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

17<sup>th</sup> Session  
25-26 April 2012  
Almaty, Kazakhstan

**National coordinating mechanism for transport facilitation**

(Item 4.3 of the Agenda)

*Note by UNECE/UNESCAP*

1. The removal of physical and non-physical barriers in international trade and transport requires involvement of numerous 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 essential as the private sector has to go through the whole procedures to bring people, goods and vehicles to cross borders.
2. In this context, the Almaty Programme of Action 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.
3. In most cases, the mechanisms for establishing national mechanisms for the coordination of transport facilitation initiatives take the following forms:
  - A. Permanent coordination institution
    - National trade facilitation committee
    - National transport facilitation committee
    - National trade and transport facilitation committee
  - B. Temporary coordination mechanism
    - Coordination body for specific programme
    - Coordination body for specific project

C. Case-based coordination approach

- Coordination of specific initiative through meetings
- Coordination of specific initiative through official communications

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

5. Recently, the UNESCAP secretariat has prepared the guidelines on establishing and strengthening national coordination mechanisms. The guidelines lay down broad principles, salient aspects and main requirements for a successful national coordination institution. The publication complements the existing UNECE guidelines on setting up national trade facilitation bodies consequent to Recommendation No. 4 adopted by United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN CEFAC). The UNESCAP secretariat may help organize national workshops to promote national coordination mechanisms in the SPECA countries. The publication is available in English at <http://www.unescap.org/publications/titlebydivision.asp?div=5>.

6. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) launched a jointly produced handbook on border crossing policies in Vienna, Austria on 22 February 2012. The Handbook of Best Practices at Border Crossings – A Trade and Transport Facilitation Perspective offers a rich array of reference material and more than 120 best practice examples at border crossings. It covers available legal instruments, inter-agency and international co-operation, balancing security and facilitation measures, processing of freight, risk management, design of border crossing points, use of ICT technologies, human resource management and benchmarking. It will help facilitate legal trade and stop illegal trade, as well as cut red tape. It combines theoretical and practical knowledge of the two organizations.

7. The publication was produced with financial contributions from Belgium, France, Finland, Kazakhstan and the U.S. It is currently available in English at <http://www.osce.org/eea/88200> and [http://www.unece.org/trans/publications/wp30/best\\_practices.html](http://www.unece.org/trans/publications/wp30/best_practices.html), and will soon be made available also in Russian.

**The Project Working Group may wish to**

- Take note of the handbook of Best Practices at Border Crossings – A Trade and Transport Facilitation Perspective, jointly published by UNECE and OSCE and the Guidelines on Establishing and Strengthening National Coordination Mechanisms for Trade and Transport Facilitation in the ESCAP Region published by UNESCAP, and encourage SPECA countries to use them widely;
- Encourage SPECA countries to establish or strengthen national coordination mechanisms to review, assess, propose and take actions for the facilitation of international trade and transport;
- Encourage SPECA countries to mobilise public and private sector resources to finance the operations and activities of the national coordination mechanisms; and
- Encourage SPECA countries to hold workshops on establishing and strengthening of national coordination mechanisms as means to remove barriers in cross-border and transit transport.