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Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics

Twentieth session
Geneva, 13-14 September 2007

**REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON TRANSPORT TRENDS
AND ECONOMICS**

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I. ATTENDANCE

1. The Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics held its twentieth session from 13 to 14 September 2007. The session was held under the chairmanship of Mr. R. Kellermann (Germany) and Mr. V. Arsenov (Russian Federation) as Vice-Chairman. Representatives of the following UNECE member States participated: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The representative of China also attended. The representative of ESCAP secretariat also attended. The representatives of Danube Commission, European Investment Bank, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the World Bank also attended. Representatives of International Road Federation (IRF) and International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA) as well as representatives of UNECE TEM and TER Project Central Offices were present. The representative of the Erasmus University Rotterdam attended at the invitation of the secretariat.

2. During the session of the Working Party, a Workshop “Transport infrastructure development in the context of Euro-Asian transport links – experiences based on the implementation of TEM and TER Projects” was held on 14 September 2007.

II. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda item 1)

3. The provisional agenda (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/41) was adopted.

III. MONITORING OF DEVELOPMENTS RELEVANT FOR THE PAN-EUROPEAN TRANSPORT CORRIDORS AND AREAS (Agenda item 2)

Documentation: Informal documents No. 1- 6

A. Relationship between UNECE infrastructural Agreements (AGR, AGC, AGTC, AGN) and the UNECE Projects (TEM and TER), with Pan-European transport infrastructure network planning procedures

4. The Working Party appreciated the information provided by the secretariats of Pan-European Transport Corridors II, VI and X as well as the presentation of the Chairman of the Pan-European Transport Corridor VI, which provided a detailed account of the most recent developments in respective corridors. The Working Party reiterated its invitation to the secretariats of the Pan-European Transport Corridors to provide an update on developments along respective Corridors at its session in 2008.¹

5. The Working Party appreciated the update on the follow-up activities on the implementation of the TEM and TER Projects’ Master Plan in 2007 and invited TEM and TER Projects to continue their work on progressive implementation as well as to provide an update on the relevant developments at its session in 2008.

¹ The underlined text indicates the Working Party’s decisions taken at the end of the session.

6. The Working Party expressed its interest to continue receiving the information about activities of the European Commission related to Pan-European Transport Corridors, implementation of the trans-European transport networks, and further implementation of activities on the extension of the major trans-European transport axes to the neighbouring countries and regions, and decided to invite the EC to provide an update on its activities at the next session of the Working Party.

B. Infrastructure bottlenecks and missing links

Documentation: Informal document No.7

7. The Working Party considered the first draft report of the “Methodological basis for the definition of common criteria regarding the identification of bottlenecks, missing links and quality of service of infrastructure networks” and took note of the presentation by the author. The Working Party was of the opinion that the first draft represents a solid basis for a thorough review of the original document (TRANS/WP.5/R.60) which should be completed as soon as possible. To this end, it decided to ask the secretariat to ensure that comments provided by member Governments be taken into account during the finalization of document TRANS/WP.5/R.60. It further decided that a small informal group which undertook the task of revising and updating the document should be convened to consider and approve its the final text, before it is submitted to the next session of the Working Party in 2008.

IV. DEVELOPMENT OF EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT LINKS (Agenda item 3)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2007/2

8. The Working Party considered the document ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2007/2 as well as Recommendations of the Informal Meeting on Euro-Asian Transport Links held on 12 September 2007, which provided the basis for discussion about future steps to be taken by the Working Party in activities related to the development of Euro-Asian Transport Links.

A. Results and recommendations of the first Informal meeting on Euro-Asian transport links

9. The Working Party was informed about the recommendations of the Informal Meeting on Euro-Asian Transport Links which took place on 12 September 2007 (annex III). It reiterated its support to the project and stressed that the uninterrupted continuation of the Project in a Phase II (2008-2011) is indispensable to ensure the development of transport routes and priority projects identified so far. Furthermore, it emphasized that for this to happen sufficient funds needed to be secured and, invited UNECE and UNESCAP concerned Member States, international financial institutions, international organizations involved with the project and other donors to provide adequate financial support which would ensure the continuation of the project in a new Phase II. Comments expressed by UNESCAP in this regard are noted down in the Report of the Informal Meeting on Euro-Asian transport links (annex III).

10. Considering the modalities to ensure better coordination of work on development of the EATL in future, the Working Party decided to propose to the Inland Transport Committee to assign the monitoring and coordinating responsibility of these activities to the UNECE-UNESCAP Expert Group established under the Project. This Group, in accordance with the

relevant UNECE Rules and Procedures and the terms of reference (annex IV), and in conjunction with the implementation of the Phase II of the EATL Project, would function as an ad hoc Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links for a period of two years (2008-2009) and possible further extension if necessary and appropriate. The Working Party further decided that the Group of Experts would report to it, and would be assisted in its work by the UNECE secretariat. The UNESCAP secretariat is invited to join efforts and assist in the work.

11. In the course of discussion, participants felt that a necessary political support for continuation of the work on development of Euro-Asian transport links could most effectively be ensured through a high-level meeting which would provide an additional impetus to the Project in the new phase. The representative of Poland drew the attention of the Working Party to a recent signing of a Joint Statement by the Ministers of Transport of countries which took part in the Euro-Asian Transport Ministerial Conference held in Warsaw in June 2007. On the basis of the recommendations of the Informal meeting, the Working Party decided to support convening of the Meeting of Ministers of Transport of countries in the Euro-Asian region during the first day of the ITC's seventieth session (19-21 February 2008), and suggested the proposed first Draft Example Statement Pledging Endorsement of the Future Development of Euro-Asian Transport Links as a basis for a final Statement or Declaration (whichever was considered to be more appropriate) to be signed by Transport Ministers (annex V). It was agreed that the point (f) of the Statement or Declaration did not imply any financial obligations for the signatories. The Working Party further asked the secretariat to finalize the text, in close cooperation and consultation with the member Governments and Ministries of Transport of the countries concerned, and to proceed with all necessary arrangements for the organization of the above Ministerial Meeting in consultation with the Bureau of the Inland Transport Committee. Moreover, it invited the UNESCAP secretariat to join efforts and assist in ensuring the participation of Transport Ministers of UNESCAP countries, non-UNECE member countries involved in the EATL Project, and to participate at the highest level.

B. Follow-up and implementation of the UNDA project on development of inter-regional transport links

12. The Working Party was informed about the completion of the Phase I on the UNDA Project on development of Euro-Asian Transport Links and the resulting in-house study. The secretariat informed the Working Party about the status and planned activities regarding other inter-regional components of the project. It asked the secretariat to be informed in future about relevant developments regarding Phase II of the Project.

C. Organization of demonstration trains

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2007/3

13. The Working Party noted the information by Turkey and OSJD about new developments related to the organization of demonstration runs of container block trains along the Euro-Asian corridors. The secretariat further informed the Working Party that a document "Recommendations on the organization of demonstration runs of container block-trains trains on Euro-Asian transport links" had been prepared and endorsed by the Working Party on Rail Transport. The document contains recommendations for all stages of preparation and organization of successful runs of container block trains, based on the experience from several

member countries. The Working Party decided to support the decision of the Working Party on Rail Transport that this document be widely distributed to all member Governments and train operating companies. In addition, the Working Party asked member Governments to provide similar information for its next session.

V. TRANSPORT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION (Agenda item 4)

A. Mediterranean Transport Study Centres and Transport Training Centre

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2007/4

14. The Working Party took note of the report on activities of CETMO in recent years, especially the information about the fourth Western Mediterranean Transport Ministers meeting (2 March 2007) and the Cooperation Protocol as well as the Conclusions of the Ministerial Meeting. In this context, the representative of CETMO pleaded for better coordination among activities related to various sub-regional (Mediterranean) and interregional (Euro-Asian Transport Links) cooperation projects and initiatives. The Working Party asked the representative of CETMO to report on the results of the work of the Centre at its next session. The Working Party asked the CETMO and TRANSCEM secretariats to prepare a presentation on their organization, functioning and activities for its next session, and requested the secretariat to promote the use of technical studies and other relevant materials produced by the two Centres for the benefit of other UNECE member countries.

B. Transport developments in the Mediterranean Region

15. Due to the absence of the representative of the European Commission, this item was not considered by the Working Party at this session. The Working Party asked the EC to present a new update on relevant developments at its next session.

C. Euro-Africa permanent link through the Strait of Gibraltar

Documentation: E/2007/21

16. The Working Party took note of the information on the development of Euro-Africa permanent link through the strait of Gibraltar and asked the secretariat to submit to its twenty-second session (2009) new information on activities carried out under this project.

VI. ACTIVITIES RELATED TO SEAPORTS (Agenda item 5)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2007/6.

17. The secretariat presented the report of an Informal meeting on seaports held on 17 April 2007 and informed the Working Party about its recommendations. The Working Party noted that its initiative to engage in issues related to seaports was timely, welcomed and considered as necessary by the Informal meeting.

18. Bearing in mind its mandate and competencies, the Working Party decided to consider the hinterland connections of seaports through a number of relevant issues such as: (a) seaport

and infrastructure connections with their hinterland; (b) operations of hinterland connections of seaports; (c) management issues, including two aspects: (i) infrastructure development, and (ii) human resources development.

19. In its future activities in this field, the Working Party decided to undertake the following course of action: (a) share experiences and best practices, including through an international conference, which the Greek Government already kindly offered to host; (b) develop a statistical base on UNECE seaports with relevant indicators which would facilitate and provide support analytical work; and, (c) take stock of the situation in UNECE ports, by establishing an inventory of types of ports services available (in major UNECE ports), handling equipment and capacity, and most importantly, problematic areas in their connectivity with inland transport modes.

20. The Working Party decided to support the establishment of an ad hoc Group of Experts on Seaports as nodal points, with the Terms of Reference (annex II), which, in view of a decision to hold the International Conference on hinterland connections of seaports, would also steer the preparation of the Conference to ensure the necessary quality, relevance and effectiveness of its outcome. The Working Party agreed that the Group of Experts would report to it and could benefit from close working collaboration with the UNECE Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics, UNCTAD and other relevant bodies within the UN system.

VII. REPLIES TO QUESTIONNAIRE ON TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENTS (Agenda item 6)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2007/7 and Add.1-8

21. The Working Party considered replies to the questionnaire on transport developments, and noted that this information represented a valuable background for discussing emerging transport trends and possible actions when addressing common issues and problems.

22. In view of the usefulness of the information obtained through the questionnaire, the Working Party requested the secretariat to circulate again the same Questionnaire on transport developments in 2012, and present results to its session in 2012. In order to further streamline the questionnaire, the Working Party agreed to continue discussing and reviewing the questionnaire at its forthcoming sessions.

VIII. DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK (Agenda item 7)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2007/8 and Add.1

23. The Working Party discussed the draft expected accomplishments as well as indicators of achievements which will be used for the 2008-2009 biennial overall evaluation of the UNECE Transport sub-programme. Turkey suggested that the text of the second paragraph on page 2 of the document ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2007/8/Add.1, under the title Indicators of achievement be replaced by the following text: "Progress made in indicating major international routes to be considered for improvement and modernization, assessing the cost of the infrastructure plan and making suggestions for financing". With this addition, the Working Party adopted the text of expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement for a cluster Transport Trends and Economics for the biennium 2008-2009.

24. The Working Party furthermore decided to insert in its Programme of Work a reference to activities on hinterland connections of seaports under point H in the list of continuing activities. With this addition, the Working Party adopted its Programme of Work (annex I to this report).

IX. ACTIVITIES OF UNECE BODIES OF INTEREST TO THE WORKING PARTY (Agenda item 8)

25. The Working Party took note of the information on decisions taken by the Commission at its sixty-second session concerning such questions as the implementation of the UNECE reform, the contribution of the UNECE to Pan-European integration, and the promotion of sustainable development in the UNECE region. It was also informed about the outcome of the High Level segment on “Secure transport development: a key to regional cooperation” held on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary session of the Commission (E/2007/37-E/ECE/1448), provided by the secretariat. In addition the Working Party was also briefed about the results of the sixty-ninth session of the Inland Transport Committee and its discussion on questions related, in particular, to its work areas as contained in paras. 32-38 of the Committee’s report (ECE/TRANS/192).

26. The Working Party asked the secretariat to provide similar information on the results of the next annual session of the Commission and the Inland Transport Committee for its next session.

X. ASSISTANCE REGARDING INSTITUTIONAL ADAPTATION OF GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND OF TRANSPORT ENTERPRISES TO MARKET ECONOMY (Agenda item 9)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2007/9

27. The Working Party stressed the importance of the technical assistance provided to some UNECE countries through advisory missions, the organization of seminars and workshops as well as implementation of projects and successful cases of fund-raising in support of these activities. Taking into account the need that these activities should be continued and further strengthened, the Working Party decided to reiterate its support to such activities carried out by the secretariat. To this end it invited Governments, relevant international organizations and potential donors to consider funding the implementation of such activities, including through voluntary contributions to the UNECE Trust Fund for Assistance to Countries in Transition (TFACT). This should include facilitating the participation of Central Asian and Caucasus countries in the work of the ITC, encouraging the execution of the TEM and TER Master Plan, promoting implementation of the UNECE International Agreements and Conventions, and reviewing the TER and TEM Master Plan.

XI. COHERENT EUROPEAN SYSTEM OF INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURES (Agenda item 10)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2007/10

28. In accordance with the request of the Working Party (TRANS/WP.5/32 para.52), the secretariat presented document TRANS/WP.5/2007/10 showing modifications in the AGR, AGC, AGN and the AGTC transport networks, as well as the developments in the TEM and TER projects. The Working Party took note of this information and asked the secretariat to continue reporting on this item on a biennial basis (next report in 2009).

XII. OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 11)

29. The Working Party's twenty-first session is tentatively scheduled for 8-9 September 2008.

XIII. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

30. The report of the twentieth session, including the decisions, was established by the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman with the assistance of the secretariat, for submission to the Inland Transport Committee.

Annex I

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR 2008-2012

PROGRAMME ACTIVITY 02.1: TRANSPORT TRENDS AND ECONOMICS

Review of general trends with regard to transport development and transport policy, and analysis of specific transport economic issues Priority: 1

Description: Review and exchange of information on general trends in the development of transport and of specific transport economic issues including transport development in the Mediterranean Region.

Work to be undertaken: The Committee and the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5) will consider and carry out the following activities:

CONTINUING ACTIVITIES

A. Study of economic aspects of transport taking into account (i) the integration process going on within the UNECE region, and (ii) the reform processes under way in member countries by monitoring current changes in transport in order to identify, promote and spread positive examples for transport development.

Output expected: Report on transport developments every 5 years (2012). Priority: 2

B. Periodical review of new important policy developments relating to inland transport in UNECE member countries in order to make the medium- and long-term evolution of transport more transparent. The Working Party WP.5 will examine all decisions, general and specific, recently taken in member countries likely to have implications in the organization of transport and take into account the findings arrived at during international meetings focusing on salient issues of transport development.

Output expected: Reports on developments in inland transport of member countries (every five years; next report: 2012). Priority: 1

C. Monitoring of the developments relevant to the Pan-European Transport Corridors in cooperation with the EC.

Output expected: Report on progress made in the implementation of the Pan-European Transport Corridors (2008). Priority: 1

D. Study of the interrelationship of the UNECE Agreements (AGR, AGC, AGTC and its Protocol, AGN) and the UNECE projects (TEM, TER) with the Pan-European transport network planning procedure with a view to:

- indicating the major international transport routes to be considered for improvement and modernization, establishing priorities and a timetable taking into account those parts of the networks where there are bottlenecks and missing links;
- assessing the cost of this infrastructure plan and making suggestions for financing it.

Output expected: Biannual report on coherent European system of international transport infrastructure (2008). Priority: 1

- E. Further elaboration of the elements of the joint UNESCAP/UNECE programme on the development of Asia-Europe land transport links as well as the analysis of results of international meetings on the problem.
Output expected: Report on Euro-Asian transport links (2008). Priority: 1
- F. Financing schemes of transport infrastructure
Output expected: Report on national experiences Priority: 1
- G. Development of efficient management frameworks for transport infrastructure maintenance and operation, thus optimizing the need for new investments (linked to the development of the Quality-of-Service concept). Priority: 2
Output expected: Report on the quality of transport services (2008).
- H. Improving inter-modal coordination and integration with a view to establishing a balanced European transport system. This also includes activities related to seaports as important nodal points for a change of transport mode. Priority: 2
- I. Assistance regarding institutional adaptation of government administration and of transport enterprises to market economy. This also includes support through the UNECE Trust Fund for Assistance to Countries in Transition (TFACT).^a
Output expected: Annual report for information (2008). Priority: 1
- J. Strengthening of cooperation with the Mediterranean Study and Training Centre, to enable all UNECE countries to benefit from the activities carried out including the organization of workshops. The Working Party will also analyze evolution of transport developments in the Mediterranean basin and the Black Sea region, as well as consider information on the Europe/Africa Permanent Link through the Strait of Gibraltar.
Output expected: Annual report on activities of the Study and Training Centre (2008). Priority: 2
Output expected: Biennial report on progress made in the analysis of the Europe/Africa Permanent Link through the Strait of Gibraltar (next report: 2009) Priority: 3

ACTIVITIES OF A LIMITED DURATION

- A. As follow-up to the Conference on Transport and the Environment: Development and implementation of programmes to establish attractive networks taking into account such aspects as intermodality, interoperability and environmentally sound vehicles.^b

^a A detailed list of subjects is circulated in document TRANS/1999/11.

^b In addition to the above item, the Working Party wishes to be associated with activities on transport and environment concerning, in particular, development of methodologies for setting up databases, implementation of scientific programmes, assistance to countries in transition, development of environmental guidelines, external costs, analysis of questions related to the protection of sensitive areas (see also items I (c), (d), (g), (h); III (e); IV (c), (f) in the Programme of Joint Action).

Annex II

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS ON SEAPORTS

1. To define the scope of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics activities and involvement in this area;
2. To take stock of the situation in major UNECE ports, establish an inventory of types of available services, handling equipment and capacity, and problem areas such as connectivity with inland transport modes;
3. To collect information on all relevant planning, management, organizational and other issues at national and international level important for seaports and their hinterland connections with a view to sharing and drawing on best practices from the collected information;
4. To prepare in a coordinated manner recommendations and/or proposals to the UNECE Governments for consideration by the ITC for improving hinterland connections of seaports in, inter alia, following areas: infrastructure (networks, terminals etc.); personnel, and information exchange;
5. The above recommendations and/or amendments to existing legal instruments should be aimed at improving the efficiency in seaports operations and their connectivity with inland transport modes by taking into account the need for maintaining fluidity and facilitation of international transport at an economically adequate level for transport users;
6. It is proposed that the Group of Experts on Seaports should be composed of experts on seaports and other transport modes having experience, in particular, of issues related to interconnections between maritime and other transport modes, appointed by the Member States of the UNECE as well as representatives of relevant international governmental and non-governmental organizations;
7. The Group of Experts is expected to start its work in February 2008, pending approval by the UNECE Executive Committee and terminate before January 2009 with the submission of a full report of its accomplishments, including the above recommendations. The recommendations will first be considered by the Bureau of the Inland Transport Committee, then by the Committee for subsequent consideration, where appropriate, by the relevant subsidiary bodies of the ITC;
8. If Governments decide to hold the International Conference, the Group will also act as a steering committee for its preparation;
9. The Group of Experts will be assisted in its work by the UNECE secretariat.

Annex III

REPORT OF THE INFORMAL MEETING ON EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT LINKS

1. The Informal Meeting on Euro-Asian Transport Links was held in Geneva on 12 September 2007. The meeting was attended by the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman of the WP.5, the National Focal Points of the following countries involved in the Euro-Asian of the UNECE-UNESCAP Project on Developing Euro-Asian Transport Links: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, China, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Romania, Russian Federation, Turkey, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, experts from Greece, Germany, Poland and the secretariat of UNESCAP and UNECE. The chairman of the UNECE Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24) also attended the meeting. The representative of FIATA attended the meeting as an observer. The meeting was chaired by the UNECE secretariat.
2. The UNECE secretariat informed the meeting about the UNECE-UNESCAP Project, about its present status and considerations relating to its continuation, as well as the possible role of the Working Party in its future work on Euro-Asian transport links. Two documents relevant for discussion were referred to - ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2007/2 and the UNECE-UNESCAP study on developing Euro-Asia transport linkages, second draft document.
3. Following the introduction, participants had a short tour “around the table “ in which they briefed the meeting on the most important developments related to the EATL Project in their respective countries towards the implementation of priority projects identified by the EATL Project.
4. Subsequently, participants had an exchange of views about the possible approaches towards the continuation of the Project in the next phase, as well as about the role of the WP.5 future activities related to the development of Euro-Asian transport links. Emphasizing that the funding will be indispensable for the continuation of the Project, participants expressed again their support to its continuation.
5. Kazakhstan informed the meeting that, as the lead country in the SPECA Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing, in June 2007 it addressed the European Commission EuropeAid to consider providing financial assistance for the continuation of the UNECE-UNESCAP (EATL) Project in a new Phase II.
6. The chairman of the UNECE Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistic (WP.24) informed the meeting about the need for closer cooperation and coordination amongst the ITC’s subsidiary bodies engaged in work on development of Euro-Asian transport links and, in line with the decision of the Committee (ECE/TRANS/192, para. 86), submitted proposals in this respect for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.
7. The meeting noted that the ITC, at its sixty-eighth and sixty-ninth sessions, supported the continuation of the joint UNECE-UNESCAP Project on Developing Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) in a new Phase II and asked the secretariat to identify the most appropriate framework in which the UNECE-UNESCAP Expert Group, established under the project, could, in close

cooperation with the Working Party, assume the role of a permanent mechanism for the monitoring of the activities related to development of Euro-Asian transport. The meeting further noted that strengthening Euro-Asian transport links was among the priority areas identified in the workplan of the UNECE Reform, which was emphasized during the panel discussions on “Secure transport development: a key to regional cooperation” held on the occasion of the sixtieth Anniversary session of the UNECE in 2007. During that session, the UNECE work in promoting the development of Euro-Asian links was emphasized, as was the need to strengthen these activities.

8. In addition, participants underlined the tangible results achieved by the Project, including the identification of main Euro-Asian inland transport routes; the evaluation and prioritization of a large number of projects along these routes; the development of GIS database; a first analysis of transit transport obstacles and recommendations for improving them; organization of national capacity-building workshops on transport facilitation; and the creation of a good cooperation mechanism, its Expert Group, consisting of designated National Focal Points of participating Governments, for the coordinated development of Euro-Asian links.

9. The meeting emphasized that the UNDA finance of the EATL project could soon come to an end and with it its useful results and the momentum created, whilst cooperation is still needed for a long time. More importantly, the development of transport links and identified priority projects would be seriously impaired if the climate created around the project and the momentum established among participating Member States were not to be sustained.

10. The meeting also noted that at its June meeting the ITC Bureau agreed that the first day of its seventieth session (19-21 February 2008) be devoted to a Meeting of Ministers of Transport of countries in the Euro-Asian region.

11. Taking into account the findings, conclusions and recommendations contained in the second draft UNECE-UNESCAP study on developing Euro-Asian transport link of August 2007 as well as document ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2007/2, in the course of their discussion, participants **agreed to propose** the following course of action for consideration by the Working Party at its twentieth session:

The Meeting recommended to the Working Party to:

(a) **express** its appreciation and gratitude to the Governments involved and their National Focal Points, to the experts from the international organizations, international financial institutions, and other organizations involved with the Project, as well as to the external consultants and the UNECE and UNESCAP secretariats for the work done and the tangible results produced by the Project so far;

(b) **reiterate** its support to the Project and **stress** that the uninterrupted continuation of the Euro-Asian Links Project in a Phase II (2008-2011) will be indispensable to ensure the development of transport routes, priority projects and other results achieved so far. The meeting, in particular, highlighted the good international cooperation and collaboration created through the Project and the momentum established among participating Member States; to **emphasize** that sufficient funds need to be ensured for the continuation of the Project;

(c) **invite** UNECE-UNESCAP concerned Member States, international financial institutions, international organizations involved with the Project, and other donors to consider providing adequate financial support in order to ensure the continuation of the Project in a Phase II;

(d) **assign** the monitoring and coordinating responsibility for the development of the Euro-Asian transport links to the UNECE-UNESCAP Expert Group established under the project (hereafter called Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links (GE-EATL)). The Group, working in conjunction with the implementation of Phase II of the project, with the support of the EATL participating Governments as well as other UNECE-UNESCAP member countries willing to be associated with it, the UNECE and UNESCAP secretariats in close cooperation with the UNECE Working Party (WP.5) and UNESCAP appropriate body, and related international organizations, international financial institutions, and bodies concerned, would ensure continuation of efforts and promotion of cooperation along the lines, objectives and tasks reflected in the joint UNECE-UNESCAP proposal for a new Phase II of the Euro-Asian transport links Project and the recommendations contained in the UNECE-UNESCAP relevant study. In this context, the UNESCAP secretariat was of the opinion that the establishment of a continuing mechanism required an in-depth analysis of all the related implications of the functioning of such a mechanism before taking a decision. Implications that need to be analysed include financial, technical, structural and logistical issues, because they are key success determinants of country participation and sustainability of the mechanism. It also expressed the view that one possible arrangement would be that SPECA PWG-TBC sessions could provide the venue for back-to-back meetings on the Euro-Asian transport linkages.

(e) **consider** recommending to the appropriate UNECE bodies the establishment of a GE-EATL, in accordance with UNECE Rules and Procedures and the Terms of Reference circulated during the meeting (annex I) for a first period of two years (2008-2009) and possible further extension as necessary and appropriate;

(f) **support** the holding of a Meeting of Ministers of Transport of countries in the Euro-Asian region during the first day of the ITC's seventieth session (19-21 February 2008). In the course of this meeting, Ministers or high-ranking officials would be invited to pledge their commitment and support for the continuation of the project, endorse priority links and projects and support assigning the monitoring and coordinating responsibility for the development of the Euro-Asian transport links to the Group of Experts on EATL;

(g) **accept** the proposed First Draft Example Statement Pledging Endorsement of the Future Development of Euro-Asian Transport Links (annex II), as a basis for a possible Statement or Declaration (whichever considered to be more appropriate) to be signed by Transport Ministers of countries in the Euro-Asian region on the occasion of the Ministerial Meeting mentioned above; and **to ask** the secretariat to finalize it, in close cooperation and consultation with the Ministries of Transport of the countries concerned. In this context, the UNESCAP secretariat expressed its view that the proposed draft of a possible statement by the Transport Ministers, as contained in document ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2007/2, annex II, needs to be further elaborated;

(h) **invite** the UNESCAP secretariat to play an active role in the organization and implementation of such a high-level Meeting, support and ensure the participation of Transport Ministers of non-UNECE UNESCAP member countries involved in the EATL Project, and participate at the highest level.

(i) **accept** the recommendations of the Second draft of the UNECE-UNESCAP EATL in-house study which are as follows:

(i) the need to support the implementation of identified priority projects and ask the appropriate UNECE-UNESCAP bodies and countries concerned to consider incorporating all identified EATL routes in the respective network agreements;

(ii) request from involved countries to elaborate a coordinated long-term Euro-Asian infrastructure development strategy based on realistic national Master Plans and their funding possibilities, to be followed by sub-regional, regional and interregional considerations; and support UNECE-UNESCAP work in completing and updating the EATL database on priority infrastructure investments;

(iii) invite all authorities concerned, in consultation with the private sector, to address obstacles to the smooth movement of goods across international borders;

(iv) continue and further strengthen capacity building activities of national officials from various agencies dealing with border-crossing formalities and procedures;

(v) use the UNESCAP time cost/cost-distance methodology to identify and isolate bottlenecks and assessing the success of facilitation measures and the competitiveness of the identified routes;

(vi) promote the accession to and effective implementation of international legal instruments relating to transport facilitation;

(vii) encourage the establishment/strengthening of appropriate national trade and transport facilitation mechanisms;

(viii) share experience and best practices amongst concerned countries and assess and monitor regularly the progress achieved at the major border-crossing points along the Euro-Asian transport routes.

Annex IV**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS
ON EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT LINKS (GE-EATL)**

1. A Group of Experts will ensure monitoring and coordination of the activities aimed at developing efficient, safe and secure Euro-Asian inland transport links;
2. Based on existing resources of the secretariat, along with the additional financial support provided by participating countries, and by other international organizations and bodies concerned, and in close collaboration with the UNESCAP secretariat, the Group would ensure the continuation of efforts and promotion of cooperation along the lines, objectives and tasks reflected in the joint UNECE-UNESCAP proposal for a new Phase II of the Euro-Asian Transport Links Project and the recommendations contained in the UNECE-UNESCAP relevant study;
3. The Group will support the continuation and further strengthening of the UNECE-UNESCAP joint work on the establishment and maintenance of the information base containing information on initiatives, activities and projects related to the development of Euro-Asian transport links, as well as completing and updating the EATL database on priority infrastructure investments;
4. The Group will support the implementation of identified priority projects and promote the inclusion of all identified EATL routes in the respective international network agreements;
5. Together with national authorities and in consultation with the private sector, the Group will address obstacles to the smooth movement of goods across international borders, and continue further strengthening capacity of national officials from various agencies dealing with border-crossing formalities and procedures;
6. The Group will promote the accession to and effective implementation of UNECE, UNESCAP and other relevant international legal instruments relating to transport facilitation; support the establishment/strengthening of appropriate national trade and transport facilitation mechanisms; share experience and best practices amongst concerned countries, and assess and monitor regularly the progress achieved at the major border-crossing points along the Euro-Asian transport routes;
7. It is proposed that the Group of Experts on EATL should be composed of national focal points/experts nominated by the Member States of the UNECE and UNESCAP involved in the UNDA funded UNECE-UNESCAP Project on developing Euro-Asian transport links, jointly elaborated by UNECE and UNESCAP in the course of 2003-2007, as well as experts from other UNECE-UNESCAP member countries interested in being associated with it, and of concerned international governmental and non-governmental organizations, having experience in various aspects relevant to its work;
8. The Group is expected to start its work in February 2008, pending approval by the UNECE Executive Committee and terminate by the end of 2009 with the submission of a report

of its accomplishments. The results of the Group will be reported to the UNECE Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics and to the Inland Transport Committee;

9. The Group of Experts would work in conjunction with the implementation of Phase II of the EATL Project;

10. The Group of Experts would be assisted in its work by the UNECE secretariat. The UNESCAP secretariat would be invited to join efforts and assist in the work.

Annex V**FIRST DRAFT EXAMPLE OF A POSSIBLE STATEMENT PLEDGING
ENDORSEMENT OF THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF
EURO-ASIAN TRANSPORT LINKS**

I, the [INSERT TITLE (*Minister of Transport or representative*)], and on behalf of all at the [INSERT NAME OF GOVERNMENT BODY (*Ministry of Transport*)] of [INSERT MEMBER STATE NAME], meeting in [INSERT CITY] on 2008 [INSERT DATE],

Considering that trade between Europe and Asia is increasing very rapidly and that it uses mostly maritime transport,

Aware that the development of efficient, safer and more secure Euro-Asian inland transport routes could provide additional transport options to existing and future trade flows between Europe and Asia,

Recognizing the importance of Euro-Asian inland transport routes in facilitating access to markets, economic opportunities and social services to a number of countries spanning along these routes, including landlocked and transit developing countries, in a manner that could significantly contribute to economic development and reduction of poverty in the region, and **taking note** of the importance of effective implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action on transit transport cooperation,

Concerned about the lack of good quality infrastructure as well as of adequate and cost effective transport services between Europe and Asia, and **mindful** of the need to increase investment in transport infrastructure and to enhance efficiency in transport systems,

Committed to the removal of physical and non-physical barriers along transport corridors, maritime ports and inland waterways,

Considering that the main Euro-Asian rail and road transport routes together with a number of priority transport infrastructure projects along these routes have been identified by the experts of participating Member States in four Expert Group Meetings under the joint UNECE-UNESCAP Euro-Asian transport links project, as reflected in the respective reports and the UNECE-UNESCAP in-house study,

Convinced that the uninterrupted continuation of the UNECE-UNESCAP Euro-Asian transport links project would ensure the development of transport routes and priority projects as well as other concrete results achieved so far, including the climate created around the project and momentum established among participating Member States,

Recognizing that the opportunity exists to implement the related projects, objectives, and policy recommendations in the transport sector of [INSERT MEMBER STATE NAME],

I resolve to endorse the respective priority Euro-Asian inland transport routes identified by the project and work toward their implementation through actions such as:

- (a) Developing or enhancing all activities at national level to promote financing opportunities to ensure sustainable and long-term financing for the implementation of priority projects;
- (b) Sharing experiences with other participating Member States and, where appropriate, other involved international organizations and international financial institutions;
- (c) Promoting activities aimed at the implementation of priority projects and the removal of physical and non-physical barriers along the Euro-Asian transport routes crossing [INSERT MEMBER STATE NAME];
- (d) Fostering and sustaining collaboration with other participating Member States, international organizations and international financial institutions, as well as other stakeholders from the public and private sector, to facilitate the implementation of the UNECE-UNESCAP Euro-Asian transport links project, and ensure the full utilization of experiences gained so far in carrying out the project.
- (e) Supporting the continuation of the project in a new Phase II (2008-2011); and
- (f) Supporting the establishment of an adequate mechanism to ensure continued monitoring of the follow-up of the project, without any financial obligation for the signatories.

To encourage other relevant government institutions to implement relevant activities within their competencies and responsibilities.

[INSERT MEMBER STATE NAME]

[SIGNATURE]
