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**GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS
(GIS) IN TRANSPORT STATISTICS**

Preparations for a Workshop on GIS in Urban Transport and Land Use Planning

(Spring 2001, Tunis)

Note by the secretariat

WORKSHOP CONCEPT

1. The UN/ECE Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6) devoted its fiftieth anniversary session to the theme of Indicators for Sustainable Transport (17-19 November 1999). In this connection, the agenda of the session embraced the concept that all transport statistics are in effect environment statistics, and as such could be used as indicators for monitoring, measuring and reporting on the sustainability of transport.
2. One tool for developing and analysing indicators for sustainable transport is GIS: an important technology with potential for multi-layered and intersectoral spatial analysis. For example, GIS can be used to analyse the correlation between emissions and congestion in road transport, pollution and sensitive areas, population and economic development, etc. Moreover, the idea of promoting GIS in developing countries as an important tool for technology transfer is gaining ground, especially with the initiation of the UN Geographic Information Working Group (UNGIWG) and the increasingly attractive notion for developing countries to "Think Spatially".

3. The use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in Transport Statistics in general, and the potential for using GIS in the area of sustainable transport indicators in particular, was explored for the first time in a Workshop on GIS in Transport, held 15-16 November 1999 in Geneva. The objective of this first Workshop on GIS in Transport was to further explore the use of GIS technology for transport planning and road management, and to have an exchange of experiences among member countries and experts in the field. The Report of the Workshop on GIS should be available during the Working Party as TRANS/WP.6/2000/1.

4. Also at the fiftieth anniversary session, Governments asked the secretariat to examine the possibility of organizing a similar Workshop in 2001, in an effort to share experiences that could be useful in the area of GIS in Transport Infrastructure Development in Africa, possibly in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and UNCTAD (TRANS/WP.6/137, para. 31).

5. Since that time, further efforts to develop this Workshop concept pointed to the usefulness of possible cooperation also with the Work Session on GIS (under the Conference of European Statisticians), and the recently established Geographic Information Working Group (GIWG) through United Nations Headquarters. Participation could also include representatives from urban authorities, including possibly the Institute of Territorial Studies in Barcelona and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, as well as from the private sector, such as ESRI (GIS software producer).

6. In a related item considered at the fiftieth anniversary session of WP.6, Governments asked the ECE secretariat to convene a Task Force Meeting on Sustainable Urban Transport Indicators. The aim of the Task Force meeting was to harmonize a set of basic indicators on sustainable urban transport, as well as to examine related definitions in this field. The Task Force meeting was held from 28-29 March 2000, hosted by the Institute of Territorial Studies (IET) in Barcelona, Spain. The Report of the Task Force meeting is contained in TRANS/WP.6/2000/4. This was in line with the follow-up to the Vienna Conference on Transport and Environment for which WP.6 is a lead actor in the field of indicators and statistics and gave further impetus to the work on urban transport within the Transport Division.

PRELIMINARY OFFER BY URBAN AUTHORITY OF GREATER TUNIS TO HOST WORKSHOP

7. Following contacts between the ECE secretariat and the Statistical Division of Headquarters, responsible for establishing the secretariat of the new GIWG, the Urban Authority of Greater Tunis offered to host such a Workshop in the spring of 2001 in Tunis. The topic of the Workshop was tentatively proposed to be "The Use of GIS for Urban Transport and Land Use Planning". This would follow one of the policy objectives identified in Barcelona, namely the importance of integrating Land Use and Urban Transport Planning (TRANS/WP.6/2000/4, annex 2). In addition, this topic would be in line with a new project initiated by the ECE's Environment and Human Settlements Division on Urban Transport Patterns and Land Use Planning: Measures to Assist

Consumer Choices, for which a Steering Group meeting is scheduled for February 2001 in Lyon (CEP Bureau, 29 May 2000).

8. Given the importance of considering Urban Transport and Land Use Planning in a concerted fashion, and the potential use of GIS in both of these fields, Governments are asked to consider the possibility of developing further this Workshop concept at its present session, including possible agenda items, speakers, participation, languages, methods of work (e.g., break-out groups, etc.), and expected outcome.
