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Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics

Group of Experts on Climate Change impacts and adaptation for international transport networks

First session

Geneva, 5 September 2011

Report of the Expert Group on Climate Change impacts and adaptation for international transport networks on its first session

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I. Attendance

1. The Expert Group (hereafter called the group) on Climate Change impacts and adaptation for international transport networks held its first session on 5 September 2011. Representatives of the following United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) member States participated: Azerbaijan, Belarus, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Poland, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey and Uzbekistan.
2. Representatives of the following United Nations organizations and specialized agencies attended the meeting: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The UNECE Trans-European Motorway (TEM) and Trans-European Railway (TER) Projects were represented.
3. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC).
4. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: International Road Federation (IRF), International Road Transport Union (IRU) and International Union of Railways (UIC).
5. Representatives of the following bodies attended the meeting at the invitation of the secretariat: Attica Toll way Operations Authority, Birmingham Centre for Railway Research and Education, National Technical University of Athens, Swiss Re Europe S.A., University of Birmingham.

II. Introduction (agenda item 1)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2010/3, ECE/TRANS/WP.5/48, ECE/TRANS/221, ECE/EX/2011/L.11

6. The Director of Transport Division welcomed the members of the group and emphasized that climate change with all its adverse effects, is one of the biggest social and environmental challenges before the global economy and a top priority of the United Nations. The Director highlighted some of the important contributions and ongoing activities of the Inland Transport Committee and its subsidiary bodies in the area of climate change and transport, and stressed that adaptation responses have not been given, generally, as much priority as mitigation so far and that it is imperative that policymakers and stakeholders also focus on the aspect of adaptation.
7. The group was informed by the secretariat on the results of the joint UNECE-UNCTAD Workshop on “Climate Change Impacts on International Transport Networks”, held under the auspices of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5) in September 2010 for which UNECE and UNCTAD secretariats had prepared ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2010/3 as a background document.
8. The group noted that the aforementioned workshop had raised awareness about the important challenges that climate change impacts and adaptation requirements present for international transport networks. It also noted that the workshop had demonstrated the urgent need to prepare appropriate policy actions, as well as the need to exchange information about best practices and concluded that there was considerable merit in establishing a new expert group to study the matter.

III. Election of Officers (agenda item 2)

9. The group elected its officers, Mr. Jerzy Kleniewski (Poland) as Chair and Mr. André Leuxe (France) as Vice-Chair for the period it was established.

IV. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 3)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.3/1 and Add. 1

10. The group adopted the agenda (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.3/1 and Add. 1).

V. Climate Change and International Transport Networks: Overview of main concerns and considerations (agenda item 4)

Documentation: Informal Document No. 1

11. The group considered Informal document No. 1 and additional information provided by the secretariat on the main issues and concerns related to the impacts of climate change on international inland transport networks and adaptation requirements for different modes of transport.

12. The group noted a number of initiatives being developed by various stakeholders and asked its members to communicate any relevant information to the secretariat.

VI. Programme of work (agenda item 5)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.3/2011/1

13. The group considered document ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.3/2011/1 prepared by the secretariat containing the proposed programme of work of the group and scheduled activities. The group approved its programme of work (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.3/2011/1), as amended and requested the secretariat to elaborate a more detailed one, based on the results of the discussions and recommendations made during the meeting, to be considered by the group at its next session. The approved programme is annexed to the present report.

VII. Partners and expected contributions (agenda item 6)

14. The group discussed potential partners for its work and possible collaboration efforts with other United Nations bodies, governments, international and regional organizations, NGOs, academia and the private sector and possibilities of ensuring financial support. It also noted that some countries are taking initiatives towards policy oriented responses that may be useful for the work of the group.

15. The group recognizing that climate change impacts and adaptation on international transport networks is a global issue that concerns countries from all over the world and not only the ECE member states, the unique character of the work of this group, and the importance of the issues at stake invited:

- UNCTAD secretariat and its member States to take an active role in the work of the group ensuring global coverage of the work, as well as to seek wider inputs and sharing of best practices among countries that would improve and at the same time

maximize the expected results from the work of the group while widening the expected benefits to more United Nations member countries;

- Other United Nations regional commissions to consider their active participation and contribution to the work of the group in close cooperation with the UNECE secretariat;
- The Steering Committees of the TEM and TER Projects and UNECE secretariat to explore practical ways of ensuring operational interaction of the TEM and TER Projects with the work of the group for developing joint activities, elaborating studies and organizing joint events aimed at promoting common objectives for the benefit of the projects and their member countries;
- Governments, international governmental and non-governmental organization, International Financial Institutions, businesses and donors to consider co-funding future project activities as they may be proposed by the group;
- The secretariat to consider ways and means that the work of the group be aligned with and or benefit from other related UN activities, particularly the processes and mechanisms developed under the UN Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC); and
- Explore cooperation opportunities with the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development (UNCSD), World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the European Commission.

VIII. International Conference on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation Requirements for International Transport Networks (agenda item 7)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/48 and Annex

16. The group noted that the organization of a conference on “Adaptation of Transport Networks to Climate Change” had been proposed by WP.5 at its twenty-third session. It also noted that the Hellenic Chambers Transport Association (HCTA) had informed WP.5 that if there was no offer from governments, the Greek Chambers of Commerce and Industry would be ready to explore the possibility of hosting such a conference.

17. Appreciating the offer of HCTA to explore possibilities for hosting a UNECE-UNCTAD international conference in 2012 if there was no offer from governments, requested it to inform the group if this can be materialized, and the secretariat, in close collaboration with other partners and key stakeholders, to explore ways that the organization of such a conference can be financed.

IX. Preliminary discussion on the structure of the final report of the Expert Group (agenda item 8)

18. The group exchanged views on the possible structure of its final report, including recommendations and proposals to the UNECE members on improving the adaptability of international transport networks to Climate Change in the areas of: infrastructure; risk assessment methodology; evaluation of adaptive measures; risk management; training tools and cross-border information sharing by national transport authorities.

19. The group noted that the report could contain a list of responsible agencies on related issues at the national level. The group also noted the secretariat's initiative to engage a consultant to assist the group.

20. The group welcomed and thanked the secretariat for its initiative to engage a consultant that would assist the work of the group.

21. Following the first exchange of views on the possible structure of the final report of the group, the group requested the secretariat, with the help of the consultant, to prepare an outline of the contents of the final report to be considered by it at its next session.

X. Other business (agenda item 9)

22. There were no other items.

XI. Date of next session (agenda item 10)

23. The Group of Experts' second session is tentatively scheduled to take place in Geneva on 8 November 2011.

XII. Adoption of the report

24. The group adopted the list of main decisions of its first session and requested the secretariat and the Chair to prepare the full and complete report to be circulated to the members of the group for comments on items other than those contained in the list of main decisions.

25. The group requested its Chair to inform the twenty-fourth session of the WP.5 on the outcome of this meeting.

Annex

Programme of Work and Terms of Reference of the UNECE Group of Experts on Climate Change impacts and adaptation for international transport networks

I. Programme of Work

A. Objectives of Work

1. In accordance with its Terms of Reference, the Group of Experts is expected to complete its work within two years and to submit a full report of its accomplishments. This will include policy-oriented recommendations that aim to improve the long-term sustainability of international transport and set best examples of national policies, address the issues of transport networks vulnerability amongst member Governments, including developing and landlocked countries, as well as small island States.

2. The Expert Group is expected to assist in the following issues:

(a) Identify potential climatic impacts on transport infrastructure, including ports and their hinterland connections, as well as on transport services and networks across the broader supply-chain, including their type, range and distribution across different regions and transport modes;

(b) Determine the costs of climatic impacts for international inland transport networks, including the broader socio-economic implications for trade and development of impacted countries as well as identify the requirements for corresponding adaptation responses;

(c) Identify existing best practices in national policies and risk management as well as formulation of relevant strategies to enhance the resilience of international transport networks, through changes in infrastructure design and operation planning and management, taking into account specific risks and vulnerabilities.

B. Activities

3. The Group of Experts will undertake the following main tasks, which are further defined in the Terms of Reference and will be further elaborated, as required, throughout the whole period of its work, with the support of the secretariat:

(a) Adopt its work plan (objectives, activities, time schedule);

(b) Take stock of the available data and analysis of climate change impacts on international transport networks in the ECE region and beyond;

(c) Collect information on all relevant planning, management, organizational and other initiatives for adaptation of transport networks to climate change;

(d) Prepare, in a coordinated manner, recommendations or proposals to member Governments, with a view to improving the adaptability of transport networks to climate change in areas such as: infrastructure and related existing agreements, risk-assessment methodology, evaluation of adaptive measures, risk management, training tools, and cross-border information sharing by national transport authorities;

(e) Convene an International Conference on Adaptation of Transport Networks to Climate Change to raise awareness and provide inputs to the work;

(f) Prepare and present a final report of its work;

(g) Make proposals on the scope of related activities of its parent body, the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5).

4. In carrying out its main tasks, the Expert Group will, among others, also:

(a) Review the geographical scope of the work, as the Terms of Reference stipulate that the Expert Group may study climate change impacts and adaptation requirements for international transport networks within and beyond the ECE region;

(b) Identify potential partners in the public or private sector and on the national, regional and international level, with whom the Expert Group may wish to collaborate in respect of its work, with a view to awareness raising and exchange of best practices, as well as ensuring extra-budgetary funding in support of its activities;

(c) Identify suitable methodological approaches for gathering and disseminating relevant information, i.e. conducting studies, distributing questionnaires, using existing studies and national strategies, existing best practices in risk management and financing of adaptation measures, among others;

(d) Identify any necessary data (including specific geological or meteorological data elements) that the Expert Group may require with regard to regions or countries that run a higher risk of being impacted, are particularly vulnerable, or are already experiencing the effects of climate change on their transport networks;

(e) Establish a list of responsible agencies on related issues at national level.

C. Time Schedule

5. At its first session on 5 September 2011, the Expert Group will review its time schedule of activities which is planned as follows:

<i>Session</i>	<i>Date</i>
First session	5 September 2011
Second session	8 November 2011
Third session	May 2012 (date to be confirmed)
International Conference on Adaptation of Transport Networks to Climate Change	Date to be confirmed (2012)
Fourth session	3 September 2012
Fifth session	7 December 2012

II. Terms of Reference

6. The Terms of Reference of the Group of Experts on Climate Change impacts and adaptation for international transport networks were set out in Annex II of document ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2010/3 and further fine-tuned and adopted by the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics at its twenty-third session (Geneva, 7–8 September 2010) as reflected in its report ECE/TRANS/WP.5/48, endorsed by the Inland Transport Committee in its seventy-third session (1–3 March 2011) and approved by the UNECE Executive Committee (10 May 2011).
