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Technical assistance to countries with transition economies

2013 Technical Assistance activities in the field of Transport

Note by the secretariat

1. At the start of the 2012–2013 biennium, a number of missions had already been planned, in conformity with the mandates given by UNECE Member countries, either by the Inland Transport Committee or even at other levels of the United Nations.

2. Technical cooperation activities in the area of transport are mainly aimed at strengthening the capacity of countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia, in particular landlocked countries, to implement relevant UN legal instruments, norms and standards in transport. In addition, in response to increased demand by Member states, the UNECE Transport sub-programme selectively identified strategic areas that deserve special attention (see Programme of Work of UNECE Transport Subprogram for 2012–2013 [ECE/TRANS/2012/9]), instead of trying to address comprehensively all the tasks in each biennium with the same emphasis and depth. The four issues of strategic importance in the current biennium are:

- Road traffic safety;
- Sustainable transport development;
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation;
- Intelligent Transport Systems.

Therefore, capacity building activities and technical assistance were also correlated with these and should contribute to their implementation.

3. In this regard, one of the biggest technical assistance programmes under implementation is linked to the **ForFITS project** – funded from the 7th tranche of UNDA. The main objective of this technical assistance, which should be completed by the end of 2013, is to enhance international cooperation and planning towards sustainable transport policies. Its achievement is expected to result from capacity building initiatives organized for policy makers and training activities for technical experts, leveraging on the

development of a modelling tool capable to assist users in the selection of the most appropriate and effective measures to reduce CO2 emissions in the inland transport sector (including road, rail and waterways). Since this modelling tool is meant to foster sustainable transport policies For Future Inland Transport Systems, the project is named ForFITS.

4. The UNDA global project for **facilitating transit and border crossing for goods transport** through customs to customs information exchange, also lead by UNECE, slowly started in 2012, but should be completed by the end of 2014. The objective of the project is to further facilitate legitimate trade and transport from and to developing countries and countries with economies in transition, in particular landlocked countries. Through an extended use of international standards, and using the latest information and communication technologies, cooperation between Customs authorities and C2C electronic information exchange is expected to increase, while collection of duties and taxes by Customs is expected to be further secured.

5. As far as **transit and border crossing facilitation** are concerned, UNECE Transport division has been involved in the activities developed under OSCE Border Staff Management College in Dushanbe (Tajikistan) in October 2012 and February 2013. A regional TIR Seminar was held in Yerevan (Armenia) in October 2012 and TIR staff actively participated in the V International theoretical and practical Conference on e-Governments Customs in Gabala (Azerbaijan) and in the WCO IT Conference and Exhibition “Effective Solutions for Coordinated Border Management” in Dubai (United Arab Emirates) in May 2013. Cooperation is also being developed with BSEC on the best practices at border crossings and in a pilot project.

6. Technical Assistance also comprises **TEM and TER infrastructure projects** and **SPECA PWG-TBC activities**, which constitute more or less a permanent area of capacity building activities, carried out by the Transport division and supported over years by the participating Member countries at the Inland Transport Committee. To some extent SPECA PWG-TBC may be considered as an effective tool to focus attention of Central Asian countries on topics of concern for the whole region, not only on infrastructure projects and border crossing facilitation but also on particular subjects such as road safety, dangerous goods transport, or transport statistics.

7. The workshop on **transport Statistics** Web Common Questionnaire held in November 2012 in Kiev (Ukraine), gathered together statisticians from Georgia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Ukraine. It was an opportunity to test the interface of the Web CoQ translated into Russian language. The methodology of data collection on road safety was also explained to the participants. The major role of statistics in road safety policies was underlined and illustrated with data from EECCA countries. The Triennial Programme of workshops offered concrete examples of synergies between the three secretariats of UNECE, OECD-ITF and EUROSTAT. The Chair of WP.6 also participated in the last workshop in a series meant to achieve a coherent and comprehensive data system on transport statistics.

8. Most of the legal instruments concerning the **transport of dangerous goods** are of global nature and almost all UNECE Member countries are Contracting Parties. However there is still a gap between being a Contracting Party of an international Convention or agreement and implementing them effectively. The SPECA PWG-TBC raised awareness of SPECA countries on this matter at its 2011 and 2012 sessions. During the 18th session of the SPECA PWG TBC held in Almaty on 2–3 May 2013, it was agreed that a capacity building workshop devoted to international transport of dangerous goods by road will be held in Almaty for all SPECA countries on 13 October 2013.

9. The Second EATL Ministerial Meeting held on 26 February 2013 in Geneva endorsed the final report of the Phase II and supported the next phase of the project in its

Joint Declaration. **Phase III of the EATL project** (2013–15), coordinated by the UNECE, aims at making the EATL overland links operational. It is focused on both coordination and facilitation of financing of infrastructural projects, as well as facilitating and removing physical and administrative bottlenecks when crossing borders in overland transport between Europe and Asia.

10. A detailed UNECE program of technical assistance in **road traffic safety** was developed to implement the UN Decade of action for road safety in the period of 2011–2020. The implementation is about to start as funding has been secured. The Inland Transport Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in partnership with the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways of India and Institute of Road Traffic Education, and in collaboration with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, are organizing an inaugural "Europe - Asia Road Safety Forum" on 4 December 2013 followed by a session of the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) on 5–6 December 2013 in New Delhi.

11. The core objective of the UNECE strategy on **Intelligent Transport Systems** is to promote new actions and policies where ITS improve the quality of life and make sustainable mobility available across borders. Twenty UNECE actions were agreed on to promote the use of ITS as illustrated in the UNECE road map on Intelligent Transport Systems. The UNECE Inland Transport Committee jointly organized a one day workshop on "Intelligent transport systems in emerging markets – drivers for safe and sustainable growth" that took place at International Telecommunication Union Headquarters in Geneva on 27 June 2013. This event focused on ITS in emerging markets and its impact on road safety. It was therefore another milestone in 2013, the year of Information and Communication Technologies and the decade of action for road safety. Additionally, it may be considered as a bridge between the 9th ITS European congress in Dublin, held in June 2013 and the ITS World Congress which will be held in Tokyo, 14–18 October 2013. The UNECE Inland Transport Committee and ITU, in this respect, played their role as global platforms that advocate for ITS.

12. The lessons learned from a decade of technical assistance in the field of transport 2002–2012 and summarized in the document ECE/TRANS/2013/12 are still valid. The diversity of actions undertaken by the various sections and the regional adviser show the complex interaction between the permanent objective of capacity building activities aimed at the accession to and implementation of the relevant UNECE legal instruments, norms and standards by countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia, in particular landlocked countries, and the actual concerns of the transport community, where all stakeholders are facing new challenges due to globalization, new technologies, transport externalities, safety and security.

13. Supporting accession to and implementation of the UN legal instruments in transport administered by UNECE is a major function of the work of the Transport Regional Adviser and senior staff of the Division. Accession to legal instruments requires direct and frequent contacts with countries in transition in order to advise the countries concerned on priority instruments. Such contacts require financing of missions to countries in need for technical assistance and capacity building. Lack of funding can result in reduced capacity to provide required assistance with negative effects on accession to legal instruments. The UNECE should ensure that such funding continues to be adequate.

14. Developing capacity building and technical assistance activities on a large scale are only possible if the most developed countries and those already involved in the work are ready to share their practices and contribute in value and in time to these activities. Member countries are therefore kindly requested to consider whether their expertise and funding may contribute to these activities.