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Informal Document 2024/9

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 ECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) was last reported to on 16 March 2023 following the eighty-fifth annual session of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) (Geneva, 21-24 February 2023), including on ITC business-critical decisions requiring EXCOM approval.
2. The period since the full report to EXCOM in March 2023, was marked by historic achievements (see section on the ITC Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Inland Transport) and several challenges due to the organization-wide hire freeze and liquidity crisis. This report will offer a succinct account of the above developments.
3. Faced with a gradual return to normality, after two years of unprecedented challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the liquidity crisis and the Strategic Heritage Plan (SHP), ECE faced continued challenges due to the budget freeze that started in 2023, which had and continues to have a severe impact on filling vacant posts in the Sustainable Transport Division.
4. In 2023, the secretariat serviced 21 Working Parties, 11 Administrative Committees and seven Groups of Experts for amending, acceding to and implementing the existing 61 UN legal instruments on inland transport administered by ECE, and forging new conventions/agreements, protocols and resolutions. The conventions/agreements cover road traffic safety, vehicle regulations, transport of dangerous goods and perishable foodstuffs, environmental performance, cross-border facilitation and customs questions affecting transport 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, 16 and 17.

B. 86th annual session of the Inland Transport Committee

5. The eighty-sixth session of ITC (Geneva, 20-23 February 2024) was dedicated to “Taking ambitious climate action - Moving towards decarbonized inland transport by 2050”. The High-level segment attracted Transport Ministers from all UN Regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East. The main highlights of the session (see ECE/TRANS/344) included:
 - (a) The adoption of the ITC Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Inland Transport and the endorsement of the High-level Statement of Support to the adoption of the ITC Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Inland Transport (ECE/TRANS/344, Annexes I and II) by Ministers and Heads of Delegations of countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Middle East.
 - (b) A high-level side event on the ITC Road Safety Forum organized on 20 February 2024.
 - (c) A high-level side event of the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) on the implementation of the SPECA Roadmap for the Digitalization of Multimodal Data and Document Exchange along the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor, Using United Nations Legal Instruments and Standards, organized on 21 February 2024;
 - (d) A high-level side event titled “Towards Sustainable Transportation: Best Practices, Challenges and Solutions”, organized on 22 February 2024 by ECE together with Turkmenistan.

(e) The ITC Roundtable on “Fostering the digital and green transition for inland transport in support of the Sustainable Development Agenda” organized on 23 February 2024.

6. The Committee adopted the main decisions (as contained in ECE/TRANS/344 and ECE/TRANS/L.1 and Add.1). The most relevant for EXCOM are:

(a) Decision 4 adopting the ITC Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Inland Transport, expressing its encouragement to support, as the United Nations Platform for Inland Transport, the Strategy’s aspirational goal of net zero greenhouse gas emissions from inland transport by 2050;

(b) Decision 9 on the continued alignment of the Rules of Procedure of ITC subsidiary bodies to those of the Committee, in line with its decision at its eighty-second session;

(c) Decision 10 on the fourth cycle of reviews of Working Parties’ mandates by their parent sectoral committees, in line with the outcomes of the 2005 reform of UNECE;

(d) Decisions 15-21 on the establishment of a new Group of Experts to promote rail passenger transport and the adoption of its terms of reference, as well as on extensions of existing bodies, and the alignment of the TOR and ROP of ITC Working Parties;

(e) Decision 23 adopting the programme of work of the Transport subprogramme for 2024;

(f) Decision 28 reflecting the outcomes of the elections for the positions of ITC Chair, Vice-Chairs and Bureau members;

(g) Decision 71 on the translation of parliamentary documents for the Revisions Committee of the Model Rules on the Permanent Identification of Railway Rolling Stock into all UN languages;

(h) Decision 72 on the new, sixty-first legal instrument under the purview of ITC promoting transport of cargo by rail as a first Convention of a system of Unified Railway Law Conventions.

7. The Committee further discussed the request for hybrid meetings enabling remote participation, which was raised by the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) and the Revisions Committee to the Model Rules on the Permanent Identification of Railway Rolling Stock (SC.2/RC.1), as well as the ITC Bureau, over the past year.

C. Highlights of achievements in 2023 and 2024

1. Adoption of the ITC Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Inland Transport

8. In February 2023, at its eighty-fifth annual session, the Committee recognized the urgent need for inland transport, the main contributor to CO₂ emissions, to become part of the solutions’ mix. The Committee decided to strengthen its role and contribution in the fight against climate change and requested the secretariat to develop an ambitious strategy document for reducing GHG emissions in inland transport, based on international United Nations legal instruments under the Committee’s purview with priority actions for the ITC and all its relevant subsidiary bodies, and supported by a strong action plan with milestones (ECE/TRANS/328, para 60 (a)).

9. Following this decision, the secretariat, in close cooperation with the Committee’s Bureau and relevant subsidiary bodies, developed the ITC Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Inland Transport, with the aspirational goal of net zero emissions from inland transport by 2050. The initial ITC Climate Action Plan with milestones, as contained in section V of the Strategy, serves as a living document and will be reviewed by the

Committee biennially. The Strategy was finalized through a multi-stage, substantial consultation process with the ITC Bureau, ECE member States and Contracting Parties to the legal instruments under the Committee’s purview.

10. At its eighty-sixth annual session in February 2024, the Committee adopted the ITC Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Inland Transport and expressed its encouragement to support, as the United Nations Platform for Inland Transport, the Strategy’s aspirational goal of net zero greenhouse gas emissions from inland transport by 2050. Ministers and Heads of Delegation attending the eighty-sixth session further endorsed the High-level Statement of Support to the adoption of the ITC Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions, as contained in Annex I to ECE/TRANS/344.

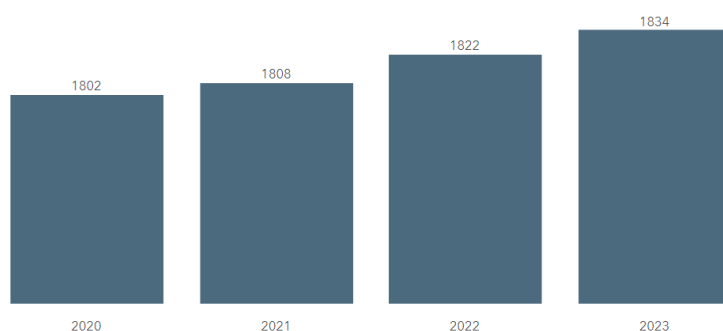
11. Noting that in 2019, Inland transport accounted for 72 per cent of global transport greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, with 69 per cent originating from road transport followed by inland shipping and rail, the inland transport sector is clearly the main contributor to GHG emissions from transport and bears a unique responsibility for reducing emissions and contributing to climate change mitigation. The ambitious Strategy adopted by ITC at its 86th session will help the inland transport sector to take the urgent climate action that is needed.

2. Regulatory governance and new accessions

12. In March 2024, there were sixty-one legal instruments on inland transport concluded under the purview of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC). Out of the sixty-one legal instruments, twelve have not yet entered into force. The summary tables on the status of signatures, ratifications and accessions for all legal instruments are available at www.unece.org/trans/conventn/intro.html.

13. The number of contracting parties increased to 1,834 with 13 new contracting parties to 8 legal instruments in 2023 and 2024¹. Despite the positive trend, as can be seen in Figure I below, the rate of accessions remained low compared to the need for a universally harmonized inland transport system.

Figure I
Annual Growth of Contracting Parties to Legal Instruments on Inland Transport under the purview of the Inland Transport Committee



¹ **Andorra 1 legal instrument** (1958 Agreement); **Belarus 1 legal instrument** (Convention on the Facilitation of Border Crossing Procedures for Passengers, Luggage and Load-luggage Carried in International Traffic by Rail); **Egypt 2 legal instruments** (1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals; 1968 Convention on Road Traffic); **Greece 1 legal instrument** (e-CMR); **Iraq 1 legal instrument** (TIR Convention); **Kyrgyzstan 1 legal instrument** (1958 Agreement); **Maldives 2 legal instruments** (1968 Convention on Road Traffic; 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals); **Türkiye 3 legal instruments** (1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals; European Agreement supplementing the Convention on Road Signs and Signals; 1973 Protocol on Road Markings); **Viet Nam 1 legal instrument** (1958 Agreement).

14. Maldives is the latest (152nd) UN Member State to become contracting party to at least one of the legal instruments under the purview of ITC.

15. The most important regulatory achievements are listed below. For a full report, please see the 2023 annual report of the Inland Transport Committee (ECE/TRANS/2024/30).

Customs Questions affecting Transport and Border Crossing Facilitation.

16. There was a major accomplishment for WP.30 and TIR Administrative Committee (AC.2) in 2023. The first ever eTIR transport was conducted after the entry into force, on 25 May 2021, of a package of amendment proposals introducing the electronic TIR procedure, known as the eTIR procedure, in the legal text of the TIR Convention, 1975 and new Annex 11.

17. The status regarding the interconnections of eTIR international system with the National Customs Systems stands as follows:

(a) Azerbaijan, Georgia, Pakistan, Tunisia and Uzbekistan have finalised the interconnection of their national customs systems with the eTIR international system,

(b) IRU has finalised the interconnection of its information technology systems with the eTIR international system,

(c) For Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, funds were made available by Regular programme of technical cooperation (RPTC) budget and national consultants have been hired and the interconnection projects have started,

(d) Iran (Islamic Republic of) has expressed interest to interconnect to the system and technical meetings were already organised.

(e) India and Ukraine have also expressed interest to initiate the interconnection projects and technical meetings will be organised during 2024.

18. The Annex 11 to the TIR Convention stipulates that Contracting Parties bound by Annex 11 shall connect their customs systems to the eTIR international system in line with the eTIR specifications. ECE shall assist countries in connecting their customs systems to the eTIR international system, including by means of conformance tests to ensure their proper functioning prior to the operational connection. A full interconnection lasts for at least twelve months where considerable resources are required from both the secretariat and the customs authority. The TIR Secretariat in order to drastically reduce the resources and time required to perform the interconnection project designed and developed a new application, the eTIR National Application (eTIR NA).

19. The eTIR NA will be offered to Customs Authorities at no cost and it is already interconnected with the eTIR international system. Customs officers, after following a short training session will be able to immediately perform the eTIR procedure since the application administers all eTIR messages required, it has its own user interface and database, and no interconnections are required. The interconnection time with the use of TIR NA will be reduced to one, maximum two months.

20. The twelfth revised version of the TIR Handbook, to be issued in 2024, is under preparation. TIRExB is in the process of drafting a set of new examples of best practices to add to the already existing set of examples. These examples refer to Explanatory Note 0.49 and comment thereto on the use of authorized consignor and consignee and to a comment on article 1 (o) on the use of subcontractors. On top of a PDF version, the secretariat intends to produce a more interactive, online version.

21. The ECE Secretariat prepared in collaboration with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), "A practical guide to cross-border facilitation". The publication provides good practices and case studies on border crossing facilitation and was issued in English, French and Russian in the first quarter of 2024.

22. At its 164th session (October 2023), WP.30 was briefed about the latest development in the implementation of a MoU between ECE and the Alliance Internationale de Tourisme / Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (AIT/FIA) on revitalising and digitalizing relevant United Nations inland transport conventions and, in particular, the development of an eCPD (Carnet de Passage en Douane) system.

23. The first session of the ad hoc informal group of experts on the digitalization of CPDs took place on the 14 December 2023, online with the participation of many customs authorities and private sector associations / clubs of FIA Secretariat. The experts had the opportunity to discuss for first time all the issues related to the efficient digitalisation of CPDs including several improvements of the current procedure that might be included. The next session of the group will take place in April 2024.

24. At its 164th session (October 2023), WP.30 adopted its new Terms of Reference and slightly revised Rules of Procedure in order to be fully aligned with the new ITC TOR. In addition, WP.30 decided to change its name to *Global forum on customs questions affecting transport including border crossing facilitation*, acknowledging that the 17 UN Conventions administered by the Working Party and the Working Party's work have global character and recognition.

Vehicle Regulations

25. Following the restructuring of WP.29 in June 2018 to implement ITC Decision No. 19 of 2018 and the establishment of the Working Party on Automated/Autonomous and Connected Vehicles (GRVA), WP.29 and its subsidiary bodies worked according to the Framework Document on Automated/Autonomous Vehicles (ECE/TRANS/WP.29/2019/34/Rev.2), endorsed by ITC at its eighty-second session, which guided the work on automated vehicles. This work, led by Co-Chairs from America, Asia and Europe, is performed in line with the safety vision, key safety elements, and guidance provided by the framework document to the Working Parties of WP.29 and in line with the programme of activities included in its annex, which is aimed to be suitable for the countries under the regime of type approval and the countries under the regime of self-certification. These activities form an initiative aimed at harmonizing globally automated vehicles regulations and creating a more productive environment for innovation. In 2023, the highlights produced under the Framework Document include a further update of the New Assessment/Test Method for Automated Driving (NATM) – Master Document, the work of a common final document representing the work of the IWGs on Functional Requirements for Automated and Autonomous Vehicles (FRAV) and on Validation Methods for Automated Driving (VMAD), which is considered as a basis for new regulations for Automated Driving Systems under both the 1958 and 1998 Agreements as well as the draft recommendations for automotive cyber security and software update.

26. Furthermore, GRVA embarked on the process of drafting a UN Regulation for Driver Control Assistance Systems (DCAS). With this new provisions, currently available and already widely spread technologies still under Level 2 of automation, will be clearly distinguished from those providing for full automated driving and thus allowing drivers to engage in other tasks than driving (see also Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) Resolution on safety considerations for activities other than driving undertaken by drivers when automated driving systems issuing transition demands exercise dynamic control) still requesting drivers to stay in control.

27. WP.29, through the activities of the Working Party on Pollution and Energy, are also steadily increasing activities to provide regulatory support to alternative powertrain and promote circular economy. Activities to measure non-exhaust particulate emissions, from tyre and brake, are being completed and implemented. Activities to support vehicle electrification, for example by providing support for increase battery durability, has been recently finalized for cars and vans, and will be expanded for trucks and buses.

28. Another key milestone activity from GRPE was the initiation of activities to look at the carbon footprint of automotive product through their entire Life Cycle Analysis (A-LCA). This forms a strong shift in vehicle regulatory approach to not only use at the use phase, but also the material extraction, construction and end-of-life phases.

1958 Agreement

29. WP.29 established a new UN Regulation No. [168] on global Real Driving Emissions that will contribute to the protection of the environment and provide realistic information on emission of air pollution of cars and vans. With the new UN Regulation No. [169] on Event Data Recorder for heavy Duty Vehicles, traffic crash investigations involving these vehicles will benefit from access to information captured immediately before and during the crash. The new UN Regulation No. [170] for Restraint systems for Safer Transport of Children in buses will largely contribute to increased safety for the most vulnerable group, children, during crashes when transported in buses.

30. Existing UN Regulations and related Resolutions were updated by 114 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.

31. As funding for the hosting of DETA at the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) could not be secured so far both under the regular budget or extra budgetary resources. WP.29 was grateful to Germany who is currently hosting the system on an interim basis. WP.29 would continue to look into possibilities for sustained solutions for the funding of the hosting of DETA.

32. As regards the development of additional functionalities/modules of DETA, the International Motor Vehicle Inspection Committee reconfirmed its readiness to finance the development of the module for Declaration of Conformity (DoC). The further development of the module for the Unique Identifier (UI), which was paused as an assessment of its general applicability for all of the UN Regulations, is ongoing. A potential optional approach is subject to ongoing discussions among contracting parties.

1997 Agreements

33. At its 191st session, WP.29 adopted the draft framework document on vehicle whole-life compliance, which provides for a compliance regime for vehicles from type-approval via periodic technical inspections, roadside technical inspections until its end-of-life and scrapping by applying a holistic approach.

34. WP.29 also adopted an amendment to Resolution R.E.6 (test equipment, skills and training of inspectors and supervision) introducing requirements for test equipment for particulate number counting. It established an amendment to UN Rule No. 1 (Protection of the Environment) introducing the particulate counting test as an alternative for diesel powered vehicles of emission levels 5/V and 6/VI. This new diesel emission test during periodic technical inspections would contribute to further protection of the environment.

1998 Agreement

35. In 2023, WP.29 concluded several years of work on a new UN Global Technical Regulations (UN GTR) and established UN GTR No. 24 on laboratory Measurements of Brake Emissions for Light-Duty Vehicles. Non-exhaust particulate emissions, coming from brake, tyres and road abrasion, represents an increasing share of particulate emissions from vehicle use. Such procedure, together with not-to-exceed limits, will ensure overall particulate emission are reduced to improve air quality, especially close to road networks.

36. WP.29 established an amendment to UN GTR No. 13 (Hydrogen and Fuel Cell vehicles) and one amendment to Mutual Resolution No. 1 (M.R.1) on the description and performance of test tools and devices necessary for the assessment of compliance of wheeled vehicles, equipment and parts according to the technical prescriptions specified in UN Regulations and UN GTRs. This will adapt the UN GTRs to the most recent technological

innovations and introduce more stringent requirements aimed at increasing both the safety and environmental performance of vehicles.

Transport of Dangerous Goods

37. In 2023, international legal instruments regulating air, maritime and land transport of dangerous goods that were updated following the transposition of the provisions contained in the Model Regulations (22nd revised edition) and the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) (9th revised edition) prepared by ECE secretariat in 2022 entered into force or could be applied in a voluntary basis since 1 January 2023. For inland transport, the provisions of the 2023 edition of ADR, RID and ADN which were adopted by the relevant intergovernmental bodies in 2022, ensure alignment with those in the 22nd revised edition of the Model Regulations and entered into force on 1 January 2023. They became mandatory for the international transport of dangerous goods by road, rail and inland waterways between the contracting parties to these agreements (54 for ADR, 45 for RID and 18 for ADN) and for domestic traffic in all European Union Member States.

38. Following the endorsement by the ECOSOC Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals of the recommendations made by its two sub-committees, the secretariat prepared, for worldwide implementation and use, new consolidated revised editions of the Model Regulations (Rev.23) and the GHS (Rev.10) as well as the 8th revised edition of the Manual of Tests and Criteria. The work in 2023 of both sub-committees contributed again to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the social, economic and environmental areas, and in particular to sustainable development goals 3, 6, 8, 12, 13, 14, 16 and 17.

39. At its 113th and 114th sessions, the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (WP.15) welcomed the actions of ITC on climate change adaptation and mitigation, and contributed to the development of the ITC strategy on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in inland transport. Its work was guided in particular by United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages), 11 (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable) and 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts). In 2023, WP.15 endorsed the common amendments to RID, ADR and ADN adopted by the RID/ADR/ADN Joint Meeting (WP.15/AC.1) during the biennium; adopted amendments specific to ADR, e.g. as regards construction and equipment of vehicles for the carriage of dangerous goods; requested the secretariat to prepare a consolidated list of all the amendments which it had adopted, so that they could be made the subject of an official proposal in accordance with the procedure set out in article 14 of ADR. All these amendments should come into force on 1 January 2025. This new set of amendments include provisions to extend the use of battery electric vehicles and enable the use of vehicles powered by hydrogen fuel cells and hydrogen for vehicle transporting dangerous goods.

40. The Committee took note of the recent publication on the ECE website of the ADR 2023 version in Arabic and noted that there is still the need to find still an option for funding the recurrent translation of the future versions of the ADR into Arabic.

41. The ADN Administrative Committee met on 26 January 2024 (see ECE/ADN/67), mainly to adopt all draft amendments prepared by the Safety Committee in 2023 and January 2024, i.e. the set of amendments that should enter into force on 1 January 2025 and that would ensure harmonization of ADN with ADR and RID.

42. The Committee noted that the ADN Safety Committee has adopted a wide range of new provisions concerning the carriage of dangerous goods in inland navigation vessels at its sessions held on 21 to 25 August 2023 and on 22 to 26 January 2024.

43. The Committee endorsed the request by WP.15 and the Administrative Committee of the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways (ADN) that the consolidated text of ADR and ADN as they would be

amended on 1 January 2025 be published by the secretariat, sufficiently in advance to prepare for its effective implementation before the entry into force of the amendments in question.

44. The Committee emphasised the importance of the work of the ADN Safety Committee within the framework of mitigating and adapting to climate change. This includes the development and improvement of provisions for the transport of dangerous goods on vessels that use of hydrogen fuel cell or methanol as fuel for their propulsion with the ultimate goal of greening inland waterways fleets.

Road Traffic Safety

45. In 2023, WP.1 continued its work in ensuring that new in-vehicle technology is – when deemed necessary – accompanied by new traffic rules. For example, WP.1 exchanged information with WP.29 and its subsidiary bodies by – among others – inviting the Working Party on Automated/Autonomous and Connected Vehicles (GRVA) Chair to its sessions, by planning and proposing joint events to share views and experience on the recent rapid technological advancements, and to offer timely provision of the appropriate guidelines for the road environment of the future.

46. In addition, WP.1 has finalized the amendment proposals to incorporate technical progress in the area of lighting and light signalling devices; is close to finalizing an overhaul of the 1968 Convention on Road Signs and Signals; is exploring digital driving permits; continues considering policy challenges of remote driving; and will keep overseeing the work of its Group of Experts on drafting a new legal instrument on the use of automated vehicles in traffic.

47. Finally, WP.1 will continue exploring the definition and role of the driver, driver education and training, and the possibility of contributing to developing a glossary of terminology for automated vehicles, which would be based on the initial draft prepared by WP.29. Developing a framework of key principles for automated vehicle safety and human centred needs may become an important element of the WP.1 workplan in 2024. Also in 2024, in the context of ITS, the exchange of views will be continued with expected contributions from eminent academics and experts on many pertinent issues.

Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs

48. The Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be Used for such Carriage (ATP) is intended to ensure that deep-frozen and chilled foodstuffs are transported efficiently, safely and hygienically and do not pose a danger to human health. It also helps countries avoid the waste of food through spoilage caused by poor temperature control during carriage.

49. Fifty-two countries – including non-ECE countries (Islamic Republic of Iran, Morocco, Tunisia and Saudi Arabia) are contracting parties to the ATP.

50. The ATP agreement provides common standards for temperature-controlled transport equipment such as road vehicles, railway wagons and containers and the tests to ensure the insulating capacity of the equipment and the effectiveness of thermal appliances. By regulating the equipment and by ensuring the carriage of perishable foodstuffs under harmonized and high-level conditions that preserve their quality, the ATP contributes to:

- (a) Facilitate the trade of temperature-sensitive goods,
- (b) Create a level playing field in the road haulage industry that ensures the quality and safety of the transported goods (target 8.2),
- (c) Prevention of possible diseases from products arriving for consumption under poor conditions of preservation (target 3.d).
- (d) The transport of chilled and deep-frozen foodstuffs impacts on climate change on a number of levels:

- (e) Use of new insulating foams and blowing agents that are both safe for the ozone layer and highly effective (target 9.5);
- (f) Determination of fuel consumption of vehicle-powered refrigeration units in order to increase energy efficiency and reduce emissions;
- (g) Determination of the insulating capacity of isothermal transport equipment (K value) that directly influences the final CO₂ emissions of a thermal engine;
- (h) Develop energy-labelling schemes or minimum-efficiency standards for the refrigerated transport industry, which have shown a push of the market towards more energy-efficient products (target 9.4).

51. ATP contributes to the overall reduction of food waste due to inadequate transport conditions. The waste of millions of tonnes of foodstuffs is also a waste of very scarce or non-renewable resources in production, such as land, water, energy, and chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and contributes to global warming. Food security is also affected by the waste of foodstuffs (targets 2.1 and 2.2, target 8.4 and targets 12.2, 12.3 and 12.5).

52. The ECE secretariat prepared a revised consolidated edition of the ATP agreement to take account the amendments accepted during 2021-2022. Activities in the transport of perishable foodstuffs contribute to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions (economic, social and environmental), in particular as it relates to Sustainable Development Goals 2, 3, 8, 9 and 12 and their related targets.

Road Transport

53. In 2023, SC.1 strengthened and advanced its programme of work. The SC.1 Group of Experts on Operationalization of eCMR (GE.22) met three times and prepared an extensive report containing proposed conceptual and functional specifications of a future eCMR system, operational procedures, use case analysis and historical review of the development of the CMR Convention and analysis on the use of consignment notes in different geographical regions by customs. At its 118th session, SC.1 decided to seek an extension of the mandate of GE.22 at the 86th session of ITC in February 2024 until October 2025 for up to three sessions per year comprised of up to three days/session, to complete its tasks and report to SC.1 at its 120th session, and subject to absorption within ECE deliverables.

54. The work of SC.1 in promoting safe and sustainable road infrastructure continued. Also, at its 118th session, SC.1 decided to create an informal group of experts on road infrastructure good practices. The informal group of experts will work with the Trans-European North-South Motorway Project (TEM) Project Manager and the secretariat on the development of a proposed capacity-building collaboration between SC.1 and the TEM Project with an initial focus on road safety inspections and road safety audits for the ECE region. As a first step in considering its contribution to the ITC Strategy on reducing greenhouse gas emissions from inland transport, SC.1 decided to include this matter as regular agenda item from its next session in 2024. In addition, SC.1 proposes to organize a half-day workshop, assisted by the secretariat, with presentations from industry and government to generate discussion and ideas on the contribution by SC.1.

55. On 31 October 2023, a second workshop on cross-border insurance of motor vehicles was organized by the secretariat jointly with ECA, ECLAC and ESCAP. The workshop was hosted by COB at its premises in Brussels and participants were able to attend in person or virtually. Outcomes included the reaffirmation of the importance of having compulsory third party insurance for all motor vehicles as part of national road safety programs, the need for stronger cooperation between the different card systems, and the desire to work towards a greater harmonization of respective card systems via reinsurance and/or pooling, and other relevant cross-system cooperation.

56. Driving times and rest periods for professional drivers continued to be an important aspect of SC.1's work. Its subsidiary body, the Group of Experts on the European Agreement Concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles Engaged in International Road Transport (AETR)

continued its work on reconciliation of the AETR region in European Union and non-European Union AETR contracting parties as well as towards the introduction of the smart tachograph, following its application in the European Union as of June 2019.

57. Finally, throughout the year, following extensive reviews and discussions by the European Commission Services and ECE Secretariat, both sides were able to overcome legal barriers which allowed them to sign the Administrative Arrangement to extend the 2009 Memorandum of Understanding between the European Commission Services and ECE which recognizes the Joint Research Centre as the authority responsible for Root and Interoperability Certification for non-European Union AETR Contracting Parties, for the period 15 November 2023 to 31 May 2024 as the first step.

Rail Transport

58. Building on the successes of previous years, the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) continued to provide cutting-edge policy and regulatory contributions to the sector. During the Working Party session, a workshop was held titled The Future of International Rail Passenger Transport. Over 80 registered delegates exchanged views, best practices and concrete examples on how best to ensure that the railways can deal with climate related emergencies.

59. In 2023 it saw a major amendment to the European Agreement on Main and International Railway Lines (AGC) by contracting parties introducing the concept of International Railway Passenger Hubs to the AGC network with the aim of further facilitating access to the railways and encouraging modal shift away from other modes of transport.

60. At its session in February 2023, ITC adopted the Model Rules on the Permanent Identification of Railway Rolling Stock and the creation of its Revisions Committee which facilitates the identification of rolling stock across the world, thus making their financing easier and cheaper and, consequently facilitating further modal shift to rail resulting in a reduced environmental footprint of the transport sector. At the first session of the Revisions Committee, an amendment to the Model Rules was prepared which was then adopted by the Working Party on Rail Transport at its November session.

61. The Working Party also proceeded with the finalisation of a new Convention on the Contract of Carriage of goods by rail. During a special session of the Working Party the draft text of the Convention was finalised and at the regular session of the Working Party in December, member States present adopted the Convention on the Contract of Carriage of Goods by Rail as the first of a system of Conventions on Unified Railway Law which has now been opened for signature.

Intermodal Transport

62. The Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24) continued its effort to strengthen the frameworks for sustainable intermodal transport and logistics operations as well as the intermodal transport and logistics policies in the ECE region. They also worked to enhance cooperation of ECE member countries on intermodal transport and logistics through the exchange of experiences and good practices.

63. WP.24 held a workshop on ways to create demand for intermodal transport and on ways to analyse the potential for modal shift. The workshop focused on exploring freight transport pricing, reliability, but also knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of different freight transport operations in the sector and by society at large. The discussion was aimed at exchanging practices and experience and at creating better understanding of the variety of measures to be put at the disposal of the sector to bring a level-playing field to the freight sector, but also about action needed to improve the business case for intermodal/combined transport. The potential actions for creating more demand for intermodal transport can be consulted at the workshop's webpage at: <https://unece.org/info/Transport/Intermodal-Transport/events/386576>.

64. WP.24 continued its work to modernize the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations. Like the previous years, the Agreement was further updated on lines and installations to reflect the planned or implemented changes to the network and installations. A new tool has been further updated, based on GIS, which allows member States, operators and other stakeholders to identify the minimum parameters of the network. The tool helps, among others benefits, to better understand the degree of the implementation of the Agreement.

65. WP.24 elaborated an initial version of a framework on information and document digitalization for intermodal transport. This framework discusses data and information flows between parties involved in a carriage of intermodal transport, among them consignor, consignee, carrier and subsequent carriers. This also concerns data and information exchanges in circumstances preventing carriage or delivery or in case of missing goods, or when subsequent instructions on carriage are provided. WP.24 would continue to refine its framework. It would hold a simulation in 2024 on a carriage facing challenges such as e.g. cargo loss or damage to verify all the necessary data and information flows to be recorded.

66. WP.24 started its work on elaboration of a handbook on automation in freight intermodal transport and logistics. It also continued its discussion on how to set up, if possible, appropriate targets for intermodal transport based on rail unitization rate and rail modal share for ECE countries for this purpose.

67. WP.24 also noted the progress made and agreed with specific proposals for updates to the CTU Code. It would continue working on these updates with relevant bodies of International Labour Organization and International Maritime Organisation with the aim to have the revised CTU Code adopted in the near future. Further to the ITC decision it would lead the process in 2024 to consider restructuring the CTU Code into CTU Code Core and Supplement.

Inland Water Transport

68. The Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) and its subsidiary body, the Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation (SC.3/WP.3) continued their activities in 2023.

3. Policy dialogue, capacity building and analytical activities

Road Safety

69. 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.

70. The ITC at its eighty-sixth session (20-23 February 2024) reiterated its concern for the limited progress globally in meeting the Sustainable Development Goal targets on road safety and welcomed the update on the implementation of the “Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030” (Global Plan) and expressed its satisfaction for the seamless integration in the Global Plan of the core United Nations Road Safety Conventions under the purview of the Committee, as well as the “ITC Recommendations for Enhancing National Road Safety Systems” (ITC Recommendations). Reiterated that, in line with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 74/299 on “Improving global road safety”, ECE partnered with WHO and its sister United Nations Regional Commissions to develop the Global Plan.

71. In 2022, ECE updated the methodology for performing the Road Safety Performance Reviews (RSPR). The updated methodology follows the ITC Recommendations² requirements and incorporates experiences from four undertaken RSPR. In general, updated

² ITC Recommendations for Enhancement of National Road Safety Systems, 2021.

RSPR methodology is more structured and simpler without compromising on RSPR quality. The preparation of two RSPR reports was launched in 2022 – RSPR Uzbekistan and RSPR Moldova. Both RSPR were completed in 2023, resulting in comprehensive reports with recommendations on how to improve national road safety systems. In 2023 two policy dialogues on RSPR recommendations in both countries and three capacity development events to strengthen national capacities to mitigate the most pressing road safety issues, were held.

72. In 2022, Georgia adopted a national road safety strategy with parts of the strategy based on findings and recommendations of the 2018 UNECE Road Safety Performance Review. Additionally, in 2022 ECE provided a report on benefits of the use of safety belts on rear seats, child restraint systems, and speed management, as well as on international best practice and potential benefits, which helped Georgian legislators with their decision on the introduction of proposed measures. Findings of the report were presented in the international road safety workshop in Tbilisi in October 2022.

73. Based on identified gaps in Georgia RSPR, UNECE worked hand-in-hand with the Georgian stakeholders on preparation of updates on national legislation on safe vehicles. Amendments on the Law on Motor Transport, draft Technical Regulation on procedures for granting Type Approval and designation of Technical Service provider pursuant to the 1958 Agreement and Action plan for efficient implementation of the 1958 Agreement in Georgia were adopted in 2022. In 2023, UNECE completed the report on development and implementation of administrative process for Type Approval in the LEPL Land Transport Agency and organized a workshop to present results of the report. In that way, UNECE strengthened capacities of Georgian institutions to regulate import/export of vehicles for sustainable, safe and environmentally friendly vehicle fleet and to support further development of national automotive industry. This task is included in the Georgian National Road Safety Strategy 2023-2030 too.

74. Having in mind ongoing fruitful cooperation in the United Nations Road Safety Fund-funded project on in-depth analysis of road accidents, the Road Traffic Safety Agency of the Republic of Serbia (RTSA) requested UNECE to provide technical assistance in implementation of several activities defined in the National Road Safety Strategy 2030. The RTSA requested analysis and expert's advice of enhancement of RSA/RSI system in Serbia in accordance with international recommendations and the best practice. Report will be completed in March 2024 and presented at regional capacity development event in Belgrade in April 2024.

75. In 2023, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia in cooperation with UNECE and WHO applied for UN Road Safety Fund for financing of the project Better Road Safety System based on in-depth analysis of road accidents in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia. Project received funding in 2023. The main objective of this project is to build a better road safety system based on results of in-depth analysis of road accidents. In-depth analysis of road accidents is a tool that can help to objectively analyse road accidents with fatalities and later contribute to the improvement of the road safety system. It can also provide detailed knowledge on the mechanism of occurrence of a road accident, as well as its entire progression and consequences, especially focusing on finding the primary causes of its origin, considering the human factor, vehicle, road, and environment. The ultimate goal is to trigger improvements in all pillars of the road safety system. Project activities are focused on legislation, education, and technology, which ensures a high degree of continuation of project activities when the project is completed and are in line with the priorities of the UN Global Plan of Action for Road Safety 2021-30 and the ITC Recommendations for Enhancing National Road Safety Systems ("ITC Recommendations"). Project kick-off meeting was held in September 2023.

THE PEP

76. The fifth High-level meeting on Transport, Health and Environment in 2021 brought together over 800 participants and 46 Ministers and Deputy-Ministers to agree on how

member States can make transport greener and healthier. The main output of this meeting was the Vienna Declaration setting out a clear plan of action on working towards better mobility for the future. A number of policy documents and studies were prepared in support of the Declaration. Work continues on the implementation of the aspects included in the Declaration.

77. In 2023, THE PEP continued work on the development of a strategy for THE PEP and a review of potential legal instruments to develop for the programme. It also started work in the framework of its partnerships including the Partnerships on Active Mobility, Sustainable Tourism and Youth and Child Friendly Mobility. Through these activities work was initiated on the development of the Masterplan on Walking to add to the Cycling Masterplan developed for the fifth High-level meeting. The Steering Committee meeting in October 2023 highlighted the importance of the work of these partnerships in shaping the development of the upcoming strategy in addition to important areas such as the communication strategy going forward. The Steering Committee session was complemented by a Relay Race focused on active mobility held in Vienna in April 2023 which brought together participants from around the region to develop further the work of the partnership.

78. In support of the implementation of THE PEP Pan-European Cycling Master Plan a Group of Experts on Cycling Infrastructure Module (GE.5) has been established under WP.5 auspices. The mandate of the Group is to serve as a platform to collect and analyse data on national cycling infrastructure, and to propose an ECE cycling network, based on existing national and EuroVelo cycling routes. Its second task involves the elaboration of common definitions for various types of cycling infrastructure as well as new road signs for signposting the cycling routes.

79. GE.5 made progress in designation of the regional ECE cycle route network based on national cycle route networks submitted by countries. It elaborated a guide for designation of the cycle route network, which is aimed at guiding countries to take the necessary steps to effectively designate their cycling networks. GE.5 also made progress in agreeing on elements of cycling infrastructure and road signs and in elaborating their common definitions as well as highlighting modifications to the existing international regulatory framework for road traffic safety for improving safety of cycling.

Promoting Euro-Asian connectivity

80. At the annual session of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics in September 2022, the Governments of Azerbaijan, Georgia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Türkiye, Kazakhstan, and Uzbekistan later joint by Kyrgyzstan requested UNECE to establish a Coordination Committee on the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul Corridors in cooperation with the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

81. A first session of the Coordination Committee was held in December 2022 with the support of the International Federation of Freight Forwarders (FIATA) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) and provided an opportunity to the members of the Coordination Committee, representatives of railway administrations, customs and ministries of transport of the above-mentioned countries, for a round of extensive consultations with private sector stakeholders operating on the corridors.

82. At the second session, held in Istanbul, Türkiye, in June 2023, hosted by the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure and Turkish State Railways (TCDD) the Coordination Committee adopted its terms of reference and a biennial 2023-2025 programme of work for the two corridors consisting of five thematic clusters:

- (a) Evaluation of transport infrastructure and renewal requirements as well as identification of missing links;
- (b) Digitalization, harmonization, and standardization of transport documents in use on the corridors;

(c) Evaluation of availability of reliable corridor-wide agreed timetables and tariffs and other issues hampering regular rail freight services on both corridors;

(d) Evaluation of the en-route border crossing efficiency on both corridors and identify, prioritize and implement border crossing facilitation initiatives; and

(e) Strengthening the economic viability and resilience of the corridors as well as their environmental performance.

83. The third session of the Coordination Committee took place in Baku, in July 2023, hosted by the Ministry of Digital Development and Transportation of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The main objective of the session was to kick-start implementation of the Coordination Committee's 2023-2025 programme of work, with a two-fold focus:

(i) To take stock of ongoing border crossing facilitation and customs digitalization projects being implemented on both corridors and

(ii) To shed light on the availability of reliable corridor-wide agreed timetables and tariffs and other issues hampering regular rail freight services.

84. Finally, the fourth session took place in an online format, in December 2023 and offered an opportunity to the members of the Coordination Committee to provide an intermediate update on recent developments and activities in support of the operationalization of their corridors. The latest status of the Unified Railway Law, developments of the TIR/ eTIR, CMR/ eCMR and other digitalization projects of relevance for the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul Corridors as well as agreed deliverables and outputs were put in focus during the meeting. The Coordination Committee members agreed to continue their periodic consultations and hold further in-person and online sessions in 2024.

International Transport Infrastructure Observatory

85. The International Transport Infrastructure Observatory (ITIO-GIS.org) is an initiative of ECE Sustainable Transport and IsDB. It is a multi-stakeholder, web-based GIS platform which hosts data on a large variety of transport infrastructure networks and nodes across different modes including road, rail, inland waterways, ports, airports, intermodal terminals, logistics centres and border crossing points. It also includes an innovative way to finance new transport infrastructure projects since it includes a pre-feasibility module where Governments can insert preliminary data regarding new construction or maintenance projects. Multilateral Development Banks connected to the system will have access to this data and will be able to see new construction projects in the format of digital maps combined with all other relevant information (including climate factors projections, information regarding international corridors etc).

86. At this stage, ITIO contains transport infrastructure data from 79 United Nations Member States/ to be expanded with a further 27 United Nations Member States during 2024. It currently accommodates some 34 accredited national focal points from Government institutions, regional organisations, and multilateral development banks. It also includes data on climate scenarios and projections providing a basis for decision making regarding transport infrastructure adaptation to climate change impacts in the ECE and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) regions. An ITIO follow-up extrabudgetary project is under preparation to improve and expand ITIO functionalities and scope for geographical outreach.

Transport Statistics

87. The 2023 Statistics of Road Traffic Accidents in Europe and North America publication has been developed and is scheduled for release by early 2024. The data sets presented in this publication are used to monitor progress towards the corresponding target 3.6 of Sustainable Development Goal 3, as well as target 9.1 of Sustainable Development Goal 9 and target 11.2 of Sustainable Development Goal 11.

88. The development of a Sustainable Development Goal microsite is currently in progress. The microsite will display progress on global indicators, ECE-specific transport indicators, as well as transport indicators chosen by countries to monitor their unique circumstances.

89. Additional efforts have been made to ensure that collected data is disseminated to policymakers in the most appropriate way. WP.6 has therefore produced an online, interactive version of the transport statistics, Infocard; a dashboard that highlights key indicators like road safety progress and modal split. Further, an experimental data story has been produced on road safety, combining interactive data visualisations with narrative using a “scrollytelling” approach.

90. The secretariat of WP.6 is currently collaborating with other international partners to produce data on electric vehicle charging infrastructure. A roundtable on this topic has been organized to gather feedback from member States regarding international definitions and suitable indicators for consistent measurement.

Adaptation of transport to climate change

91. A Group of Experts on Assessment of Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for Inland Transport (GE.3) operating under WP.5 auspices commenced its activities in 2020 focusing on: (a) raising awareness, building capacity and integrating knowledge from countries and scientific community on climate change impact assessment and adaption for transport, and (b) further advancing the state of knowledge, the analysis of climate change impacts on inland transport and identification of suitable and costs-effective adaptation measures.

92. During 2023 the Group of Experts analysed projections for heatwaves and heavy precipitation. In particular GE.3 focused on analysing the exposure of transport system to heatwaves and heavy precipitation in terms of additional days at which temperature or precipitation were expected to exceed given threshold levels. This increased exposure was also analysed in terms of current transport disruptions and their consequences which occurred when the temperature or precipitation levels exceeded the given thresholds. This work is to offer a foundation for a more detailed analysis for the necessary analysis and setting up intervention programmes to maintain optimal resilience level of transport systems. The Group developed a framework for stress testing transport asset to climate change hazards. This framework is helpful for identifying vulnerabilities, assessing risks, and planning adaptation or risk reduction measures against selected extreme scenarios, e.g. 1 in 100/500 years flood events. It explains the subsequent steps to be undertaken in an effective test. It discusses the methods for the stress test from qualitative to quantitative ones. Transport professionals are invited to use the framework to assess the resilience levels of their assets and networks.

93. GE.3 prepared an advanced version of a guide on adaptation pathways in transport. Adaptation pathways can be broadly described as a sequence of interlinked and flexible actions that can be progressively implemented, based on future dynamics and changes to risk, through early actions that do not compromise future actions and assist in providing overall adaptation to climatic changes. The guide explains the application of adaptation pathways in transport and discusses the steps for an effective implementation of adaptation pathways for transport networks and assets. It also explains challenges with this approach and advises how to avoid pitfalls.

94. GE.3 also started its work on guidance on network criticality assessment. It also continued to raise awareness of the need for action in adapting transport to climate changes. To this end, it organized two events during 2023. The first of them was a Conference on adaptation of transport in the Mediterranean region to climate change which took place in Marseille on 15 and 16 May 2023. This conference focused on raising awareness on adaptation of transport infrastructure to climate change and on setting up effective intervention programmes. It was organized jointly with ESCWA, France (Directorate

General of Infrastructure, Transport and Mobility and Région Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur) and CETMO. It was attended by 60 participants from 15 countries. It featured not only panel discussions and presentations but also hands-on work in break-out groups on climate projections and their meaning.

95. The second of the events comprised a foresight session organized during the PIARC World Road Congress in Prague on 6 October 2023 on stress test as a tool to assess the resilience of road asset to climate change hazard. The session featured a panel which discussed issues such as what is a road asset, what are the observed impacts from extreme weather events and how they affect service provision by roads, what is an economically optimal resilience level of a road asset and what are the options to carry out the stress tests. The panel was followed by a simulation of a stress-test using a qualitative (expert opinion-based) method.

ITC Capacity Development Plan

96. The ITC Capacity Development Plan was presented and adopted at the 82nd session of the Inland Transport Committee. The year 2023 has witnessed a resurgence in demand for capacity development activities in the field of sustainable transport, reverting to pre-pandemic levels. Member States have reiterated the need for continued long-term assistance in the efficient implementation of United Nations transport-related legal instruments, accompanied by a noteworthy upswing in requests for digitalization of transport services initiatives, particularly in association with the eTIR International system. Three important ECE Sustainable Transport Division tools were further upgraded which will significantly increase the secretariat's ability to offer a wide spectrum of capacity development assistance to member States:

- In December 2021, a comprehensive set of Sustainable Inland Transport Connectivity Indicators (SITCIN) were launched in the framework of a United Nations Development Account (UNDA)-funded project. **SITCIN** offers a set of measurable criteria for Governments allowing them to evaluate the extent to which they implement the relevant UN legal instruments in the field of transport and the degree to which their inland transport systems are inter-operable with those in neighbouring countries. In 2023 and 2024 the use of the SITCIN user platform/ self-assessment process is being further promoted and based on user feedback received so far additional applications and language versions are under development aimed at strengthening the user-friendliness and effectiveness of the platform.
- In 2022, ECE (lead by the Sustainable Transport Division) launched LearnITC – the Inland Transport and Trade Connectivity eLearning Platform. LearnITC aims to provide member States and other stakeholders with a platform to learn about United Nations Inland Transport and Trade Connectivity principles and policies so as to facilitate member State accession and implementation to them. LearnITC currently contains 110 interactive courses from the wide spectrum of ITC activities as well as access to the Trade Implementation Facilitation Guide. To date, participants have launched over 650 courses from more than 80 countries. As the project continues, further courses are planned to be added and targeted capacity building will be delivered to further understand and encourage its use.

97. In 2022, Uzbekistan expressed a keen interest in elevating its national road safety system, leading to the initiation of the Road Safety Performance Review (RSPR) in collaboration with ECE and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Uzbekistan. Subsequently, productive discussions between the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova and ECE culminated in extending an invitation to ECE in cooperation with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Moldova to conduct the RSPR for Moldova. In 2023 both reports were completed and discussed with national stakeholders during policy dialogue events held in May and December 2023. Discussions are ongoing with the Government of Kazakhstan to resume the Road Safety Performance Review (RSPR)

project initiated in 2019. The project aims to fortify Kazakhstan's road safety system by addressing critical road safety areas and enhancing the national road safety record.

98. In 2023, capacity development activities were focused on assistance to member States on road safety and digitalization of transport services:

- On 21 November 2023, on the request of the Georgian Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development (MoESD), ECE organized a Workshop on Renewable Energy in Transport. Georgian national stakeholders strengthened capacities on international legal instruments and best practices in use of renewable energy in transport. Workshop was implemented as collaborative capacity development activity of Sustainable Transport and Sustainable Energy Division.
- ECE organized a capacity development workshop on "How to Design Safe Roads" on March 17, 2023. This strategic workshop aimed to fortify the knowledge base of national experts in the process of designing safer roads. The curriculum included insights into the integration of updated national standards and guidelines. The collaboration with the European Investment Bank (EIB) and UNICEF Uzbekistan in executing this workshop was instrumental in bridging the knowledge gap.
- On 18-19 May 2023, ECE in collaboration with UNICEF Uzbekistan and the Road Traffic Safety Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Uzbekistan, organized an RSPR policy dialogue. This was concurrently complemented by a workshop on improving the National Road Safety System. The objective of this event was multifaceted - presenting RSPR results to Uzbek road safety stakeholders, soliciting feedback, and fostering a comprehensive understanding of RSPR recommendations.
- A workshop on "How to Improve the National Road Safety System" was kicked off with a policy dialogue involving key road safety stakeholders in Moldova on December 13-14 in Chisinau. This was followed by a capacity-building workshop focused on key elements of road safety strategy. Objectives included sharing findings from the Moldova RSPR, providing training, and strengthening the capacities of national road safety stakeholders. The workshops aimed to empower national road safety stakeholders in upgrading their systems based on RSPR findings.
- During the 27th (Tashkent, Uzbekistan, November 2022) and 28th (online, November 2023) session of the SPECA Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity (WG-STTC), ECE advised SPECA countries on transport connectivity, regional cooperation in infrastructure development and border crossing facilitation. The SPECA Mini workshop on digitalization of transport services for better connectivity after pandemics (online, November 2023) strengthened knowledge of the national representatives of SPECA countries on digitalization of transport services, electronic exchange of information on railways and digitalization of multimodal transport and facilitation tools including those based on legal instruments (eTIR and eCMR).
- The TIR Executive Board (TIRExB) organised a friends of the Chair meeting on transforming the middle corridor to an eTIR corridor in Samarkand Uzbekistan on 21-22 June 2023. The Customs Authorities and the National Associations of all countries from the region participated at the meeting. The meeting was supported by European Commission DG Taxation and Customs Union, TRACECA, Islamic Development Bank, IRU and GIZ.
- With the support of the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC), Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan initiated in December 2023 activities to connect their national customs system with the eTIR international system with the use of the eTIR NA application developed by the TIR Secretariat. Technical workshops were organised with experts from the three countries.
- In the framework of SC.1 a workshop was organised on the operationalization of eCMR in November 2023 bringing together all actors interested in electronic CMR

discussing the results already have achieved in the framework of the ECE group of experts. The workshop was supported by DG MOVE, UN/CEFACT, ITU, FIATA.

99. A full report on the implementation of the ITC Capacity Development Plan can be found in ECE/TRANS/2024/22.

II. Major activities planned for 2024 and beyond

100. Going forward, during 2024 and beyond, the highest priority for the Committee is the operationalization of the Committee's revised Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure that entered into force on 16 February 2022, the implementation of the ITC Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions, as well as the continued implementation of the ITC Strategy until 2030 and the continued modernization and geographical expansion of its normative work.

101. At the time of the preparation of this report, the geographical scope of contracting parties to legal instruments under the purview of the Committee includes **152 out of 193 United Nations Member States** (79 per cent) with the accession of Maldives in 2023, 2 Permanent Observers (Holy See and Palestine) and one non-State Contracting Party (European Union).

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

102. EXCOM is invited to consider the following ITC Decisions requiring its approval.

(a) The establishment of a new Group of Experts on Passenger Information in Stations and Hubs and its terms of reference, as contained in annex V of ECE/TRANS/2024/10, for the period 2024 to 2026;

(b) The extension of the mandate of

(i) the Group of Experts on Drafting a New Legal Instrument on the Use of Automated Vehicles in Traffic (LIAV), as per ECE/TRANS/WP.1/185, paragraphs 29 and 30, and as contained in document ECE/TRANS/2024/L.1/Add.1, until June 2025;

(ii) the Group of Experts on the operationalization of eCMR (SC.1/GE.22), as contained in document ECE/TRANS/2024/L.1, until October 2025, for up to three sessions per year comprised of up to three days per session, to complete its tasks and report to SC.1 at its 120th session and subject to absorption within ECE deliverables;

(c) The adoption of the updated terms of reference for the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5), as contained in annex I to ECE/TRANS/2024/10;

(d) The adoption of the updated terms of reference for the Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6), as contained in annex II to ECE/TRANS/2024/10;

(e) The adoption of the updated terms of reference for the Working Party on Transport of Dangerous Goods (WP.15), as contained in annex III to ECE/TRANS/2024/10;

(f) The adoption of the updated terms of reference for the Global Forum on Customs Questions affecting Transport including Border Crossing Facilitation (WP.30), as contained in annex IV to ECE/TRANS/2024/10;

(g) The adoption of the 2024 Programme of Work of the transport subprogramme, as reflected in ECE/TRANS/2024/12.

103. EXCOM is further invited to take note of the update provided on requests made by the ITC and some of its subsidiary bodies regarding hybrid meeting servicing. In this regard, EXCOM is invited to request the ECE secretariat to continue its dialogue with relevant Secretariat entities at United Nations Headquarters.

IV. Follow-up to the 2023 session of the Economic Commission for Europe

104. Through its normative and policy work, as well as its analytical and capacity-building activities, the transport subprogramme contributes considerably to key aspects of digital and green transformations for sustainable development and in support of the regional and global 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 promoting and enabling green transformation and digitalization, as well as the circular economy and help to accelerate the transition to sustainable inland transport. The new ITC Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Inland Transport further supports this transition, i.e. by promoting low- and zero-carbon solutions and the adoption of new technologies and digital solutions. The 86th ITC session included the organization of the “ITC Roundtable on Fostering the digital and green transition for inland transport in support of the Sustainable Development Agenda” (23 February 2024).

105. The Inland Transport Committee and its subsidiary bodies will continue their normative, capacity building and analytical work in support of digital and green transformations, as well as of circular economy, 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.

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

106. The Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5) at its 36th annual session (Geneva, 4–6 September 2023, ECE/TRANS/WP.5/74, para. 63) recognized that to facilitate progress in e-mobility, a dedicated informal task force focused on driving and coordinating efforts related to Electric Vehicle (EV) developments and their charging infrastructure both within ECE (and across its different sub-programmes) and in collaboration with other institutions should be established. Draft terms of reference were developed by the WP.5 secretariat, together with the Chair and in close consultation with other relevant Working Parties and relevant intergovernmental groups in the ECE Sustainable Energy Division and submitted to the ITC at its 86th annual session in February 2024 for positive consideration.

107. The informal task force on e-mobility, which will launch its work in the second quarter of 2024, is tasked to raise awareness, build capacity and integrate inter-disciplinary knowledge from countries, the scientific community, private sector, and nongovernmental bodies on latest developments surrounding all types of EVs (covering all inland modes both for passengers and freight) and their charging infrastructure.

108. More in particular, the informal task force is tasked to further advance the state of knowledge on Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) charging infrastructure as well as smart charging solutions including bidirectional charging and their interaction with the electricity grid. It aims at offering a platform for the identification of suitable and cost-effective policies and measures, taking location efficiency, systemic efficiency and energy system resilience into consideration, which can lead the way to a future Zero Emission road, rail and inland waterway transport sector. In the conduct of its work, the informal task force will regularly liaise with relevant working parties and groups of experts under ECE ITC and ECE

Committee on Sustainable Energy (CSE) auspices. It was established for an initial period 2024 to 2026 with a possibility for extension.

VI. Technical cooperation activities

109. In line with the ITC Capacity Development Action Plan (2020-2025), several capacity development activities took place in the Western Balkans and SPECA region. In post-pandemics era, the Sustainable Transport Division was focused on in-person capacity development events. When it was appropriate demand driven remote capacity development activities were held.

110. For a comprehensive presentation of the subprogramme's broader capacity building and technical assistance work, see the 2023 annual report on the implementation of the Inland Transport Committee Capacity Development Action Plan (2020-2025) (ECE/TRANS/2024/22).

VII. Cooperation with other organizations

111. Since the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the secretariat, with the support of the other regional commissions and the private sector, maintains the Observatory on Border Crossing Status due to COVID-19³, with information from almost all United Nations Member States, providing daily updates on the status of inland transport border crossings. Updated information is collected and provided for 174 United Nations Member States. The Observatory is officially supported by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), World Customs Organization (WCO), International Transport Forum (ITF), International Road Transport Union (IRU), Federation International de l'automobile (FIA), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) and International Union of Railways (UIC). The secretariat, in collaboration with IRU also published a flyer on how TIR keeps borders open in the age of COVID-19⁴.

112. The collaboration between ECE 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. ECE provides the secretariat for the Special Envoy.

113. 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), United Nations Office for the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (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, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Union of Railways (UIC), IRU, International Road Federation (IRF), River Commissions in Europe (i.e. Central Commission

³ unece.org/transport/border-crossing-facilitation

⁴ unece.org/DAM/trans/bcf/news/documents/TIR_during_COVID-19.pdf

for the Navigation of the Rhine (CCNR), Danube Commission, Mosel Commission and International Sava River Basin Commission), International Organisation for International Carriage by Rail (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), International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA), European Boating Association (EBA), and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR). The Division contributes to the Sustainable Mobility for All (SuM4All) initiative, pursued by the World Bank and several key partners and as a member of the Steering Committee of the initiative.
