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

Eighth session
Geneva, 14–15 January 2016

Report of the Group of Experts on Climate Change impacts and adaptation for transport networks and nodes on its eighth session*

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* The present document was not edited before being sent to the United Nations translation services.

I. Attendance

1. The Group of Experts (hereafter called the Group) on Climate Change impacts and adaptation for transport networks and nodes held its eighth session from 14 to 15 January 2016.
2. Representatives of the following United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) member States participated: Azerbaijan, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Uzbekistan.
3. A representative of Australia attended under Article 11 of the Terms of Reference of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).
4. Representatives of the following United Nations organizations and specialized agencies attended the meeting: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).
5. The following non-governmental organizations were represented: International Road Federation (IRF) and International Union of Railways (UIC).
6. Representatives of the following bodies attended the meeting at the invitation of the secretariat: Banedanmark, CMS Cameron McKenna LLP.

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.3/15

7. The Group adopted the agenda.

III. Climate Change and Transport Networks and Nodes: Presentations of initiatives at national and international levels (agenda item 2)

Documentation: Informal Document 1

8. The Group noted the secretariat's initiative to engage a consultant, Professor Andonis Velegrakis, to assist the Group.
9. The Group considered presentation made by the external consultant (Informal document No. 1) on the subject. The Group appreciated the work done on the review of the scientific background and existing literature contained in Informal document No. 1 and took note of the information contained therein and especially for:
 - (a) The review of the scientific background of climate change and its implications on the ECE region;
 - (b) The identification of the issues pertinent to climate change impacts on transport infrastructure in the ECE region;
 - (c) The review of the available literature on climate change projections and especially on floods, high temperatures, sea level rising and permafrost in the ECE region.
10. The Group was informed by its members about related initiatives at national and international levels.

(a) Mrs. Caroline Evans (Australia) presented the Australian perspective, the different initiatives on climate change adaptation and mitigation as well as other projects developed on environment and climate change;

(b) Mr. Piet de Wildt (Netherlands) presented the ClimaCor project which is a methodology for the assessment of the climate impacts on transport corridors;

(c) Mr. Piotr Czarnocki (Poland) presented the adaptation of transport sector to climate changes in Poland by illustrating the KLIMADA project, the Polish national strategy for adaptation to climate change 2020 and the guide to investment preparation respecting climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as resilience to natural disasters;

(d) Mr. André Leuxe (France) presented two case studies. One on the evaluation of costs to the community from the interruption of railways circulation in Morlaix, France and the analysis of a scenario on possible interruption of A8 highway in Viaduc, Var.

11. The Group appreciated the presentations made by the members of the Group regarding initiatives at the national and international levels on climate change impacts and adaptation for transport networks and nodes. Considering these initiatives as very useful for the future work of the Group, requested the secretariat and the consultant to include these initiatives in the final report of the Group as among the existing national/international case studies and possible best practices. The presentations can be found at the following link: http://www.unece.org/trans/main/wp5/wp5_ge3_08.html.

IV. Partners and expected contributions (agenda item 3)

12. The Group was informed by the secretariat on its efforts to explore collaboration with different UN bodies such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Trans-European Motorways (TEM), Trans-European Railways (TER) and Euro-Asian transport Links (EATL) projects.

13. The secretariat mentioned that letters will be prepared in order to be sent to UNFCCC and WMO secretariats requesting input in the Group's work especially on climate change projections. Furthermore the secretariat informed the Group that the TEM, TER and EATL projects have been informed on Group's program of work and agreed to collaborate in its implementation. The secretariat also mentioned that will request cooperation from the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) secretariat in Tehran in order to ensure input to Group's work from States of Central Asia. The Group appreciated the efforts of the secretariat to explore possible collaboration opportunities with different United Nations bodies and requested to continue its cooperation efforts with these organizations in order to ensure implementation of the Group's program of work. The Group also asked the secretariat to report on the results of its efforts at the next Group session.

14. The UNCTAD secretariat provided information on different initiatives that would eventually contribute to Group's program of work. The Group welcomed the information provided by UNCTAD secretariat and asked to report developments on these initiatives at its next session.

V. Preliminary discussion on the structure of the final report of the Group of Experts (agenda item 4)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.3/2016/1, ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.3/2016/2

15. The secretariat, with the help of the consultant prepared an outline of the contents of the final report for consideration by the Group (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.3/2016/1).

16. The Group following an exchange of views on the possible structure of its final report approved as amended the outline of the contents of the report. The amendments were the following:

Under 4.4 Case studies the following should be included:

4.4.1 Analysis of socio-economic and environmental impacts

4.4.1 Potential extreme hazards under different scenarios of climate change

17. The Group agreed that the outline of the contents should be further reviewed based on the progress of the work and data collection in order to ensure its optimal implementation. The Group also agreed that clear definitions of transport networks and climate change factors should exist based on its program of work. The secretariat provided the following information on these definitions based on Group's program of work:

(a) Transport networks are considered the road, rail and inland waterways networks in the ECE region – and of other States interested in the Group's work - of international importance and, whenever, needed because of connections with ports and intermodal transport centres of national importance;

(b) Nodes are considered the ports, airports and the freight villages / logistics centres / intermodal centres;

(c) Climate change factors are considered the precipitation/floods, winds, fog, high temperatures, low temperatures, low/high river flow, mean sea level, storm waves and surges.

18. Furthermore, the Group, noting the importance of gathering information, requested at its previous session from the secretariat to prepare a questionnaire in order to receive data and information by member States relevant to its program of work. The secretariat with the help of the external consultant prepared the draft questionnaire (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.3/2016/2) for Group's consideration.

19. The Group agreed that the questionnaire reflects its program of work however it is quite demanding and challenging and some experts might not be able to collect the relevant data on time. Mr. Alberto Compte (Spain) presented relevant data analysis in Spain pointing out the degree of difficulty of such a task.

20. The questionnaire was approved as amended by the experts and requested the secretariat to send it to States' focal points as soon as possible.

VI. Other business (agenda item 5)

21. There were no other items.

VII. Date of next session (agenda item 6)

22. The Group of Experts ninth session is tentatively scheduled to take place in Geneva on 11–12 April 2016.

VIII. Summary of main decisions (agenda item 7)

23. The Group adopted its main decisions of its eighth 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 its main decisions.
