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**Economic Commission for Europe****Inland Transport Committee****Working Party on Transport Statistics****Seventieth session**

Geneva, 12-14 June 2019

Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda

**Development of a global indicator framework for the****Sustainable Development Goals: Data provision for indicator 9.1.2****Improving Data Provision for Sustainable Development Goal Indicator 9.1.2****Note by the secretariat****I. Background**

1. After adopting the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals in 2015, in March 2016 over 230 indicators were created to measure their achievement. While there is not one stand-alone Goal for transport as it is of a cross-cutting nature, the Inland Transport Committee has recognized that three goals are particularly relevant: goal 3 on good health and well-being; goal 9 on industry, innovation and infrastructure; and goal 11 on sustainable cities and communities.

2. Goal 9 has as one of its twelve indicators, 9.1.2, an indicator that measures “Passenger and freight volumes, by mode of transport”. The Inter Agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals, IAEG-SDGs, has classified this indicator as Tier 1<sup>1</sup>, meaning that data are widely available and internationally agreed methodology exist. The joint custodian agencies for this indicator are the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Transport Forum (ITF), with the ECE secretariat, United Nations Environment Programme and the Universal Postal Union as partner agencies.

3. In 2018 the data reported to the United Nations Statistics Division<sup>2</sup> for this indicator improved, as statistics on road and rail were added to the data already reported for aviation from 2017. These new data are a welcome addition to monitoring this indicator.

4. The United Nations Statistical Commission 2017 decision UNSC 48/101 (I)<sup>3</sup> “...strongly recommended that national data be used for global reporting and that adjustments and estimates of country data be undertaken in full consultation with countries and through fully transparent mechanisms...” It should be noted that the road and rail data come from the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/tier-classification/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/48th-session/documents/Report-on-the-48th-session-of-the-statistical-commission-E.pdf>

transport model of the ITF, and as such are not sourced from official statistics, which are available for a majority of ECE member States and published through the ECE database.

5. The metadata file available to track this indicator on the metadata repository (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/metadata/>) until now has mainly reflected the aviation data on the part of the ICAO, and the road and rail data are described as outputs of the transport model of the ITF, rather than any methodology guidance to countries.

## II. Current Structure of Indicator 9.1.2

6. As noted above, indicator 9.1.2 deals with passenger and freight volumes, by mode of transport.

7. On the passenger side, this has been interpreted to mean passenger-km, and the existing data for aviation, rail and road give a reasonably good coverage of the passenger transport situation in a majority of countries. Additional data on maritime and inland waterway passenger transport would complete the picture, but these play a relatively minor role in global passenger volumes. What would possibly be of more interest would be to split the road passenger-km between private cars, taxis, motorbikes, buses, metros and trams, or at a minimum split between public modes and private modes. While much depends on the vehicle categories and passenger load factor used in each mode, public transport typically has lower negative environmental and safety externalities when compared to private transport.

8. On the freight side, tonne-km measure freight volumes. The existing data reported for aviation, road and rail account for a reasonable share of global freight trade. The main components of total tonne-km missing are tonne-km from the maritime and inland waterway sectors. For many ECE member States inland waterways form a significant portion of domestic freight transport, and maritime freight transport is the principal transport mode for intercontinental trade. Pipeline transport of oil and oil products, while in many ways different to other modes of freight transport, nevertheless plays an important role in moving significant quantities of liquid fuels between and within countries.

## III. Activities in 2018 and 2019

9. In 2018 and 2019 the ECE secretariat has been working closely with the two custodian agencies and other relevant actors. The overall goal of the collaboration is to improve the data that is disseminated for indicator 9.1.2 in the global SDG database (<https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>) published by the United Nations Statistics Division, specifically by increasing the use of official statistics, by improving the coverage of transport data, and by improving the metadata available. The following improvements to the data coverage for this indicator can be expected in 2019:

(a) Official statistics from the UNECE/ITF/Eurostat web common questionnaire (WebCoQ) will be used to measure this indicator, when available and data appear to be of sufficient quality.

(b) The database will include inland waterway and pipeline tonne-km data for the first time, provided from WebCoQ.

(c) The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) have been involved to fill the data gap on the maritime side. While tonne-km data are not available globally for maritime transport in UNCTAD's database, other UNCTAD maritime data do seem relevant for monitoring global freight. Two relevant datasets will be used: container port traffic in twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU) for all countries with container ports; and cargo flows of maritime freight (tonnes loaded and unloaded) by region only. These data cannot be compared to the tonne-km figures from other modes, but do give an understanding of quantities and changes in maritime freight.

(d) The metadata file will be updated to better reflect how the data should be collected by national statistical offices. Reference will be made to the Glossary for Transport Statistics, and other statistical frameworks for other modes, where relevant.

## IV. Future Work

10. The custodian and partner agencies are now in regular contact on data provision, improving comparability and overall better monitoring of indicator 9.1.2. This should further improve data and metadata quality and increase the use of official statistics.

11. In order to improve the comparability of passenger and freight data of different modes, the Working Party may wish to discuss the data currently available and identify ways to improve comparability in the future, either through adjustments or further data collections. This is further explored in document ECE/TRANS/WP.6/2019/9.

12. 2020 is the first “review window” for the Sustainable Development Goal indicators. It has been noted in previous sessions of the Working Party that the indicator does not have explicit success criteria. A possible way of turning the indicator into a measure of progress is to instead track the non-private vehicle proportion of passenger volumes, and the non-road proportion of freight volumes. This is similar to the approach taken by Eurostat in their Sustainable Development Goals publication<sup>4</sup>. Delegates of the Working Party wishing to improve the way this indicator is measured should contact the custodian and partner agencies with suggestions. Furthermore, delegates coming from member States with seats on the Inter-Agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDGs) are encouraged to raise the issue of improving the monitoring of this indicator in future meetings. A full membership list of the IAEG-SDGs can be found at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/members/>.

13. The statistical commission also noted in 2017 that “the global indicators are not necessarily applicable to all national contexts and that alternative or complementary indicators for regional, national and subnational levels of monitoring will be developed at the regional and national levels on the basis of national priorities, realities, capacities and circumstances.” This means that if desired, ECE member States can develop their own complementary indicators of sustainable and resilient infrastructure through the Working Party, based on existing data sources, for the ECE region as a whole, and the Working Party may wish to discuss this.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/9237449/KS-01-18-656-EN-N.pdf/2b2a096b-3bd6-4939-8ef3-11cfc14b9329>