

REPORT
OF THE 21st SESSION OF SPECA THEMATIC WORKING GROUP ON
SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT, TRANSIT AND CONNECTIVITY ¹

7-8 September, 2016
Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

¹ This report has been issued without formal editing

INTRODUCTION

Organization

The 21st session of SPECA Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity (TWG-STTC) was organized from 7 to 8 September 2016 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan and was hosted by the Ministry of Motor Transport of Turkmenistan. The session was conducted in English with simultaneous interpretation into Russian language.

Attendance

Representatives of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Tajikistan and Turkmenistan participated in the session. The session was also attended by representatives of ESCAP, ECE and the Islamic Development Bank. The list of participants is enclosed at the end of the present document.

PROCEEDINGS

1. Opening of the Session

The session was opened by Mr. Annadurdy Kosaev, Deputy Minister of Motor Transport of Turkmenistan. In his statement, Mr. Kosaev welcomed the participants to the 21st session of SPECA TWG-STTC, informed about the significance of Turkmenistan for various international transport linkages due to its strategic geographical location as well as achievements of Turkmenistan's transport sector, highlighted the importance of promoting transport cooperation between countries and strengthening dialogue on improvement of transport efficiency in the SPECA sub-region. Opening statements were also delivered by the representatives of ECE and ESCAP.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The Thematic Working Group has reviewed and adopted the draft agenda as contained in documents SPECA/TWG-STTC (20)/L.1 and L.2.

3. Adoption of the report on the 20th session of the PWG-TBC

The TWG-STTC adopted the report of the 20th Session of the PWG-TBC, held from 10 to 11 September 2015 in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

4. Review of transport projects, activities and initiatives.

- 4.1 Transport infrastructure projects, activities and initiatives at national and international level, including development of dry ports to facilitate intermodal transport in SPECA countries

Background document: SPECA/TWG-STTC (21)/1;

Representatives of ESCAP and ECE presented their respective initiatives and efforts for promoting the development of transport infrastructure in SPECA countries. Representatives of SPECA countries reported on the national and international activities in development of transport infrastructure projects, including development of dry ports to facilitate intermodal transport in their countries.

The Thematic Working Group encouraged SPECA countries to become Parties to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports, to actively participate in the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway (AH) network and the Trans-Asian Railway (TAR) network, and to support ECE in further implementation of Euro-Asian Transport Linkages (EATL) project.

- 4.2 Accession and implementation of International Conventions and Agreements

Background document: SPECA/TWG-STTC (21)/2

ESCAP and ECE representatives informed TWG on the progress of accession and ratification of UN legal instruments. Delegates of SPECA member countries updated the Thematic Working Group on their status with regard to accession and implementation of international conventions and agreements.

The Thematic Working Group reaffirmed the importance of the UN legal instruments and reiterated the need for SPECA member states to intensify their efforts aimed at acceding to and implementing the transport-related UN legal instruments. The Thematic Working Group also encouraged SPECA countries to assign members to ESCAP Regional Network of Legal and Technical Experts on Transport Facilitation.

- 4.3 Establishment and operation of national coordinating mechanisms for transport facilitation

Background document: SPECA/TWG-STTC (21)/3

The Thematic Working Group encouraged SPECA countries to establish or strengthen national coordination mechanisms to review, assess, propose and take actions for the facilitation of international trade and transport;

4.4 Identification, isolation and elimination of major bottlenecks along international transport routes

Background document: SPECA/TWG-STTC (21)/4

ESCAP secretariat briefed the TWG about various activities, meeting and workshops undertaken for strengthening transport connectivity, development of railways in the ESCAP member building more efficient legal regime to facilitate cross-border and transit transport.

ESCAP secretariat also informed the TWG about the transport facilitation frameworks and tools that were developed to support countries in addressing major bottlenecks, namely Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport, Regional Cooperation Framework for the Facilitation of International Railway Transport, Transport Facilitation Tools¹.

ESCAP secretariat presented to the Thematic Working Group the Draft Model Bilateral Agreement and Draft Model Subregional Agreement on International Road Transport which serve as can be applied for drafting and negotiating new agreements and for planning amendments to existing agreements at bilateral and subregional levels with the purpose of harmonization of provisions of different legal instruments and establishment of legal regime favorable for development of international transport throughout the region

ESCAP secretariat also informed about the development of the regional online database of bilateral agreements on international road transport by the ESCAP secretariat and invited SPECA member countries to further update and refine the database.

ECE secretariat informed the TWG of the latest activities related to the Annex 9 on rail border crossing and Annex 8 on road border crossing to the International Convention on Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods. The TWG was informed that in 2016, the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30), embarked on the development of a new Annex 10 to the Convention, to address facilitation of maritime port procedures. WP.30 has reviewed a preliminary draft at its 143rd session (June 2016) and, following a round of comments, will be reviewing an amended draft in forthcoming sessions. ECE secretariat also outlined the progress related to development of a new Convention on rail border crossings for

¹ Secure Cross-Border Transport Model, Efficient Cross-Border Transport Models, Model on Integrated Control at Border Crossing, Time/Cost-Distance Methodology

passengers and their luggage and implementation of the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention-1975) and e-TIR procedures.

Representatives of SPECA countries reported on the national activities in identification, isolation and elimination of major bottlenecks along international transport routes.

4.5 Progress towards Unified Railway Law

Background document: SPECA/TWG-STTC (21)/5

ECE reported on the progress achieved in preparing the draft Unified Railway Law.

The Thematic Working Group encouraged SPECA countries to actively participate in the activities of the Group of Experts towards the Unified Railway Law and provide comments on draft document prepared by the Expert Group.

4.6 Progress report on the development of the SPECA TWG-STTC transport databases

Background document: SPECA/TWG-STTC (20)/6

ECE secretariat made a presentation on the transport related statistics as an important tool for policy development and measuring achievements in the implementation of the SDGs.

The Thematic Working Group encouraged SPECA member countries to continue collecting data and information in SPECA region and submitting them to the transport databases. Furthermore, Thematic Working Group welcomed further capacity building projects/workshops on transport statistics for the SPECA region

4.7 Establishment and strengthening of public-private partnerships in the SPECA region

Background document: SPECA/TWG-STTC (21)/7

ESCAP secretariat informed of the progress being achieved by ESCAP and ECE in promotion of the use of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) by developing and disseminating resource and training materials; conducting national and regional capacity building activities; establishing regional knowledge networks through regular regional meetings of PPP units and programmes; and providing advisory services and technical assistance.

ESCAP secretariat informed that the first Asia-Pacific Forum on PPPs for Transport Infrastructure Development was organized in 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand, an online Qualitative Value-For- Money Toolkit was launched to support Governments in early stage identification and selection of projects

suitable to be delivered on a PPP basis and to facilitate the use of PPP for dry port development, a “Project Structuring Options and Model Agreement” has been developed specifically for this type of infrastructure and is now available online.

ECE secretariat informed the TWG on the First International PPP Forum “Implementing the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through effective, people-first Public-Private Partnerships” held its session in Geneva from 30 March to 1 April 2016. Experts discussed PPPs as a key mechanism to contribute to the 2030 Development Agenda and as a tool to achieve the SDGs. Almost 20 parallel work streams rounds were carried-out during the Forum to accelerate the work on the standards and to implement the recommendation endorsed by various key stakeholders for Centres of Excellence, Specialists Centres and Project Teams.

The Thematic Working group updated the meeting on developments in PPPs in SPECA countries, including application of this mechanism for specific transport projects. The TWG also encouraged SPECA member countries to pursue policy measures to create favourable institutional environment for PPPs and strengthen the training programmes for government officials by taking advantage of training materials on PPPs prepared by ECE and ESCAP.

4.8 Road safety issues and policy interventions in the SPECA region

Background document: SPECA/TWG-STTC (21)/8

ECE and ESCAP secretariats representatives made a presentation on their activities as regards the implementation of the UN Decade of action for road safety 2011-2020, as well as road safety projects and capacity building events. Representatives of SPECA countries reported on the national activities in addressing road safety issues.

6. Bilateral consultations on transport and border-crossing issues between SPECA countries

In the absence of written requests, this topic was not discussed during this session.

7. Review of the draft agenda for the 22nd session of the SPECA TWG-STTC

Background document: SPECA/TWG-STTC (21)/9

The Thematic Working Group reviewed the draft agenda of the 22nd session of the Thematic Working Group.

8. Other business

Background document: SPECA/TWG-STTC (21)/10

The Thematic Working Group considered other matters not included in the agenda, particularly decisions of the Governing Council of SPECA on its tenth session in November 2015 to change the name from the “Project Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing” (PWG-TBC) into the “Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity” (TWG-STTC) with new objectives added in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the commitment to its implementation, including the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It was highlighted that Thematic Working Group can provide an important platform for supporting progress towards transport-related SDGs.

The SPECA countries were encouraged to explore the possibility to host next TWG-STTC meeting.

9. Adoption of the conclusions and recommendations

The Thematic Working Group reviewed and adopted the conclusions and recommendations of its 21st session, included below.

**Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and
Connectivity (TWG-STTC)**

21st session
7-8 September 2016
Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE 21st SESSION OF THE SPECA THEMATIC WORKING GROUP ON
SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT, TRANSIT AND CONNECTIVITY²**

7-8 September 2016
Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Following the presentation and consideration of the session documents as stipulated in the Agenda of the 21st session of SPECA Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity (TWG-STTC), the Thematic Working Group adopted the following conclusions and recommendations:
2. The TWG adopted the report of its 20th session.
3. The TWG encouraged those SPECA member countries that have not yet done so to take measures towards acceptance, approval, accession or ratification of the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway (AH) network, the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway (TAR) network and the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports. The TWG invited SPECA countries that are parties to the agreements to actively participate in activities related to the aforementioned Intergovernmental Agreements.
4. The TWG invited SPECA countries to exchange information with the secretariat (e-mail: escaptd@un.org) on a regular basis on the latest status of key national and regional road and rail infrastructure projects, and provide the secretariat with information on ongoing and/or planned initiatives relating to policies and projects aiming at developing transport infrastructure of international importance in their respective countries, including issues and challenges.
5. The TWG supported the Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) Project; it encouraged Governments to participate more actively in the activities of the EATL Group of Experts and invited them, as well as other donors, to contribute to the EATL budget, preferably on a project basis.
6. The TWG reaffirmed the importance of the UN legal instruments and invited SPECA countries to intensify their efforts to accede to and effectively implement them.
7. The TWG took note of the ESCAP transport facilitation efforts including Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport, Regional Cooperation Framework for the Facilitation of International Railway Transport, transport

facilitation tools, draft Model Bilateral and Subregional Agreements and draft Multilateral Road Freight Transport Permits.

8. The TWG appreciated the development of the regional online database of bilateral agreements on international road transport by the ESCAP secretariat and invited SPECA member countries to further update and refine the database.
9. The TWG invited SPECA countries to delegate members to the ESCAP Regional Network of Legal and Technical Experts on Transport Facilitation and to further participate in its activities.
10. The TWG highlighted the importance of identifying any outstanding issues related to the accession to and implementation of the transport-related UN legal instruments, and took note of ECE and ESCAP secretariats readiness to provide assistance in this regard..
11. The TWG invited SPECA countries to think about introducing new technologies in the implementation of the UN legal instruments by joining those allowing electronic information processing (additional protocol to CMR [e-CMR], and TIR Convention (e-TIR).
12. The TWG gave its support to the preparation and implementation of the Unified Railway Law and encouraged Governments to actively participate in the activities of the Group of Experts towards the Unified Railway Law and provide comments on draft legal provisions towards the Unified Railway Law.
13. The TWG encouraged SPECA countries to provide statistical data on the inland transport sector for the specified databases and welcomed further capacity building initiatives on transport statistics for the SPECA region.
14. The TWG encouraged SPECA countries to pursue policy measures to create the appropriate environment for the development of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) and to strengthen the training programmes for government officials and other relevant stakeholders by taking advantage of training materials on PPPs prepared by ECE and ESCAP.

15. The TWG invited SPECA countries to take actions to respond to the global and regional goals and targets in road safety and to continue their efforts to improve road safety. It emphasized the need for the collection of quality road safety data to facilitate the regular monitoring of road safety at the national and regional levels.
16. The TWG noted with satisfaction the presentations made by the representatives of SPECA countries, ESCAP and ECE on transport infrastructure development and international transport facilitation projects, activities and initiatives at national and regional level.
17. The TWG approved the Draft Agenda for the 22nd session of the SPECA TWG-STTC.
18. The TWG took note of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015 and emphasized the importance of regional cooperation in achieving transport related SDGs.
19. The TWG took note on decisions of the 10th session of SPECA Governing Council on amendments related to the TWG-STTC.
20. The TWG agreed that the date and the place of the next session would be decided later and invited SPECA countries to express their interest in hosting the 22nd session of SPECA TWG-STTC.
21. The TWG encouraged all SPECA countries to take active participation in the sessions of SPECA TWG-STTC.
22. The TWG expressed high appreciation to the Islamic Development Bank for the continuous support to SPECA TWG-STTC activities.
23. The TWG expressed its sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Motor Transport of Turkmenistan for hosting the 21st session of SPECA TWG-STTC and excellent arrangements made for the session.
24. The conclusions and recommendations of the 21st session of SPECA TWG-STTC were unanimously adopted on 8 September 2016 in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.



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

20th Session
10-11 September 2015
Almaty, Kazakhstan

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA
FOR THE 21ST SESSION OF SPECA PWG-TBC**

1. Opening of the Session
2. Adoption of the Agenda
3. Adoption of the report on the 20th Session of the PWG-TBC
4. Review of transport projects, activities and initiatives in line with the Vienna Programme of Action.
 - 4.1. Transport infrastructure projects, activities and initiatives at national and international level, including development of dry ports to facilitate intermodal transport in SPECA countries (SPECA countries/UNECE/UNESCAP)
 - 4.2. Accession and implementation of International Conventions and Agreements (SPECA countries/UNECE/UNESCAP)
 - 4.3. Establishment and operation of national coordinating mechanisms for transport facilitation (SPECA countries)
 - 4.4. Identification, isolation and elimination of major bottlenecks along international transport routes (SPECA countries/UNECE/UNESCAP)
 - 4.5. Progress toward Unified Railway Law (UNECE/UNESCAP)
 - 4.6. Progress report on the development of the SPECA PWG-TBC transport databases (NIITK/UNECE/UNESCAP)
 - 4.7. Establishment and strengthening of public-private partnerships in the SPECA region (SPECA countries/UNECE/UNESCAP)
 - 4.8. Road safety issues and policy interventions in the SPECA region (SPECA countries/UNECE/UNESCAP)
5. Bilateral consultations on transport and border-crossing issues between SPECA countries (SPECA countries/UNECE/UNESCAP)
6. Review of the draft agenda for the 22nd session of the SPECA PWG-TBC
7. Other business.
8. Adoption of the conclusions and recommendations.

List of participants
21st session of SPECA Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Transport,
Transit and Connectivity
7-8 September 2016

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1. Mr. Gafgaz Adigozalov
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2. Mr. Vugar Orujov
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Ministry of Transport

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3. Mr. Dauren Toktarov
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Committee of Automobile Roads
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Kyrgyzstan

4. Mr. Nursultan Mukaev
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5. Mr. Begijon Ziyoev,
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Safety, Ministry of Transport
6. Mr. Dilovar Olimov
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7. Mr. Annadurdy Kosaev
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Motor Transport
8. Mr. A. Matarov
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Ministry of Motor Transport
9. Mr. Bakhram Chariyev
Head of Department
Ministry of Internal Affairs
10. Mr. Begench Geldiyev
Deputy Minister on Economic Affairs
Ministry of Railway Transport
11. Mr. Bagtyyar Annanukhammedov
Chief Specialist
Ministry of Railway Transport
12. Mr. Allamyrat Yalkanov
Deputy Head
State Border Service
13. Bagtyyar Rejepov
Head of Department for Automobile Transport
State Border Service
14. Mr. Hekimberdi Ovezov
Specialist
State Election Commission
15. Mr. Serdar Abayev
Chief Specialist
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16. Ms. Govher Sahatova
Head of Freight Management Department
Turkmenbashi International Port
State Service for Sea and River Transport
17. Mr. Dortguly Gurbanpesov
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“Avtoýollary” State Concern (Roads)

18. Mr. Gurbanmyrat Shyhmyradov
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20. Mr. Kerim Gayytov
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21. Mr. Dovlet Baytyyev
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22. Mr. Yklym Kakamyradov
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23. Mr. Maksat Kakalyyev
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25. Mr. Mergen Gurdov
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