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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Inland Transport Committee

#### Eighty-fifth session

Geneva, 21–24 February 2023

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

#### **Actions of the inland transport sector to join the global fight against climate change**

### **Draft ministerial declaration entitled “Harnessing the full potential of inland transport solutions in the global fight against climate change”**

#### **Note by the secretariat\***

#### **Background**

1. On 22 February 2022, at its eighty-fourth session, the Inland Transport Committee marked its seventy-fifth anniversary and adopted a ministerial resolution entitled “Ushering in a decade of delivery for sustainable inland transport and sustainable development”. In that resolution, the Committee, among other things, recognized that an unprecedented mix of global emergencies and challenges, including climate change, threatened to derail the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and reaffirmed its determination to take the steps necessary to implement the 2030 Agenda in full and on time. In the same resolution, the Committee decided, among other things, to leverage urgently its relevant regulatory and policy recommendation functions 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.

2. At the end of the high-level segment of the Committee’s eighty-fifth session, ministers and other heads of delegation of the contracting parties to the United Nations conventions under the purview of the Inland Transport Committee will be invited to express their support for a declaration entitled “Harnessing the full potential of inland transport solutions in the global fight against climate change” (see annex). The declaration will give direction to the work of the Committee, as the United Nations platform for inland transport, and its subsidiary bodies, thereby contributing to ushering in a decade of delivery on the climate change front.

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\* This document was submitted late due to delayed inputs from other sources.



## Annex

# Harnessing the full potential of inland transport solutions in the global fight against climate change

## Draft ministerial declaration

*We, the ministers and other heads of delegation of the contracting parties to the United Nations conventions under the purview of the Inland Transport Committee, attending its eighty-fifth session,*

*[Recalling the United Nations Charter, in particular one of its main purposes “To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace”,]*

*Recalling General Assembly resolutions 74/219 of 19 December 2019, 75/217 of 21 December 2020 and 76/205 of 17 December 2021 on the protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind,*

*Recalling also our commitment to implementing the ministerial resolution adopted on the occasion of the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Inland Transport Committee, entitled “Ushering in a decade of delivery for sustainable inland transport and sustainable development”, in particular the decision contained in subparagraph (l) thereof,*

*Alarmed by the mounting social and economic costs of devastating climate-related calamities and their disruptive impact on social and economic life for present and future generations worldwide,*

*Alarmed also by the increasing impact of climate change on the smooth operation of inland transport modes, which compromises the resilience of supply chains, and expressing appreciation in this regard for the work of the Committee’s subsidiary bodies on climate change adaptation,*

*Fully supporting pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels,*

*Gravely concerned by the continued rise of greenhouse gas emissions in the transport sector,*

*Cognizant that direct greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector account for 23 per cent of global energy-related carbon emissions and that more than 71 per cent of direct greenhouse gas emissions from the transport sector come from inland transport,*

*Stressing the need to extend the Committee’s efforts to tackle ambient air pollution, particularly in urban areas, as well as noise pollution from transport, and emphasizing the importance of these activities for the global efforts to prevent mortalities from non-communicable diseases, as well to promote healthier life worldwide,*

*Fully aware, therefore, that global climate change mitigation cannot be achieved without transformative changes in the transport sector and that demand- and supply-side transport mitigation strategies are key requirements for such changes,*

*Emphasizing the importance of developing and implementing climate change mitigation policies and strategies that are socially inclusive for all, including people with special mobility needs, taking into consideration people’s economic vulnerability due to rising fuel prices, and promote regional and global integration, economic growth and sustainable development,*

*Affirming the role of the Committee in promoting, intraregionally and interregionally, sustainable transport and mobility, the environmental and climate performance of which benefits all countries, regardless of their level of development,*

*Noting* that electromobility, powered by zero-emission or low-emission electricity and supported by adequate charging infrastructure, has the potential to rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, in particular from road transport,

*Taking note of* the ambition of the members of the COP26 Road Transport Breakthrough 2030 to make zero emission vehicles the new normal by making them affordable, accessible, and sustainable in all regions by 2030,

*Expressing appreciation* for the ambitious targets on the transition to electric vehicles set by a number of Member States,

*Expressing appreciation also* for the targets of several Member States on reducing greenhouse gas and air pollutant emissions from inland water transport,

*Acknowledging* that new technologies and innovation in the areas of alternative energy, digitalization, automation and intelligent transport systems, complemented by circular economy principles, can support systemic changes and accelerate the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, but are not yet fully deployed,

*Recognizing* the strategic importance of a shift to more environmentally sound modes of freight, passenger and public transport and an increase in the shares of rail and inland water transport and active mobility, and of ensuring that this shift is based on both circular economy principles, and social and environmental standards,

*Reaffirming* that appropriate and adequate infrastructure for safe pedestrian and cycling mobility, matched with improvements in urban design and quality public transport services and shared mobility concepts, can contribute significantly towards reducing demand for individual motorized transport, particularly high-emission vehicles,

*Recognizing* that solutions to unlock inland transport's potential contribution to global climate change mitigation efforts exist and that scaling them to meet the challenge not only is a matter of political will, technological solutions and financing at the national level, but also hinges on adequately developed international regulatory solutions that allow for harmonized, concerted actions to be deployed in safe, efficient and effective ways nationally, regionally and interregionally,

*Reaffirming* our commitment to the second Decade of Action for Road Safety (2021-2030) focusing on the connection between road safety and climate solutions also stressed at the first High-level Meeting on Improving Global Road Safety in 2022,

*Expressing appreciation* in this regard for the unique role and contribution of the Committee as a United Nations centre that provides a comprehensive platform for the consideration of all aspects of inland transport development and cooperation and pays special attention to interregional and intraregional regulatory governance through the United Nations transport conventions and other means,

[*Declare* our inviolable observance of the UN Principles, namely that all Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations;]

1. *Declare* our steadfast support for the goals and objectives of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and, inter alia, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, to deliver on our climate change solutions and to accelerate the transition to decarbonized mobility and net zero or low emissions in the inland transport sector;

2. *Call upon* member States, when needed for the achievement of those goals and objectives, to promote new national commitments, initiatives and measures aiming at a rapid and significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants from inland transport;

3. *Encourage* member States to include in their nationally determined contributions measures to reduce emissions from inland transport, benefiting from technical deliberations on targets agreed in the framework of the Inland Transport Committee;

4. *Decide* to maintain regular high-level policy dialogues at future Committee sessions on new targets, strategies, plans, challenges and solutions aimed at reducing

greenhouse gas emissions from the inland transport sector to ensure that the Committee addresses this important topic in a systematic way, thereby strengthening its role and contribution;

5. *Encourage* the Committee to further review and, if needed, adapt its workstreams to further orientate its working modalities towards specific actions and road maps that will assist the inland transport sector in reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 through the implementation of a specific series of regulations, tools, recommendations and good practices;

6. *Request* the Committee and its relevant subsidiary bodies to continue efforts towards the further harmonization of performance requirements and intelligent transport system-related principles and efforts to directly contribute to reducing greenhouse gas emissions through the efficient use of energy, for example, through route optimization and optimized driving behaviours, the accelerated substitution of conventionally fuelled vehicles with zero-emission vehicles, the efficient use of transport networks, and therefore the efficient movement of people and cargo, the shift from private cars to public transport and shared mobility, when available, flexible load and storage resources for the power grid (for electric vehicles and automation);

7. *Request* the Committee and its subsidiary bodies and treaty bodies to intensify efforts towards digitalization under the main inland transport conventions, in particular those dealing with carnets, transport documents and certificates, thereby contributing indirectly but solidly to the efforts of concerned countries to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions through the replacement of immeasurable quantities of paper documentation and a significant reduction in the queues of private and commercial vehicles to present and validate those documents;

8. *Call upon* the Committee and its relevant subsidiary bodies to accelerate efforts concerning border crossing facilitation by means of the implementation of conventions such as the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods that could eventually turn borders into bridges, given that slow and cumbersome border crossing operations create extensive queues for several countries at international borders, and in those cases lead to high levels of emissions from significant volumes of private cars and trucks;

9. *Also call upon* the Committee and its relevant subsidiary bodies and informal working groups to reflect upon environmental and energy efficiency considerations of the use of automated vehicles in traffic;

10. *Further call upon* the Committee and its relevant subsidiary bodies to accelerate efforts towards promoting environmentally efficient transport by encouraging, in their workstreams, regulations and policy development that favour the modal shift of passengers and freight towards emission-free road transport, rail, inland waterways and intermodal transport, alongside the promotion of active mobility, and to promote the monitoring of this shift through relevant data collected under existing arrangements and under consideration of the external costs associated with the shift;

11. *Request* the Committee to actively support the task initiated by the Working Party on Pollution and Energy to develop a globally harmonized methodology to determine the carbon footprint of the entire life cycle of road vehicles, including in terms of greenhouse gas emissions from material extraction, vehicle and parts manufacturing, vehicle use, end-of-life processes and recyclability<sup>1</sup>, as well as recognize the life-cycle emissions associated with the transportation infrastructure materials, construction and maintenance as important parts of the total environmental impact of transportation;

12. *Request* the Committee's relevant subsidiary bodies and treaty bodies to accord priority to making timely amendments to the United Nations inland transport legal instruments that support the safe and efficient achievement of targets, commitments and solutions on climate change;

13. *Request* the Committee's relevant subsidiary bodies to facilitate efforts to reduce demand for fossil fuels, increase energy efficiency, develop alternative fuels and the corresponding fuel infrastructure, further develop new alternative energy vehicles, green the inland fleet, enhance automation and connectivity, promote digitalization, introduce the

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<sup>1</sup> See [ECE/TRAN/ITC/2023/21](#), annex III.

circular economy and promote walking and cycling, for example through sharing best practices on appropriate and sufficient infrastructure for safe pedestrian and cycling mobility;

14. *Request* the Committee to provide biennial reports on the latest developments in its work on inland transport in terms of contributing to the global fight against climate change;

15. *Encourage* the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme to continue its efforts on greening transport and mobility and to share good practices with others;

16. *Call upon* the secretariat to provide adequate technical assistance and capacity-building, at the request of Member States, and to promote best practices in support of the needs of States members of the Committee in meeting their climate-related goals and commitments;

17. *Request* the secretariat, in close cooperation with the Bureau of the Committee and relevant subsidiary bodies, to develop a strategy document on reducing greenhouse gas emissions in inland transport on the basis of international United Nations legal instruments under the Committee's purview, containing priority actions for the Committee and all its relevant subsidiary bodies, for consideration by the Committee at its eighty-sixth session;

18. *Urge* the United Arab Emirates and the secretariat to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to ensure a prominent role for transport, including inland transport and the role of the Inland Transport Committee, at the twenty-eighth Conference of the Parties, to be held in the United Arab Emirates.

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