UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2008/17/Add.1
30 July 2008

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Inland Water Transport

Fifty-second session
Geneva, 13-15 October 2008
Item 12 of the provisional agenda

INLAND WATERWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Draft SC.3 Resolution on Guiding Principles on the Development of Inland Navigation and Environmental Protection in the UNECE region

Addendum

Note by the secretariat

I. INTRODUCTION

1. As recommended by SC.3/WP.3(ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/64, para.13), the Working Party may wish to consider adopting a resolution on guiding an integrated planned approach, integrated planning principles and criteria for river engineering, based on the Joint Statement on Guiding Principles on the Development of Inland Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Danube River Basin, presented in document ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2008/17.

II. DRAFT SC.3 RESOLUTION ON GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INLAND NAVIGATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN THE UNECE REGION

GUIDING PRINCIPLES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF INLAND NAVIGATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN THE UNECE REGION

Draft Resolution No.

The Working Party on Inland Water Transport,

Recalling the Declaration adopted by the Pan-European Conference on Inland Waterway Transport (Bucharest, 13 – 14 September 2006) which called on the River commissions for navigation and environment of the Danube and the Rhine to establish procedures for a structured dialogue on environmental issues concerning inland waterway infrastructure projects and to support these processes (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2006/11, point 21),

Noting the adoption of the Joint Statement on Guiding Principles on the Development of Inland Navigation and Environmental Protection in the Danube River Basin, initiated by the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR), Danube Commission and the International Sava River Basin Commission,

Believing that these Guiding Principles on the Development of Inland Navigation and Environmental Protection could be extended to other river basins in the UNECE region and contribute to the development of inland navigation and protection of the environment,

Bearing in mind the report of the Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation on its thirty-second session (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/WP.3/64, para. 13),

1. *Adopts* the text of the enclosed annex on “Guiding Principles for the Development of Inland Navigation and Environmental Protection in the UNECE region”,

2. *Recommends* Governments to implement these principles in the matters dealing with inland waterway transport and environmental sustainability,

3. *Requests* Governments to inform the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe whether they accept this resolution,

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Europe to place the question of the application of this resolution periodically on the agenda of the Working Party on Inland Water Transport.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF INLAND NAVIGATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN THE UNECE REGION

I. RECOMMENDATIONS ON GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A. Integrated planning approach for the river basins in the UNECE region

1. To achieve "good ecological status" or "good ecological potential" for all surface waters and to prevent deterioration of the ecological status an integrated planning philosophy is urgently needed. Multi-use riverine landscapes should be the goal (including for example providing for fauna and flora habitats, flood protection, inland navigation, fisheries, tourism). Catchment-wide thinking and cross-border cooperation are challenges calling for multi-disciplinary planning and decision-making processes.

2. Actions to improve the current situation should be seen from both perspectives inland water transport (IWT) and ecological integrity and especially focus on the following areas:

(a) River stretches requiring fairway development and associated effects on special ecological qualities and the water status.

(b) River stretches requiring ecological preservation/restoration and associated effects on navigability.

3. Due to the fact that IWT plans and projects have environmental implications, there is the need to carry out environmental assessments before decisions are made. Under these procedures, the public can give its opinion and results are taken into account in the authorisation procedure for the projects. A culture of integrated planning of navigation and environmental improvement projects is needed to minimise legal costs, delays and sometimes unstable outcomes.

B. Integrated planning principles

4. In order to implement an integrated planning approach for all plans and projects all involved stakeholders need to agree on common planning principles leading to acceptable solutions for ecological integrity as well as navigation. Such planning principles should be applied to every project within the river basin and include at least the following steps, but first and foremost, joint planning of projects seeking both environment and navigation improvements as the key to accelerate the process:

(a) Establish interdisciplinary planning teams involving key stakeholders, including Ministries responsible for transport, for water management and environment, waterway administrations, representatives of protected areas, local authorities, non-governmental organisations, tourism, scientific institutions and independent (international) experts.

(b) Define joint planning objectives.

(c) Set-up a transparent planning process (information/participation) based on comprehensive data and including the environmental benchmarks and current standards required for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA – for qualifying plans, programmes and policies) and for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA – for projects).

(d) Ensure the comparability of alternatives and assess the feasibility of a plan (including the costs and benefits) and/or project (including a reflection of the status quo, alternatives and non-structural measures as well as environmental and resource costs).

(e) Assess if the IWT project has a basin wide/transboundary impact.

(f) Inform and consult the international river commissions in the river basin before deciding on new developments, as well as other possibly affected countries.

(g) Define and ensure the prerequisites and goals of IWT as well as river/floodplain ecological integrity, followed by a consideration of the need to prevent deterioration, possible mitigation and/or restoration measures to achieve all environmental requirements.

(h) Ensure that there are no technically viable, environmentally better and not disproportional costly alternative means to achieve the required objective.

(i) Seek to avoid or, if this is not possible, to minimise the impacts of structural/hydraulic engineering interventions in the river system through mitigation and/or restoration, giving preference to reversible interventions.

(j) Ensure that, when planning navigation projects, the issue and respective effects of climate change are taken into account.

(k) Use of best practice measures to improve navigation.

(l) Carry out a priority ranking of possible measures to ensure the best possible environmental as well as navigation development effect and use of financial resources.

(m) Ensure flexible funding conditions for projects to enable integrated planning (including the involvement of all stakeholder groups) and adaptive implementation as well as monitoring.

(n) Monitor the effects of measures and – if relevant- adapt them

C. Criteria for river engineering

5. To implement the above mentioned planning principles the following criteria should be applied during the design phase of navigation projects:

(a) Use a case-by-case approach which considers both the ecological requirements for river sections and the basin-wide scale and the strategic requirements of IWT at the basin-wide scale when deciding on adequate fairway width and depth,

(b) ‘working with nature’ wherever possible through implementation of measures according to given natural river-morphological processes following the principle of minimum or temporary engineering intervention,

(c) integrated design of regulation structures, equally regarding hydraulic, morphological and ecological criteria,

(d) implementation of measures in an adaptive form (e.g. river bed stabilisation by granulometric bed improvement, low water regulation by groynes),

(e) optimal use of the potential for river restoration (e.g. river banks restoration) and side channel reconnection,

(f) ensuring that flood water levels are not exacerbated and, ideally, are reduced.

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