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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

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agenda item 5)

**REPORT TO THE UNECE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PRIORITIES OF THE UNECE REFORM
FOR STRENGTHENING SOME ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE**

Meeting between EXCOM and Chair and Vice-Chairs of the Inland Transport Committee

Items for discussion

Note by the secretariat

INTRODUCTION

1. The work of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) aims at facilitating transport in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region and, at the same time, at increasing its level of efficiency, safety, security and protection of the environment, thereby contributing to sustainable development.
2. ITC develops and updates international agreements and conventions, which are legally binding for the countries that adhere to them and which provide the international legal and technical framework for national transport legislation in UNECE member States. These legal instruments cover all relevant aspects of inland transport including infrastructure, vehicles, road traffic rules and border procedures. Altogether, 57 agreements and conventions have been developed. ITC also develops and keeps up to date transport-related recommendations on which legally binding consensus cannot be achieved. **In performing these regulatory and standard-setting functions, some of which are global in scope, ITC fulfils a need that is not met by any other international organization.**
3. ITC also promotes the implementation of these legal instruments through surveys and other monitoring activities as well as through training activities and advisory services. In addition, ITC promotes subregional cooperation of governments with a view to coordinating the implementation of legal instruments including those aimed at the development of coherent transport infrastructure networks in the UNECE region.

I. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK DURING THE PAST 12 MONTHS

A. General

4. In the course of the past twelve months, ITC and its subsidiary bodies continued their endeavours to develop and promote pan-European inland transport regulatory framework and further contribute to facilitation of the international movement of persons and goods, improved safety, environmental protection, energy efficiency and security in the transport sector to levels that contribute effectively to sustainable development. These efforts were mainly centered on facilitating negotiations and managing international agreements, conventions, norms and standards. Furthermore, UNECE work contributed to further development of safer, more secure and efficient transport operations, safer and less polluting vehicles, as well as simplified border crossing procedures.

5. In 2008, ITC and its subsidiary bodies adopted amendments to a number of important agreements and conventions. The total number of Contracting Parties to UNECE legal Instruments on Transport reached 1,633. In 2008, there were **27 new accessions** to legal instruments, of which nine from non-UNECE countries. 2008 accessions from UNECE member States to UNECE legal instruments in the area of transport were: Albania 5; Andorra 1; Belarus 2; Bosnia & Herzegovina 1; France 1; Germany 2; Lithuania 1; Republic of Moldova 2; Monaco 1; Romania 1; Slovakia 1. Accessions from non-ECE countries were: Australia 1; Guyana 1; Jordan 3; Lao People's Democratic Republic 1; Saudi Arabia 1; Syrian Arab Republic 1; Tunisia 1.

6. This may be attributed to increased efforts to further promote the implementation of the regulatory framework through a growing number of capacity-building and advisory activities which were carried out in collaboration with member Governments and which involved a large number of experts from both public and private sectors.

B. Highlights of the work of ITC and its subsidiary bodies

1. Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and ECOSOC Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals and its two subcommittees

7. With respect to the **transport of dangerous goods**, the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways (ADN) entered into force on 29 February 2008 and now counts 10 Contracting Parties.

8. Amendments were adopted regulating the transport of dangerous goods by road (ADR), rail (RID) and inland waterways (ADN) for entry into force on 1 January 2009, and accordingly the secretariat published a revised consolidated edition of ADR (ADR 2009) and of ADN (ADN 2009), while the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Organization for the International Carriage by Railways (OTIF), which cooperates with UNECE in this respect, published RID 2009.

9. The accession of Tunisia to ADR raised the number of Contracting Parties to 44. After Morocco, Tunisia is the second non-UNECE country acceding to ADR, showing the increased interest of non-UNECE countries in UNECE transport legal instruments.

10. The European Union has rationalized its legislation concerning the inland transport of dangerous goods by adopting a single directive (Directive 2008/68/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 September 2008 on the inland transport of dangerous goods) which refers to ADR, RID and ADN and requires its Members States to apply their provisions to domestic and intra-community traffic.

11. The United Nations Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council, serviced by the UNECE secretariat, concluded its work in the biennium 2007-2008 by the adoption of amendments to its Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, Model Regulations and Manual of Tests and Criteria, and to the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS). These amendments are intended to take account of new technological developments in various areas, e.g. increased use – and transport – of lithium batteries and fuel cells, or, in the case of GHS, to complement the current system (e.g. criteria for classification of substances depleting the ozone layer), or to provide clarifications and facilitate implementation at national level.

12. On 31 December 2008, Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council on classification, labelling and packaging of substances and mixtures aligning EU legislation with GHS was published in the Official Journal of the European Union. Regulation (EC) 1272 ensures that the same hazards will be described and labelled in the same way as in other countries all around the world which have implemented GHS or are in the process of implementing it. It is expected that the use of internationally agreed classification criteria and labelling elements will facilitate trade and contribute to global efforts to protect humans and the environment from hazardous effects of chemicals. Commission Vice President Günter Verheugen, responsible for enterprise and industry, said: “In a global world, we need global rules. This agreement helps to remove trade barriers and enterprises will save costs. This kind of regulation at United Nations level will be a great help to European industry.” Environment Commissioner Stavros Dimas, responsible for environment, said: "The use of the same pictograms and phrases to describe the same hazards throughout the world will benefit the protection of workers, consumers and the environment.”

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

13. In 2008 the **World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29)** continued to update the existing and adopted new regulations aimed at improving vehicles' safety and their environmental performance. Among them, updated provisions for safety glazing, head restraints and electronic stability control systems have been introduced as amendments to existing Regulations annexed to the 1958 Agreement and as new global technical regulations in the framework of the 1998 Agreement. Studies indicate that electronic stability control systems on certain categories of vehicles used in some regions have shown the highest life-saving benefits in the real world since the introduction of safety belts. New provisions for the mandatory fitment of safety-belts on coaches have also been introduced. In 2008, the World Forum commemorated the 50th anniversary of the 1958 Agreement concerning the adoption of uniform technical prescriptions for wheeled vehicles, equipment and parts which can be fitted

and/or be used on wheeled vehicles and the conditions for reciprocal recognition of approvals granted on the basis of these prescriptions (E/UNECE/324-E/UNECE/TRANS/505/Rev.2), to which 48 States, not only from the UNECE region, are now Contracting Parties. Altogether, 127 vehicle regulations are now annexed to the 1958 Agreement and constitute the basis for the legal framework of vehicle construction in those countries, including those of the European Union (EU). In this respect, the European Commission continued to follow the recommendations contained in the Competitive Automotive Regulatory System for the 21st century (CARS 21) report for the replacement of 37 EU directives concerning vehicle construction by reference to UNECE Regulations annexed to the 1958 Agreement.

14. The World Forum has continued to study the possibility of developing **market fuel quality standards** in order to further improve the environmental performance of vehicles. In addition, a round table on how to incorporate intelligent transport systems (ITS) into UNECE legal instruments was organized in 2008. The secretariat participated in the 2008 ITS European Congress. Activities and work of the World Forum were presented to the first session of the International Transport Forum (ITF) held in Leipzig, in May 2008. ITF urged the World Forum to accelerate work on the development of common methodologies, test cycles and measurement methods for vehicles to reduce their emissions, including CO₂ emissions, which could contribute to the reduction of global warming. In June 2008, the World Forum held a first meeting of expert groups to develop **Environmentally Friendly Vehicles** and a **worldwide test cycle** for the measurement of gaseous pollutants and CO₂ emissions from motor vehicles.

3. Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30)

15. With regard to **border crossing facilitation**, a new Annex 8 to the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982 (“Harmonization Convention”) came into force, on 20 May 2008. This is the first time that an annex to the Harmonization Convention deals with a particular mode of transport, i.e. road transport, thus acknowledging the fact that road transport operators should be considered as the main beneficiaries of the facilitation measures set out in the Convention. The accession of Lao People's Democratic Republic in December 2008 raised the number of Contracting Parties to the Harmonization Convention to 51.

16. **The TIR Convention** amendments came into force on 1 January 2009 while an extensive package of amendment proposals has been finalized and submitted for approval to the TIR Administrative Committee.

4. Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) and Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1)

17. With regard to **road transport**, the European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles Engaged in International Road Transport (AETR) has now 49 Contracting Parties, with Monaco acceding to it on 16 June 2008. The Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR), of 19 May 1956, has now 54 Contracting Parties. The Protocol to the Convention on CMR, of 5 July 1978, has now 39 Contracting Parties, with Belarus acceding to it on 29 July 2008. The Additional Protocol to the CMR concerning the **electronic consignment note (e-CMR)** was signed by eight countries, during an official signing ceremony in May 2008 in Geneva. Being a significant step towards increased e-governance in

the transportation sector, this Protocol remains open for signature at United Nations headquarters until 30 June 2009.

18. **Road safety** remains an area of huge concern both globally and regionally. WP.1 has started a process of adaptation to the rapidly changing situation in this area. The United Nations Road Safety Collaboration (UNRSC) meeting had a joint session with WP.1 in November 2008. All five regional commissions have agreed to consider road safety as the priority area in their enhanced cooperation.

19. The 1968 **Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals** has now 58 Contracting Parties, with Guyana acceding to it as from 25 September 2008. The secretariat has translated and published the Vienna Conventions on Road Traffic and on Road Signs and Signals, in all the official languages of the United Nations, thus allowing an increased use beyond the UNECE region.

20. UNECE in cooperation with the other United Nations regional commissions is the implementing lead agency for the **UNDA funded project on “Improving global road safety: setting regional and national road traffic casualty reduction targets”**, to be carried out in 2008 and 2009.

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

21. The Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5) finalized an important publication on **bottlenecks, missing links and quality of service in infrastructure networks** that will be ready by UNECE in the near future.

22. The new **Group of Experts on Hinterland Connections of Seaports** organized a UNECE conference entitled ‘The Role of Seaports as a Link between Inland and Maritime Transport’ that was hosted by the Greek government (Piraeus, 17-18 September 2008) and attended by high-level officials, leading academic researchers, senior business and labour leaders, and experts from a number of international organizations. The conclusions of the Piraeus conference will feed into recommendations of the Group in its final report.

23. To address issues of inadequate transport infrastructure, internationally unharmonized transport rules and cumbersome, costly and time-consuming border crossing procedures, UNECE and UNESCAP continued to work closely with governments of the Euro-Asian region to develop **Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL)**. These countries were: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, China, Georgia, Greece, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The project’s results included the identification of main Euro-Asian inland transport routes, prioritization of infrastructure projects, development of geographic information system (GIS) database, analysis of non-physical obstacles, six national capacity-building workshops and publication of the final study.

24. The first phase of the EATL project culminated in 2008 with the **Ministerial Meeting** in Geneva where high-level representatives of 19 countries signed a joint statement on future development of Euro-Asian transport links. In early 2008, the UNECE Inland Transport Committee and the Executive Committee approved the establishment of a **Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links** to ensure the monitoring and coordination of EATL activities.

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

25. In the field of **rail transport**, UNECE organized an international workshop on rail security (Geneva, 19 November 2008) that addressed key rail security issues in the pan-European region.

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

26. In the field of **Inland Water Transport** new amendments to the **European Agreement on Main Inland Waterways** (AGN) have been adopted and further progress was made, with the cooperation of the European Commission and the River Commissions, in the harmonization of traffic regulations on European waterways, technical requirements for inland navigation vessels and the recognition of ship's certificates and boat master's licenses.

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

27. A large package of amendments to the **European Agreement on International Combined Transport Lines** (AGTC) has been adopted that extend the AGTC network and its minimum service standards to the Baltic States and to Central Asia. Work has started to analyse the underlying causes and requirements of supply chain management and logistics on intermodal transport demand, quality and land use planning for terminals and distribution centers.

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

28. Amendments to the **International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs** (ATP) were also adopted.

10. Multidisciplinary Group of Experts on Inland Transport Security

29. In 2008, the Inland Transport Committee continued to review its work in the area of **transport security**. The Expert Group established for this purpose took stock of the different regulatory initiatives and submitted a progress report and recommendations.

11. Sub-regional cooperation projects

30. Following the release of the **Trans-European Motorway (TEM) and the Trans-European Railway (TER) Master Plan** in 2005, which provided a regionally harmonized investment strategy for developing the road and rail transport backbone networks in 21 Central, Eastern and South-Eastern European countries, UNECE has been monitoring its implementation. In 2007, the first progress report on the implementation of the priority projects identified by the TEM and TER Master Plan was produced (with a comparison report of the Master Plan Backbone Networks with the E-Networks as well as with those developed under the auspices of the EU and other international institutions).

31. In 2008, the preparatory work for the **Revision of the TEM and TER Master Plan** and its terms of reference was completed. This work targets an extended geographical coverage of the Master Plan to 25 UNECE member countries and embrace new challenges, such as intermodality, funding and operational performance along the main routes. The First Joint Meeting of the TEM and TER Expert Groups on Revision of the Master Plan took place on 2 - 3 September 2008 in Austria, and national coordinators from participating member countries

agreed on the terms of reference, schedule of tasks associated with the Revision and further actions needed to complete this process during the 2009.

II. MAJOR ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR THE FORTHCOMING 12 MONTHS

32. Overall, the short-term plans in the field of inland transport will be to continue improving efficiency, safety, environmental protection and security. This will be done by amending the relevant UNECE international legal instruments in cooperation with various United Nations agencies, other international organizations as well as non governmental organizations (NGOs) representing the transport and transport equipment industry, business, road users and consumers.

33. Concerning the **harmonization of vehicle regulations**, the World Forum will continue to adapt its regulations to the technical progress and, when necessary, to adopt new regulations, to further improve the safety and environmental performance of vehicles. A road map for the establishment of a worldwide common test cycle for the measurements of emissions of light vehicles, including CO₂ emissions, will be one of the priorities of the World Forum. A round table on vehicles and CO₂ emissions will be organized as a half day-block during the World Harmonization Forum meeting. It will make further efforts to increase participation of new non-UNECE countries. The secretariat will participate in the 2009 Geneva Motor Show in order to increase visibility and promote UNECE work in the area of vehicle regulations.

34. For **transport of dangerous goods**, the secretariat will publish the 16th revised edition of the United Nations Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, Model Regulations, the 5th revised edition of the related “Manual of Tests and Criteria”, and a third revised edition of the “Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals”, and the UNECE will prepare draft amendments to ADR, RID and ADN to reflect the provisions contained in these new United Nations recommendations.

35. In the area of **road safety**, the process of adaptation is expected to continue in 2009 and to result in a strengthened WP.1 as an important contributor to solving the global road safety crisis. The secretariat and WP.1 will contribute in the preparatory process of the First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety to be hosted by the Government of the Russian Federation in November 2009; the conference is a major opportunity for improving the visibility of UNECE and raising awareness of its work on road safety. It is also expected that the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) funded project “**Improving global road safety: setting regional and national road traffic casualty reduction targets**” will lead to setting targets at subregional and regional level; the results of the project will be presented at the Conference and will also be included in the Report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly in 2010. The secretariat will work, together with relevant partners, towards raising the political profile of this epidemic of traffic-related deaths and injuries

36. Concerning **border crossing facilitation**, the objectives for 2009 will be to ensure the full implementation of the new Annex 8 to the Harmonization Convention at the national level, to finalize and adopt a new Annex 9 on rail crossing facilitation as well as to monitor the situation at borders in the UNECE region through developing a set of border crossing indicators.

37. In the area of **the TIR procedure**, major challenges will be to reach a decision on the possible increase in the TIR guarantee level for non-EU countries to Euro 60,000 and to make further progress in the computerization of the TIR procedure (eTIR) by finalizing chapter 3 of

the TIR reference model designing a set of electronic messages for the future eTIR system. UNECE will also conduct a strategic review of the role and competitiveness of the TIR procedure in the light of recent changes in the areas of trade, transport and customs, in order to keep it up-to-date.

38. In the area of the **transport of perishable foodstuffs**, challenges will include reaching agreement on extending the scope of the ATP to also cover fruit and vegetables as well as to cover carriage by inland waterway.

39. The Group of Experts on **Hinterland Connections of Seaports** will submit to the twenty-second session of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (9-10 September 2009) a report with policy-relevant conclusions and recommendations for UNECE member states. The Group of Experts on **Euro-Asian Transport Links** will organize in the first half of 2009 a prestigious international event in Shanghai that will be hosted by the Chinese Government.

40. In the field of **inland water transport**, in line with the decisions of the 2006 pan-European conference on inland water transport, UNECE, in close cooperation with river commissions, will prepare a White Paper on efficient and sustainable inland water transport in Europe as a contribution to overcome the fragmentation of the inland water transport at the pan-European level, and also to take stock of developments in the whole UNECE region, including North America.

41. UNECE will identify its role and possible value-added activities addressing the challenges of **global supply chains and logistics** affecting transport demand and transport quality requirements to ensure non-discriminatory, sustainable, safe and secure transport systems in line with national and regional priorities. The harmonization and possible reconciliation of transport laws and liability regimes, particularly in rail and intermodal transport, remains a major challenge at the pan-European level and UNECE will endeavour to contribute to long-term solutions in this field.

42. UNECE Trade and Transport Divisions will jointly organize a **half-day conference** during the 2009 sessions of the Inland Transport Committee and the Committee on Trade.

43. UNECE will organize an international workshop in Geneva on the **accessibility of heavy rail transport for people with mobility handicaps**, in cooperation with international organizations, the UNECE Population Activities Unit and NGOs.

44. In collaboration with member Governments, the secretariat of the Transport Division will prepare the methodological and procedural basis for the **2010 E-Road and E-Rail Census** programmes covering all UNECE member countries.

III. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE SUBSIDIARY STRUCTURE OF THE COMMITTEE

45. A thorough review of the subsidiary structure was undertaken in 2006. As a result of the discontinuation of some activities previously conducted by the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT), notably railway, inland water and intermodal transport and logistics, road safety and transport of individuals with reduced mobility, all of these areas

(except the latter) will be incorporated into the UNECE programme of work while the area of transport of individuals with reduced mobility is being seriously considered.

46. In 2008, two new expert groups were established and started work, one concerning hinterland connections of seaports, with a one-year mandate, and the other on Euro-Asian transport linkages, with a two-year mandate.

47. A formal proposal for the extension of the mandate of the Group of Experts on Hinterland Connections of Seaports by one year in order to enable it to develop its final report that is to be presented for the consideration of WP.5 at its twenty-second session in September 2009, will be submitted at the next EXCOM session.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORKPLAN ON UNECE REFORM

48. Chapter III of the workplan on UNECE reform (E/ECE/1434/Rev.1, paras. 35 to 39), requests ITC to strengthen a number of areas of work and activities and to submit proposals thereon to the Executive Committee. The following paragraphs provide a basis for addressing these priorities and proposals.

49. Closer cooperation with the Committee on Trade in the areas of **trade and transport facilitation** is being pursued as these topics seem most appropriate (as elaborated in ECE/TRANS/2008/3) and contain a road map about the strengthening of border crossing and trade facilitation activities, prepared jointly by the trade and transport divisions. In 2008, based on the above-mentioned road map, ITC discussed solutions to strengthen activities in the fields of border crossing and trade facilitation in cooperation with the Committee on Trade. To this end, a joint half-day trade and transport conference on the impact of globalization on transport, logistics and trade is being organized back to back for the first time by the two committees as part of their annual sessions in February 2009. The joint conference is expected to contribute to the UNECE report to the transport ministers of the ITF at the 2009 ITF Forum on transport for a global economy, new challenges and opportunities, to be held in May 2009 in Leipzig.

50. With regard to **Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) and environmental, energy and health aspects of transport**, ITC with the Committee on Environmental Policy and in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO)-Europe, is further strengthening activities related the THE PEP and environmental aspects of transportation. The Transport and the Environment, Housing and Land Management divisions, together with WHO-Europe are in the final phase of preparations for the 3rd High Level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment which will take place in January 2009 in the Netherlands. This meeting will, inter alia, seek to bring a renewed impetus to THE PEP, encouraging policymakers to work together to enhance the efficiency of transport systems, while managing sustainable mobility, reducing emissions and promoting health and safety. The secretariat is persistently trying to secure funds on a long-term basis for THE PEP Clearing House. A seminar on sustainable urban transport was held in 2006 and another workshop on sustainable and healthy urban transport was held in the Republic of Moldova in October 2008.

51. The World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations is facing the challenge of **climate change mitigation** and is considering a number of measures to improve vehicle energy efficiency. Supported by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Petroleum Industry Environmental Conservation Association (IPIECA), the World

Forum is committed to developing the necessary recommendations or standards on market fuel quality.

52. In order to further shed light on environmental aspects of transport and enable governments to make the right policy decisions, the Transport Division, in cooperation with other United Nations regional commissions, has submitted a **project proposal on global warming and transport to UNDA** for possible funding. If approved for funding, the implementation of this project would involve all United Nations regional commissions and will be coordinated by UNECE.

53. In the field of **monitoring and strengthening the implementation of key UNECE legal instruments on transport**, a proposal to strengthen the implementation of the Harmonization Convention was submitted to the Executive Committee in May 2006. The secretariat has also prepared a note (ECE/TRANS/2008/9) describing how it intends to strengthen the implementation of the Vienna Conventions on Road Traffic and Road Signs and Signals and AETR. ITC will consider a new draft proposal on ways and means of monitoring and strengthening the implementation of key UNECE legal instruments on transport, including those on road traffic safety in 2009. This proposal is circulated as informal document No. 17. The ITC proposal to the Executive Committee to strengthen the implementation of other transport conventions will follow, pending its adoption by ITC. A monitoring mechanism has already been developed to assess the application of minimum infrastructure standards in some transport infrastructure agreements, notably the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC) and AGTC.

54. The work on **Euro-Asian transport links (EATL)**, one of the main areas of activity identified in the reform proposal for the transport subprogramme, has reached a milestone at the ministerial meeting in 2008. With a view to ensuring the political commitment necessary for the continuation of EATL work, a meeting of ministers of transport of Euro-Asian countries was organized in Geneva on 19 February 2008 during the seventieth ITC session. The objective of the meeting was to ensure stronger political impetus for the continuation and further development of the UNECE-UNESCAP Euro-Asian Transport Links project as well as to obtain the necessary financing for Phase II (2008-2011). On this occasion, ministers signed a Joint Statement in which they confirmed their support for the project and its continuation, endorsed the identified EATL routes and their priority development, as well as the creation of a mechanism ensuring coordination and monitoring of the project-related activities in future. Work will continue through the activities of WP.5 and its subsidiary ad hoc Group of Experts on EATL. The Government of Russia has provided extra-budgetary funding to support among others EATL activities. At its first meeting in Geneva on 8 September 2008, the Group of Experts on EATL discussed its programme of work, objectives, tasks and deliverables. The Group is planning to meet again in Shanghai, in the first half of 2009, upon the invitation of the Government of China.

55. Concerning the **strengthening of the TIR Convention**, following the audit by the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) of the UNECE-International Road Transport Union (IRU) agreement, UNECE has expeditiously undertaken every effort to implement all OIOS recommendations. The TIR Convention has been strengthened by amendments (adopted in February 2008 and coming into force on 1 January 2009) which will provide more financial transparency on the functioning of the TIR system. Detailed provisions concerning external audit of the IRU accounts kept for the financing of the operation of the TIR

Executive Board (TIRExB) and the TIR secretariat have been incorporated in the UNECE-IRU Agreement and are being implemented. Another extensive package of amendment proposals has been finalized and submitted for approval to the TIR Administrative Committee with a view to clearly defining the responsibilities of major players in the TIR system (Customs, operators and guarantors). UNECE has commissioned a study which will provide a strategic review of the TIR system, including an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT), and will promote the marketing of the TIR system and the development of the eTIR project that is aimed at the computerization of the TIR procedure. To harmonize the application of the TIR procedure at national level and support the training of Customs personnel, a set of examples of best practices has been prepared, including step by step instructions on how to fill-in and use the TIR carnet.

V. INTERSECTORAL ACTIVITIES WITHIN UNECE

56. In addition to well-established intersectoral cooperation between ITC and other UNECE Sectoral Committees such as the **Committee on Trade, the Committee on Environmental Policy and the Committee on Sustainable Energy**, cooperation with other committees has also been strengthened. Several new cross-sectoral initiatives will be embarked upon in 2009 while those already existing will be strengthened. Among others, initiatives with the Environment, Housing and Land Management Division and the WHO-Europe in the framework of the PEP; with the UNECE Trade and Timber Division to leverage the cooperative results achieved so far in trade and transport facilitation; with the Sustainable Energy Division to improve energy efficiency in transport and to be more responsive to global warming concerns; and with the Statistics Division to further improve the collection and delivery of transport statistics.

57. It is expected that cooperation with the **Committees on Environmental Policy and on Sustainable Energy** will also be strengthened through joint work to develop fuel quality standards. In this respect, as elaborated above, the Transport Division has organized a round table to discuss fuel quality and its influence on motor vehicle emissions. As a result, a number of new initiatives will be launched.

58. ITC and the **Conference of European Statisticians** have cooperated by jointly reviewing transport statistics in order to increase the value for users and to ensure the delivery user-oriented transport statistics. The review has begun to assess the user needs, the quality and coverage, the availability of metadata (documentation) and the extent to which transport statistics comply with the principles governing international statistical activities. So far, tangible results have been produced, including the use for transport statistics tools developed by the Statistical Division for data work, i.e. structured query language (SQL) database and the dedicated software called “PC-AXIS” serving as a dissemination platform.

59. Activities of the Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links and Hinterland Connections of Seaports are conducive to the implementation of the **Millennium Development Goals** (MDGs) while assessing specific development problems in landlocked developing countries in the UNECE region (and neighbouring Afghanistan and Mongolia in case of the EATL project) and developing policy-relevant conclusions. Furthermore, the joint UNECE-OSCE project aiming to develop a handbook of best border-crossing practices will also provide an important development tool for landlocked developing countries, helping them to reach MDGs faster. The activities to address road safety issues, including the UNDA project on injury reduction targets, have direct connection with MDGs.

VI. SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES

60. The activities of ITC have helped to **strengthen the capacity of countries with economies in transition** to implement UNECE legal instruments on transport, facilitate international transport in the UNECE region and promote intercountry cooperation towards the development of pan-European transport networks and Euro-Asian transport links. It contributed, inter alia, through active participation and submission of papers, to a number of international activities and forums, towards the development of European Transport infrastructure, as well as of Euro-Asian Transport Links and the accession to and implementation of UNECE legal instruments in transport.

61. Technical cooperation activities have been promoted also through assistance offered to **TEM and TER Projects** work, which in 2008 focused on monitoring the implementation of their Master Plan, including its Revision that started in June 2008 and is expected to be completed in 2009.

62. ITC continued supporting the **United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) Transport Infrastructure and Border Crossing Facilitation Working Group** (PWG-TBC), established in 1998 within the framework of the SPECA Tashkent Declaration. At its thirteenth session held in Almaty, 12-13 March 2008, the SPECA PWG-TBC project discussed transport infrastructure and facilitation issues in relation to the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action. These included country reports on transit transport, regional and interregional transport activities, bilateral consultations on border crossing and implementation of guidelines to improve efficiency of SPECA PWG – TBC.

VII. COOPERATION WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

63. With the objective to increase the impact of its work, the Transport Division continues to collaborate with all relevant transport organizations in Europe and beyond.

64. Cooperation with the **European Commission** is continuing and further strengthened in a variety of transport issues dealt with by ITC. UNECE provides the **European Union (EU)** with a suitable forum to consult with non-EU countries. The need for such a consultation is particularly evident when EU legislation has an extra-territorial impact or an extra-territorial application (and for international inland transport that is frequently the case). Conversely, when EU carries out consultations with major stakeholders - particularly in the process of preparing new legislation – UNECE may reflect on the implications beyond EU. Moreover, as a result of EU participation in the elaboration of UNECE vehicle regulations, EU has initiated migration of the EU vehicle regulatory framework to UNECE vehicle regulations. EU is already applying more than 100 vehicle Regulations set up by the UNECE World Forum. During its June 2008 session, the World Forum noted the intention of the European Community to simplify its regulatory and legislative system, aiming at promoting a wider harmonization of vehicle regulations and replacing 50 EU Directives on vehicles by the corresponding UNECE Regulations, if possible. The same applies for inland transport of dangerous goods, where the EU legislation requires member States to apply the requirements of the international legal instruments applicable to international transport (ADR, RID and ADN) to domestic and intra-community traffic. Other areas of UNECE-EU co-operation include: the development of pan-European transport corridors, the introduction of a digital tachograph into the AETR Agreement and transport statistics.

65. **Cooperation among the United Nations regional commissions** is particularly strong in the field of road safety. A cooperation road map was discussed first at the regional commissions' retreat in Turin, in August 2008, and was finalized and agreed in November 2008, during a regional commissions' coordination meeting that took place on the occasion of the joint WP.1 and UNRSC meeting. Through common efforts the regional commissions successfully contributed in the finalization of the new terms of the reference of UNRSC led by WHO. Moreover, the regional commissions jointly elaborated and submitted the first draft of the declaration to be endorsed at the First Global (ministerial) Conference to be held in Moscow, in November 2009. Partnership with other United Nations regional commissions is continuing, and is expected to extend to the already mentioned UNDA project on Global Warming and Transport. UNECE - UNESCAP collaboration is continuing on the Euro-Asian Transport Links project and transport facilitation.

66. In intermodal transport and logistics, rail transport, statistics and road safety UNECE has cooperated with the **International Transport Forum (ITF)** - previously called European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) - under relevant ECMT working groups. As these working groups were discontinued, UNECE was given an opportunity to play a role in carrying on the work by providing the only intergovernmental forum for 56 countries to exchange information and best practices in these areas and by serving as a technical forum to develop common positions on issues of interest to transport ministers. Conversely, as a political forum, ITF, will help in promoting the implementation of UNECE legal instruments. In this context, UNECE provided input to the 2008 ITF Ministerial Forum on global warming and transport. In May 2008, UNECE Executive Secretary took part in the first ITF Forum, ministerial session, entitled the challenge of climate change, held in Leipzig. In their key messages, transport ministers urged UNECE World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations to "accelerate the work to develop common methodologies, test cycles and measurement methods for light vehicles", including CO₂ emissions. The 2008 **ITF Ministerial Declaration includes reference to UNECE work, in particular to the role for the World Harmonisation Forum**. Close cooperation is established in preparing for the 2009 ITF Forum on globalization and transport. To this end, a joint ITF-UNECE-World Bank conference on border crossing issues will take place, in Paris, in March 2009. The 2010 ITF Forum will be about innovation and new technologies on transport. Therefore, the focus of future cooperation with ITF will be UNECE work on ITS.

67. Cooperation with the **Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)** is promoted in accordance with the memorandum of understanding (MoU) between UNECE-OSCE, signed in 2004. OSCE-UNECE cooperation continues in the area of transport facilitation and capacity building, as well as through the reviews of the implementation of OSCE transport commitments, promotion of more effective implementation of the "Harmonization Convention", contributions to the mid-term review of the Almaty Programme of Action and the organization of various joint capacity building initiatives in the area of transport. Due to the active and constructive engagement of ITC in the last two years, the Office of the Coordinator for Economic and Environmental Activities of OSCE has selected transport to be one of its priority areas. During the sixteenth OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum, 19-21 May 2008, Prague, UNECE contribution in the framework of the review of the implementation of OSCE commitments in the economic and environmental dimension in the field of transport focused on dangerous goods.

68. Cooperation with the **Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC)** is promoted in accordance with the cooperative agreement between UNECE-BSEC, signed in 2001. UNECE has assisted in the process of harmonization of national transport legislation of BSEC member States. Furthermore, UNECE contributed to the coordinated development of transport infrastructure in the BSEC region through the elaboration of the TEM and TER Master Plan, as well as through the development of Euro-Asian transport links, including through the BSEC region. At the BSEC ministerial meeting, held in Odessa, in April 2008, ministers of transport of the BSEC region adopted a joint Declaration, which, inter alia, acknowledged the importance of UNECE activities on developing internationally harmonized transport norms and standards and agreed to intensify joint efforts to ensure the implementation of the related UNECE transport conventions. The Joint declaration also stressed the necessity to strengthen cooperation with UNECE, EC and other international organizations in the development of Euro-Asian transport linkages.

69. Cooperation with WHO continued on road safety and THE PEP. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and IPIECA support the activities of the World Forum on fuel quality and actively participate in the development of recommendations or standards on market fuel quality. In December 2008, a MoU on strengthened cooperation in the field of transport between UNECE and EU funded project, Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia (TRACECA), was signed in Baku. In rail, inland waterway and transport of dangerous goods, ITC also cooperates closely with regional or international organizations, notably OTIF, Organization for Cooperation of Railways (OSJD), Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine (CCNR), Danube Commission, International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Cooperation is also continued with a number of other organizations, including Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), World Bank, International Labour Organization (ILO) and United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

VIII. COOPERATION WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND NON GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs)

70. ITC and the secretariat are vigorously continuing efforts to engage the **private sector and NGOs** not only in technical work, but are also exploring possibilities for obtaining additional financing for new programme activities.

71. One of the most successful examples of ITC cooperation with the private sector is its cooperation with the IRU as the effective implementation of the TIR Convention hinges upon public-private co-operation. In particular, Contracting Parties to the TIR Convention periodically authorize IRU to organize and manage an international guarantee system, which is one of the crucial elements of the TIR procedure.

72. Another most recent example is the additional financial support offered by the Greek Chambers of Commerce and Industry in support of the organization of the UNECE Conference on Hinterland Connections of Seaports held in Piraeus in September 2008.

IX. GENDER MAINSTREAMING

73. The Executive Committee requested all Sectoral Committees to set up a mechanism to ensure that gender is effectively mainstreamed into relevant areas of the Programme of Work and to include gender mainstreaming into the annual report to the Executive Committee.

74. At its meeting on 2 June 2008, the ITC Bureau asked the secretariat to prepare a paper on “transport and gender” for consideration at its next meeting. At its meeting on 27 November 2008, the Bureau considered the paper prepared by the secretariat, which presented a review of current approaches to gender mainstreaming in general and in transport sector in particular, as well as the current state of art in gender mainstreaming in international organizations and selected UNECE member countries.

75. The Bureau welcomed and appreciated the comprehensive review and decided to circulate it to the seventy-first ITC session, in February 2009, as official documents (ECE/TRANS/2009/6, ECE/TRANS/2009/7 and ECE/TRANS/2009/8). The Bureau felt that these documents contained valuable information for the future work of ITC and recommended that ITC should endorse them. It further suggested that all ITC subsidiary bodies should, within their areas of competences and where appropriate, consider and ensure that gender is effectively mainstreamed into relevant areas of their programme of work.

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