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**Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing (PWG-TBC)**

13<sup>th</sup> session  
12-13 March 2008  
Almaty, Kazakhstan

**DRAFT CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Following deliberations and substantive discussion of the documents and additional information provided through the presentations of UNECE and UNESCAP and other participants as stipulated in the Agenda of the 13th session of SPECA PWG-TBC, the Project Working Group came to the following conclusions and recommendations.
2. The Project Working Group reviewed the progress achieved since the 12th session in developing the four priority transport databases (rail routes, road routes, border crossing points, intermodal transport) for the SPECA region and requested SPECA countries to provide missing information for the databases.
3. The Project Working Group noted the progress on the development of the SPECA guide on road wayside facilities reported (Phase I – Kazakhstan), and the need for assistance on identifying the financial sources for its publication. The Project Working Group also requested the SPECA countries to provide the information pertaining to the location of wayside facilities along international highways of the SPECA network to NIITK on a regular basis.
4. The Project Working Group requested NIITK to continue the work on determining/identifying projects of common interest for the SPECA countries, and submit its proposals to the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Kazakhstan for consideration.
5. The Project Working Group expressed its gratitude to the Ministry of Transport and Communication of Kazakhstan for submitting, on behalf of SPECA PWG-TBC, the projects proposals approved at the 11th and 12th session of PWG to donors for funding consideration, and requested the Ministry to continue its efforts to consult with donors in this regard.
6. The Project Working Group also stressed the crucial role of NIITK as an institute of technical support through the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Kazakhstan in the

implementation of the PWG-TBC projects and activities, and the need for financial and other assistance to NIITK along with continuing advisory assistance by UNESCAP and UNECE.

7. Reaffirming the importance of the international conventions recommended for accession at the second session of the PWG-TBC, and noting the progress achieved by SPECA countries since the last session, the Project Working Group encouraged the SPECA countries to consider further accession to the conventions. The Project Working Group also encouraged public and private sectors to establish partnerships to identify problems and solutions for effective implementation of the international legal instruments. It also acknowledged the technical assistance received from UNECE and UNESCAP in assessing the implications of acceding to and implementing the transport-related international legal instruments and asked them to continue to provide further assistance. In this regard the PWG noted with interest that the Interstates Council of EurASec held on 6 October 2007 in Dushanbe adopted a resolution recommending EurASec member states to accede 25 international conventions up to the end of 2008.
8. The PWG appreciated the UNESCAP study report on national trade and transport facilitation mechanisms and the progress being made by SPECA member countries in establishing and strengthening such mechanisms as well as the importance of sharing information among the facilitation bodies in the SPECA region. The Project Working Group also noted the importance of including the private sector/non-governmental organizations in the facilitation mechanisms. It discussed and considered the modalities of establishing subregional and regional fora of national facilitation coordinating mechanisms to promote cooperation and experience sharing.
9. The PWG noted with appreciation the revised UNESCAP Time/Cost-Distance Methodology. It also noted the results of route analysis carried out by the Forum of Entrepreneurs of Kazakhstan, the Freight Forwarding Association of Kyrgyzstan and KAZTRANSSERVICE. The meeting requested the relevant industry associations and the government agencies to work closely with UNESCAP and UNECE secretariat in the collection of data and the analysis of the seven road, rail and intermodal routes identified by the 12<sup>th</sup> session of the SPECA PWG-TBC and requested SPECA countries to present the findings at the 14<sup>th</sup> session of the SPECA PWG-TBC. In this regard the SPECA PWG-TBC requested UNESCAP to provide advisory services to enhance the understanding of the relevant public and private stakeholders on the application of the UNESCAP Time/Cost-Distance Methodology.
10. SPECA countries also briefed the Project Working Group on their transit transport issues and initiatives in relation to the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action at national level.
11. The Project Working Group noted the importance of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific to the SPECA member countries and encouraged the

SPECA member countries to actively participate in the UNESCAP activities to implement the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase 1 (2007-2011). Noting that all SPECA member countries except Turkmenistan are the Parties to the AH Agreement, the Project Working Group encouraged the SPECA countries to take necessary steps towards ratification, acceptance or approval of Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian-Railway Network to ensure its early entry into force. In this regard, the PWG was informed that Kazakhstan was taking process of ratification of the TAR Agreement.

12. The PWG noted with satisfaction the tangible results achieved by the UNECE-UNESCAP project on developing Euro-Asian Transport Linkages (EATL), which had been implemented in 2003-2007 with the participation of 18 countries, including all SPECA countries.
13. The PWG welcomed the Meeting of Ministers of Transport of countries in the Euro-Asian region, which was held on 19 February 2008 in Geneva during the 70<sup>th</sup> session of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee (ITC), in which the Ministers from the countries involved in the EATL project signed a joint statement on future development of the Euro-Asian transport links. It noted that by their joint statement the Ministers reaffirmed their support and commitment to the project, endorsed the Euro-Asian routes and priority infrastructure investments identified by it and supported the establishment of a mechanism for monitoring its follow-up activities.
14. Noting that the donor community considers positively funding the joint implementation by UNECE-UNESCAP of a Phase II of the EATL project from 2008 to 2011 and that the UNECE ITC had approved the creation of an Expert Group on EATL, which will be based on the UNECE-UNESCAP Expert Group that worked successfully in the last five years, the SPECA PWG encouraged SPECA countries to support the implementation of the Phase II of the EATL project and asked the UNECE and UNESCAP to join efforts for its implementation
15. The PWG welcomed the development by the five UN regional commissions in 2008-2009 of a new UNDA funded project on “Improving global road safety by setting regional and national road casualty reduction targets” as a follow-up of the recommendations made in GA Resolution A/RES/60/5 on improving global road safety. The SPECA PWG encouraged SPECA member states to actively participate in the project’s activities and make full use of it, in view of the severe penalty in road accidents paid annually by their societies.
16. The Project Working Group noted with satisfaction major achievements in improving efficiency of the Working Group since the adoption of the Guidelines at its 10<sup>th</sup> session held in March 2005. It also noted that lacking of financial support is the main issue in the improvement of the efficiency of the PWG-TBC and stressed the importance of financial support being ensured particularly for the proposed projects of common interest to the SPECA countries and for the

efficient functioning of PWG-TBC in general. The Project Working Group endorsed the refined thrust areas of PWG-TBC as contained in Annex (Annex to be attached: chapter 4 of the document SPECA/PWG-TBC(13)/8).

17. The Project Working Group supported bilateral consultations on border-crossing issues between Kazakhstan and its immediate SPECA neighbors held on 13 March 2008 under the framework of SPECA PWG-TBC, and requested to organize at the next 14<sup>th</sup> session of SPECA PWG-TBC, the bilateral consultation of interest to (host country) and its immediate neighbors.
18. The Project Working Group endorsed the Draft Agenda of the 14th session of the SPECA PWG-TBC (Annex ) to be held in (venue), with the dates to be determined later.
19. The Project Working Group was updated on the information on Clearing House on the Transport, Health, and Environment Trans-European Programme, and encouraged the SPECA countries to more effectively participate in the Programme.
20. The Project Working Group noted with interest the presentations made by delegates of SPECA member states on the progress achieved and future plans for the development of transport infrastructure and facilitation as well as by the presentation of the representative of the OSCE.
21. Noting that despite the progress achieved so far there are still many problems that persist throughout the SPECA region hampering international transport and that these include significant border-crossing delays, high transit costs, numerous and unnecessary national check points, non-official charges claimed by transport operators along the main international transport routes, low standard infrastructure, bottlenecks and missing links, the PWG invited competent authorities of SPECA member states to address these problems as a matter of urgency, starting with the non-physical obstacles, the solution of which do not necessarily entail financial burdens to the national budget.
22. The SPECA PWG-TBC was informed by UNESCAP of the demise of Mr. Vladimir Timofeev, Advisor with UNESCAP, on 13 March 2008. The PWG wished to place on record their appreciation of the contribution made by Mr. Timofeev to the work of the SPECA PWG-TBC and his commitment to the progress of SPECA. The PWG observed one minute of silence in memory of Mr. Timofeev and requested UNESCAP secretariat to convey their deepest sympathies to the family of Mr. Vladimir Timofeev.
23. The PWG expressed its appreciation to the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) for providing support for the organization of 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> session of the PWG-TBC and kindly requested for its continuous support.

24. The PWG expressed its deep gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Kazakhstan for its hospitality, and the conducive atmosphere provided for the session and also for the substantial preparation and excellent arrangements made for the Session.
25. The major conclusions and recommendations were unanimously adopted by the 13th session of SPECA PWG-TBC on 13 March 2008 in Almaty.