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Item 4 (b), (c) of the provisional agenda

International Convention on the Harmonization of

Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982 (“Harmonization Convention”):

Annex 8 on road transport;

Annex 9 on rail border crossing

Draft letter to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Contracting Parties to the Harmonization Convention

Note by the Secretariat



UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

The Executive Secretary
Under-Secretary-General

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Sir,

I am writing to you in connection with the International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982 (Harmonization Convention), to which your country is a Contracting Party. This Convention establishes a globally agreed framework for coordinated border management and reduction in the number and duration of all types of border controls of goods. Its full text can be consulted at the following website: <http://www.unece.org/trans/conventn/legalinst.html#customs>

First, please allow me to recall the entry into force, on 30 November 2011, of a new Annex 9 on rail border crossing to the above Convention which had been communicated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in his Depositary Notification C.N.534.2011.TREATIES-1 of 1 September 2011. The new annex introduces a number of key principles to facilitate border crossing procedures for international rail freight, such as simplified visa procedures for officials and other persons engaged in international rail transport; minimum infrastructure and staff requirements for border railway stations; cooperation and coordination of actions between adjacent countries; reciprocal recognition of all forms of control of rolling stock and goods; simplified border controls; setting up time limits for border clearance and monitoring actual delays of the trains at borders; using electronic systems for the exchange of information.

I am confident that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, together with other competent Governmental agencies of your country (Ministry of Justice, Customs administration, Ministry of Transport, etc.), have already published the new Annex in the proper national legal journal and have started its implementation at the national level.

His Excellency
Mr.
Minister of Foreign Affairs of



THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF ECE

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Second, I would like to draw your attention to Article 7 of Annex 8 of the Harmonization Convention which requires that the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) carry out, every second year, a survey among Contracting Parties on progress made to improve border crossing procedures in their countries. As the previous survey was conducted in 2009-2010, I count on your support in repeating this exercise.

The questionnaire, which was approved by the UNECE Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30) (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/244, para.15), is enclosed to this letter. The respondent can choose between English, French and Russian versions. I would appreciate it if you could return the duly filled-in survey to the UNECE secretariat **by 1 November 2012**.

I look forward to our continued cooperation and receiving a reply from your country.

Please accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Sven Alkalaj

Encl.
