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Item 6 (b) of the provisional agenda

Regulatory Cooperation: Sectoral projects

Progress report on the sectoral initiative on the safety of pipelines

Note by the secretariat*

Summary

The Working Party repeatedly expressed support for an initiative to foster increased regulatory cooperation in the sector of pipeline safety, to improve the management of risks in this sector. A Sectoral Initiative was formally established in 2009 and aims at developing a proposal for Common Regulatory Objectives on Pipeline Safety, based on the UNECE International Model for Technical Harmonization, as contained in Recommendation L (ECE/TRADE/378). However, as no Convenor could be designated since the last annual session, the Sectoral Initiative has neither met nor has it produced any output during the current year.

This document is submitted to the Working Party for consideration and discussion.

* At The Working Party at its eighteenth session requested that the secretariat provide an update each year on the work of all the sectoral initiatives (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2008/18, para.63). Accordingly, the present report contains concise information on the status of the proposed initiative, and describes the main activities that have been completed or are under way.

I. Project objective and key deliverables

1. Accidents on international pipelines endanger human lives and the environment, cause considerable losses and contribute to building general public hostility towards pipelines.
2. At its sixteenth and seventeenth sessions, the Working Party expressed support for an initiative to foster increased regulatory cooperation in the sector of pipeline safety. At its eighteenth session, the Working Party mandated the informal working group of delegates who had expressed interest in this initiative to document regulatory practices on the national markets for this sector.
3. A questionnaire was sent to regulatory authorities in 30 countries: replies were received from 5: i.e. Belarus, Brazil, Canada, Kazakhstan and Turkey. The compiled answers were presented at the annual session in 2009 (ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2009/7, annex II).
4. The terms of reference of the Initiative were endorsed by the Working Party at its annual session in 2009 (see ECE/TRADE/C/WP.6/2009/19, para. 46 and annex I). The Sectoral Initiative on the Safety of Pipelines now intends to develop a proposal for Common Regulatory Objectives (CROs) on Pipeline Safety. The CROs will incorporate the principal elements defined in the UNECE International Model for Technical Harmonization, as contained in Recommendation L (ECE/TRADE/378).

II. Current status of project key deliverables

5. The Sectoral Initiative needs to formally select a coordinator, and a team of experts, to draw up the draft CROs.

III. Project meetings and/or conference calls held in 2010

6. The initiative did not hold any meetings in 2010.

IV. Progress in 2010 and deliverables for the annual session

7. There are no deliverables this year.

V. Responsibility for the continuation of the work

8. The Sectoral Initiative should select a Convenor for the continuation of this Initiative.

VI. Role of the secretariat

9. The secretariat is prepared to continue assisting the sectoral initiative in identifying contacts in national administrations, and more generally in the development of the CROs.
