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Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics

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Item 9 of the provisional agenda

Activities of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe bodies of interest to the Working Party

Contribution of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics to the Fourth Cycle of Review of Working Parties' Mandates by their Parent Sectoral Committee

Note by the secretariat

I. Background

1. The Inland Transport Committee (ITC), at its eighty-sixth annual session in 2024, noting that the year 2023 marked the fourth cycle of reviews of Working Parties' mandates by their parent sectoral committees, in line with the outcomes of the 2005 reform of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the ensuing guidelines for the establishment and functioning of working parties within ECE (ECE/EX/1) and taking into consideration the submissions by the Working Parties as contained in the annexes to ECE/TRANS/2024/9 as well as the review and analysis contained in ECE/TRANS/2023/4/Rev.2, requested the secretariat to provide a review and analysis of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5) submissions, with a view to further identify opportunities for enhancing synergies and accelerating the implementation of the mandates of ITC and its Working Parties and submit it at the eighty-seventh ITC session for its consideration.

2. In this context, the Working Party may wish to revisit its contribution from last year. To this end, the present document builds on ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2023/10 and uses a suggested template applied for the review and analysis as referred to in the ITC decision.

II. Input for the Review Process of the Mandate

A. Subsidiary Body Mandates and Governance Framework

3. WP.5 has undertaken steps to fully align its Terms of Reference (ToR) and Rules of Procedure (RoP) with those of ITC, as follows:

(a) WP.5 prepared and endorsed its revised RoP at its thirty-sixth session on 6 September 2023 based on the revised ITC RoP (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/74, annex II). The WP.5 RoP were then adopted by ITC at its eighty-sixth annual session in February 2024;

(b) WP.5 amended its ToR on 6 September 2024 during its thirty-sixth session (ECE/TRANS/WP.5/74, annex I). In this process, WP.5 considered the priority areas and tasks of the ITC Strategy until 2030. As a result, WP.5 ToR were adopted by ITC at its eighty-sixth session (Geneva, February 2024).

B. Work objective

4. In accordance with its revised ToR, the WP.5 objective is to:

(a) Review the general trends regarding transport developments and transport policy and analyse specific transport economic issues including sustainable transport development in the ECE region and beyond, taking into account:

(i) The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development where sustainable transport is mainstreamed across several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets and the importance of transport for climate action as recognized by the Paris Agreement and in the ITC Strategy until 2030;

(ii) Development processes under way in member States by monitoring current changes in the transport sector to identify, promote and spread positive examples for enhanced sustainability of the inland transport sector.

(b) Encourage exchanges of information and data among countries on transport policy developments, particularly relating to inland transport in the ECE region in order to review and monitor medium- and long-term trends and developments in the sector;

(c) Strengthen ongoing efforts on the operationalization of transport corridors in the ECE region and beyond through improving inter-modal coordination and integration thereby considering the relevance of the ECE infrastructure agreements (European Agreement on Main International Traffic Arteries (AGR), European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC), European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) and its Protocol, European Agreement on Main Inland Waterways of International Importance (AGN)) and ongoing ECE projects (Trans-European Motorway (TEM), Trans-European Railway (TER)) as well as relevant transport facilitation instruments in support of pan-European transport network planning;

(d) Monitor relevant transport corridor developments in the ECE region and with adjacent regions, in cooperation with the European Commission and other international governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as other United Nations regional commissions. In doing so, work on resilience of transport networks to climate change and contribute to the development of resilience parameters for United Nations infrastructure legal instruments;

(e) Serve as a regional and inter-regional platform for the exchange of information on latest trends and developments in urban mobility, public transport and cycling infrastructure related developments through the hosting of knowledge seminars and development of resource materials as well as through elaboration of relevant cycling infrastructure parameters and their monitoring;

(f) Serve as a platform for the exchange of information on threats and risk in inland transport and holds targeted meetings as necessary.

5. WP.5 serves or recently served as the parent body to a number of designated groups of experts, including most recently the Group of Experts on Assessment of Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for Inland Transport (WP.5/GE.3) from 2020 to 2025, the Group of Experts on Cycling Infrastructure Module (WP.5/GE.5) from 2022 to 2024; and the Group of Experts on Benchmarking of Transport Infrastructure Construction Costs (WP.5/GE.4) from 2016 to 2022.

C. Work areas and their coverage of transport facilitation, safety and environmental/climate performance

6. In accordance with the WP.5 ToR and its long-term programme of work, WP.5 focuses on the following work clusters:

- (a) Development of transport networks and links;
- (b) Transport and climate change;
- (c) Sustainable urban mobility, public transport and cycling;
- (d) Transport infrastructure data;
- (e) Review and monitoring of emerging issues and sustainable development;
- (f) Inland transport security.

7. With this, WP.5 covers transport facilitation (through cluster (a)), safety (through cluster (c) and (f)), and environmental and climate performance (through clusters (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e)).

D. Efficiency and value-added (internal and external overlaps and synergies)

1. Internal overlaps

8. None. WP.5 is a unique intergovernmental body that reviews transport development trends and policies and analyzes specific transport economic issues. By fostering worldwide, multi-stakeholder participation in its activities, WP.5 collaborates closely with other subsidiary bodies of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) and with various other ECE sub-programmes, including those covering “sustainable energy” and “urban development, land management, and housing”. Its mandate enables it to serve as a transport “think tank” within the ITC framework. In focusing on its key areas of work, WP.5 fulfils ITC tasks as outlined in the ITC Strategy (see item (b) “work objective” above).

2. External overlaps

9. None. There is no other intergovernmental body with an equivalent mandate.

3. Internal synergies

10. WP.5 collaborates closely with the following ECE working parties and/ or other ECE sub-programmes:

(a) Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24) on administering a joint Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) / Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) Coordination Committee on the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Tehran-Istanbul Corridors which has been established as an informal Group of Friends of the WP.5 Chair;

(b) WP.24 on the on the development of a Geographic Information System (GIS) based International Transport Infrastructure Observatory (ITIO-GIS.org) by up-dating data on AGTC parameters and attributes;

(c) World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29), and its subsidiary bodies, WP.24, the Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6) and the Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1) as well as relevant bodies of the ECE Sustainable Energy Division Committee in administering an Informal Task Force on aspects of E-mobility;

(d) The Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (WP.1), SC.1, Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2), Working Party on Inland Water Transport (WP.3/SC.3), Working Party on Transport of Dangerous Goods (WP.15), WP.24, WP.29, Working Party on Customs Questions Affecting Transport (WP.30) and other working parties under ITC auspices on the development and maintenance of a set of Sustainable Inland Transport

Connectivity Indicators (SITCIN) deployed as an online tool for governments to evaluate their transport system performance;

(e) The ECE Urban Development, Housing and Land Management sub-programme and the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP) on issues relating to sustainable urban mobility.

4. External synergies

11. WP.5 collaborates closely with:

(a) The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) on the aforementioned Coordination Committee and the European Commission (EC) and the Mediterranean Transport Study Centre (CETMO) on the Trans-European Transport (TEN-T) Network and transport in the Mediterranean region;

(b) ESCWA, Islamic Development Bank, CETMO, European Commission and the Transport Community Secretariat on the development and geographical expansion of ITIO-GIS.org;

(c) ECLAC, ESCWA, World Trade Organization (WTO) and other relevant partners on the development and maintenance of SITCIN;

(d) Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) on transport security related activities including designated workshops and awareness raising activities;

(e) The European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) and the World Bicycle Industry Association (WBIA)/ Confederation of the European Bicycle Industry (CONEBI) on aspects of cycling infrastructure development;

(f) International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT), the European Association for Electromobility (AVERE), the European Commission and other partner organizations on e-mobility issues.

E. Work methods

12. WP.5 deliverables, including the number of meetings, official documents, and publications, are indicated in the ITC programmes of work of the transport subprogramme, programme plans and publication programmes, as follows:

- 2024: ECE/TRANS/2024/12/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/2024/13; ECE/TRANS/2024/14
- 2023: ECE/TRANS/2023/11, ECE/TRANS/2023/12, ECE/TRANS/2023/13/Rev.1
- 2022: ECE/TRANS/2022/8, ECE/TRANS/2022/9, ECE/TRANS/2022/10 and Corr.1
- 2021: ECE/TRANS/2021/8, ECE/TRANS/2021/9, ECE/TRANS/2021/10
- 2020: ECE/TRANS/2020/21, ECE/TRANS/2020/22/Rev.1, ECE/TRANS/2020/23
- 2019: ECE/TRANS/2019/23, ECE/TRANS/2019/24
- 2018: ECE/TRANS/2018/21, Add.1 and Corr.1, ECE/TRANS/2018/22.

F. Main partners

13. The main partners are listed under item D above.

G. Results achieved

14. WP.5 is regularly, on bi- or triennial basis, reviewing its results and is adjusting its actions as appropriate in line with its long-term programme of work. This review for the last three years (2020-2023) is provided in ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2023/10.

15. In support of its work, WP.5 organizes annual workshops and thematic discussions. In recent years the following ones were held:

- 4 September 2023 – Multimodal transport corridor management
- 5 September 2023 – General trends and developments surrounding electric vehicles and their charging infrastructure
- 5 September 2023 – Cyber threats to electric vehicles and their charging infrastructure
- 6 September 2023 – Critical role of inland transport in accelerating climate change mitigation
- 5 September 2022 – Electrification of mobility – Challenges and opportunities for transport, energy, and spatial planning
- 6 September 2022 – Taking stock of the operational rail freight capacity of the Trans-Caspian and Almaty-Istanbul corridors
- 7 September 2022 – Protection of transport infrastructure at the stages of design, construction and operation
- 15 September 2021 – Inter-regional consultations on sustainable transport connectivity
- 16 September 2021 – Security aspects of dangerous goods transportation
- 17 September 2021 – Green urban transport
- 8 September 2020 – Expert Round Table on Intelligent Transport Systems and Cyber Security
- 9 September 2020 – Workshop on Economic analysis of the transformation of urban transport systems.

16. Worth noting is also the fact that in 2020 and 2021, WP.5 has been administering an “Informal Multidisciplinary Advisory Group Meeting on Transport Responses to the COVID-19 Crisis” which gathered representatives of ministries of transport, health and customs officials from across the ECE region to take stock of the challenges experienced by the inland transport sector in view of the then pandemic, discussed possible issues in re-opening of cross-border traffic and exchanged views on possible recommendations to increase transport authorities’ preparedness for and resilience to future outbreaks.

H. Results and changes expected in near future

17. WP.5 formulates in its biennial programmes of work expected accomplishments based on which it assesses its achievements and formulates possible new work approaches for the future. ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2023/11 formulates activities and their accomplishments for the 2024–25 biennium. A previous biennial evaluation for the period 2020–2021 is contained in ECE/TRANS/WP.5/2019/6.

III. Possible next steps

18. WP.5 is invited to consider the information contained in this document and request the secretariat to submit it to ITC for further analysis, as deemed necessary.