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**Governance Issues and Other Matters Arising
from the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe,
the Economic and Social Council
and other United Nations bodies and Conferences**

Digital and Green Transformations for Sustainable Inland Transport: Inland Transport Committee Contributions to the Upcoming Seventieth Session of the Economic Commission for Europe

Note by the secretariat*

The high-level segment of the seventieth session of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) will be held under the theme “Digital and Green Transformations for Sustainable Development in the Region of the Economic Commission for Europe”. Related issues have been prominent areas of the Committee’s work for many years and have yielded a rich body of instruments and knowledge products of the transport subprogramme.

This document outlines relevant work undertaken by the Committee and its Working Parties and introduces potential draft decisions. The Committee is invited to consider the draft decisions in this document and invite the Commission to consider them for adoption at its seventieth session.

* This document was scheduled for publication after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter’s control.



I. Introduction

1. The high-level segment of the seventieth session of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) will be held under the theme “Digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the UNECE region”.
2. Related issues have been prominent areas of the Inland Transport Committee’s (ITC) work for several years and have yielded a rich body of high-level documents endorsed by the Committee, as well as instruments and knowledge products of the transport subprogramme.
3. 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 on the above themes. More prominent among those is the Strategy pillar of ITC as the United Nations Platform for supporting new technologies and innovations in inland transport. This is done, among others by ensuring that its regulatory functions are keeping pace with cutting-edge technologies driving transport innovation - especially in the areas of Intelligent Transport Systems, autonomous vehicles and digitalization - thus improving road traffic safety, environmental performance, energy efficiency, inland transport security and efficient services in the transport sector. The long-term action plan of the transport subprogramme includes the development of regional and global platforms for digitalization, automated driving and intelligent transport systems.
4. This document takes stock of progress and achievements by the Committee and its Working Parties in promoting circular economy regionally and globally, in support of member States’ and contracting parties’ efforts to develop more circular, and therefore sustainable, transport systems and/or embrace related principles in their transport policy planning and economic practices.

II. ECE Transport-Related Instruments and Achievements Related to Digitalization and Green Transformation

5. The annex to this document summarizes key aspects of the Committee’s Terms of Reference, high-level outcome documents (Ministerial resolutions and declarations) and related decisions.
6. The list of achievements by the Committee and its subsidiary bodies is more fully developed in two Commission documents for its seventieth session, namely:
 - “Digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the region of the Economic Commission for Europe” (E/ECE/1504) and
 - “Toolbox of instruments of the Economic Commission for Europe related to digital transformation” (E/ECE/1505).

III. Draft Decisions Proposed for Consideration of the Commission

7. The Committee, recognizing the high relevance and impact of the Commission deliberations on the topic of digital and green transformations at its seventieth session for the work of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies, is **invited to consider** the following draft decisions for transmission to the Commission for possible adoption at its seventieth session:

“The United Nation Economic Commission for Europe is **invited to consider for adoption** at its seventieth session the following decisions in support of the work of the Inland Transport Committee and its subsidiary bodies in the area of digitalization and green transformation:

- **acknowledge** the importance of the TIR Convention and of the eTIR international system towards seamless, paperless and efficient border-crossing operations internationally, further facilitating road / intermodal transport and trade and **request** the countries that have not yet performed interconnection of their customs systems with the eTIR international system to do so as soon as operationally possible.

- **reiterate** its support to the TIR Convention recognizing the benefits it created since its entry into force for transport and trade facilitation, **appealing** for its further geographical expansion and **inviting** United Nations Member States from all regions to become contracting parties to the Convention.
- **welcome** the efforts of the secretariat and the contracting parties to operationalize the eCMR protocol to the CMR Convention and **invite** all relevant parties to finalize this demanding task as soon as possible, and to ensure that the future eCMR system will include the interests of all stakeholders involved in today's daily CMR practice and of all regions, thus creating a sustainable electronic solution and continuing the great success over time of the CMR Convention by leading intermodal transport to a fully digital environment.
- **note** the development of the International Transport Infrastructure Observatory on a Geographical Information Technology Platform, including the work done on the adaptation of transport infrastructure to climate change, **invite** countries to start using the tool and benefit from its services **emphasizing that** this work is a good practice that creates economies of scale and further facilitates the sustainable development of transport infrastructure.
- **welcome** the establishment of a package of a package of UN Regulations in the area of vehicle automation by the ECE/ITC World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations, which provide the technical and legal basis for the certification of automated driving systems, allowing drivers to engage in certain tasks other than driving, during its use on motorways as well as complementary regulatory elements covering Cyber-Security or Over-the-Air Software Updates, and thus making these vehicles safe, secure and flexible for future developments.
- **concerned** about the lack of progress in solving the global road safety crisis, **welcome** activities in the framework of the ECE/ITC World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations towards the establishment of minimum technical safety and environmental requirements for used and new vehicles designated for markets in low- and middle-income countries, where some 90 per cent of global road crash fatalities occur.
- **note** the ongoing work and regulatory results by this UNECE/ITC body for the safety, energy consumption testing, and carbon Life-Cycle-Assessment of electric and hydrogen vehicles and **emphasize that** these regulatory tools provide a sound basis for efficient decarbonization of road transport.
- **recall** the use of the ITC carbon emission modelling tool ForFITS, and **invite** countries, regions or cities to request modelling of impact for different policy measures planned towards mitigation of road transport-based carbon emissions”.

Annex

Inland Transport Committee Terms of Reference and Selected Decisions of Relevance to the Seventieth Session of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

I. ITC Terms of Reference (endorsed by ECOSOC on 16 February 2022 ([E/RES/2022/2](#)))

(...)

(g) The Committee pursues the objective of sustainable transport development by means of promoting both the reduction of the negative impact of transport on the environment and the utilization of environmentally sound modes of transport, including the development of combined transport; (...)

(i) It [*the Committee*] acts as a centre for supporting new technologies and innovations in inland transport, by providing a platform for digitalization, automated driving and intelligent transport systems;

II. Eighty-Fourth Session of the Inland Transport Committee ([ECE/TRANS/316](#))

A. Ministerial Resolution “Ushering in a decade of delivery for sustainable inland transport and sustainable development” ([ECE/TRANS/316](#), [Annex I](#))

[We, the ministers and other heads of delegation (...)] (...)

Praising the role of the Inland Transport Committee in promoting the sustainable transport of freight and passengers internationally, regionally and nationally, in optimizing the modal mix and in promoting public transport, environmental performance, energy efficiency and the circular economy while catalysing improvements in inland transport safety and security, as well as non-motorized transport infrastructure and efficient service provision in the transport sector,

Acknowledging the key role of the Inland Transport Committee in improving the environmental performance of motorized road transport, in supporting the energy transition in the sector, in accelerating the shift to more environmentally friendly modes of transport and in addressing the increased vulnerability of inland transport infrastructure and mobility (...)

[*Decide:*] (...)

(b) To accelerate the further development and regular updating of the legal instruments of the Inland Transport Committee in order to make the regulatory framework less fragmented and more harmonized, relevant and impactful given the fast-changing strategic landscape by fully integrating and promoting technological changes in all inland transport modes, especially in relation to intelligent transport systems, autonomous and connected vehicles, automated driving and digitalization of transport documents and procedures in international transport; (...)

(l) To leverage urgently the relevant regulatory and policy recommendation functions of the Inland Transport Committee to reduce harmful emissions and energy consumption, especially in road transport, to promote intermodality and harmonized solutions to climate issues and environmental degradation and to optimize the modal combination for the transport of passengers and goods, in order to enhance the inland transport sector’s contribution to the achievement of the goals and objectives of the United

Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, while paying particular attention to the needs of small island developing States, the least developed countries and landlocked developing countries in achieving their sustainable low-emission transport objectives; (...)

(n) To enhance the regulatory framework for sustainable intermodal transport by promoting rail, inland waterway, intermodal and logistics legal and policy solutions with the aim of reducing the environmental impact of transport, increasing accessibility and improving efficiency;

(o) To also enhance cross-cutting activities within the framework of the legal instruments of the Inland Transport Committee and with other Economic Commission for Europe sectoral committees, to further develop deliverables supporting the circular economy, in line with decisions taken at the sixty-ninth session of the Economic Commission for Europe, and highlighted circularity as a growing overarching issue where new or revamped legal instruments would add significant value;

B. Inland Transport Committee Decisions (ECE/TRANS/316)

12. The Committee **welcomed and endorsed** the ITC Resolution on Ushering in a decade of delivery for sustainable inland transport and sustainable development (...).

16. The Committee **was also informed** by the secretariat about recent matters arising from activities of the Commission of interest to the Committee, including about:

(a) Commission-related decisions on strengthening the work of sectoral committees in the area of circular economy; and

(b) Further development of ECE-wide nexus areas, i.e. intersectoral (horizontal) coordination workstreams in ECE, as part of aligning the work of ECE to the Sustainable Development Goals.

17. The Committee **welcomed** Commission-related decisions on strengthening the work of sectoral committees in the area of circular economy and **invited** its Working Parties to enhance and expand their work on the specific aspects of circular economy in transport, as appropriate. (...)

27. The Committee also **adopted** the revised Terms of Reference of the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3), contained in Annex III of ECE/TRANS/2022/6¹, as requested by SC.3 (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/215).

28. The Committee **approved** the establishment of a new Group of Experts on the operationalization of the e-CMR procedure for two years, as requested by SC.1 (ECE/TRANS/SC.1/416) on the basis of its Terms of Reference as contained in Annex IV of ECE/TRANS/2022/6. (...)

47. The Committee **requested** the Secretariat, in close cooperation with the Bureau, to prepare for the next Committee session an overview of current activities in the field of information and computerization technologies and intelligent transport systems carried out by Working Parties of ITC and link it, where appropriate, with the 70th ECE central theme in 2023 which will be on “Digital and green transformations for sustainable development in the UNECE region”.

¹ ECE/TRANS/2022/6, Annex III, para. 5(d) refers.

III. **Eighty-Third Session of the Inland Transport Committee** ([ECE/TRANS/304](#))

A. **Ministerial resolution “Enhancing resilient inland transport connectivity in emergency situations: an urgent call for concerted action”** ([ECE/TRANS/304, Annex I](#))

[We, the ministers and other heads of delegation (...)] (...)

Considering that new technologies in the areas of digitalization, automation and intelligent transport systems may enhance the above-mentioned capabilities and contribute to global efforts for a swift and sustainable recovery, (...)

[Decide] (...)

(c) To contribute, as a response to epidemiological outbreaks, to the promotion of digital technical and technological solutions on transport, including the further digitalization of United Nations legal instruments on transport, in particular those relating to transport facilitation and paperless trade;

B. **Inland Transport Committee Decisions** ([ECE/TRANS/304](#))

13. The Committee **welcomed and endorsed** the ITC Resolution on “Enhancing resilient inland transport connectivity in emergency situations: an urgent call for concerted action (...).

26. The Committee **approved** the establishment of a new Group of Experts tasked with drafting a new legal instrument on the use of automated vehicles in road traffic on the basis of its Terms of Reference as contained in ECE/TRANS/2021/6, Annex III (...).

117. The Committee **took note** of (a) the main findings of the workshop on the Sustainable Development Goals and how they can be achieved in inland waterways, held on 12 February 2020 at the fifty-sixth session of SC.3/WP.3, (b) the outcome of the workshop Circular economy in inland water transport held at the sixty-fourth session of SC.3 and (c) the progress in automated and smart shipping on inland waterways.

119. The Committee **took note** of the progress made by SC.3 and its subsidiary bodies, **expressed its support** to the activities of the secretariat in the field of the implementation of circular economy in inland water transport and **encouraged** other Working Parties to do so.

IV. **Eighty-Second Session of the Inland Transport Committee - Ministerial Declaration on “enhancing sustainable inland transport solutions to global climate and environmental challenges – a united call to action”** ([ECE/TRANS/294, Annex I](#))

V. **Eighty-First Session of the Inland Transport Committee - Ministerial Resolution on “enhancing cooperation, harmonization and integration in the era of transport digitalization and automation”** ([ECE/TRANS/288, Annex I](#))
