

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

16th Session
20-21 April 2010
Almaty, Kazakhstan

Establishment and operation of national coordinating mechanisms for transport facilitation

(Item 5.4 of the agenda)

Note by UNECE / UNESCAP

1. The removal of physical and non-physical barriers in international trade and transport requires the involvement of many government agencies. Efficient and effective coordination and cooperation among all the relevant agencies through proper inter-agency coordination institutions are crucial for the facilitation of international trade and transport. Cooperation from the private sector is also required because in the end it is the private sector that has to go through the whole procedures to bring people, goods and vehicles to cross borders.

2. In this context, the APoA recommended that landlocked and transit developing countries should consider establishing, where appropriate, and/or strengthening existing national trade and transport boards or committees involving all major stakeholders, including the private sector.¹

3. In many cases, the mechanisms for establishing national mechanisms for the coordination of transport facilitation initiatives take the following forms:

- A joint trade and transport facilitation body
- A transport facilitation body
- A transport coordination body for a specific project
- A meeting for the coordination of specific initiatives

4. Many initiatives have been taken by SPECA member countries in establishing national transit transport facilitation bodies. However, most of the existing facilitation coordinating bodies are facing difficulties in their sustainable operation, often resulting from insufficient financing sources, inadequate recognition of their role and functions, inadequate organizational structure and incomplete representation of key stakeholders.

5. Over the last few years UNESCAP and UNECE have stressed the importance of facilitation mechanisms in several SPECA countries through national workshops on trade and transport facilitation. Currently, UNESCAP secretariat is preparing a publication on trade and transport facilitation to assist member countries in strengthening inter-ministerial cooperation with the participation of the private sector.

Issues to be considered by the Project Working Group

6. The Project Working Group may wish to:

- a) encourage the SPECA member countries to establish or strengthen national facilitation coordination mechanisms to review, assess, propose and take actions for the facilitation of international trade and transport; and;
- b) encourage the SPECA member countries to mobilize public and private sector resources to finance the operations and activities of the national coordination mechanisms.

¹ APoA priority 3 paragraph 37 (f).