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Item 3(c) of the provisional agenda

Update on Special Procedures during COVID-19 period: decisions related to the extension of Special Procedures during COVID-19 period

Special Procedures during COVID-19 period for subsidiary bodies of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

Background

1. As of end September 2020, the scheduling of meetings of the official calendar is still impaired by mitigating measures to the COVID-19 pandemic and significantly reduced availability of conference servicing capacity at the United Nations Office at Geneva. Currently, only select meetings of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) can be held with full interpretation and under special arrangements that are being reviewed periodically, as host country guidance is evolving.
2. To ensure business continuity, and also taking into account a potential resumption/tightening of COVID-mitigation measures, the Bureau of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards has decided to approve the below Special Procedures during the COVID-19 period for its subsidiary bodies. This would permit the membership to retain the option of taking business-critical decisions, as needed. It is understood that the special procedures would not be used if formal meetings can be held.
3. The Executive Committee is invited to approve the below decisions.

Draft Decision

4. Further to the Special Procedures during the COVID-19 period adopted by the Executive Committee on 6 April 2020, the Executive Committee:

(a) Takes note that the Bureau of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards has decided to approve, where Chairs of its subsidiary bodies deem it necessary, the convening of informal consultations of the Steering Committee's subsidiary bodies during the period where the Special Procedures apply, to allow them to discuss matters of crucial importance for the continuity of their work under the exceptional circumstances triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic;

(b) Authorizes the Chairs of the relevant subsidiary bodies to circulate recommendations to the members of those subsidiary bodies on business-critical issues resulting from these informal consultations, through the Permanent Missions in Geneva,

under a silence procedure of at least 72 hours and in accordance with Rule 44 of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of ECE as contained in E/ECE/778/Rev.5;

(c) Notes that, if the silence is not broken, the recommendations shall be considered adopted and will be submitted to the 6th session of the Steering Committee for consideration, as appropriate.
