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Economic Commission for Europe

Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics

Thirty-sixth session

Geneva, 4–6 September 2023

Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda

Critical role of inland transport in accelerating climate change mitigation

Thematic discussion on the critical role of inland transport in accelerating climate change mitigation

Note by the secretariat

I. Introduction

1. This thematic discussion held in the framework of the thirty-sixth annual Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5) on 6 September 2023 (from 10:00-13:00) focuses on the critical role of inland transport in accelerating climate change mitigation. It is expected to feed into the ongoing development of an ambitious strategy document and action plan with milestones for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the inland transport sector, as requested by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Inland Transport Committee (ITC) at its eighty-fifth plenary session in February of this year.

2. The ITC Climate Change Mitigation Strategy will encompass the overarching ambitious target of net zero emissions from the inland transport sector by 2050. It is being developed with due account to the inputs and work carried out by the Working Parties under the auspices of the ITC and Administrative Committees of relevant United Nations legal instruments (see [ECE/TRANS/2023/21](#) for more information). The draft strategy will be consulted with UNECE member States as well as other United Nations member States. The final strategy is envisaged to be adopted by ITC at its eighty-sixth session, in Geneva, on 20-23 February 2024. Ministers and Heads of Delegations will be invited to endorse and sign up to the Strategy during the high-level policy segment of ITC (on 20 February 2024).

II. Objective

3. This thematic discussion will enable representatives of member States as well international organizations, non-governmental bodies, private sector associations and academia working on decarbonization of the inland transport sector, to learn more about the ongoing development of the ITC Climate Change Mitigation Strategy and to share their insights, proposals, and feedback on possible future actions for climate change mitigation in inland transport.

III. Guiding questions

4. In preparation of the discussion, the ECE secretariat invites you to consider the following guiding questions to facilitate a fruitful exchange during the session:

- What are the main challenges and obstacles for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the inland transport sector (road, rail and inland waterways)?
- Which opportunities can be identified for reducing greenhouse gas emissions for climate change mitigation in the inland transport sector?
- Based on the draft outline of the Strategy (see Annex), which essential elements should – from your point of view – be included in the ITC climate change mitigation strategy and its accompanying action plan?
- How can Member States, non-governmental bodies and the private sector be encouraged to take further ambitious actions necessary for reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the inland transport sector to meet the goal of the Paris Agreement of pursuing efforts to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius?

5. While in-person participation is encouraged in the interest of an interactive dialogue among the participants, remote participation will also be possible via the Zoom WebPlatform. Interpretation, both in the room and online, will be provided in the three ECE working languages (English, French and Russian).

IV. Draft programme

Moderator: Ms. Els de Wit, Chair, Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5), Netherlands

10:00-10:45 - Introductory session

Ms. Franziska Hirsch, Secretary, Inland Transport Committee, Sustainable Transport Division, UNECE

Mr. Francois Cuenot, Secretary to the Working Party on Pollution and Energy (WP.29/GRPE)

10:45 – 11:45 – Tour de table – Proposals by UNECE Member States on how to achieve net zero emissions from the inland transport sector by 2050 and the role of the Inland Transport Committee in this regard

Interventions from the floor

11:45 – 12:45 – Tour de table – Proposals by non-governmental bodies, private sector and academia on how to achieve net zero emissions from the inland transport sector by 2050 and the role of the Inland Transport Committee in this regard

Interventions from the floor

12:45 – Wrap-up and next steps by WP.5 Chair/ and secretariat
