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Inland Transport Committee

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Item 7 of the provisional agenda

Draft Annual Report of activities undertaken by the Committee's subsidiary bodies in 2015

Challenges for 2016 and Beyond

Note by the secretariat

In addition to the annual report on the transport activities of UNECE, the secretariat has prepared a list of the main challenges that can be turned into opportunities. This is close-to-final work in progress, as it is prepared before the close of the year. The corresponding full report with photos will be submitted as informal document at the annual session.

The Committee is invited to consider how best it can support the efforts to meet the challenges identified in this document.

I. Preparation for the 70th anniversary of the Committee

1. 2016 will be the year of preparation for the 70th anniversary of the Committee. Drawing lessons from seven decades of existence of the Committee in order to determine its future direction in a fast changing world will be a major opportunity and challenge for the ITC member States as well as the Contracting Parties to the 58 UN legal instruments on inland transport under the purview of the ITC and the UNECE Sustainable Transport Division.

II. Sustainable Development Goals

2. One of the key challenges and opportunities for the Committee in 2016 and beyond will be to shape its role and areas of contribution in the implementation of the transport-related targets of the 2030 Agenda. In this regard delineating the future role of the ITC and

its working parties will be of high importance. For example, the role of the Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6) may need to be reviewed as it deals with the development of appropriate methodologies and terminology for the harmonization of transport statistics as well as the collection and dissemination of data.

III. Climate change

3. The Committee will also need to consider what role it can and will play in the follow up implementation of the Climate Change Summit. The disproportionately high share of inland transport in the transport generated CO₂ created increased responsibility for the Committee and its potential role in further reducing CO₂ emissions, either by directly impacting the energy efficiency of vehicles or promoting a modal shift that is supportive of climate change mitigation. On climate change adaptation, the pioneering work undertaken under the auspices of the ITC would warrant scaling up, in order to make a difference.

IV. Policy Dialogue, Capacity Building and Technical Assistance

4. In the field of policy dialogue, capacity-building and technical assistance, the timely implementation of on-going projects with lasting results will be the main task and challenge especially in light of the need for extra-budgetary funding.

V. Road Safety and road transport

5. The completion of a preliminary assessment on the implementation of the Convention on Road Signs and Signals of 1968 by the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) Group of Experts on Road Signs and Signals is expected in 2016.

6. WP.1 will continue to work on the issue of more advanced vehicle automation vis-à-vis the driver's role and will explore possibilities to work closer with WP.29 on the human factors issues (especially human-machine interaction).

7. The Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1) Group of Experts on the European Agreement Concerning Work of Crews of Vehicles Engaged in International Road Transport (AETR EG) met throughout 2015 without coming to agreement on how the AETR Agreement may be amended. Demonstration by Contracting Parties of political will to find a compromise could facilitate a consensus.

8. Progress with the drafting of the Multilateral Agreement on the International Regular Transport by Bus and Coach (OmniBUS) is expected in 2016, provided member States engage in negotiations.

VI. Inland Water Transport

9. In the field of inland water transport, the main challenge remains the implementation of the Policy Recommendations set out in the White Paper on Efficient and Sustainable Inland Water Transport in Europe with particular reference to improving the institutional framework at pan-European level and focusing on identifying the optimal institutional structure for inland waterways in collaboration with member States and other stakeholders. With reference to this, a new strategy for the Working Party on Inland Water Transport being under discussion with the aim of updating the terms of reference for the Party.

10. Launch the organisation of the International Conference on Inland Water transport to be held in 2016 or 2017.

VII. Border Crossing Facilitation

11. In the field of border crossing facilitation, the Sustainable Transport Division will encourage the participation of landlocked countries in relevant meetings and initiatives. Landlocked developing countries are the biggest potential beneficiaries of the facilities provided by the UN legal instruments for border crossing facilitation. However, for financial reasons, representatives of those countries often cannot afford to participate in UNECE meetings in Geneva. Possible solutions could include the establishment of a trust fund with the assistance of the private sector and/or conducting some official meetings in these countries rather than in Geneva.

12. In an effort to inform member States of what tools exist to assist with facilitating efficient border crossing, the brochure "Spectrum of Border Crossing Facilitation Activities" was released in 2015 and will be published in hard copy in 2016.

13. Additionally, preparing a new convention to facilitate the crossing of frontiers for passengers and baggage carried by rail to replace the outdated 1952 Convention - A first draft was submitted by the end of 2015 to both WP.30 and SC.2 for their consideration.

14. Amendments to the Harmonization Convention with a new Annex 10 on sea ports will be discussed and possibly agreed upon in 2016.

15. As always, there will be great focus on ensuring that TIR Convention functions properly in all Contracting Parties.

VIII. Harmonisation of Vehicle Regulations

16. The draft amendment to the 1958 Agreement on uniform technical prescriptions for wheeled vehicles, equipment and parts which can be fitted and/or used on wheeled vehicles and the conditions for reciprocal recognition of approvals are expected to reach consensus by Contracting Parties at the World Forum for Harmonisation of Vehicle Regulations in March 2016.

17. This amendment will provide the basis for International Whole Vehicle Type Approval which will request the establishment of a new UN Regulation as well as an international data base on type approval data (DETA) at UNECE.

18. Within the World Forum for Harmonisation of Vehicle Regulations considerations on a more strategic approach on the establishment of future UN global technical Regulations under the 1998 Agreement on global technical regulations for wheeled vehicles, equipment and parts which can be fitted and/or used on wheeled vehicles has started in 2015 under the leadership of the three sponsor contracting parties United States of America, Japan and European Union.

19. The reflection of recent technologic developments towards automated / autonomous vehicles within the existing regulatory framework has already been started and needs to be continued in the coming years.

20. An inclusion of passenger cars and light vans and further strengthening of the system for periodic technical inspections as regulated under the 1997 Agreement on Uniform Conditions for Periodical Technical Inspections of Wheeled Vehicles and the Reciprocal Recognition of Such Inspections is currently under consideration at the World

Forum for Harmonisation of Vehicle Regulations aiming at the introduction of new UN Rules until 2018.

IX. Intelligent Transport Systems ITS

21. Implementing the UNECE ITS Action Plan calls for a coordinated work with a holistic approach on technical matters at the level of the subsidiary bodies of the Inland Transport Committee and on policy matters at the Committee level.

X. Transport of Dangerous Goods and Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

22. The draft amendments to the European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways (ADN) have been prepared in 2015, but most amendments under discussion are expected to be finalized in January 2016.

23. All these draft amendments should be submitted to Contracting Parties to the European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR), ADN and the European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail (RID), as appropriate, for acceptance in 2016 and entry into force on 1 January 2017.

XI. Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs

23. Challenges facing WP.11 include further discussions on possible amendments to the decision making and voting procedures (unanimity rule in Article 18.4).
