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## **Economic Commission for Europe**

### **Inland Transport Committee**

#### **Seventy-third session**

Geneva, 1–3 March 2011

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

**Commitments and opportunities related to the Economic Commission for Europe session in 2011, the Commission on Sustainable Development and the review process of achieving the Millennium Development Goals**

### **Commitments and opportunities related to the session of the Economic Commission for Europe, the Commission on Sustainable Development and the review process of achieving the Millennium Development Goals**

#### **Note by the secretariat**

1. The forthcoming bi-annual *session of the Economic Commission for Europe* will take place in Geneva from 29–31 March 2011. The session will have high-level and a general segment. In preparing the agenda for the session, member Governments decided to devote one session of the high-level segment to transport and trade infrastructure under the heading: “The role of regional integration and cooperation for promoting sustainable development in the ECE region”. This session will be held on 29 March 2011 starting at 15:00 hours.
2. In order to adequately address issues of common concern, the member Governments expressed their interest to devote attention to several specific transport issues to be discussed in the high-level segment: transport and sustainable development; new challenges of infrastructure development in the UNECE region; transport facilitation; strengthening the transport legal framework for better connectivity in the UNECE region; and, facilitation of climate change mitigation in the UNECE region.
3. In drafting the agenda for the high level segment the Governments and the secretariat were led by the view that the above mentioned issues need to be brought to the attention of member Governments, whether to raise their awareness and sensitize them to emerging challenges in transport sector or to solicit their stronger support for ongoing and planned activities by the Inland Transport Committee. Thus, the programme of the high-level segment on “The role of regional integration and cooperation for promoting sustainable development in the ECE region” will be structured in the following way:

- Keynote presentation: “Transport for Sustainable Development in the UNECE region – best practices and new challenges”;
- Keynote presentation: “Integrating Eastern Europe and Central Asia into International Supply Chains”;
- Presentation: “New challenges of infrastructure development in the UNECE region – Integrated approach towards planning and financing”;
- Presentation: “Implementing Key Trade facilitation Standards and Recommendations”;
- Presentation: “Transport facilitation for borderless traffic in the UNECE region”;
- Presentation: “Strengthening the transport legal framework for better connectivity in the UNECE region – harmonised conditions to facilitate long-distance rail traffic”;
- and
- Presentation: “Facilitation of climate change mitigation in the UNECE region – Future Inland Transport Systems (ForFITS) Project (UNDA)”.

4. It is expected that in this session the Commission will take note of the work carried out by the Inland Transport Committee and the Committee on Trade, discusses the issues raised by each presentation and provide additional support to the ongoing and planned activities of the Inland Transport Committee, such as, on the development of the harmonised conditions to facilitate long-distance rail traffic and the work on development and implementation of a monitoring and assessment tool for CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in inland transport to facilitate climate change mitigation.

5. The general segment of the Commission session will also address two specific transport issues: the global road safety and inland water transport. The Commission is expected to take note of the launching of the Decade of Action for Road Safety and of the UNECE initiatives to scale up road safety activities as well as to encourage Governments to support the Inland Transport Committee and its working parties through active participation in their work, recommend to Governments to set ambitious yet feasible national road traffic casualty reduction targets and mobilize the necessary human and financial resources to achieve them, and to call upon the international donor community to provide additional funding in support of road safety action programmes carried out by the UNECE.

6. The second White Paper on Efficient and Sustainable Inland Water Transport in Europe based on policy studies, ministerial declarations and input from European river navigation commissions, the European Union (EU) and other international bodies, outlines key elements of a Pan-European strategy for efficient and sustainable inland waterway transport. The Commission is expected to support the White Paper’s policy recommendations – as endorsed by the ITC – in 7 priority areas in order to solicit tangible support to this mode of transport.

7. In September 2010 the report “*Millennium Development Goals in Europe and Central Asia: Achievements, Challenges and the Way Forward*” was launched. The report was prepared under the responsibility of Ján Kubiš, Executive Secretary of the UNECE and Chair of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) of UN agencies, jointly with United Nations Development Programme, International Labour Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World Food Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Development Fund for Women, World Health Organization, United Nations Children’s Fund, United Nations Population Fund, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and International Trade Centre. The entire

report is available at the following internet address:  
[http://www.unece.org/commission/MDGs/2010\\_MDG\\_Optimized.pdf](http://www.unece.org/commission/MDGs/2010_MDG_Optimized.pdf).

8. The UNECE Transport division contributed to the chapter on the Millennium Development Goal 8: Develop a global partnership for development with targets for aid, trade and debt relief. Concretely, it provided the policy context and the analysis for targets 8.B: Address the special needs of the least developed countries and 8.C: Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. From this policy analysis, two policy recommendations were specified and were integrated in the report:

- Improving the pan-European and Euro-Asian transport infrastructure should be a priority in regional cooperation and therefore calls for the agreement and involvement of all member States; and
- It also calls for resource mobilization, including through innovative forms of financing such as public-private partnerships, to ensure steady progress in the development of this regional public good.

9. Streamlining border control procedures was another aspect of international transport highlighted in the report. The relevant policy analysis and two policy recommendations were provided in the report:

- (i) Governments should speed up processes for harmonizing and effectively implementing international agreements, standards, norms and recommendations related to border crossing and trade facilitation; and
- (ii) transparent border-crossing performance measures, best-practice benchmarks and improvements in transport data collection and statistics should be developed as a way to promote evidence-based policies and measures in this area.

10. The United Nations *Commission on Sustainable Development* (CSD) is responsible for reviewing progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development; as well as providing policy guidance to follow up the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) at the local, national, regional and international levels. The CSD meets annually, in two-year cycles, with each cycle focusing on clusters of specific thematic and cross-sectoral issues, outlined in its multi-year programme of work (2003–2017). In the biennium 2010–2011, transport is one of the clusters which are being reviewed by the Commission. The 18<sup>th</sup> session held from 3-14 May 2010 was a *review session* devoted to transport, chemicals, waste management (hazardous & solid waste), mining and a 10 year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns. UNECE Transport division contributed to the session with the background document: “United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Work in support of Sustainable development of transport” available at: [http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/resources/res\\_pdfs/csd-18/csd18\\_2010\\_bp15.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/resources/res_pdfs/csd-18/csd18_2010_bp15.pdf).

11. 19<sup>th</sup> CSD session will be held from 2–13 May 2011 and will be a *policy session* of the fourth implementation cycle and will be devoted to the same four clusters, including transport. Following up on the report prepared for the review session in 2010, the UNECE Statistical division prepared a more elaborate and comprehensive report. Based on member countries’ replies to regular annual Questionnaire on Transport Situation in the UNECE region, this report entitled “Transport for Sustainable Development” is not only providing a thorough overview of the current situation in transport sector and its implications for sustainable development but is also highlighting important policy considerations and implications of transport policies that may be supportive and conducive to sustainable economic, social and environmental development in UNECE member countries.

12. This report is being circulated to the Inland Transport Committee in its final draft form. Upon its completion and printing, it will be submitted to the 19<sup>th</sup> session of the CSD in May 2011, but before that it will also be presented to the high-level segment of the 2011 session on the Economic Commission for Europe in March this year.

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