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Economic Commission for Europe

Executive Committee

111th meeting

Geneva, 5 October 2020

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

Extension of Special Procedures during COVID-19 period

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 secretariat proposes to extend the Special Procedures during the COVID-19 period. 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.

Draft Decision

The Executive Committee:

3. Authorizes the Chair of the Commission to continue using the Special Procedures during the COVID-19 period, initially adopted on 6 April 2020, for taking decisions of the Executive Committee until 31 December 2020;

4. Extends the Special Procedures approved for the Inland Transport Committee and the Committee on Sustainable Energy, adopted on 29 May 2020, until 31 December 2020;

5. Requests the Secretariat to continue exploring possible solutions to the issue of interpretation in remote meetings in accordance with Rules of procedure 18 and 19, with a view of proposing solutions to the membership as soon as possible;

6. Underlines that these arrangements are exceptional and time-limited and requests the Secretariat to report back to EXCOM on their implementation throughout the COVID-19 situation.
