day, with the theme "Road safety is no accident", which contains a number of recommendations,

Also commending the United Nations regional commissions and their subsidiary bodies for responding to the above-mentioned resolutions and to the report of the Secretary-General,

1. *Takes note* of the recommendations contained in the *World report on road traffic injury prevention*;

2. ***Invites the World Health Organization, working in close cooperation with the United Nations regional commissions, to act as a coordinator on road safety issues within the United Nations system;***

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in submitting his report to the General Assembly at its sixtieth session in accordance with resolution 58/9, to draw upon the expertise of the United Nations regional commissions, as well as the World Health Organization and the World Bank;

4. *Underlines* the need for the further strengthening of international cooperation, taking into account the needs of developing countries, to deal with issues of road safety.

84th plenary meeting
14 April 2004

¹ A/58/228.

² Ibid., para. 44 (a).

³ Ibid., para. 44 (k).