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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

(Seventy-first session, 24-26 February 2009,  
agenda item 15)

**ACRONYMS OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE INLAND TRANSPORT  
COMMITTEE**

Note by the secretariat

**I. MANDATE**

1. At its 2 June 2008 meeting, the Bureau noting that current acronyms of the Committee's subsidiary bodies are not harmonized and that this may create confusion to country delegates, asked the secretariat to study the matter and prepare proposals for consideration at its next meeting.
2. Following this request, the secretariat has prepared this document as a report of the subject matter. The current structure of the Committee's subsidiary bodies is annexed to this document.
3. The Bureau may wish to consider the matter and provide further guidance to the secretariat.

**II. BACKGROUND**

4. The establishment of continually acting sub-commissions or other subsidiary bodies to the UNECE Commission follows the Terms of Reference and Rules and Procedures of the Economic Commission for Europe (E/ECE/778/Rev.4) of 2006.
5. Chapter VI, Rule 18 of current UNECE Rules indicates that "...with the approval of the Economic and Social Council, the Commission may establish such continually acting sub-commissions or other subsidiary bodies...". Rules 19 and 20 indicate that "The Commission may establish or discontinue such committees and sub-committees ....Subsidiary bodies shall adopt their own rules of procedures unless otherwise decided by the Commission". Chapter C of the Workplan on ECE Reform of 12 December 2005 (E/ECE/1434/Rev.1), indicates that "UNECE Sectoral Committees, (including the Inland Transport Committee) ... are responsible for the preparation and implementation of their Programmes of Work and that these shall be

approved by the Commission”. In the same Chapter, all Committees are requested “... to review their subsidiary intergovernmental bodies by 2007, in accordance with the Guidelines defined in E/ECE/1407/Add.1 and thereafter report to the Executive Committee, once a year”.

6. These Guidelines, as revised by ECE/EX/2006/L.3, define the Working Party as an intergovernmental body, subsidiary to a Sectoral Committee. They also indicate that Working Parties are established by the Executive Committee upon the recommendation of the Sectoral Committee. The establishment and functioning of Teams of Specialists <sup>1/</sup> follows the provisions of the respective Guidelines (ECE/EX/2006/L.3).

7. Since its creation in 1947, the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) established a number of subsidiary bodies to it, as well as a number of Working Parties, Ad Hoc Working Parties, Sub-Groups, Groups of Experts and Study Groups, with or without limited duration. During the same period, some of these bodies completed their tasks and were discontinued, while others remained in existence. It is useful to recall some historical facts related to the establishment of some ITC subsidiary bodies:

(a) **At its first session, 22-24 October 1947**, the ITC decided to set up (a) a Working Party on Transport by Rail (Census, Identification, Restitution, Use of Rolling Stock), (b) a Working Party on Transport Equipment, (c) a Working Party on Road Transport (short-term problems) and (d) an Ad Hoc Working Party on Road Transport (long-term problems).

(b) **At its second session, 5-10 February 1948**, the ITC decided to establish, under its authority and control a Sub-Committee for Road Transport, which would replace the Ad Hoc Working Party on Road Transport (long-term problems), while the Working Party on Road Transport (short-term problems) would continue its work under the Sub-Committee for Road Transport. At the same session, the ITC also decided to set up, under its authority, a Working Party on Perishable Foodstuffs.

(c) **At its third session, 29 October 1948**, the ITC decided to set up, under its authority, a Sub-Committee on Rail Transport. At the same session, the ITC recognizing the importance of Inland Water Transport agreed that the establishment of a Sub-Committee on Inland Water Transport and Ports would be necessary in the future. The establishment of a Sub-Committee on Inland Water Transport and Ports was decided by the ITC at a later stage. The establishment of a Working Party to prepare the International Regulations Governing the Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways and of a Working Party to prepare Model International Regulations Governing the Related Operations of Handling Dangerous Goods was decided by the Committee **at its sixth session, on 22 September 1950**. These Sub-Committees were later named “**Principal Working Parties**” and later on “**Working Parties**”.

(d) From this very early stage, the ITC established the practice that some Working Parties, such as the Working Party on Perishable Foodstuffs and others, should report directly to the ITC while other Working Parties were accountable to the Sub-Committee that was parent to it.

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<sup>1/</sup> According to the guidelines, these teams of specialists can also be named “advisory groups”, “ad hoc groups”, “task forces,” etc.

### III. CONSIDERATION OF THE ACRONYMS OF THE ITC SUBSIDIARY BODIES

8. The current structure of the Inland Transport Committee and its subsidiary bodies is illustrated in the annexed table and includes the following acronyms:

(a) (SC) abbreviation of Sub-Committee and its number (SC.1, SC.2, SC.3). However, the full title does not reflect the abbreviated acronym but refers to the related Working Party, as follows:

- (SC.1) Working Party on Road Transport;
- (SC.2) Working Party on Rail Transport;
- (SC.3) Working Party on Inland Water Transport.

(b) (WP) abbreviation of Working Party and its number (WP.1, WP.3). These are as follows:

- (WP.1) Working Party on Road Traffic Safety;
- (SC.3/WP.3) Working Party on the Standardization of Technical and Safety requirements in Inland Navigation<sup>2/</sup>
- (WP.5) Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics;
- (WP.6) Working Party on Transport Statistics;
- (WP.11) Working Party on the Transport of Perishable Foodstuffs;
- (WP.15) Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods;
- (WP.24) Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics;
- (WP.29) World Forum for the Harmonization of Vehicles Regulations. In the case of WP.29, there is a deviation from the general practice. Instead of bearing the title of Working Party, it is called World Forum. This deviation was adopted by WP.29 at its 119<sup>th</sup> session in November 1999 and was endorsed by the ITC at its 2000 session. This decision was taken in order to emphasize the global aspect of WP.29 work;
- (WP.30) Working Party on Customs Questions Affecting Transport.

(c) There are also some Working Parties that do not bear (WP) in their acronyms. This is the case of the Working Parties that are subsidiary bodies to the World Forum (WP.29), as follows:

- (GRPE) Working party on Pollution and Energy, subsidiary body of the World Forum;

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<sup>2/</sup> The inclusion in the acronyms of SC.3 before the number of the WP, indicate the parent body to which this Working Party reports).

- (GRSG) Working Party on General Safety Provisions, subsidiary body of the World Forum;
- (GRRF) Working Party on Brakes and Running Gear, subsidiary body of the World Forum;
- (GRE) Working Party on Lighting and Light Signalling, subsidiary body of the World Forum;
- (GRB) Working Party on Noise, subsidiary body of the World Forum;
- (GRSP) Working Party on Passive Safety, subsidiary body of the World Forum.

(d) Some of the ITC Working Parties cooperate with bodies established by other organizations which possess similar or complementary expertise in order to avoid duplication of work. These bodies discuss only issues which are of common interest to the UNECE and the cooperating organization. This is the case of WP.15, which cooperates with OTIF and CCNR, as follows:

- OTIF: (WP.15/AC.1) Joint Meeting of the RID Committee of Experts and the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods;
- CCNR: (WP.15/AC.2) Joint Meeting of Experts on the Regulations annexed to the European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterways.

(e) There are also official sub-groups, groups of experts and other specialized bodies functioning under the authority of some Working Parties or directly under the ITC, bearing the following acronyms:

- (ECE/TRANS/AC.11) Multidisciplinary Group of Experts on Inland Transport Security, directly reporting to the ITC;
- (WP.5/GE.1) Group of Experts on Hinterland Connections of Seaports, reporting to WP.5;
- (WP.5/GE.2) Group of Experts on Euro-Asian Transport Links, reporting to WP.5;
- (WP.6/AC.2) Ad Hoc Group of Experts on E-Road Census, meeting every 5 years for the Census, reporting to WP.6;
- (WP.6/AC.4) Ad Hoc Group of Experts on E-Rail Census, meeting every 5 years for the Census, reporting to WP.6;
- (WP.29/AC.2) Administrative Committee for the Coordination of work, reporting to the World Forum.

(f) In addition, there are unofficial bodies (informal groups of experts, groups of Volunteers or ad hoc groups) functions under the Working Parties.

(g) Moreover, other bodies serviced by the Transport Division which do not report to the ITC or to any of ITC subsidiary bodies. This is the case of Administrative Committees of UNECE Legal Instruments (ACs), as well as those under the authority of the Economic and Social Council, including the Committee of Expert of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized Systems of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (ST/SG/AC.10), the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods-TDG Sub-Committee (ST/SG/AC.10/C.3) and the Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (ST/SG/AC.10/C.4). Also the Steering Committee on the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP), serviced by the UNECE Transport and Environment Division as well as by WHO/Europe, does not report to the ITC nor to the UNECE Commission, but to the High-level Meeting on Transport, Health and Environment that is convened every 5 to 7 years (ECE/AC.21/SC-EUR/08). Therefore, the acronyms of these bodies have not been considered by the secretariat in the context of the present study.

9. Based on the above analysis, the issues for consideration are as follows:

(a) The differentiation of titles among some ITC subsidiary bodies;

(b) The differentiation of acronyms and titles and their numbering (SC and WP);

(c) The differentiation of acronyms of Groups of experts and other subsidiary bodies to the ITC Working Parties.

#### The differentiation of titles among some ITC subsidiary bodies

10. The ITC subsidiary bodies that bear the title of Working Parties are, to a great extent harmonized, except for WP.29, which is called World Forum, following the decision of WP.29 and its endorsement by the ITC. The secretariat is of the opinion that, due to the need to put emphasis in the global coverage of this Working Party, **such a deviation should be considered as acceptable.**

11. Moreover, Working Parties that are subsidiary bodies to the World Forum, mentioned above in para 7 (c), have acronyms that do not start with (WP). For these Working Parties, we may consider the feasibility of including (WP) before their abbreviated title.

#### The differentiation of acronyms and titles and their numbering (SC and WP)

12. Since all subsidiary bodies to the ITC, except for WP.29, have the title of Working Parties, the only remaining issue in this regard is whether SC acronyms should be maintained or replaced by WP. Although changing SC acronyms to WP may appear as a logical and rather simple solution, a number of elements analysed below indicate that this entails difficulties and the risk of creating even higher confusion and problems. More precisely:

- (a) The acronym (SC) Sub-Committee is part of the history of the ITC. SC.1, SC.2 and SC.3 are the oldest subsidiary bodies of the ITC. Therefore, a possible change should be considered from the aspect of the **institutional memory and history** too.
- (b) SC.3 is in fact the parent body of WP.3 (SC.3/WP.3) following the traditional structure of the ITC. Therefore, **it should keep the acronym SC.3.**
- (c) SC.1 and SC.2 are the oldest ITC subsidiary bodies. In the past 60 years, these bodies have been supervising the work of many Working Parties reporting to them. The fact that the Working Parties functioning under SC.1 and SC.2 no longer exist does not necessarily mean that these groups may not establish new subsidiary bodies under their authority in the future. Therefore, **changing their acronyms from SC to WP may not be the best solution.**
- (d) For many decades, the working documents and reports of these subsidiary bodies have used symbols including the acronym SC. A possible change to WP would automatically mean changes to symbols of the respective documents to be published in the future, which **may pose problems of continuity and lead to further confusion.**
- (e) Respective acronyms are quoted in a number of **international Agreements developed by the UNECE and in the National Legislations and Guidelines in many UNECE countries. Changing these acronyms may also pose problems in this regard.**
- (f) **Given the laborious and time-consuming procedure that a change in acronyms would require in various fora, including the SC.1, SC.2, SC.3, ITC, EXCOM. and ECOSOC, the question arises as to the validity of such an action.**
- (g) **Changing acronyms which a great number of country experts involved in the work of the ITC and its subsidiary bodies are familiar with may create more confusion.**

13. Numbering of various Working Parties may not be regarded as a problem. Working Parties are not necessarily permanent bodies. Their usefulness is considered periodically (last in 2007 on the occasion of the UNECE Reform). Since its creation, the ITC has established many WPs and has decided about the discontinuation of many of them. This will likely continue in future. **Therefore, re-numbering some WPs seems unnecessary.**

The differentiation of acronyms of Group of experts and other subsidiary bodies to the ITC Working Parties

14. The differentiation of acronyms between groups of experts and other subsidiary bodies to the ITC Working Parties is an issue that could be addressed. Some of these groups correctly use the acronyms of their parent Working Party in the front part of their abbreviated title, others do not. **Placing the acronyms of the parent Working Party in the front part of the abbreviated title could be generalized.**

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