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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Inland Transport Committee

#### Working Party on Transport Statistics

##### Seventy-first session

Geneva, 17–19 June 2020

Item 10 of the provisional agenda

##### Implementation of the ITC strategy to 2030 and the Programme of work for 2020–2021

## Implementation of the Inland Transport Committee Strategy

### Note by the secretariat

#### I. Mandate

1. The Inland Transport Committee (ITC), at its eighty-first session in February 2019 adopted its new strategy to 2030. Following this adoption, the ITC mandated its subsidiary bodies to review their work in order to align their activities to the new strategy. This document sets out the current activities of the Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6), in what ways its activities are already enabling the strategy, and how they will be modified over the coming years to reflect the requirements of the new strategy. This document should be read in conjunction with the draft programme of work for the Working Party, document ECE/TRANS/WP.6/2020/9.

#### II. Current activities of WP.6

2. The Working Party on Transport Statistics has an annual meeting and ad-hoc workshops on specific statistical themes, often for the purposes of capacity building. The main objectives of the Working Party, as set out in its Terms of Reference (ECE/TRANS/WP.6/161, para. 66) are (among other things): to develop common methodologies and terminology for the harmonization of land transport statistics, improving comparability; to collect, compile and disseminate those statistics; to provide a forum for the exchange of best practices on land transport statistics; and to foster cooperation and collaboration with the European Commission, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and other United Nations regional commissions and organizations or bodies of the United Nations system. In recent years, a workshop has been held at the start of the meeting to discuss statistical methods, data collection and the importance of harmonization of statistics within the context of different transport themes. Recent examples include a workshop on data quality in inland waterway statistics (2018) and a workshop on urban public transport statistics (2019).

3. The Working Party also contributes to the development of indicators for monitoring the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals related to transport. It has a well-established data collection mechanism that feeds into the monitoring of goals 3, 9 and

11. This is recognised with UNECE being a partner agency for four SDG indicators: 3.6.1 on road traffic fatalities; 9.1.1 on rural transport access; 9.1.2 on passenger and freight volumes; and 11.2.1 on urban public transport access.

4. In addition, the Working Party currently addresses the following topics in its deliberations and discussions on transport statistics:

- Traffic censuses in the ECE region
- Dissemination of transport statistics
- Capacity building
- responding to the needs of other Working Parties under the ITC.

5. This is supplemented by regular updates from international institutions and organizations on their activities of relevance to transport statistics.

### **III. Key elements of the ITC Strategy**

6. The 2017 Ministerial Resolution of the ITC contains the policy directions for the future work of the ITC, as articulated in Decision 1, in principle “enabling the Committee to efficiently address the needs of global inland transport, with special attention to global regulatory governance through the UN transport Conventions and other means, (...) while leaving the organizational structure of the ECE secretariat, as well as the programme-budgeting function and oversight unchanged”. Based on this, the ECE reform review and United Nations General Assembly Resolutions, the vision for ITC is that it is “...the UN platform for inland transport to help efficiently address global and regional needs in inland transport.”

7. To achieve this, it should perform the following key functions:

- Leading change in inland transport
- Developing and administering transport legal instruments
- Increasing accessions and equitable participation, including by non-ECE Member States.

8. The mission for ITC is that it contributes to sustainable inland transport and mobility for achieving the sustainable development goals in the ECE and United Nations member States through policy dialogue, harmonizing regulatory frameworks, as appropriate, promoting new technologies, assisting in enhancing connectivity and supporting the implementation of legal instruments.

9. The objectives of the ITC are:

(a) Strategic: Increased governance – the ITC is truly the United Nations platform with equal participation of all contracting parties to United Nations legal instruments under its purview to lead the future development of inland transport; United Nations transport conventions under its purview are universally accepted and implemented, open for accession/ratification by all United Nations Member States if feasible, and inclusive of regional good practices; ITC keeps pace with technological developments in a timely manner; the work of the ITC enhances regional and inter-regional connectivity;

(b) Horizontal: Increased support to the implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals, in particular through: (a) improved traffic safety and urban mobility (Goals 3 and 11); (b) reduced pollutants and GHG emissions (Goals 3 and 13); (c) improved industry innovation and infrastructure efficiency and connectivity (Goal 9); (d) Affordable and clean energy (Goal 7); (e) decent work and economic growth (Goal 8); (f) gender equality (Goal 5) and (g) contributions to global monitoring of progress towards sustainable transport as much as feasible (all relevant Goals).

10. To achieve these objectives, the following actions need to be taken:

(a) Enhance the role of ITC as the United Nations Platform for inland transport conventions;

(b) Enhance the role of ITC as the United Nations Platform for supporting new technologies and innovations in inland transport;

(c) Enhance the role of ITC as the United Nations Platform for regional, interregional and global inland transport policy dialogue;

(d) Enhance the role of ITC as the United Nations Platform for promoting sustainable regional and interregional inland transport connectivity and mobility.

11. When the strategy was being considered, the Chair of WP.6 provided significant input into how to include statistics activities into the overall strategy. In particular, the chair insisted that accurate, comparable and detailed statistics would be necessary in order to monitor progress towards the objectives of the strategy, and indeed that statistics are essential for any evidence-based policies with regards to new inland transport conventions, supporting new technologies and innovations in inland transport, inland transport policy dialogue, and regional and interregional inland transport connectivity and mobility. Based on these comments, statistics activities were therefore fully included in the strategy as a critical supporting activity, that are required for the necessary actions to be realised. Not least, this recognises the necessity of transport statistics as a tool to measure progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

#### **IV. Evolving the activities of WP.6 to meet these requirements**

12. It is important to note that the activities of WP.6 are already in line with the ITC strategy and support the realisation of its objectives; reliable, timely and comparable official statistics are a prerequisite for leading change in inland transport, as well as providing an evidence base for the efficacy of relevant transport legal instruments. The Working Party develops data gathering, validation and dissemination processes to produce relevant statistics that form the basis for accurately addressing global and regional challenges in inland transport and for monitoring the progress towards sustainable transport. Nevertheless, the work can evolve further to meet the updated requirements of the Strategy and the needs of all U.N. Member States as well as the requirements relating to achieving the SDGs.

##### **Enhancing the role of ITC as the UN platform for inland transport conventions.**

13. It is proposed that this is done for transport statistics by:

- Continuing to collect and compile statistics that highlight the impact of existing legal instruments on, for example, transport safety, international connectivity, accessibility and efficiency. For example, the E-Road and E-Rail censuses track traffic volumes on the international road and rail networks as defined by the European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR) and the European Agreement on Main International Railways Lines (AGC) respectively, which allows an understanding of how internationally-important transport infrastructure is being used and where it may require expansion.
- Providing data and statistics based on definitions agreed in conventions to strengthen the role and relevance of the conventions to Contracting Parties.

##### **Enhancing the role of ITC as the UN platform for supporting new technologies and innovations in inland transport.**

14. It is proposed that this is done for transport statistics by:

- Continuing the work of developing methodologies and terminology for transport statistics; for example, by periodically refining and expanding upon the Glossary for Transport Statistics.
- Further developing the UNECE Transport Statistics Database to ensure user-friendly access to accurate and timely transport statistics.

- Modernising and improving over time the web common questionnaire system that collects transport statistics in cooperation with the International Transport Forum and Eurostat, minimising the reporting burden on member States.
- Continuing to improve data disseminated that track changes in technology, for example by quantifying the number of electric vehicles.

**Enhancing the role of ITC as the UN platform for regional, interregional and global inland transport policy dialogue.**

15. It is proposed that this is done for transport statistics by:

- Continued focus on harmonizing transport statistics and improving their international comparability.
- Emphasising the role of accurate, timely and reliable data in evidence-based decision making.
- Exploring interlinkages between the transport-related Sustainable Development Goal indicators and other areas of sustainable development, for example interactions between transport and environment, energy, health, gender etc.
- Moving towards becoming a central hub for transport statistics in the region and more globally, enhancing the role of the Working Party as a trusted source of transport statistics and guidance on addressing statistical challenges. This can be achieved by solidifying its role in coordinating transport statistical activities of international organizations. Specifically, inviting other regional commissions to the Working Party session, and building upon relations with e.g. the World Health Organization with regards to tracking road safety, and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) with regards to container transport statistics.

**Enhancing the role of ITC as the UN platform for promoting sustainable regional and interregional inland transport connectivity and mobility.**

16. It is proposed that this is done for transport statistics by:

- Actively participating in the development and maintenance of the Sustainable Development Goal indicator framework related to transport, in particular by improving methodological guidance to countries and sharing country practices.
- Increasing awareness of the transport-related Sustainable Development Goal indicators.
- Continuing to facilitate country collaboration and to provide capacity building and technical assistance on how to monitor the progress towards sustainable transport.
- Continuing to provide a platform for sharing best practices and experiences in the area of transport statistics.
- Increasing the consideration of how transport statistics can measure sustainability issues, relating to safety, environmental, accessibility and efficiency questions. This can be achieved through further considering how transport data can be used to monitor the Sustainable Development Goals and exploring the interlinkages between the transport-related indicators and other Goals (e.g. good health and well-being, gender equality, decent work and climate action).

In addition to this this, other activities as per the current terms of reference and agenda should continue as important to the achieving the goals of producing accurate statistics to support evidence-based transport decisions.

## V. Next steps for the Working Party

17. The Working Party may wish to consider the actions set out in this document to better align the work of WP.6 to the ITC strategy. Based on the decisions taken at the seventy-first session of the Working Party, the Secretariat will prepare an updated terms of reference for

the working party to be presented to member States at the seventy-second session for adoption.

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