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Inland Transport Committee

Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport

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Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Activities of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

bodies and other United Nations organizations of interest to the Working Party

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Note by the secretariat

I. Background

1. At its previous session, the Working Party took note that the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) at its seventy-ninth session (February 2017) had “welcomed the discussion on increasing the Committee’s role at the meeting of the Chairs of its working bodies on a rapidly changing global environment; considered ways to increase the influence of the Committee and its working bodies in addressing current challenges and opportunities in a global context, in accordance with the resolution of Ministers of the seventy-ninth Committee session of 21 February 2017, by inclusion, in the terms of reference of the Working Parties, of issues in implementing transport-oriented sustainable development goals (see ECE/TRANS/270/Add.1, Annex VII, para. 27). In reply, the Working Party recognized the relevance of its work for various Sustainable Development Goals, in particular: Goal 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure - (accession to the TIR and Harmonization Conventions, implementation of the TIR, eTIR and Harmonization procedures); goal 12 - Responsible consumption and production - (strengthening the supply chain through increased border crossing facilitation); and Goal 17 - Partnership for the goals - (application of the international TIR guarantee system). When it comes to the 2030 Agenda, the Working Party fully supported the vision of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Sustainable Transport Division to strive for a globally harmonized regulatory system for inland transport that is the foundation for sustainable transport and mobility. The Working Party further reconfirmed its statement at the 143rd session, supporting any capacity-building activities of the UNECE secretariat related to the

legal instruments under the purview of WP.30 outside the ECE region, as long as sufficient focus on capacity-building within the region remains ensured (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/286, para. 14). Finally, WP.30 supported the digitalization of inland transport by stating that it is essential to arrive at eTIR in the shortest possible time. To that end, and in view of the progress made in drafting the legal framework of eTIR, the Working Party urged Contracting Parties to make the necessary financial reservations in their national IT budgets to accommodate eTIR within their national customs systems at the first opportunity. In that context, the Working Party confirmed the recommendation by the Informal Ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure (GE.1) and the Group of Experts on Legal Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure (GE.2) that the maintenance costs could conceivably be covered through an amount per transport. However, the source of funding for the initial costs required to develop and deploy the system remained unidentified, though essential to start eTIR. The Working Party requested the secretariat to transmit its findings to ITC for consideration at its 2018 session. Furthermore, the Working Party requested the secretariat to prepare a document outlining the principles and scopes of the Sustainable Development Goals and outlining proposals on how to include issues of implementing transport-oriented sustainable development goals in its Term of Reference, for discussion at the next session (see ECE/TRANS/WP.30/292, paras. 4 and 5).

II. Sustainable Development Goals and the TIR and Harmonization Conventions

2. In 2016, Mr. T. H. Reis, at that time, staff member of the UNECE TIR secretariat, published an article in the September 2016 issue of the Asian Journal of Transport and Infrastructure (Volume 19, No. 2), elaborating, inter alia, the background and scope of Sustainable Development Goals as well as their relevance for the TIR and Harmonization Conventions. For technical reasons, the article cannot be reproduced in this document. However, delegations are encouraged to consult it at: <http://www.aitd.net.in/pdf/AsianJournals/29-Inter-Country-Road-Transport-Facilitation.pdf>. The secretariat will also make available hard copies of the article (English only) at the 147th session of the Working Party.

III. Sustainable Development Goals and the Terms of Reference of WP.30

3. In the Annex , the secretariat reproduces the Terms of Reference of WP.30, contained in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2015/7, as endorsed at the 139th session of the Working Party (February 2015) and subsequently approved by ITC at its seventy-seventh session (February 2015, see ECE/TRANS/248, para. 131). In *underlined italics*, the secretariat introduces a proposal to amend the Terms of Reference in accordance with the request of ITC to implement transport-oriented sustainable development goals.

IV. Considerations by the Working Party

4. The Working Party is invited to take note of the article by Mr. T. H. Reis and to consider the proposal by the secretariat to amend its Terms of Reference, as contained in the Annex.

Annex

Terms of Reference of the Working Party on Customs Questions Affecting Transport (WP.30)

1. The Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (hereinafter referred to as WP.30), acting within the framework of the policies of the United Nations and the Economic Commission for Europe (hereinafter ECE) and subject to the general supervision of the Inland Transport Committee (hereinafter ITC) shall, provided such actions are in conformity with the Terms of Reference of ECE (document E/ECE/778/Rev.5) and consistent with the legal instruments listed in Appendix:

(a) Initiate and pursue actions aimed at the harmonization and simplification of regulations, rules and documentation for border crossing procedures for the various modes of inland transport, with particular focus, where possible, on contributing to the advancement of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (General Assembly Resolution A/RES/70/1.) and related Sustainable Development Goals;

(b) Analyse difficulties encountered at border crossings with a view to devising administrative procedures eliminating such difficulties;

(c) Administer and monitor the implementation of the Conventions and Agreements on border crossing facilitation under the auspices of the Working Party (Appendix);

(d) Review the above legal instruments to ensure their relevance as well as their coherence with other international or subregional treaties concerned with Customs and border crossing facilitation issues and to keep them in line with modern transport and border control requirements;

(e) Consider and endorse amendment proposals to the legal instruments listed in Appendix and, where appropriate, submit them to the relevant Administrative Committees (see point (n) below) for consideration and formal adoption;

(f) Consider and adopt recommendations, resolutions, comments and examples of best practices with regard to the implementation of these legal instruments and, where appropriate, submit them to the relevant Administrative Committees (see point (n) below) or ITC for consideration and formal approval;

(g) Study Customs questions with a view to streamlining Customs and other administrative procedures and documentation in the field of transport, in particular by promoting electronic data interchange solutions;

(h) Study specific legal and other measures to combat fiscal fraud resulting from simplified Customs and other border crossing procedures and foster the exchange of intelligence among the competent authorities of Contracting Parties to the relevant legal instruments on border crossing facilitation on abuses with a view to identifying measures to combat such occurrences;

(i) Promote the possible extension of the Agreements and Conventions from Appendix to other regions and encourages the accession of new countries to those;

(j) Encourage wider public and private participation in its activities by fostering cooperation and collaboration with countries, the European Commission, World Customs Organization, other international governmental and non-governmental organizations concerned with transport and border crossing facilitation and the other United Nations regional commissions and other organizations or bodies of the United Nations system with

a view, among other things, to discussing and resolving problems relating to the interpretation or enforcement of the provisions of the relevant legal instruments;

(k) Create a working environment that facilitates fulfilment by the Contracting Parties of the obligations set forth in the legal instruments listed in Appendix, and an exchange of views on the interpretation of these instruments or the resolution of problems connected with their enforcement;

(l) Ensure openness and transparency during its meetings;

(m) Support training and capacity-building activities aimed at the proper implementation of the above legal instruments;

(n) Ensure close cooperation with and support for the activities of the Administrative Committees for the TIR Convention (AC.2), for the Harmonization Convention (AC.3), for the Convention on Customs Treatment of Pool Containers Used in International Transport (AC.4) and for the TIR Executive Board (TIRExB);

(o) Collaborate closely with other subsidiary bodies of ITC, particularly the Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1), the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) and any other relevant ECE body on matters of common interest relating to Customs questions affecting transport;

(p) Draw up and implement a programme of work relating to its activities and reports on its accomplishment to ITC.

2. These Terms of Reference do not modify the provisions of the relevant legal instruments.
