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Item 4

Informal Document 2021/9

Meeting with the Chair of the Inland Transport Committee

Report by the Chair

Report by the Chair of the Inland Transport Committee

I. Achievements over the past twelve months

A. Introduction

1. The Chair of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC), Mr Kristof Schockaert (Belgium), last reported to the ECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) on 20 May 2020 following the eighty-second annual session of ITC (Geneva, 25-28 February 2020) (full report) and on 5 March 2021 on ITC business-critical decisions requiring EXCOM approval, following the eighty-third annual session of ITC (23-26 February 2021).

2. The period since the last Chair's full report to EXCOM in May 2020, was marked by unprecedented challenges due to the disruptive impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and unique innovations and accomplishments in support of member States efforts to achieve swift and sustained recovery. This report will offer a succinct account of both.

3. Faced with an unprecedented situation as of March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the liquidity crisis and the Strategic Heritage Plan (SHP), UNECE had to severely limit meeting activities for the remainder of 2020 and the first quarter of 2021. These measures are outlined in ECE/TRANS/2021/5. This had a disproportional impact on the transport subprogramme, which heavily relies on meetings and documents in order to facilitate intergovernmental negotiations and perform its regulatory functions through the implementation of its Programme of Work. As a result, 65 per cent of planned deliverables were implemented in 2020. Roughly half of the delivered intergovernmental meetings were under *informal* remote formats. These impacts are described in more detail in ECE/TRANS/2021/5.

4. Despite these difficulties, in 2020, the secretariat serviced 20 Working Parties, 10 Administrative Committees and seven Groups of Experts for amending, acceding to and implementing the existing 59 UN conventions/agreements on inland transport administered by UNECE, and forging new conventions/agreements, protocols and resolutions. The conventions/agreements cover safety, vehicle regulations, transport of dangerous goods and perishable foodstuffs, environmental performance, cross-border facilitation as well as transboundary infrastructure networks to provide regulatory support for countries to implement SDGs 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 16.

5. To achieve that, the ITC Bureau with the support of the secretariat provided intersessional support, in order to ensure that the enduring work of the Committee continues to positively impact the daily lives of people around the world. At the request of EXCOM, the ITC Bureau authorized on behalf of the Committee with the support of the secretariat, and approved by EXCOM "business continuity" adjustment measures. These included special procedures for remote informal and formal meetings during the COVID-19 period. The aim of these extraordinary measures and adjustments to the methods of work of the ITC and its subsidiary bodies was to ensure continued delivery on the key mandates on transport matters entrusted to UNECE, even under pandemic conditions. These measures were fully aligned with the "business continuity" adjustment measures, including special procedures, that were put in place by EXCOM.

B. 83rd annual session of the Inland Transport Committee

6. The eighty-third session of ITC (hybrid, 23-26 February 2021) was opened with the High-level Policy Segment on "Back to a sustainable future: achieving resilient connectivity for post-COVID-19 sustained recovery and economic growth." This High-level Segment saw the participation of Transport ministers from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Middle East, as well as a keynote speech by the European Commissioner for Mobility and Transport. There were 440 participants from more than 83 countries, including 40 non-ECE

ones, and the heads and high-level representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations as well as key inland transport stakeholders. The main highlights of the High-level Policy Segment (see ECE/TRANS/304, Annex III) included:

(a) The adoption at the end of the High-level Policy Segment of the ITC Ministerial Resolution, “Enhancing resilient inland transport connectivity in emergency situations: An urgent call for concerted action” by Ministers and Heads of Delegations of countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and Middle East (ECE/TRANS/304, Annexes I and II);

(b) The official launch of the publication “Sustainable Transport in the Age of COVID-19 - Practices, Initiatives and Responses: Building pandemic-resilient transport systems”;

(c) A high-level side event on “Sustainability of transport and trade connectivity in the Caspian Sea region in the age of pandemics”, organized jointly by the Permanent Mission of Turkmenistan to the UN Office at Geneva, the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) and ECE (ECE/TRANS/304, Annex IV);

(d) A high-level ITC Roundtable on “Road safety at a crossroads at the dawn of the new Decade of Action” (ECE/TRANS/304, Annex VII).

7. The Committee adopted the main decisions (as contained in ECE/TRANS/304 and Informal document ITC (2021) No.8/Rev. 5). The most relevant for EXCOM are:

(a) Decision four welcoming the alignment activities by the Committee’s Working Parties to the ITC Strategy until 2030, as well as requesting support for the Strategy’s implementation, calling for its monitoring and proposing of adjustments to implementation actions, if deemed necessary;

(b) Decision six welcoming research on existing frameworks and new needed areas of cooperation in the field of counteracting the effects of various emergency situations of cross-country nature including epidemics and pandemics;

(c) Decision seven expressing appreciation to the secretariat and the Bureau for their extraordinary efforts and achievements in adjusting the Committee’s methods of work to ensure business continuity and for the provision of unplanned critical services to its core constituents;

(d) Decision eight requesting the ITC Chair to convey in his report to EXCOM, the urgency and high stakes of the return to the normal provision of services;

(e) Decision nine adopting the revised Terms of Reference of SC.2;

(f) Decision 16 adopting the draft programme of work of the Transport Subprogramme for 2021, which was approved by EXCOM at its March 2021 session;

(g) Decision 28 adopting the updated ITS Road Map for the period 2021-2025 which was developed in line with the Committee’s decision at its eighty-second session;

(h) Decision 32 encouraging its members to participate actively at the fifth High-level Meeting as well as consider designating national THE PEP focal points from the transport sector and inform the secretariat;

(i) Decisions 39-45 on Road Safety, reiterating the Committee’s concern for the limited progress globally in meeting the Sustainable Development Goal targets on road safety as well as those of the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety and fully supporting an enhanced role for UNECE’s comprehensive contribution to the global efforts, with the

adoption of the “ITC Recommendations for Enhancing National Road Safety Systems”, as well as the support of the United Nations Road Safety Fund and the Secretary General’s Special Envoy for Road Safety;

(j) Decision 63 adopting the resolution on strengthening intermodal freight transport and requesting WP.24 to work with UNECE member States in implementing it;

(k) Decision 71 encouraging cooperation between UNECE and ESCAP;

(l) Decisions 11, 12, 13 on extending the mandates for three Groups of Experts and the creation of two new ones (see section III in this report);

(m) Decision 16 adopting the 2021 Programme of Work for the transport subprogramme.

C. Highlights of achievements in 2020 and 2021

1. COVID-19 response

8. In response to the impact of COVID-19 crisis on inland transport, UNECE acting as the secretariat to the Inland Transport Committee helped member States and Contracting Parties to respond to the pandemic in several ways and levels, which include the following indicative but critical actions:

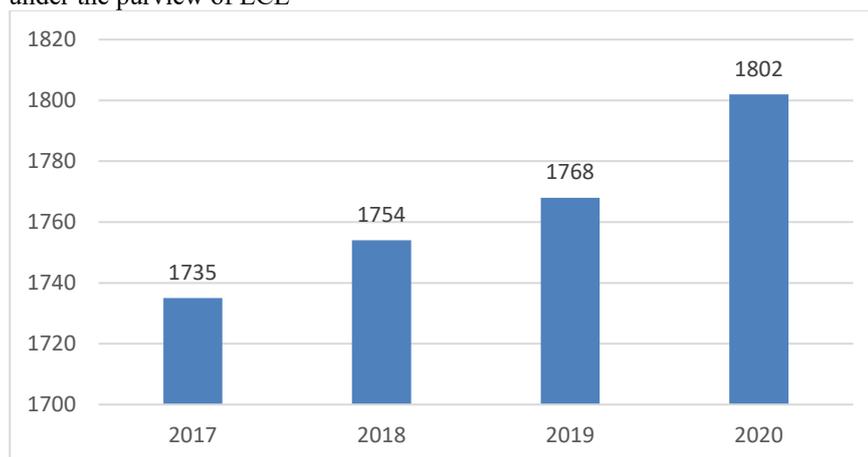
- ECE helped countries coordinate emergency measures under UN transport agreements to ensure delivery of medical supplies – including oxygen, for which demand surged 5 to 10 times due to COVID-19.
- The cold chain logistics developed by 50 countries, many of which in the European region, to transport perishable foodstuff under our ATP agreement will be used for the global roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccines.
- Countries adopted legal provisions for the full computerization of the TIR Convention. TIR enables over 34,000 transport and logistics companies worldwide. Successful piloting of the digitalized “eTIR” system has demonstrated how it can unlock further efficiency gains. This could be especially crucial for Landlocked Developing Countries, who face transport costs up to 85 per cent higher than global averages. To combat COVID-19 disruptions, eTIR can facilitate seamless operation of supply chains while reducing virus transmission risks by minimizing physical contact between customs officers and truck drivers.
- ITC decided at its eighty-third session to enhance cooperation between working parties, and between the ITC and other specialized agencies of the UN System, including the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) contributing to a better coordinated delivery of programme of work and increased interoperability.
- To facilitate delivery of essential goods and to limit socio-economic impacts of the pandemic due to supply chain disruptions, UNECE launched an Observatory on Border Crossings Status, which gathers all information on cross-border limitations worldwide, directly from governments, partner organizations and the transport sector. The Observatory has been visited over 100,000 times, by users in almost every country on earth.
- ECE/ITC established an Informal Multidisciplinary Advisory Group on Transport Responses to the COVID-19 Crisis which had its first virtual meeting on 26 June 2020 and its second one on 8 September 2020 as part of the 33rd session of Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5).
- Eight United Nations organizations stressed the critical role of international transport and integrated supply chains for a sustainable COVID-19 recovery for the Sustainable Development Goals. UNECE instruments – such as TIR and the CMR

Convention – enable the movement of cargo across borders without requiring physical checks, reducing contact between people.

2. Regulatory governance and new accessions

9. The number of contracting parties increased to 1,802 with 16 new contracting parties to 18 legal instruments in 2020¹ (ECE/TRANS/2021/11). Despite the positive trend, as can be seen in figure 2 below, the rate of accessions remained low compared to the need for a universally harmonized inland transport system.

Figure 2: Number of Contracting Parties to the United Nations Inland Transport Conventions under the purview of ECE



10. The most important regulatory achievements are listed below. For a full report, please see the 2020 annual report of the Inland Transport Committee (ECE/TRANS/2021/25).

Road Safety

11. The Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) adopted an important amendment proposal which, when it enters into force, is expected to facilitate automated driving for contracting parties to the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic.

Border Crossing Facilitation

12. The main focus in 2020 in the field of border crossing facilitation has been on the upcoming computerization of the TIR procedure, eTIR. The TIR Administrative Committee adopted an extensive package of amendments proposals in February 2020, including eTIR in

¹ **Afghanistan** (1956 CMR); **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (1978 CMR Protocol); **Brunei Darussalam** (1949 Convention on Road Traffic); **Croatia** (1949 Convention on Road Traffic); **Egypt** (1975 TIR Convention); **Honduras** (1968 Convention on Road Traffic); **Liechtenstein 8 legal instruments** (1949 Convention on Road Traffic; 1968 Convention on Road Traffic; 1949 Protocol on Road Signs and Signals; 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals; 1971 European Agreement to the Convention on Road Signs and Signals; 1971 European Agreement to the Convention on Road Signs and Signals; 1950 European Agreement to the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic and the 1949 Protocol on Road Signs and Signals; 1973 Protocol on Road Markings) **Norway** (e-CRM Protocol); **Oman 3 legal instruments** (1956 CMR; e-CMR Protocol; 1968 Convention on Road Traffic); **Pakistan** (1958 Agreement concerning the Adoption of Uniform Technical Prescription for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts); **Serbia** (1978 CMR Protocol); **Sweden** (e-CMR Protocol); **Thailand** (1968 Convention on Road Traffic); **Turkmenistan 6 legal instruments** (1973 Protocol on Road Markings; 1971 European Agreement to the Convention on Road Signs and Signals; 1971 European Agreement to the Convention on Road Traffic; 1991 AGTC Agreement; 1985 AGC Agreement; 1975 AGR Agreement); **Ukraine 2 legal instruments** (1978 CMR Protocol; e-CMR Protocol); **Uzbekistan 3 legal instruments** (1957 ADR Agreement; 1993 Protocol to ADR Agreement; e-CMR Protocol).

the legal text of the TIR Convention (1975). The amendments enter into force on 25 May 2021 for all contracting parties.

Vehicle Regulations

13. The first three UN Regulations for automated vehicles were adopted at the June 2020 session of the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) and entered into force on 22 January 2021. They address the safety and security of automated vehicles with performance based and technology neutral provisions:

- UN Regulation No. 155 on Cyber Security
- UN Regulation No. 156 on Over the Air Software Updates
- UN Regulation No. 157 on Automated Lane Keeping Systems

14. Also, two new UN Regulations aimed at improving vehicle safety and environmental performance entered into force:

- UN Regulation No. 153 on Fuel System Integrity and Electric Power Train Safety at rear-end collision in 2020; and
- UN Regulation No.154 on Worldwide harmonized Light vehicles Test Procedure (WLTP Regulation) on 22 January 2021.

15. WP.29 adopted two more new UN Regulations in 2020 aiming at the protection of vulnerable road users.

- UN Regulation No. 158 on devices for reversing motion and motor vehicles with regard to the driver's awareness of vulnerable road users behind vehicles.
- UN Regulation No. 159 on the Moving Off Information Systems for the detection of pedestrians and cyclists in June 2021.

16. Existing UN Regulations were updated by 96 amendments, which adapt the regulations to the most recent technological innovations and introduce more stringent limits aimed at increasing both the safety and environmental performance of vehicles.

17. In 2020, WP.29 concluded several years of work on a new Global Technical Regulation (UN GTR) No. 21 on the Determination of Electrified Vehicle Power, that was adopted by the Executive Committee of the 1998 Agreement at its November 2020 session.

Transport of Dangerous Goods

18. In 2020, the international legal instruments regulating air, maritime and land transport of dangerous goods were updated following the transposition of the provisions contained in the Model Regulations (21st revised edition) and the GHS (8th revised edition) prepared by the ECE Secretariat in coordination with the international organisations involved, to ensure that provisions may be applied simultaneously for all modes of transport as of 1 January 2021.

19. The proposal of amendments (contained in ECE/TRANS/WP.15/249,-249/Corr.1 and -249/Add.1), and to the Regulations annexed to ADN, including those intended to harmonize ADN provisions with those of ADR and RID (contained in ECE/ADN/54, -54/Corr.1 and -54/Add.1), were transmitted to Contracting Parties for acceptance. Since none of the ADR or ADN Contracting Parties raised any objection, the proposed amendments to annexes A and B, as amended, as well as the proposed amendments to the Regulations annexed to ADN, entered into force for all Contracting Parties on 1 January 2021 with a 6-month transition period.

20. Accession of Uzbekistan to ADR on 24 January 2020 brought the number of Contracting Parties to fifty-two (among which three are non-ECE countries: Morocco, Nigeria and Tunisia).

Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs

21. The Working Party on Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs (WP.11) supported in 2020 the implementation and updating of the Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be Used for such Carriage (ATP). The revised consolidated edition of the ATP agreement was prepared and entered into force on 6 July 2020 to take account of accepted amendments during 2017-2018.

Road Transport

22. In 2020, there was much interest by countries in the CMR Conventions and its two protocols which resulted in two accessions to CMR, three accessions to the Protocol to CMR and six accessions to e-CMR. For the latter, this brings the total number of contracting parties to 29, more than doubling the number of contracting parties over the last five years.

Rail Transport

23. The European Agreement on Main and International Railway Lines (AGC) is being updated to facilitate the use by member States and generate more accessions. In 2020, Turkmenistan became the 28th contracting party to the AGC.

24. The Group of Experts on the Permanent Identification of Railway Rolling Stock started its work in 2020. The Group is working towards the development of standards that will facilitate the financing of new rolling stock.

25. The Convention for facilitating the crossing of national frontiers by rail transport for passengers and their luggage was finalised and opened for signature. This 59th UNECE Convention will facilitate the international movement of passengers on the rail network.

26. The TER High Speed Railway Master Plan Phase II has been completed and will provide the region with a concrete tool to assist member States in identifying the most appropriate areas for investment in High Speed Rail.

Intermodal Transport

27. The Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24) continued its work to update the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) and the Protocol to the AGTC. Amendment proposals to Annexes I and II from Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece and Serbia were adopted. WP.24 held consultations to discuss impact of Covid-19 pandemic on freight transport. A draft resolution on strengthening intermodal freight transport was developed as a result of these consultations.

Inland Water Transport

28. The Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) approved Addendum No. 3 to the third revision of the Inventory of Main Standards and Parameters of E Waterway Network; adopted (a) Amendment No. 4 to the European Code for Inland Waterways (CEVNI), (b) Amendment No. 2 to the Recommendations on Harmonized Europe-Wide Technical Requirements for Inland Navigation Vessels (resolution No. 61, revision 2), (c) Revised list of reception facilities for transfer of waste generated on board vessels on the E waterway network (appendix to the annex to resolution No. 21), (d) second revision of the International Standard for Tracking and Tracing on Inland Waterways (annex to resolution No. 63), revision of the International Standard for Electronic Ship Reporting in Inland Navigation (annex to resolution No. 79).

3. Policy dialogue, capacity building and analytical activities

Road Safety

29. Despite strong and consistent efforts by Member States, the international community was not able to achieve by 2020 the target 3.6 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals on road safety to halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents.

30. Despite this setback, there were three milestones in 2020 for the global community's and United Nations' efforts to address this challenge. First, the transport leadership of the international community came together at the third Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety (Stockholm, 19–20 February 2020), to reach global consensus through the Stockholm Declaration on continued international collaboration on road safety up to 2030. Second, ITC adopted at its eighty-second session (Geneva, 25–28 February 2020), effective 1 April 2020, the ITC Recommendations on Enhancing National Road Safety Systems, providing much needed direction and guidelines to Member States on how to improve their road safety systematically and sustainably. Third, the General Assembly adopted on 31 August 2020 Resolution A/RES/74/299 on "Improving global road safety", inaugurating the second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030. It is setting new ambitious goals and calling upon the main stakeholders for the preparation of a plan of action of the Second Decade as a guiding document to foster the implementation of its objectives by halving the global number of deaths and injuries on roads by 2030

31. All three milestones recognize the unique and critical role of UNECE and the ITC in the global efforts to improve road safety in a sustainable manner.

THE PEP

32. As a response to the COVID-19 situation, THE PEP created in April 2020 a special task force on the creation of recommendations for green and healthy sustainable transport which will become a key part of the Vienna Declaration being prepared for the fifth High-level meeting of THE PEP.

Inland Transport Security

33. A Round Table on "Intelligent Transport Systems and Cyber Security" was held on 8 September 2020, in conjunction with the thirty-third session of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5). Participants recognized that the increasingly digitalized, interconnected and automated transport system functionalities create a range of new security risks and acknowledged the need for a set of binding cyber security norms.

Promoting Euro-Asian connectivity

34. A virtual round of "Consultations on next steps in the Operationalization of Euro-Asian Transport" were held on 26 November 2020 jointly by the WP.5 secretariat and the OSCE. Participants agreed on an outcome including a set of conclusions and recommendations.

35. The International Transport Infrastructure Observatory, which has the aim to facilitate the financing of Euro-Asian transport links, has reached its final stage of development in 2020.

Sustainable Inland Transport Connectivity Indicators

36. In 2020, as part of the UNDA funded project on "Sustainable transport connectivity and implementation of transport related Sustainable Development Goals in selected landlocked and transit/bridging countries", the Sustainable Inland Transport Connectivity

Indicators have been tested in the context of five pilot countries and have been further improved and strengthened. At this stage 220+ indicators and sub-indicators have been produced for piloting and testing purposes.

Urban Mobility

37. An Expert Round Table on economic analysis of the transformation of urban transport systems was held on 9 September 2020. The workshop featured speakers on selected case studies as well as policy makers and academia from a various group of countries. The meeting was opened with the launch of the “Handbook on Sustainable Urban Mobility and Spatial Planning – Promoting Active Mobility” which was prepared under the auspices of WP.5 and THE PEP Steering Committee with the aim of assisting member States in integrating, transport, health, quality of life and environmental objects into urban and spatial planning policies.

Transport Statistics

38. The Sustainable Transport Division continued its work as the forum for transport-related Sustainable Development Goals discussion, in line with the ITC strategy to 2030. The Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6) published the results of a pilot tram and metro statistics questionnaire, giving data for over 140 cities in the ECE region which were not previously reported (tracking public transport use for Sustainable Development Goal target 11.2).

39. The Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6) created a wiki page collating all known-country level sources for transport data, allowing policy makers to make decisions based on the very latest reliable information, particularly relevant given the extraordinary changes in transport use due to COVID-19.

Intermodal Transport and Logistics

40. WP.24 developed the Handbook for national master plans for freight transport and logistics which presents optimization processes as well as actions in support of the freight transport and logistics sector’s development in a sustainable manner.

eTIR

41. The year 2020 saw continued eTIR pilot projects between countries and the preparation of extensive technical guidelines to assist interested countries to link up to the eTIR international system.

42. On 7 April 2020, the UNECE Executive Secretary invited all interested contracting parties to the TIR Convention to start a connection project to link their national customs system to the eTIR international system. Multiple countries showed interest. Additionally, there has been close cooperation with the European Commission and some European Union member States to connect European Union customs administrations to the eTIR international system.

ITC Capacity Development Plan

43. The ITC Capacity Development Plan was presented and adopted at the 82nd session of the Inland Transport Committee. Due to COVID-19, the Sustainable Transport Division was only able to focus on demand driven remote capacity development activities.

44. The UNECE-led Regional Dialogue was held on 29 September 2020 and facilitated an inclusive discussion and coordinated actions and plans on harmonization of international inland transport procedures to enhance connectivity in the SPECA regions. The conclusions of the Dialogue were adopted by the participating countries.

45. The 25th session of the SPECA Working Group on Sustainable Transport Transit and Connectivity (WG-STTC) was held on 23-24 October 2020. SPECA countries agreed on starting points for preparation of the SPECA Transport Connectivity Strategy, with a main goal to set up a realistic WG-STTC Work programme.

II. Major activities planned for 2021 and beyond

46. Going forward, during 2021 and beyond, the highest priority for the Committee is the implementation of the ITC Strategy until 2030 and the continued modernization and geographical expansion of its normative work.

47. At the time of the preparation of this report, the pool of United Nations Member States that are contracting parties to legal instruments under the purview of the Committee includes **150 out of 193 United Nations Member States** (or 78 per cent) with the accession of Brunei Darussalam and Honduras in 2020.

48. The Inland Transport Committee was founded in 1947, so its eighty-fourth session (Geneva, 22-25 February 2022) will mark its 75th anniversary. Judging by the high-level and global spread of transport ministers and leaders who have participated in the ITC annual sessions in recent years, the 75th anniversary session is expected to be an exceptionally high-level event which should consolidate its unique institutional position and pave the way for the realization of the strategic vision of the ITC as the UN Platform for Inland Transport.

III. Any proposed change to the subsidiary structure of the Committee

49. EXCOM endorsed at its 115th meeting the following ITC Decisions requiring its approval.

(a) the extension of the mandates of the following Group of Experts as contained in document ECE/TRANS/304:

- The Group of Experts on Road Signs and Signals;
- The Group of Experts on European Agreement Concerning Work of Crews of Vehicles Engaged in International Road Transport (AETR);
- The Group of Experts on Benchmarking Transport Infrastructure Construction Costs.

(b) the establishment of the following Groups of Experts, as reflected in ECE/TRANS/304:

- Group of Experts tasked with drafting a new legal instrument on international rail passenger hubs;
- Group of Experts tasked with drafting a new legal instrument on the use of automated vehicles in road traffic.

(c) the adoption of the 2021 Programme of Work of the transport subprogramme.

IV. Follow-up to the 2021 session of the Economic Commission for Europe

50. Through its normative and policy work, as well as its analytical and capacity-building activities, the subprogramme on sustainable transport contributes considerably to key aspects of the regional and global economy by creating the desired “loop” that optimizes the use of resources in a circular economy. All four pillars of the Inland Transport Committee Strategy

until 2030, adopted by the Committee at its eighty-second session (ECE/TRANS/288/Add.2), include elements of the circular economy and help to accelerate the transition to sustainable inland transport.

51. The Inland Transport Committee and its subsidiary bodies will continue their normative, capacity building and analytical work on circular economy and the sustainable use of natural resources, especially in the areas of vehicles regulations, transport infrastructure, transport of dangerous waste, and developing new practices in a sharing economy (E/ECE/1495).

V. Intersectoral activities: new activities and/or progress in existing intersectoral activities

52. The 5th Ministerial High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment (SHLM) will be held virtually on 17 and 18 May 2021, complemented by the Vienna Declaration. High-level meetings at the ministerial level are normally convened every five years and are the governing body of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP), that is administered jointly by the Regional Office for Europe of the World Health Organization (WHO-Europe), and the Environment and Sustainable Transport Divisions of UNECE.

VI. Technical cooperation activities

53. In line with the ITC Capacity Development Action Plan (2020-2025), a number of capacity development activities took place in the SPECA region. Due to COVID-19, the Sustainable Transport Division was only able to focus on demand driven remote capacity development activities.

VII. Cooperation with other organizations

54. UNECE took lead in the joint effort of all five UN Regional Commissions, the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UNOHRLLS), IMO, ICAO and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), aimed at curbing the effects of COVID-19 on connectivity, trade, and transport through joint statements. UNECE significantly contributes through the creation of a package of standards for the digitalization of multimodal transport data and document exchange, aimed at avoiding physical contacts (reducing the spread the COVID-19 infection), and increasing the efficiency of supply chains. Practical pilot implementation has begun, including in the Black Sea – Baltic Sea and Dnepr – Danube transport corridors.

55. Similarly, when ships enter and leave ports, vital information about cargoes, dangerous goods, crews, vessel details and many other things must be exchanged with the authorities ashore. In 2020, UNECE joined forces with International Organization for Standardization and the World Customs Organization to assist International Maritime Organization in digital transformation, a major step towards increased efficiency in a sector worth US\$ 14 trillion each year to the global economy.

56. The collaboration between UNECE and the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy has created an important new coalition for raising awareness for road safety and also for the role of ITC in this respect. This cooperation has also led to new or reconfirmed partnerships, especially within the United Nations system, the United Nations country teams and UNDP. UNECE provides the secretariat for the Special Envoy.

57. In carrying out its activities and the work programme in transport, the Division cooperates and coordinates work with all the key international organizations of inland transport, transport of dangerous goods and vehicle regulations. Among them the most frequent interactions and joint activities throughout the past year were with: European Union, UN Regional Commissions, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA), UN OHRLLS, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other UN departments and agencies, multilateral development banks, especially the World Bank and the Islamic Development Bank, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Transport Forum, Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), ICAO, IAEA, IMO, International Labour Organization (ILO), International Union of Railways (UIC), IRU, International Road Federation (IRF), River Commissions in Europe (i.e. Central Commission for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR), Danube Commission, International Sava River Basin Commission, Mosel Commission), OTIF, Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), International Rail Transport Committee (CIT), World Road Association (PIARC), World Association for Waterborne Transport Infrastructure (PIANC), WHO, European River-Sea-Transport Union (ERSTU), European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF), European Federation of Inland Ports (EFIP), International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA), European Boating Association (EBA), UNITAR. The Division contributes to the Sustainable Mobility for All (SuM4All) initiative, pursued by the World Bank and a number of key partners and as a member of the Steering Committee of the initiative.