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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

(Sixty-sixth session, 17-19 February 2004,
agenda item 3)

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE,
THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL AND
OTHER UNITED NATIONS BODIES AND CONFERENCES**

**I. PROVISIONS OF GENERAL INTEREST TO THE INLAND TRANSPORT
COMMITTEE ARISING FROM THE FIFTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

INTRODUCTION

1. The fifty-eighth session of the Commission took place from 4 to 6 March 2003 (see Annual Report E/2003/37 - E/ECE/1406). The following main topics and issues were examined and debated at the session: economic developments in the UNECE region; sustainable development in the UNECE region; the UNECE reform; major policy directions of UNECE's work; UNECE's achievements and constraints during 2002 and perspectives for 2003; preparation for and follow-up to world and regional conferences; technical cooperation; cooperation and coordination with other organizations; report of the Group of Experts on the Programme of Work (GEPW); and other business. All documents discussed at the session may be downloaded from the UNECE web site http://www.unece.org/commission/2003/58th_index.htm.

2. Recommendations of a more general nature were made with regard to sustainable development in the UNECE region at the two Round Tables held during the Commission's session: Round Table I: "Progress in national strategies for sustainable development" and Round Table II: "Strategy implementation - the role of international cooperation". Among the priorities

or areas addressed by countries were the following: decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation; changing production and consumption patterns; science and technology development; fighting poverty and ensuring social cohesion; improving quality of life and well being of the people; health; sound management of natural resources; sustainable energy policy; environmental protection; research, technology and innovations; land use, urban planning and development; environment-friendly mobility.

3. The secretariat has summarized some of the issues and decisions taken during the session which are relevant to the work of the Inland Transport Committee and other principal subsidiary bodies (PSBs).

Substantive issues

4. All PSBs should:

- (a) Continue to regularly review their strategic directions and priorities. In particular, during the budget submission year, future directions for the programme of work should be discussed in preparation for the next programme budget and medium-term plan cycles;
- (b) Regularly review forthcoming activities in order to consider what might be dropped and replaced by new activities;
- (c) Ensure a balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development into all sectors of activity;
- (d) Further develop their intersectoral cooperation and activities, e.g. by scheduling bureau meetings of two or three PSBs in the same week in order to hold a joint meeting of these PSB bureaux;
- (e) Further incorporate cross-sectoral concerns into the work of all subprogrammes: gender issues, security, information and communication technologies (ICT) and knowledge-based economy;
- (f) Ensure coordination with other organizations involved in the same fields of activity.

Strengthening the Organization – review of the intergovernmental structure

5. Principal subsidiary bodies and their subsidiary bodies should regularly review their intergovernmental structure, in particular:

- (a) Some future streamlining and restructuring of the subsidiary bodies and related expert groups need to be considered, to ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness;
- (b) Sunset clauses should be introduced when appropriate, with an evaluation of the work achieved at the end of the period;

- (c) The frequency of meetings and number and length of reports produced should be reviewed.

Technical cooperation

6. Technical cooperation activities need to be reviewed and streamlined with the involvement of PSBs. In this review, PSBs should pay particular attention to the following conclusions of the Commission:

- (a) The priority-setting mechanism for technical cooperation needs to be strengthened to ensure that technical assistance projects are carried out in response to the real needs of member countries and that they are within the UNECE expertise and do not overlap with the work of other organizations (see in particular, paragraphs 35-36 of the paper on UNECE reform (E/ECE/1399), chapter V of which addresses these issues as well as those outlined below);
- (b) Technical cooperation should be demand-driven and action-oriented, with emphasis given to less advanced, low-income countries with economies in transition;
- (c) Therefore, technical cooperation with Central Asia, Southeast Europe and the Caucasus should be strengthened;
- (d) Financial assistance should be made available to low-income countries with economies in transition to enable them to participate in UNECE activities such as workshops and seminars;
- (e) Evaluating technical cooperation activities, though difficult, complex and demanding, is important and necessary.

II. UNECE SPRING SEMINAR

7. In connection with the fifty-eighth session of the Commission, the 2003 UNECE Spring Seminar dealt, *inter alia*, with the following theme: Sectoral dimensions of sustainable development: Energy and transport. A copy of the paper will be made available to participants of the Committee's sixty-sixth session. In this context, the Director of the UNECE Transport Division made a presentation on the contribution of the UNECE work on transport, in particular, UNECE regulations on vehicle emission, to sustainable development.

III. SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF 2003 OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

8. The attention of the Committee is drawn to the resolutions on the "Work of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods" and "Europe-Africa permanent link through the Strait of Gibraltar" adopted at the ECOSOC substantive session of 2003 (Geneva, 30 June to 25 July 2003), the texts of which are reproduced below:

2003/64

Work of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolutions 1999/65 of 26 October 1999, 2001/34 of 26 July 2001 and 2001/44 of 20 December 2001,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals¹ during the biennium 2001-2002,

A

Work of the Committee regarding the transport of dangerous goods

Recognizing the importance of the work of the Committee for the harmonization of codes and regulations relating to the transport of dangerous goods,

Bearing in mind the need to maintain safety standards at all times and to facilitate trade, as well as the importance of this to the various organizations responsible for modal regulations, while meeting the growing concern for the protection of life, property and the environment through the safe transport of dangerous goods, including their security in transport,

Noting the increasing volume of dangerous goods being introduced into worldwide commerce and the rapid expansion of technology and innovation,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* for the work of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals with respect to matters relating to the transport of dangerous goods, including their security in transport;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General:

(a) To circulate the new and amended recommendations² on the transport of dangerous goods to the Governments of Member States, the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and other international organizations concerned;

(b) To publish the thirteenth revised edition of the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods: Model Regulations*³ and the fourth revised edition of the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods: Manual of Tests and Criteria*⁴ in all the official languages of the United Nations, in the most cost-effective manner, not later than the end of 2003;

(c) To make these publications available on the web site of the Economic Commission for Europe, which also provides secretariat services to the Committee, and to make them available also on CD-ROM;

3. *Invites* all Governments, the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the other international organizations concerned to transmit to the secretariat of the Committee their views on the Committee's work, together with any comments that they may wish to make on the amended recommendations;

4. *Invites* all interested Governments, the regional commissions, the specialized agencies and the international organizations concerned, when developing or updating appropriate codes and regulations, to consider taking into account the recommendations of the Committee;

5. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report on the status of the effective implementation of the *Model Regulations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods* by Member States and international organizations on a worldwide level;

B

Work of the Committee regarding the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

Bearing in mind that, pursuant to paragraph 19.27 of Agenda 21,⁵ the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals has cooperated for a decade with the International Labour Organization, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods to develop a globally harmonized hazard classification and compatible labelling system for chemicals,

Bearing in mind also that the Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals was created pursuant to resolution 1999/65 to make the Globally Harmonized System available worldwide, to keep it up-to-date and to promote and monitor its implementation,

Noting with satisfaction that the Committee could reach consensus on the Globally Harmonized System after consideration of a draft consolidated by the Inter-Organization Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals on the basis of input from the Subcommittee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, the International Labour Organization and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development,

Aware that the World Summit on Sustainable Development at its 2002 session in Johannesburg, in paragraph 23 (c) of its Plan of Implementation,⁶ encouraged countries to implement the Globally Harmonized System as soon as possible with a view to having the system fully operational by 2008,

Also aware that the General Assembly, by its resolution 57/253 of 20 December 2002, endorsed the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and requested the Economic and Social Council to implement the provisions of the Plan relevant to its mandate and, in particular, to promote the implementation of Agenda 21 by strengthening system-wide coordination,

Further aware of and recognizing the significance of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research/International Labour Organization/Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Global Partnership for Capacity-Building to Implement the Globally Harmonized System for building capacities at all levels to achieve the 2008 target,

1. *Expresses its deep appreciation* to the Committee and other organizations concerned for their fruitful cooperation;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General:

(a) To publish the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals in all the official languages of the United Nations, in the most cost-effective manner and to circulate it to the Governments of Member States, the specialized agencies and other international organizations concerned as soon as possible and no later than 2004;

(b) To consider disseminating the Globally Harmonized System as a CD-ROM;

(c) To make the Globally Harmonized System available on the web site of the secretariat of the Economic Commission for Europe, which also provides secretariat services to the Committee;

3. *Invites* all Governments to take the necessary steps, through appropriate national procedures and/or legislation, to implement the Globally Harmonized System as soon as possible and no later than 2008;

4. *Reiterates* the call for support to developing countries in strengthening their capacity for sound management of chemicals by providing technical and financial assistance;

5. *Invites* the regional commissions, United Nations programmes, the specialized agencies and other organizations concerned to promote the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System and, where relevant, to amend their respective legal international instruments addressing transport safety, work safety, consumer protection or the protection of the environment so as to give effect to the Globally Harmonized System through such instruments;

6. *Invites* Governments, the regional commissions, United Nations programmes, the specialized agencies and other organizations concerned to provide feedback to the Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals;

7. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report on the status of implementation of the Globally Harmonized System;

8. *Encourages* Governments, regional commissions, United Nations programmes, specialized agencies and other relevant international organizations and non-governmental organizations, in particular industry, to support implementation of the Globally Harmonized System and capacity-building activities in developing countries and countries in transition by providing financial contributions and/or technical assistance;

C

Programme of work of the Committee

Taking note of the programme of work of the Committee for the biennium 2003-2004 as contained in paragraphs 29 to 31 of the report of the Secretary-General,¹

Noting the relatively poor representation of experts from developing countries with economies in transition in the work of the Committee and the need to ensure their wider participation in its work,

1. *Decides* to approve the programme of work of the Committee;

2. *Stresses* the importance of the participation of experts from developing countries as well as countries with economies in transition in the work of the Committee, calls, in this regard, for voluntary contributions to facilitate their participation, including through support for travel

and daily subsistence allowance, and invites Member States and international organizations in a position to do so to contribute;

3. *Notes* the recommendations of the Committee regarding staff resources,⁷ and invites the General Assembly to consider this issue in the context of its review of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005:

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Economic and Social Council in 2005 on the implementation of the present resolution.

*49th plenary meeting
25 July 2003*

1. E/2003/46.
2. ST/SG/AC.10/29/Add.1 and 2.
3. ST/SG/AC.10/1/Rev.13.
4. ST/SG/AC.10/11/Rev. 4.
5. *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.
6. *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August – 4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.
7. As contained in E/2003/46, para. 33: see also A/54/443/Add.1, para.7.

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2003/52

Europe-Africa permanent link through the Strait of Gibraltar

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolutions 1982/57 of 30 July 1982, 1983/62 of 29 July 1983, 1984/75 of 27 July 1984, 1985/70 of 26 July 1985, 1987/69 of 8 July 1987, 1989/119 of 28 July 1989, 1991/74 of 26 July 1991, 1993/60 of 30 July 1993, 1995/48 of 27 July 1995, 1997/48 of 22 July 1997, 1999/37 of 28 July 1999 and 2001/29 of 26 July 2001,

Referring to resolution 912 (1989) adopted on 1 February 1989 by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe¹ regarding measures to encourage the construction of a major traffic artery in south-western Europe and to study thoroughly the possibility of a permanent link through the Strait of Gibraltar,

Referring also to the Barcelona Declaration adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference, held at Barcelona in November 1995, and to the work programme annexed thereto, aimed at connecting the Mediterranean transport networks to the trans-European transport network so as to ensure their interoperability,

Referring further to the Lisbon Declaration adopted at the Conference on Transport in the Mediterranean, held at Lisbon in January 1997, and to the conclusions of the Pan-European Transport Conference, held at Helsinki in June 1997, on corridors in the Mediterranean incorporating the permanent link,

Taking note of the conclusions of the second and third meetings of the Western Mediterranean Transport Group, held at Rabat in September 1995 and at Madrid in January 1997, and of the conclusions of the meeting held at Brussels in 2000 by the Euro-Mediterranean Forum on Transport, which constitutes a framework for coordination among the countries of the Mediterranean basin, for the development of integrated transport networks,

Taking note also of the conclusions of the study on transport infrastructure in the six countries of the western Mediterranean (INFRAMED), carried out by the Western Mediterranean Transport Group in 1998, which is currently being updated with funding by the European Commission, for the establishment of an integrated network in the Mediterranean basin,

Taking note in addition of the follow-up report prepared jointly by the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic Commission for Africa in accordance with resolution 2001/29,² submitted for that purpose, which refers to further project studies, with the aim, in particular, of supplementing the related geological and geotechnical research,

¹ See Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, fortieth ordinary session (third part), 30 January-3 February 1989, *Texts adopted by the Assembly*, Strasbourg, France, 1989.

² E/2003/45.

1. *Welcomes* the cooperation on the project for the link through the Strait of Gibraltar between the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Governments of Morocco and Spain and specialized international organizations;
2. *Also welcomes* the efforts made to date in deep-sea drilling work, which have provided a decisive impetus to geological and geotechnical knowledge of undersea formations, and invites the two sponsoring countries and the organizations concerned to intensify their cooperation in order to finalize the project studies;
3. *Commends* the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic Commission for Africa on the work done in preparing the project follow-up report¹⁷⁷ requested by the Council in its resolution 2001/29;
4. *Renews* its invitation to the competent organizations of the United Nations system and to specialized governmental and non-governmental organizations to participate in the studies and operations on the permanent link through the Strait of Gibraltar;
5. *Requests* the Executive Secretaries of the Economic Commission for Africa and the Economic Commission for Europe to continue to take an active part in the follow-up to the project and to report to the Council at its substantive session of 2005;
6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide formal support and, to the extent that priorities permit, the resources necessary, within the regular budget, to the Economic Commission for Europe and the Economic Commission for Africa, to enable them to carry out the activities mentioned above.

*47th plenary meeting
24 July 2003*
