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Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

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Item 13 of the provisional agenda

Review of the UNECE reform and proposals for renewed (five-year) mandates of the Committee's subsidiary bodies

Draft proposals of the Committee on the review of the UNECE reform

Note by the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The present note provides the Inland Transport Committee an outline of the review of the UNECE reform in the field of transport and the proposals for renewed (five-year) mandates of the Committee's subsidiary bodies as well as for the continuation of the work of the Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) for two more years
2. While proposals in this note are to be considered for approval by the Committee under its agenda item 13 the note is also expected to serve as one of the basic documents for the discussions during the second meeting of the Chairs of the Committee's subsidiary bodies and Administrative Committees of UNECE legal instruments, the members of the Bureau and Government delegates in the framework of the ITC session.
3. The note should be considered in conjunction with the Briefing note for the Review of the ECE reform, Template "Information requested by EXCOM for the ECE review" with annexes 1 and 2, communicated by the secretariat.

II. Follow-up to the First Meeting of the Chairs of the Committee's subsidiary bodies

4. The Chairs of the Committee's subsidiary bodies and Administrative Committees of UNECE legal instruments, the members of the Bureau and Government delegates who participated in the seventy-third session of the Committee, attended the first meeting of the Chairs of the Committee's subsidiary bodies, held on 2 March 2011. The meeting — a

restricted meeting for Government delegates only — allowed the Chairs of the Committee's subsidiary bodies to discuss strengthening cooperation, share experiences and address common challenges, including the impact of the global nature of the UN transport agreements administered by the ITC. The outcome of the Chairs meeting was circulated in the form of Chair's conclusions. These included the identification of several common challenges:

- (a) Expected reduced participation of government delegates during the economic and financial crisis;
- (b) Lack of sufficient funds at the secretariat to support the work, and need for extra-budgetary funding, as well as additional regular budget in the case of TIR;
- (c) Lack of adequate and timely submission of inputs from ECE member States and reduced data availability;
- (d) Lack of consensus, impeding the updating and development of some agreements;
- (e) Sub-regional specificities, different priorities and technical standards;
- (f) Need for regular cooperation and exchange of good practices on cross-cutting issues;
- (g) Public-Private Partnerships on implementation of ECE legal instruments ensuring transparency and good governance; and
- (h) Implementation of ECE legal instruments through the introduction of modern technologies.

5. At its meeting on 3 March 2011, the Bureau had welcomed the results of this meeting and stressed that efficiency, synergy and interdependence, as well avoiding duplication and sharing experiences were among the main messages of the Chairs. Expected reduced participation of Government delegates during the crisis due to governments' budget constraints and the lack of sufficient funds at the secretariat to support work were identified as main challenges that need to be addressed. Moreover, the Bureau had requested the secretariat to make proposals on the possible responses for its consideration at the next Bureau meeting.

6. In responding to the concerns expressed by the Chairs, the secretariat prepared proposals on the possible responses addressing four broad issues:

- (a) Efficiency-participation-prioritization:
 - Consider reducing the number and duration of meetings and making them more efficient;
 - Consider reducing lower priority activities to release resources to be used for addressing higher priority areas and new emerging needs.
- (b) Synergy-sharing experiences:
 - Organizing the meeting of Chairs as a regular feature of the ITC sessions;
 - Organizing joint meetings amongst WPs, promoting multidisciplinary areas of work and cross-cutting issues, sharing experiences and good practices.
- (c) Further deepening the inter-agency cooperation to avoid also in the future the duplication of work:

- Enhance cooperation with other regional commissions, EU, regional and sub-regional organizations and global partners to raise awareness of the Committee's work, sharing knowledge, transferring know-how, and promote the benefits from accession to ECE legal instruments globally;
 - Identify reasons that impede accession to legal instruments and introduce specific conditions to accommodate such cases, as necessary and appropriate;
 - Study the costs and benefits of a possible global transit system and consider the possible role of the UNECE in its development;
 - Consider using 6 UN languages in some official sessions of ITC subsidiary bodies that could contribute to increasing the geographical reach of the UN legal instruments in transport;
 - Consider changes in the ToR and rules of procedure to allow equal treatment of all Contracting Parties in those Working Parties which are responsible for legal instruments;
 - Provide more information on ECE procedural matters to the Chairs.
- (d) Funding-assistance:
- Ensure extra-budgetary funding through systematic efforts to explore opportunities in cooperation with ECE governments and other stakeholders, in support of the work;
 - Provide technical assistance and capacity building to current and future Contracting Parties in need, aimed at enabling them to collect and submit quality data as well as implement the UN legal instruments in transport.

III. The sixty-fourth session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe results and follow up

7. At its sixty-fourth session the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, held in Geneva, from 29 to 31 March 2011, discussed the transport and trade infrastructure; the new directions of UNECE activities; the UN Secretary General request for budget cuts; and the launch of the review of the UNECE reform.

8. The Commission welcomed the implementation and achievements of the ECE reform adopted in December 2005 and underlined the importance of its first five-year review that will take place in 2011–2012 according to the guidelines contained in document ECE/EX/1, with the view to drawing conclusions on the future work priorities of the ECE.

9. The Commission requested the Executive Committee (EXCOM) to duly consider the outputs of the discussion of its sixty-fourth session when it reviews the work programme of ECE Sectoral Committees and to the Sectoral Committees to consider the said outputs, as appropriate. The decisions adopted by the Commission session were circulated as document E/2011/37–E/ECE/1462.

IV. Launch of the review of the UNECE reform

10. In addition to the above-mentioned request of the Commission to EXCOM and to the Sectoral Committees, the Commission had also invited EXCOM to gather information

relating to the allocation of resources, budget and results in 2010-2011 and decide on the modalities of the upcoming review with a view to proposing decisions on review of the ECE reform, to be taken by the next ECE session (in 2013).

11. In May 2011, the Secretariat presented to EXCOM information on the current allocation and use of resources provided to ECE in the 2010-2011 with a link to all main products and services delivered in 2010, along with information on the availability of non-staff resources provided under the Regular Budget (Section 19). Information was also provided on work carried out and resources available in 2010 from the Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation (Section 22) and the UN Development Account (Section 35), as well as extra-budgetary resources.

12. The strategic tasks and challenges of the Transport Division were presented to the EXCOM by the Director of the division in the framework of the follow-up to the Commission session. Additional inputs were provided to EXCOM by the Division including a briefing note on the work of the Inland Transport Committee and a report on the activities and results of the transport subprogramme in 2010.

13. At its forty-first and forty-second Meetings, in May and June 2011, respectively, EXCOM agreed on the modalities to be followed for the above-mentioned review as they have been reflected in Informal document No. 2011/5 and 2011/5/ Rev. 1.

14. The sixty-fourth session of the Commission had requested that the first five-year review of the ECE reform that will take place in 2011-2012. EXCOM would solicit inputs from the Chairpersons of Sectoral Committees and their main subsidiary bodies (e.g. Working Parties, Teams of Specialists, etc), as well as the secretariat. The purpose would be to identify within each sub-programme:

- Priority areas of current work and results achieved;
- Possible new and emerging issues and expected results;
- Possibilities for streamlining and synergizing activities within each of the expected results;
- Ways of improving efficiency and methods of work;
- Expected results and related activities that may need to be re-oriented/refocused to better reflect priority demands of member States;
- Possible optimization of the structure of the programme of work;
- Ways of improving communication and public outreach.

IV. Launch of the review of the UNECE reform in the field of transport, incorporating possible responses to the challenges identified by the Chairs of the Committee's subsidiary bodies

15. Based on the methodology and time-table set by EXCOM, the Transport Division prepared a road map which was endorsed by the Bureau at its June 2011 session and duly implemented.

16. At its June meeting, the Bureau considered the conclusions of the Chairs meeting, the request of the ECE Commission and EXCOM as well as the Transport Division's proposals on the possible responses and the proposed road map on the review of the UNECE reform in the field of transport and agreed to:

- Invite the Committee's subsidiary bodies to initiate the review process taking into account the outputs of the discussions of the sixty-fourth session of the Commission and the conclusions of the First Chairs meeting and provide proposals to the Bureau by early November 2011;
- Invite the Chairs of the Committee's subsidiary bodies to a meeting with the Bureau to be held in the morning of the first day of its November meeting, if sufficient participation of Chairs is ensured;
- At its next meeting, consider inputs and prepare recommendations to ITC with the assistance of the secretariat.

17. Following the above-mentioned request, the secretariat communicated a Briefing note for the Review of the ECE reform and a Template - "Information requested by EXCOM for the ECE review" (with annexes 1 and 2) to the Chairs of the Committee's subsidiary bodies and Administrative Committees of UNECE legal instruments, seeking their inputs, and invited them to participate in the meeting with the Bureau on 29 November 2011.

V. Meeting of the Chairs of the Committee's subsidiary bodies and the Administrative Committees of UNECE legal instruments with the Committee's Bureau (29 November 2011)

18. This meeting aimed at reviewing the main activities of the transport subprogramme in 2010–2011 and the existing mandates and prioritization of work for the future, including possible new tasks and areas of work, and prepare recommendations to the Committee. The Chairs of the Committee's subsidiary bodies and the Administrative Committees of UNECE legal instruments presented their comments and remarks on the documents communicated to them by the secretariat (Briefing note for the Review of the ECE reform, Template "Information requested by EXCOM for the ECE review" with annexes 1 and 2).

19. Based on the proposals of the Committees subsidiary bodies and Administrative Committees of UNECE legal instruments, communicated to it by their Chairs, the Bureau concluded as follows¹:

(a) agreed with the content of the briefing note, as well as the Template and its annexes 1 and 2 for the review of the ECE reform, containing key results achieved by the Committee and its subsidiary bodies in 2010–2011, expected future results and the new or emerging issues/activities;

(b) agreed that all future results contained in annex 1 are the outcome of high priority activities, while further prioritization to be inserted, would clearly reflect internal priorities within an area of work and reflecting the change in priorities over time of their implementation;

(c) agreed that while all issues/activities reflected in annex 2 are of high priority the secretariat should propose ranking and provide additional information on the expected start and / or duration for those issues/activities that are of limited duration, clearly indicating which activities would start later; and requested the secretariat, to associate these activities with additional resources required;

¹ For the full text of the Bureau conclusions please see ECE/TRANS/2012/8 annex III, pages 12 and 13

(d) expressed its strong view that while there are many important issues to be added to the Committee's work (reflected in the annex 2 of the above-mentioned Template), there is no room for abolishment of any activity and that therefore the question "if you had 10% less resources, what would you drop?" does not represent a realistic option for the UNECE ITC, neither for the ECOSOC Committees.

(e) agreed that the question "if you had 10% more resources, what you would do?" has been adequately replied in annex 2 of the Template and that the question "if your resources stay the same but want to do more, what would you drop to undertake a new activity?" merits a serious consideration by the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, as well as by the ECOSOC Committees;

(f) noted that in the framework of the five year's review of the UNECE reform process all the Committee's subsidiary bodies have requested that their mandates be renewed for another five years;

(g) in addition, it agreed that the difficulties related to delayed entry into force of new vehicle regulations and their amendments due to delays in the translation of the proposals in all the three authentic versions, will need to be solved.

20. The Bureau requested the secretariat to produce a revised version of the above-mentioned documents, including necessary amendments and improvements adequately reflecting the above decisions and prepare the draft proposals of the Committee to the Executive Committee on the review of the ECE reform to be considered at its next meeting and by the Committee, at its seventy-fourth session.

VI. Second Meeting of the Chairs of the Committee's subsidiary bodies

21. The second meeting of the Chairs of the Committee's subsidiary bodies and Administrative Committees of UNECE legal instruments, the members of the Bureau and Government delegates — to be held in the morning (10.00 to 11.30 a.m.) of the second day of the seventy-fourth session of the Committee (29 February 2012) as a restricted meeting for Government delegates only — will focus on the review of the UNECE reform, as well as on issues relating to strengthening cooperation, synergy and interdependence and sharing experiences among the working parties.

22. Participants may wish to present their comments and remarks on the revised documents prepared by the secretariat based on inputs and comments by the Bureau and the working party chairs (Briefing note for the Review of the ECE reform, Template "Information requested by the Executive Committee (EXCOM) for the ECE review" with annexes 1 and 2), and prepare the draft proposals of the Committee to EXCOM on the review of the ECE reform to be considered by the Committee at its seventy-fourth session.

VII. Proposals of the Inland Transport Committee to EXCOM on the review of the ECE reform in the filed of transport and proposals for renewed (five-year) mandates of the Committee's subsidiary bodies and of the EATL Group of Experts

23. Participants are expected to review the revised version of the briefing note for the Review of the ECE reform and the Template "Information requested by EXCOM for the

ECE review” with annexes 1 and 2. They may wish to consider and recommend the Committee to:

(a) agree with the content of the briefing note for the review of the ECE reform containing the Committee’s objectives, work areas and methods, as well as main partners and results achieved prepared by the secretariat, as amended;

(b) agree with the key results achieved by the Committee and its subsidiary bodies in 2010–2011, as well as with the expected future results contained in Annex 1 of the Template;

(c) agree that all future results contained in annex 1 of the Template are the outcome of high priority activities and should be marked with the symbol (H), while further prioritization and related explanations, clearly reflect internal priorities in terms of the timeframe of their implementation and not of their importance;

(d) agree with the new or emerging issues/activities as well as with the expected future results and indicators of achievement, as well as associated additional resources required for their implementation, contained in annex 2 of the Template;

(e) agree that while all issues/activities reflected in annex 2 are of high priority for the Committee and should be marked with the symbol (H), the symbols (H1, H2, ...) refer to their theoretical ranking, while additional information on the expected duration for those issues/activities that are of limited duration (LD) or should start later (SL), as appropriate are reflected with the symbols (H1-LD 2 years) or (H1-SL 2 years);

24. Bearing in mind the unique role of the Inland Transport Committee as an intergovernmental platform for negotiations, discussion and development of international transport legislature, the high importance and relevance of its work for all UNECE member countries and for Contracting Parties to the UN transport conventions from within and beyond the region, and the unique character of the analytical work and capacity building provided by the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, some of which are of global nature and scope, also bearing in mind that the Transport Division is the secretariat not only to ITC but also to ECOSOC transport committees, participants may wish to recommend the Committee to:

(a) express the view that while there are many important issues to be added to the Committee’s work (reflected in the annex 2 of the above-mentioned Template), there is no room for abolishment of any activity;

(b) that in view of the above and further explanations contained in the responses to the questions asked by EXCOM in its Template, agree that the question “if you had 10% less resources, what would you drop?” does not represent a realistic option for the Committee;

(c) also agree that while the question “if you had 10% more resources, what you would do?” has been adequately replied in annex 2 of the Template, the question “if your resources stay the same but want to do more, what would you drop to undertake a new activity?” merits a serious consideration by the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, which, however is constantly on their agenda as part of the regular revision of their work programme and priorities, currently being implemented every two years, in an effort to strike the right balance between the huge needs for new actions vs. the limited resources made available to the secretariat in support of their work;

(d) noting that in the framework of the five year’s review of the UNECE reform process all the Committee’s subsidiary bodies have requested that their mandates be renewed for another five years, request EXCOM to renew all the Committee’s subsidiary bodies for another five years;

(e) accept the request of WP.5 to endorse the extension of the Group of Experts on Euro-Asian transport links for two more years with possibility of further extension in order to allow the group to continue its work in support to the development of the Euro-Asia transport connections and request the UNECE Executive Committee to approve this extension;

(f) ask its Chair and the Director of the Transport Division to present its proposals to EXCOM on the review of the ECE reform in the field of transport and proposals for renewed (five-year) mandates of the Committee's subsidiary bodies and for the continuation of the work of the Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) for two more years.

25. Reiterating the conclusion of the first meeting of the Chairs of the Committee's Working Parties and Administrative Committees, as well as the question of the EXCOM concerning the need for more synergies, higher efficiency and strengthened interaction among subsidiary bodies, and with the objective to reinforce the added value of the Committee's work, participants recommend the Committee to:

- agree with the responses to the questions asked by EXCOM in its Template relating to the possible ways of improving the work of the Committee, including possibilities for streamlining and synergizing activities; ways of improving efficiency and methods of work; possible reorientation of activities; optimization of the structure of the programme of work; areas for enhancement or abolishment; ways for improving communications and public outreach; and changing conditions of doing business.
