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Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport

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**Activities of Activities of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe bodies –
and other United Nations organizations of interest to the Working Party**

Working Party input into the Inland Transport Committee Climate Change Mitigation Strategy

Submitted by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The Chair of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) has written to all Working Party Chairs to obtain input into the new ITC Climate Change Mitigation Strategy. In particular, the Chair provides an outline of what the strategy should look like and encourages input into these chapters. The outline is set out below:

- I. Inland transport and climate;
- II. ITC vision and mission for climate action;
- III. Strategic objectives;
- IV. ITC-administered instruments to assist in mitigating climate change;
- V. ITC Climate Action Plan with milestones – ITC to help deliver on climate goals;
- VI. List of priorities;
- VII. Resource requirements for the delivery of this Strategy;
- VIII. Strategic Partnerships for the delivery of this Strategy.

2. The Working Party will recall that the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30) had already included in its terms of reference to *initiate and pursue actions aimed at promoting the harmonization, improvement and simplification of technical and operational regulations, standards, rules and documentation for customs and border crossing procedures for the various modes of inland transport and multimodal connections, with particular focus, where possible, on contributing to the advancement of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1.) and related Sustainable Development Goals;*

3. The remainder of this document sets out some initial considerations from the Working Party.

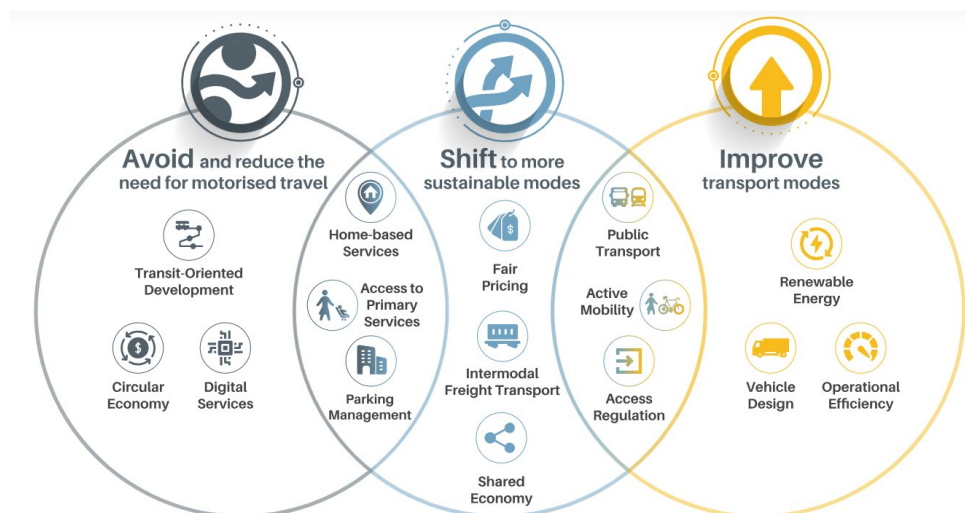
II. Some initial considerations

4. Mitigating climate change means reducing the flow of heat-trapping greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. This involves cutting greenhouse gases from main sources such as power plants, factories, cars, and farms. Reducing and avoiding our emissions requires us to reshape everything we do — from how we power our economy and grow our food, to how we travel and live, and the products we consume.

5. The Customs-climate change linkage is not intuitive. Customs regulates cross-border movements of goods and is traditionally associated with responsibilities such as revenue collection, anti-smuggling, supply chain security, trade facilitation, and gathering trade statistics.

6. Applying the Avoid-Shift-Improve (ASI) measures through integrated, inter-modal and balanced approaches is critical to unleashing the full benefits of sustainable, low carbon transport. The ASI framework has been central to sustainable, low carbon transport for more than a decade (SLOCAT). This approach will be mainly used for the development of the ITC strategy on climate change mitigation.

Figure 1
Avoid-Shift-Improve (ASI) measures



Source: SLOCAT

7. The ASI approach follows an implicit hierarchy, with appropriate and context sensitive Avoid measures intended to be implemented first, followed by Shift measures and finally by Improve measures. This prioritization can help reduce environmental impact, improve access to socio-economic opportunities, increase logistics efficiency, reduce congestion, improve air quality, and increase road safety.

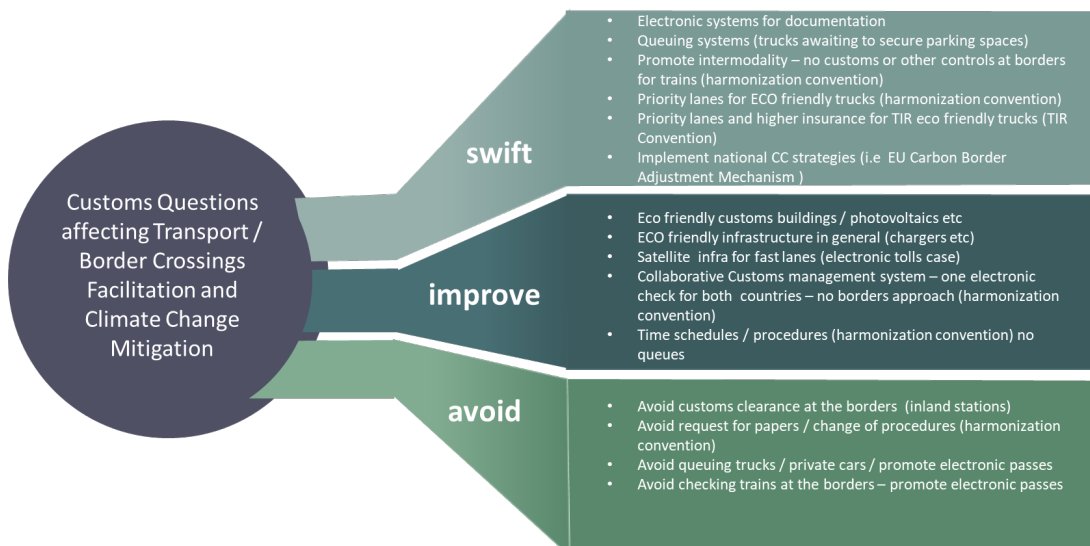
- AVOID: Avoiding unnecessary motorised trips based on proximity and accessibility.
- SHIFT: Shifting to less carbon-intensive modes – that is, from private vehicles to public transport, shared mobility, walking and cycling, water-based freight, electrified road-rail freight, and cargo bikes for last-mile deliveries, among other.
- IMPROVE: Improving vehicle design, energy efficiency and clean energy sources for different types of freight and passenger vehicle.

8. The ASI measures as described by SLOCAT are very “vehicles” focused and trying to implement it at border crossings management / operations and customs services might provide limited results. Following the secretariat tries to implement the ASI approach but by replacing the SHIFT with the SWIFT and use the measures with a broader definition.

SWIFT measures

- a. Electronic systems for documentation. Customs officers require a series of documents from trucks, private cars and trains depending on the cargoes they carry, the country of origin, the country of origin of the company, their risk analysis parameters etc. Those documents are normally connected with international conventions (TIR, CMR, CPD, CIM, SMGS, Phytosanitary etc). In order for the vehicles to cross the borders without stopping, all these documentations should be online / electronic and have been sent to customs in advance. Therefore Customs Authorities should start asking for electronic data, implement existing electronic solutions (eTIR, eCMR, eCPD, ePhyto etc), participate or require the existence of platforms that integrate these information. (TIR Convention, CMR Convention, Temporary Importation Conventions, Harmonization Convention etc)
- b. Queuing systems (trucks awaiting to secure parking spaces). Customs should introduce / adopt practices and systems such as queuing systems that permit to trucks the booking of the time and the day that they will cross the borders having also sent electronically the documentation required. Therefore, the trucks instead of queuing in kilometers along the roads before the borders can wait at safe parking spaces and reach the customs only at the time and date booked. (might be a future amendment of the Harmonization Convention)
- c. Promote intermodality – no customs or other controls at borders for trains (might be a future amendment to harmonization convention). Customs could adopt practices and that promote intermodality by completely reducing any controls to trains fully permitting their customs control in inland stations.
- d. Priority lanes for ECO friendly trucks (might be a future amendment to the harmonization convention). Priority lanes should be created for ECO friendly trucks (electric, hydrogen etc)
- e. Priority lanes and improved insurance for TIR eco-friendly trucks (might be a future amendment to the TIR Convention). ECO friendly trucks could have improved insurance rates and dedicated lanes.
- f. Implement national, regional and international CC mitigation strategies (i.e EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism). Carbon imports tariffs are a climate mitigation policy where Customs is frequently the administering agency. For instance, Carbon leakage occurs when companies based in the EU move carbon-intensive production abroad to countries where less stringent climate policies are in place than in the EU, or when EU products get replaced by more carbon-intensive imports. The EU’s Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) is a landmark tool to put a fair price on the carbon emitted during the production of carbon intensive goods that are entering the EU, and to encourage cleaner industrial production in non-EU countries.

Figure 2
WP.30 and Climate Change Mitigation Strategy



Source: secretariat

IMPROVE measures

- a. ECO friendly customs buildings / photovoltaics etc .
- b. ECO friendly infrastructure in general (chargers etc)
- c. Satellite infrastructure for fast lanes (electronic tolls case). Trucks and cars have the electronic card on their windshield. The card is scanned while crossing the green / fast lane which is connected with customs systems. All documentation has been sent in advance, electronically, (risk analysis has been undertaken) therefore the truck passes without stopping at all.
- d. Collaborative Customs management system – one electronic check for both countries – no borders approach (might be a future amendment to harmonization convention)
- e. Time schedules / procedures (might be a future amendment to harmonization convention) no queues.

AVOID measures

- a. Avoid customs clearance at the borders (inland stations). This is a best practice followed by many countries that dramatically reduces congestion at the borders.
 - b. Avoid request for papers / change of procedures (might be a future amendment to harmonization convention). The rules are changing when customs are changing their requirements. Customs should stop asking for paper-based documentation and promote the electronic one.
 - c. Avoid queuing trucks / private cars / promote electronic passes
 - d. Avoid checking trains at the borders – promote electronic passes
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