

---

---

**Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and  
Connectivity (TWG-STTC)**

21<sup>st</sup> Session  
7-8 September 2016  
Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

**Other business**

**(Item 7 of the Agenda)**

*Note by ECE/ESCAP*

**Background**

1. The United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) was launched in 1998 to strengthen intra-regional cooperation in Central Asia and its integration into the world economy. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) jointly provide overall support to the activities under the Programme.
2. The Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC) has been established in 1998 with the first session taking place the same year in Almaty. The PWG-TBC focuses on developing new, and extending existing, transport networks in the region, as well as implementing projects and programmes to support landlocked and transit developing countries in Central Asia.
3. The Governing Council of SPECA on its tenth session in November 2015 decided to change the PWG-TBC into the “Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity” (TWG-STTC) with new objectives added in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda adopted by the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit 2015 and the commitment to its implementation, including the achievement of the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs). The 10 session of SPECA Governing Council confirmed a strong potential of SPECA for supporting and facilitating the achievement of the SDGs. The SPECA framework, including its Governing Council, Economic Forums, and Working Groups can provide an important platform for supporting progress towards many of the SDGs through the exchange of best practice, capacity-building, joint development and implementation of regional projects and the sharing of experience on the use of new financial mechanisms and partnerships.

### **Expected work scope of the TWG**

4. Based on the SPECA Governing Council decision, it is expected the TWG on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity will serve as a platform for supporting the efforts of participating countries towards achieving the transport-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets through the exchange of best practices and experiences, consultation, relevant activities and implementation of projects in SPECA countries. Transport sector has direct influence on the following SDGs and targets:

a) **Goal 3.** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages (Road Safety)

Target 3.6. By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents

b) **Goal 7.** Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (Energy efficiency)

Target 7.3. By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency

c) **Goal 9.** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation (Sustainable infrastructure)

Target 9.1 Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and trans-border infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all

d) **Goal 11.** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (Sustainable (urban) transport for all)

Target 11.2. By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons

e) **Goal 12.** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns (Fuel subsidies)

Target 12.c Rationalize inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption by removing market distortions, in accordance with national circumstances, including by restructuring taxation and phasing out those harmful subsidies, where they exist, to reflect their environmental impacts, taking fully into account the specific needs and conditions of developing countries and minimizing the possible adverse impacts on their development in a manner that protects the poor and the affected communities

5. The TWG will also facilitate policy discussions on strategic issues on strengthening regional cooperation and integration through enhanced transport connectivity and collection and dissemination of transport statistics with special focus on implementation of sustainable development goals.

More specifically, the TWG will continue to:

- oversee the implementation of transport-related activities and initiatives at national and subregional level, including development of road and railway networks, dry ports as well as facilitate intermodal transport in SPECA countries;
- support the establishment and operation of national coordinating mechanisms for transport facilitation.
- Facilitate the implementation of ESCAP agreements in transport such as the intergovernmental agreements on Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway and Dry Ports.
- Assist in identification and elimination of major bottlenecks along international transport routes in SPECA region and beyond.
- Facilitate the development of the SPECA TWG special database on transport and border crossing activities for the SPECA countries as well as collection of transport statistics.
- Promote public-private partnerships in the SPECA region
- Work towards improving road safety to reduce road traffic fatalities and casualties in the SPECA region.

In relation to SDG's, the TWG will also:

- Support the efforts of the participating countries to implement 2030 development agenda by enhancing the sustainability of transport;

- Ensure more focus on those efforts which would result in strengthening regional cooperation aimed at achieving transport related SDGs;
- Serve as a forum for inland transport stakeholders to discuss strategic issues, exchange of experiences, lessons learned and good practice, as well as for national and subregional efforts in transport sector related to increasing sustainability of transport and achieving SDGs;
- Develop and implement transport projects, when possible, in line with relevant SDGs and targets to contribute to 2030 development agenda;

6. Furthermore, the TWG will explore the possibilities for preparation of analytical paper how regional transport cooperation within SPECA framework could contribute to SPECA countries in achievement of SDG's. The findings should be incorporated in SPECA TWG Programme of Work 2017-18 to be approved at 22nd session of TWG-STTC in 2017.

#### **Activities by ESCAP related to Sustainable Transport Development**

7. After the adoption of the SDGs, the issues of sustainability and inclusiveness in transport development received much priority attention. The secretariat continued to work with member States to develop and implement sustainable and inclusive national transport, urban transport and rural connectivity policies. Further, due to the increase in frequency of natural disasters and extreme weather events in the region, the issues and policies to develop disaster resilient and climate adaptive transport systems is also receiving more importance. The main activities held were sharing innovations in policies and successful interventions in the region through regional and subregional seminars and national workshops.

8. In this context, a Subregional Seminar on Sustainable and Inclusive Transport Development was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan on 17-18 September 2015. At the seminar senior transport officials and representative of cities from SPECA member countries<sup>1</sup> participated. In addition a Regional Seminar on Disaster Resilient and Climate Adaptive Transport for Sustainable Development was organized in Kathmandu, 17-18 November 2015 in conjunction with 9th Environmentally Sustainable Transport Forum. In this regional seminars international experts, senior transport officials and representatives of capital and secondary cities including

---

<sup>1</sup> Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan

from four SPECA countries<sup>2</sup> shared ideas and enhanced their knowledge and understandings of policies and experiences in building better, more sustainable and inclusive national, urban and rural transportation systems and services as well as policies to develop disaster resilient and climate adaptive transport systems. Thus representatives of SPECA countries greatly benefitted from participation in the regional and subregional seminars and exposed to sustainable and inclusive transport development policies and practices that can be useful in to making meaningful contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

### **Activities by UNECE related to Sustainable Transport Development**

9. The publication “Transport for Sustainable Development: the case of Inland Transport<sup>3</sup>”- with UNECE as the lead author – is the result of cooperation between the five Regional Commissions of the United Nations and key global stakeholders, in particular, the International Road Transport Union (IRU) and the International Union of Railways (UIC). The study examines issues, progress and challenges in global efforts to achieve a transition to sustainable mobility of freight and people using inland modes of transport. While transport is a precondition for social and economic interactions, unfortunately, it also has negative impacts, such as road crashes, air and noise pollution, and greenhouse gas emissions. With a wealth of good and best practices, the study showcases results in mitigating the negative impacts, and also identifies the main challenges and opportunities to accelerate the transition to sustainability. It promotes an in-depth and real-world understanding of the five defining dimensions of sustainable transport – accessibility, affordability, safety, security and environmental performance. One of the main policy recommendations of the study is that in order to achieve this transition, transport for sustainable development needs to be seen as a political and financial priority for development policies across income groups and geographical regions.

10. In the urban context, public transport and mobility are crucial to eradicating poverty and increasing economic growth (access to markets and jobs), improving education (access to schools), protecting child and maternal health (access to medical services), and enhancing environmental sustainability and traffic safety. The publication “Sustainable Public Transport

---

<sup>2</sup> Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=40662>

and Urban Mobility in UNECE capitals<sup>4</sup>” reviews the current situation and trends in urban passenger transport and urban freight distribution. Urban passenger and freight transport, while providing an essential service, also have negative impacts, leading to congestion, pollution and to traffic safety challenges, among others. Increasingly, passenger and freight movements are intertwined in a zero-sum game, having to utilize the same finite infrastructures and urban space to satisfy the ever-growing demand for mobility. The analysis looks, in particular, at the demand for urban mobility and its distribution between the different transport modes vis-à-vis the accessibility and comfort provided through urban public transport. It also takes stock of the growing popularity of non-motorized transport in urban areas.

11. The major over-arching goal of UNECE moving forward is to stay on course with the Sustainable Development Goals. Other than staying involved in the process of the finalization of the indicators for measuring the SDGs in 2016, UNECE scaled its efforts to align its activities with the global sustainable development agenda. Zooming in to specific activities of UNECE in 2016 some of the main activities included the following:

- The adoption of SDG’s raised awareness about the important challenges that climate change impacts and adaptation requirements present for international transport infrastructure. In 2015 UNECE Group of Experts on Climate Change Impact and adaptation for transport networks and nodes was established with the aim to:
- Identify and establish, if possible, inventories of transport networks in the ECE region which are vulnerable to climate change impacts, if possible in a geographic information system (GIS) environment;
- Use/develop models, methodologies, tools and good practices to address potential extreme hazards (e.g. high temperatures and floods) to selected inland transport infrastructure in the ECE region under different scenarios of climate change;
- Identify and analyze case studies on the potential economic, social, and environmental consequences of the climate change impacts and provide a cost/benefit analysis of the adaptation options.

---

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=41845>

- The ITU/UNECE Symposium on the Future Networked Car 2016 organized in cooperation with ITU, was held on 3 March 2016 within the 86th International Geneva Motor Show. The symposium brought together leading experts to discuss the latest developments in Intelligent Transport Systems and automated driving, focusing on the state of the art technologies that enable the integration of information technology in vehicles.
- The Security Discussion Forum on securing the global supply chain, jointly organized by the UNECE and Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), was focused on major security risks in the inland transport sector, such as cargo theft, cybercrime, safety of traffic and terrorism and the impact on supply chains. The event, held in Geneva on 17 June 2016, pointed out the need for a more effective and risk-based security concept for all modes of transport, including inland navigation, and the experts' panel called for a multi-stakeholder approach which will minimize cyber security risks to critical transport infrastructure.