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TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

Note by the secretariat

The intention of the present note is to inform the Working Party about some of the important developments in the work of UNECE on transport and environment since the thirty-sixth session of WP.1.

As a follow-up to the London Charter on Transport, Environment and Health, adopted on 18 June 1999, the UNECE and WHO/Euro secretariats convened a High-Level Meeting on Transport, Environment and Health in Geneva on 4 May 2001 to decide on the further steps required to achieve transport sustainable for health and environment. As a basis for discussions, the High-Level Meeting considered a Synthesis Report: Overview of Instruments relevant to Transport, Environment and Health and Recommendations for Further Steps (ECE/AC.21/2001/1 – EUR/00/5026094/1) prepared by the two secretariats which recommended the start of negotiations on a new framework Convention on Transport, Environment and Health.

The Synthesis Report also recommended in paragraph 189 (c) and (d) the following activities which directly apply to the activities of WP.1:

“(c) Further amending the UN/ECE Conventions on Road Traffic and on Road Signs and Signals as well as the European Agreements supplementing them with a view to improving road traffic safety, with emphasis on issues such as drivers’ behaviour towards pedestrians and cyclists, drink-driving, use of mobile phones while driving, daytime use of

vehicle lights and other issues currently under consideration by the UN/ECE Working Party on Road Traffic Safety;

(d) Further amending the UN/ECE Conventions on Road Traffic and on Road Signs and Signals and the European Agreements supplementing them in order to establish minimum technical standards for non-motorized vehicles and infrastructures such as cycling paths and signals ...”

At its meeting on 4 May 2001, The High-Level Meeting made the following recommendations:

- “1. **WELCOMES** the assessment of priorities for further work identified in the Synthesis Report, especially (a) the integration of the transport, environment and health sectors, in particular in relation to decision-making processes, monitoring and impact assessment, (b) transport-related environment and health problems in urban areas, applicable to a great extent to sensitive areas, as well as to transport corridors with heavy traffic and major transport infrastructure, and (c) the needs and role of pedestrians and cyclists participating in transport;
2. With a view to increasing visibility, quality and impact of these and other future activities in the fields of transport, environment and health as well as to ensure cost-effective use of limited resources available both at national and international levels, **ENDORSES** the approach on rationalization of the existing international institutional mechanisms established under the Vienna and London follow-up processes and on prioritisation of the related work as laid out in the Conference Room Paper of 25 April 2001; **REQUESTS** the appropriate bodies to take up the matter at their next sessions with the aim of finalizing the recommendations at the High Level Meeting on Transport, Environment and Health in 2002;
3. **CALLS UPON** the Contracting Parties to existing international agreements and legal instruments related to transport, environment and health, particularly those identified in the Synthesis Report, to further enhance implementation of those instruments and to further develop them with a view to achieving transport sustainable for the environment and health;
4. **INVITES** the concerned international organizations to further enhance cooperation as well as coordination of all activities in the fields of transport, environment and health, particularly those identified in the Synthesis Report, as well as in the London Charter and Vienna Programme of Joint Action;
5. **DECIDES** that further preparatory work to be able to decide whether to start negotiations of a Framework Convention, including the specific task of identifying the possible elements of such an instrument, shall be carried out at the international level by a tripartite task-force to be established within the framework of the London and Vienna follow-up processes, as soon as

possible. NGOs and other stakeholders will be invited as observers to the meetings of this task force. A progress report on this tripartite process should be submitted to regional ministerial meetings (such as the regional preparatory meeting for the Johannesburg Summit in September 2001). Further decision should be taken at the second High Level Meeting on Transport, Environment and Health to be convened in 2002, prior to the Johannesburg Summit.”

At its meeting on 6 June 2001, the fourth Joint Meeting on Transport and Environment decided, in order to facilitate the rationalization of the existing international institutional mechanisms under the Vienna and London follow-up processes and the prioritisation of the related work, to establish a Joint UN/ECE–WHO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Transport, Environment and Health by extending the existing Joint Ad Hoc Expert group on transport and the environment to include health experts, with the aim of finalizing recommendations at the High Level Meeting on Transport, Environment and Health in 2002.

The mandate of the Joint UN/ECE–WHO Ad hoc expert group on transport, environment and health would be as follows:

“(a) Preparation of detailed proposals for rationalizing and streamlining the existing institutional mechanisms at the international level in transport, environment and health on the basis of the proposals contained in the joint secretariat Conference Room Paper of 25 April 2001. These proposals shall be developed with the full involvement of the transport, environment and health sectors including an assessment of the implications for a better achievement of the objectives of the UN-ECE Vienna declaration and the London Charter.

(b) Establishment of key issues, priority policy directions and corresponding activities to be undertaken or further developed within the period 2002-2007, taking account of the key priorities to be identified under the Programme of Joint Action and the London Charter follow-up work as well as of the key challenge areas contained in the Synthesis Report. This may also include new emerging issues as well as the consideration of other related processes. This work should be based on the Mid-term review of the POJA and on the review of the London Charter implementation.

(c) In accordance with paragraph 5 of the “Decisions and recommendations adopted by the High Level Meeting on Transport, Environment and Health (Geneva, 4 May 2001), the Joint UN/ECE – WHO Ad hoc expert group on transport, environment and health will be also acting as a Task force whose mandate shall be to

(i) Carry out further preparatory work to be able to decide whether to start negotiations on a Framework convention, including the specific task of identifying the possible elements of such an instrument for further decisions to be taken at the second

High Level Meeting on Transport, Environment and Health to be convened at the Ministerial level in June/July 2002.

(ii) In addition, in carrying out the above work, consideration should be given to the existing legal instruments as well as to other legal aspects relating to a possible Framework convention.”

The following timetable was drawn up for the work of the Joint UN/ECE–WHO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Transport, Environment and Health:

- “June 2001:** Adoption of the Terms of Reference of the Joint UN/ECE–WHO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Transport, Environment and Health by the Joint Meeting on Transport and the Environment (fourth session on 6 June 2001) and by the London Charter Steering Group (meeting on 7 June 2001).
- September 2001:** Secretariats submit a progress report on the work carried out to the regional preparatory meeting for Rio +10 summit (Johannesburg, September 2002).
- November 2001:** First meeting of the Joint UN/ECE – WHO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Transport, Environment and Health (possibly 26 and 27 November 2001).
- February 2002:** Second meeting of the Joint UN/ECE – WHO Ad Hoc Expert Group on Transport, Environment and Health, adoption of proposals and recommendations for the High-Level Meeting.
- June/July 2002:** Second High-Level Meeting on Transport, Environment and Health, to be held at the Ministerial level, to:
- (a) Take note of the Vienna mid-term review and of the evaluation of the implementation of the London Charter;
 - (b) finalize the rationalisation of the London and Vienna follow-up processes; consolidation of institutional mechanisms and priorities for future action;
 - (c) decide whether the start negotiations on a Framework Convention on Transport, Environment and Health.
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