



Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
8 December 2022

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Eighty-fifth session

Geneva, 21-24 February 2023

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Actions of the Inland Transport Sector to Join the Global Fight Against Climate Change

Concept note of the high-level segment “Actions of the inland transport sector to join the global fight against climate change”

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This document outlines the concept and main themes of the high-level segment organized around Actions of the inland transport sector to join the global fight against climate change. This document also contains information on planned activities. The Bureau of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC), at its June 2022 meeting, agreed that the themes of the panels of the first day of the eighty-fifth session of the Committee would focus on this topic. The High-level segment will conclude with the endorsement of the ITC Declaration Harnessing the full potential of inland transport solutions in the global fight against climate change.



I. Background and Policy Context

1. Eight years after the signing of the Paris Climate Agreement and the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations General Assembly, climate change remains a global challenge whose negative impacts can be felt in every region in the world and in some parts already pose existential threats. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.¹ The Paris Agreement on climate change, adopted by 196 Parties at UNFCCC COP21 in Paris in 2015, sets its goal to limit global warming to well below two, preferably to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels.
2. Globally CO₂, the major contributor to the greenhouse gas (GHG), emitted from the transport sector account for 23 per cent of global energy-related CO₂ emissions.² Within the transport sector, more than 71 per cent of CO₂ emissions are from inland transport, including about 70 per cent from the road subsector alone.³
3. To attain the goal set by the Paris Agreement, ambitious targets have been set for the transport sector, in particular road transport, to cut CO₂ emissions. Yet, the International Transport Forum (ITF) predicts that by 2050 passenger transport will increase 2.3-fold and freight transport will grow 2.6-fold under the trajectory reflecting current efforts.⁴ CO₂ emissions from transport will increase by 16 per cent by 2050 even if today's commitments to decarbonise transport are fully implemented. This path is not sustainable. To fully implement these commitments, it must be ensured that the existing international regulatory framework is in position to support the ambitious target.
4. At the 81st session of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) in 2019, the Committee adopted its Strategy until 2030, establishing it as the United Nations platform for inland transport, performing functions comparable to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Both ICAO and IMO have set specific goals and adopted strategies or specific measures for the reduction of CO₂ emissions from civil aviation and maritime transport respectively.
5. At the 84th session of the ITC, which marked its 75th Anniversary, the Committee endorsed an aspirational Ministerial Resolution entitled Ushering in a decade of delivery for sustainable inland transport and sustainable development (ECE/TRANS/316, Annex I). Important decisions driving the work of the Committee were included in the operative clauses focusing on delivery of the goals and targets of the Sustainable Development Agenda. At the same time, aspirational national visions and targets have been pronounced in recent years on key areas for the future of the world. Inland transport has a key role to play particularly in the area of climate change. The high-level segment of the 85th plenary session of ITC has the potential to capitalize on the important mandates and ITC decisions generated at the Committee's 84th session, in order to help turn aspirational visions and targets into concrete action and outcomes.
6. This theme aims to address the hard questions: How can inland transport be turned into a catalyst of climate change mitigation? What role can ITC play in achieving this? To answer these questions, this panel will explore the topic of climate change and the necessity of reducing local emissions in the transport sector. What are the best practices of reducing emissions in the transport sector? What is the role of strategic partnerships? How can ITC support or develop the use of alternative fuels or modes of transport?
7. Furthermore, the panels will focus on the technological, financial and regulatory innovations needed to efficiently address climate challenges. They will explore policy responses to technological changes and the conditions for creating an environment open and

¹ Goal 13, United Nations General Assembly resolution 70/1 Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015.

² 2022, "Climate Change 2022 – Mitigation of Climate Change" Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Working Group III contribution, https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6/wg3/IPCC_AR6_WGIII_Full_Report.pdf .

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ International Transport Forum (ITF), Transport Outlook 2021, 2021.

enabling to innovations. They will also explore how ITC can provide international regulatory support to help move faster towards greener forms of transport not only on roads, but also in other inland modes such as increased use of automated driving and autonomous vehicles, as well as intelligent transport systems and the growing use of information and communication technologies.

8. Since its creation in 1947, the Inland Transport Committee has provided a framework for intergovernmental cooperation and concerted action in order to facilitate international transport while improving its sustainability and environmental performance. Nowhere are the main results of this work reflected better than in the 59 United Nations transport agreements and conventions under the purview of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies which provide the international policy, legal and technical platform for the development of international road, rail, inland waterway and combined transport. The work of the Conventions resulted *inter alia* in several UN vehicle Regulations dealing with CO₂/ fuel consumption for cars and vans⁵, and is complemented by policy tools such as ForFITS (For Future Inland Transport Systems) that is capable of assisting countries in making informed choices between available policy options and measures, on the basis of their impact on CO₂ emissions reductions.

II. High-level Segment

9. Building on recommendations by the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) and Bureau debates, the general theme of the policy segment will be on Actions of the inland transport sector to join the global fight against climate change. This theme will provide an opportunity to reflect on the unique assets of the Committee, highlighting its value added and underlining its future potential in curbing greenhouse gas emissions trends from inland transport in a disaster-hit global economy due to the impacts of climate change both regionally and globally.

10. The draft programme on Tuesday, 21 February 2023, includes:

- (a) Opening statements;
- (b) Two keynote speeches on the importance of addressing climate change challenges, harnessing the full potential of inland transport solutions and the role of the Committee as a catalyst for action and delivery;
- (c) Three thematic panel debates with up to five panellists each and followed by scheduled interventions from the floor;
- (d) The conference will conclude with the endorsement of the ITC Declaration.

A. Opening and keynote speech

11. The traditional opening statements will be followed by two keynote speeches from major recognizable leaders in the global fight against climate change on the vital need of finding and fast-tracking effective solutions to enable governments around the world to learn from best-case examples, facilitate knowledge-sharing, including on technological solutions, and deliver on their commitments. A key factor for a successful way forward is the preparedness of the international regulatory system to provide mature solutions to support member States in their efforts. Thus, the keynotes will also place an emphasis on the strategic role of the Committee in providing a comprehensive cooperation platform to forge concerted solutions and enhance international collaboration.

⁵ UN Regulation No. 101 on CO₂/ fuel consumption, UN Regulation No. 154 WLTP Regulation, and UN GTR No. 15 on WLTP

B. Panel debates

12. Three high-level panel debates will follow, with themes on critical policy and regulatory issues of direct relevance to the challenge of tackling climate change for ITC and its subsidiary bodies. The panel themes are:

(a) Critical partnerships and leaving no-one behind in the climate battle: global challenges and winning formulas for net-zero leaders;

(b) Bridging regulators and innovators to bring to scale critical technologies supporting climate change mitigation actions

(c) A bet we can't afford to lose: challenges and opportunities in the nexus of international financial and regulatory support for climate action

13. Each panel debate will accommodate up to five high-level panellists.

14. Each debate will be moderated, starting with short statements by the panellists, followed by scheduled high-level interventions from the floor and then an open discussion.

C. Endorsement of the ITC Declaration Harnessing the full potential of inland transport solutions in the global fight against climate change

15. At the end of the meeting, Ministers and Heads of delegations of Contracting Parties will be invited to express their support for the ITC Declaration Harnessing the full potential of inland transport solutions in the global fight against climate change (ECE/TRANS/2023/2). The Declaration takes stock of the worsening global climate change emergency, recognizes the unique strengths of the Committee and articulates the urgent call for harnessing the full potential of inland transport in terms relevant to the Committee's mandates. It does so by recognizing the Committee's unique regulatory assets as a main avenue to support the international efforts to find solutions for these challenges and deliver on ambitious commitments triggered by the 2015 Paris Agreement and regional and national policy responses and initiatives. It also calls upon world transport leaders to embrace and intensify their support for the work of the Committee as the UN Platform for Inland Transport, to the benefit of the global community and future generations.

III. Scheduled high-level side-events

A. High-level side event of the ITC Road Safety Forum

16. Despite strong and consistent efforts by member States, the international community was not able to achieve by 2020 the target of the Sustainable Development Goals on road safety as evidenced by increasing, rather than decreasing, road fatalities and injuries globally. In response, the General Assembly adopted on 31 August 2020 Resolution 74/299 on Improving global road safety, inaugurating the second Decade of Action for Road Safety, setting new ambitious goals, supported by the launch in 2021 of a new Global Plan of Action as a guiding document to support the implementation of its objectives. Both milestones recognize the unique and critical role of ECE and the ITC.

17. The Inland Transport Committee Road Safety Forum's objective is to provide a structured platform that will bring together key worldwide stakeholders for a regular and strategic discussion on progress achieved, remaining challenges and the way forward for the success of the second Decade of Action and the implementation of its Global Plan of Action (ECE/TRANS/2023/36).

18. This year's High-level side event will bring together key worldwide stakeholders for a strategic discussion on the new course of action that is needed in order to make definitive progress in successfully addressing the continuing crisis and will provide key directions and high-level insights for the ITC Road Safety Forum.

Annex I

Draft weekly programme (20–24 February 2023)

Monday 20 February	3–6 p.m.	ITC Bureau meeting	
Tuesday 21 February	10 a.m.–1 p.m.	ITC High-level segment Salle XIX	
	1–3 p.m.	<i>Lunch Break and high-level side event on ITC Road Safety Forum</i>	
	3–6 p.m.	ITC High-level segment (Cont'd) Salle XIX	
	6–8 p.m.	Cocktail/Reception (Palais des Nations) (tbc)	
Wednesday 22 February	10 a.m.–1 p.m.	ITC Annual Session - Restricted session* Salle XIX (*Government representatives only)	
	1–3 p.m.	<i>Break</i>	
	3–6 p.m.	ITC Annual Session Regular session (Cont'd) Salle XIX	
Thursday 23 February	10 a.m.–1 p.m.	ITC Annual Session Regular session (Cont'd) Salle XIX	
	1–3 p.m.	<i>Break</i>	
	3–6 p.m.	ITC Annual Session Regular session (Cont'd) Salle XIX	
Friday 24 February	10 a.m.–1 p.m.	ITC Annual Session Regular session (Cont'd) Salle XIX	
	1–3 p.m.	<i>Break</i>	ITC Bureau meeting
	3–6 p.m.	ITC Roundtable on Connectivity Salle XIX	

Annex II

Draft Programme

**High-level segment
Actions of the inland transport
sector to join the global fight against climate change
21 February 2023, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m., Salle XIX
Palais des Nations, Geneva**

10–10.30 a.m.	Opening statements and welcome speeches
10.30–10.50 a.m.	Keynote speech 1
10.50–11.10 a.m.	Keynote speech 2
11.10 – 11.40 a.m.	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.40 a.m. – 1 p.m.	Panel I: Leaving no-one behind in the climate battle: global challenges and winning formulas for net-zero leaders <i>Discussion and scheduled interventions (3' each max)</i>
1–3 p.m.	Lunch break & High-level side event on ITC Road Safety Forum
3 – 4.15 p.m.	Panel II: Bridging regulators and innovators to bring to scale critical technologies supporting climate change mitigation actions <i>Discussion and scheduled interventions (3' each max)</i>
4.15 – 4.45 p.m.	<i>Coffee break</i>
4.45 – 5.50 p.m.	Panel III: A bet we can't afford to lose: challenges and opportunities in the nexus of international financial and regulatory support for climate action <i>Discussion and scheduled interventions (3' each max)</i>
5.50 – 6 p.m.	Announcement of the ITC Declaration and closing statements
