



Economic Commission for Europe**Inland Transport Committee****Eighty-second session**

Geneva, 25–28 February 2020

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Environmental challenges to sustainable inland transport**Draft concept note of the high-level policy segment
“Environmental challenges to sustainable inland transport”****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

This document outlines the concept and main themes of the high-level policy segment organized around “Environmental challenges to sustainable inland transport”. This document also contains information on planned activities, side events and other social events. The Bureau of the Inland Transport Committee, at its June 2019 meeting, agreed that the themes of the panels of the first day of the eighty-second session of the Committee would focus on this topic. The High-level policy segment will conclude with the endorsement of the ITC Declaration “Enhancing sustainable inland transport solutions for global climate and environmental challenges: a united call for universal action”.

I. Policy Context**Background and general outlook**

1. Five years after the signing of the Paris Climate Agreement and the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations General Assembly, climate change and environmental challenges remain a global challenge whose negative impacts — from compromised infrastructures, to undermined access and connectivity, to road safety and beyond — can be felt in every region in the world. It is likely that disadvantaged and vulnerable populations including minorities, indigenous groups, women and populations economically reliant on agricultural and coastal products will continue to experience incommensurate consequences of insufficient action on this issue.

2. At the same time, inland transport contributes to, and is disrupted by, climate change caused in part by the sector’s significant carbon footprint. The process of making transport more environmentally friendly and energy efficient, therefore, can lead to significant reductions on the sector’s carbon emissions, thereby mitigating the more pernicious effects of climate change and reducing the likelihood of climate change-related transport disruptions.

3. The Inland Transport Committee (ITC) is uniquely situated to be able to contribute to solutions that would lead to the drastic reduction in emissions necessary to limit the average global increase in temperature to under 1.5°C. As a global regulator, solutions proposed at the conference stand to result in real, tangible outcomes.

II. High-level Policy Segment: Environmental challenges to sustainable inland transport

4. Building on recommendations by the Committee and Bureau debates, the general theme of the policy segment will be “Environmental challenges to sustainable inland transport”. This theme will provide an opportunity to reflect on the past accomplishments of the Committee as well as current performance and future trajectory, highlighting its value added and underlining its future potential.

5. The draft programme on Tuesday, 25 February 2020, includes:

- (a) Opening statements and launch of the publication on Climate Change Adaptation;
- (b) A keynote speech on the importance of addressing environmental challenges in transport and the role of the Committee in creating solutions;
- (c) Three thematic panel debates with up to 5 panellists each and followed by scheduled interventions from the floor;
- (d) The conference will conclude with the endorsement of the ITC Declaration.

A. Opening, launch of climate change publication and keynote speech

6. The traditional opening statements will be followed by the official launch of a ground-breaking publication on climate change adaptation. A keynote speech will follow on the vital need of finding and promoting efficient solutions to climate and environmental challenges to sustainable inland transport, while addressing issues that may arise when adapting transport systems to climate change. It will also place an emphasis on the strategic role of the Committee in providing a comprehensive cooperation platform to forge harmonized solutions and enhance international collaboration. Improving the environmental performance of transport, in addition to improving accessibility, efficiency and safety in inland transport systems are of paramount importance to meeting the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. ITC has demonstrated its long and successful track record of real, positive impacts when working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders from the public and private sectors. A strong commitment to required bold transformations of existing inland transport systems is needed to confront climate change and impact meaningfully the daily lives of people and their economic activities.

B. Panel debates

7. Three high-level panel debates will follow, with themes on critical policy and regulatory issues of direct relevance to the challenge of addressing environmental concerns and climate change more broadly in the work of ITC and its subsidiary bodies. The panel themes are:

- (a) Climate change: the role of sustainable inland transport in emissions reduction and adaptation;
- (b) What role for transport innovations in addressing effectively environmental and climate challenges?
- (c) International cooperation for climate and environment solutions and the role of the ITC as the United Nations Platform for Inland Transport.

8. Each panel debate will accommodate up to 5 high-level panellists.

9. Each debate will be moderated, and will last approximately 60 minutes, starting with short statements of 5–7 minutes by the panellists. The panellist’s statements will be followed by scheduled high-level interventions from the floor (up to three minutes each). Statements and interventions will be followed by an open discussion.

1. Panel I: Climate change: the role of sustainable inland transport in emissions reduction and adaptation

10. This panel will address the realities of climate change and extreme weather, and the strain that these changes put on the integrity and safety of all inland transport systems under the purview of this Committee: rail, road, water and intermodal transport. For this existential threat to humanity, ITC must rise to the challenge on two related fronts. Firstly, this body has a unique regulatory role to play in Member State efforts worldwide to reduce emissions. Secondly, it must play a leading role in supporting its members to adapt all systems of inland transport to changes in the climate that are already being felt.

11. According to the International Energy Agency’s (IEA) CO₂ Emissions Statistics, transport and electricity/heat generation account for two-thirds of total CO₂ emissions and were equally responsible of almost the entire global growth in emissions since 2010. Twenty-eight per cent of all energy-related greenhouse gas emissions are estimated to come from transport, with road transport as the main contributor. If no reduction is made, emissions will double by 2050. Yet, to limit average global temperatures to a 1.5°C increase above pre-industrial levels, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reported in 2018 that low-emission final energy in the transport sector would need to comprise a 35–65 per cent share in 2050, compared to just 5 per cent in 2020. ITC, in its role as a global regulator, supports and develops conventions and agreements that catalyse innovative solutions to this problem. But is that enough?

12. ITC must also be a leader in facilitating transport adaptation. In its 2019 special report *Climate Change and Land*, IPCC noted the disruptive effect of extreme weather events on food supply chain infrastructure. Flooding, earthquakes, road damage due to heatwaves and other weather events can block important transit routes and lead to personal and economic insecurity. These problems must be anticipated and planned for in the activities and outputs of ITC. Action of this type is particularly important for developing countries that face the twin problems of bearing the brunt of climate change in addition to having transport systems that may already be maladapted to weather extremes.

13. This panel will explore the topic of climate change and the necessity of reducing emissions in the transport sector. It will also discuss the unique problems that climate change causes for transport systems and will debate adaptations that are necessary to confront this global issue. What are the best practices of reducing emissions in the transport sector? How can ITC promote or develop the use of alternative fuels or modes of transport? What adaptations are necessary to deal with transport disruptions due to extreme weather events and how can those responses be sensitive to differences in geography, resources and the needs of the people and places impacted?

2. Panel II: What role for transport innovations in addressing effectively environmental and climate challenges?

14. Building on the first panel, the second will focus on the innovations needed to address efficiently environmental and climate challenges. It will explore policy responses to technological changes and the conditions for creating an environment open to innovations, as well as how ITC can provide international regulatory support. Relevant topics include: moving faster towards greener forms of transport not only on roads, but also in other inland modes; increased use of automated driving and autonomous vehicles and their impact on road safety; intelligent transport systems and the growing use of information and communication technologies; and the gains and challenges of technological innovations.

15. Current World Health Organization (WHO) estimates of the health effects of ambient air pollution include an estimated 4.2 million premature deaths globally, mainly from heart disease, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lung cancer, and acute respiratory infections in children. Available evidence on air pollution emission sources suggests that

several sectors should be targeted for abatement policies, including motorized road transport. Furthermore, noise emission, including from motorized road transport, is increasingly seen as a health hazard. Excessive noise seriously harms human health.

16. Despite the fact that emissions of air pollutants from transport have generally declined over the past two decades, due to significantly more stringent vehicle regulations that resulted from the work of Committee and its subsidiary bodies, the problem persists and more needs to be done.

17. The 2030 Agenda's urgent call for action on air pollution, comes as no surprise. The list of targets with relevance to ambient air pollution includes:

- SDG target 3.9, which calls for a substantial reduction in deaths and illnesses from air pollution.
- SDG target 11.2, which aims to provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all
- SDG target 11.6, which aims to reduce the environmental impact of cities by improving air quality

18. The work of ITC fosters innovation in two distinct ways. Firstly, ITC develops governance mechanisms and legally-binding international agreements that harmonize diverse systems and create horizontal linkages, leading to more efficient and environmentally-friendly transport systems. Secondly, the Committee encourages the development and uptake of new technologies that are more environmentally friendly. These two processes complement and reinforce each other to create a more environmentally sustainable transport sector.

19. Thus, ITC can play a key role in negotiating more stringent standards for motorized transport or promoting the development of cleaner energy sources altogether.

20. ITC has a long track record of success in acting as a dynamic leader and has recognized the impending climate crisis in the ITC strategy. The global regulatory role of the Committee would position it as a unique facilitator to drive progress on the transport transition on the scale needed to combat the climate and environment crises. This panel should interrogate how the Committee can best facilitate innovation. How can it identify best practices? Which advances should be promoted? How can the Committee help developing countries leapfrog over less efficient technologies?

3. Panel III: International cooperation for climate and environment solutions and the role of the ITC as the United Nations Platform for Inland Transport

21. **No United Nations Member State can deliver on the dual climate-environment crisis alone.** This final panel will conclude the high-level policy segment by placing an emphasis on the vital need for enhanced international cooperation in search of effective climate and environment solutions. This panel debate will offer different perspectives and vision by top policymakers around the world on the role of the international institutional and regulatory frameworks in improving the national and international governance of inland transport, while contributing to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda.

22. Important policy questions thus need to be tackled, especially considering the need to deliver on commitments to reduce global emissions from the transport sector in line with the Paris Agreement (COP-21). The Sustainable Development Goal 3 on health, Goal 7 on energy, Goal 11 on sustainable cities and Goal 13 on climate change are direct manifestations of the worldwide resolve to tackle this problem. However, implementation is not yet at an adequate level to meet global and intergenerational hopes and aspirations.

23. Governance solutions are of strategic importance to realizing the Goals and various international bodies and initiatives have already taken up ambitious frameworks in the hope of mitigating anthropogenic climate change. Most recently, at the United Nations Climate Summit in 2019, 65 countries and the European Union committed to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. The European Union has adopted the "Transport 2050" strategy that pledges fossil fuel free transport.

24. Since its creation in 1947, the Inland Transport Committee has provided a framework for intergovernmental cooperation and concerted action in order to facilitate international transport while improving its sustainability and environmental performance. Nowhere are the main results of this work reflected better than in the 59 United Nations transport agreements and conventions under the purview of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies which provide the international policy, legal and technical platform for the development of international road, rail, inland waterway and combined transport. The work of the Conventions is complemented by policy tools such as ForFITS (For Future Inland Transport Systems) that is capable of assisting countries in making informed choices between available Transport policy options and measures, on the basis of their impact on CO₂ emissions reductions.

25. At the eighty-first session of ITC in 2019, the Committee adopted its strategy until 2030, a strategy for sustainable inland transport and mobility, which expanded the scope of work of ITC and established it as the United Nations platform for inland transport, performing functions comparable to International Maritime Organization (IMO) or International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). This strategy, organized in four pillars, is meant to harmonize inland transport in order to advance sustainable transport and mobility, and represents a real opportunity to impact transport systems worldwide.

26. The goal of this panel debate is to offer different perspectives and vision by top policymakers around the world on the role of the international institutional and regulatory frameworks in improving the national and international governance of inland transport, while contributing to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda, and the implementation of the Paris Agreement. It will offer a space to interrogate the role of ITC as the UN platform to cooperate on issues of climate change and environment in inland transport. How can the Committee facilitate the accession to legal instruments that promote sustainability? How can the Committee support the development of regulations that can keep pace with technical innovations or with new information? How can ITC be sensitive to the needs of developing countries or of regions that are affected differently by climate change?

C. Endorsement of the ITC Declaration “Enhancing sustainable inland transport solutions for global climate and environmental challenges: a united call for universal action”

27. At the end of the meeting, Ministers and Heads of delegations of Contracting Parties will be invited to express their support for the ITC Declaration: “Enhancing sustainable inland transport solutions for global climate and environmental challenges: a united call for universal action”. The Declaration articulates the united call for universal action against the climate and environmental emergencies in terms relevant to the Committee’s mandates. It does so by recognizing the Committee’s relevance as a main avenue of the international efforts to find solutions for these challenges and by calling upon world transport leaders to embrace and even intensify their support for the work of the Committee as the UN Platform for Inland Transport, to the benefit of the global community. Most importantly, the declaration calls upon the conveners of transport-related global intergovernmental initiatives, starting with the second Global Conference on Sustainable Transport, to take a fundamentally different approach, by recognizing the critical need for a truly holistic approach involving *all* modes of inland transport, through the Inland Transport Committee.

III. Scheduled high-level side-events

A. ECE side event on used cars

28. The purpose of the side event is to explore advantages and challenges to create access to safer and cleaner used vehicles that contribute to the sustainable development of countries and cities around the world. The main benefits of safer, cleaner and more energy efficient used vehicles are improved road safety, reduced emissions (climate and air quality), improved fuel consumption, and costs savings (healthcare, rescue services, vehicle maintenance, fuel consumption, etc.). The side event will contribute to a better understanding

of the potential role of used vehicles in meeting national, regional and global goals, including those stemming from the Sustainable Development Goals, the Decade of Action for Road Safety, the Global Framework Plan of Action for Road Safety and the Paris Climate Agreement.

B. Road Safety Post-Stockholm side event (4.30–6 p.m., 25 February 2020)

29. The purpose of the side event will be to take stock of the results of the third Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety, and rally support of ITC constituents in the efforts to meet the global aspirations for sustainably tackling the road safety crisis globally. The side event will showcase, among others: the special role and potential of the United Nations Road Safety Fund; the mobilizing role United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety; and the international regulatory role of the Inland Transport Committee in enhancing national road safety systems. The event will be immediately followed by a cocktail/reception.

Annex I

Draft weekly programme (24–28 February 2020)

Monday 24 February	3–6 p.m.	ITC Bureau meeting - Room IX	Side event 1: Used Cars side event - Room XIX
Tuesday 25 February	10 a.m.–1 p.m.	ITC High-level Policy segment Room XIX	
	1–3 p.m.	ITC demos	Lunch break
	3–4.30 p.m.	ITC High-level Policy segment Room XIX (Cont'd)	
	4.30–6 p.m.	ITC Annual Session - Restricted session* Room XIX (*Government representatives only)	Side event 2: Road Safety Post-Stockholm - Room XXIV
	6–8 p.m.	Cocktail/Reception (Palais des Nations)	
Wednesday 26 February	10 a.m.–1 p.m.	ITC Annual Session Regular session Room XIX	
	1–3 p.m.	Break	
	3–6 p.m.	ITC Annual Session Regular session (Cont'd) Room XIX	
Thursday 27 February	10 a.m.–1 p.m.	ITC Annual Session Regular session (Cont'd) Room XIX	
	1–3 p.m.	Break	
	3–6 p.m.	ITC Annual Session Regular session (Cont'd) Room XIX	
Friday 28 February	10 a.m.–1 p.m.	ITC Annual Session Regular session (Cont'd) Room XIX	
	1–3 p.m.	Break	
	3–6 p.m.	ITC Bureau meeting - Room IV	

Annex II

Draft Programme

High-level policy segment

“Environmental challenges to sustainable inland transport”

25 February 2020, 10 a.m. – 4.30 p.m., Salle XIX

Palais des Nations, Geneva

10–10.20 a.m.	Opening statements, welcome speeches and official launch of climate change publication
10.20–10.35 a.m.	Keynote speech
10.35–11.30 a.m.	Panel I: Climate change: the role of sustainable inland transport in emissions reduction and adaptation <i>Discussion and scheduled interventions (3' each max)</i>
11.30 a.m.–12 p.m.	<i>Coffee Break</i>
12–1 p.m.	Panel II: What role for transport innovations in addressing effectively environmental and climate challenges? <i>Discussion and scheduled interventions (3' each max)</i>
1–3 p.m.	<i>Lunch break and side events/demos</i>
3–4 p.m.	Panel III: International cooperation for climate and environment solutions and the role of ITC as the United Nations Platform for Inland Transport <i>Discussion and scheduled interventions (3' each max)</i>
4–4.15 p.m.	Announcement of the ITC declaration and closing statements
4.30–6 p.m.	<i>Side event Road Safety post–Stockholm: the next decade</i> [Salle XXIV - <u>Note change of venue</u>]
6–8 p.m.	Reception to mark the end of the Decade of Action for Road Safety and future action