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ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

(Sixty-fifth session, 18 - 20 February 2003,
agenda item 3)

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR EUROPE, THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
AND OTHER UNITED NATIONS BODIES AND CONFERENCES**

**I. PROVISIONS OF GENERAL INTEREST TO THE INLAND TRANSPORT
COMMITTEE**

1. The fifty-seventh session of the Economic Commission for Europe took place from 7 to 10 May 2002.^{1/} It emphasized in its discussion, *inter alia*, items related to economic aspects of security, the functioning of the Principal Subsidiary Bodies and the Programme of Work, strengthening the organization in the light of the Millennium Declaration principles and priorities and ECE technical assistance activities.
2. The Committee may wish to take note of the various issues contained in this document which, to a large extent, are being dealt with in the context of the Committee's Programme of Work. The Committee is asked to take these issues duly into account when dealing with the relevant agenda items and indicate appropriate follow-up.^{1/}

The economic dimension of security in the ECE region

3. The discussion of this topic focused on both the ECE role in developing the economic conditions for long-term security and the sectoral dimension. The discussion was organized around two Round Tables: Round Table I - An integrated policy approach to security and development and Round Table II - The sectoral dimensions of security: the ECE role. The debate on the sectoral dimension of security benefited from contributions by the presence of the Chairpersons/Vice-chairpersons of ECE's Principal Subsidiary Bodies. It revealed that all PSBs have, in varying degrees, ongoing work relevant to the issue of security, particularly in the areas of transport, energy, environment, trade facilitation and human settlements.

^{1/} Copies of the Annual Report of the Economic Commission for Europe covering the period from 12 May 2001 to 10 May 2002 (E/2002/37-E/ECE/1395) will be made available to participants.

4. The Commission expressed its support to the endeavour of all UN agencies to ensure a more stable and safe environment in the region and noted the work of the secretariat to identify the appropriate contributions of ECE in this regard. It was felt that, while ECE is not a security agency, it can contribute through its ongoing work in the various sectors. However, it stressed that ECE should avoid duplicating the work of other regional and international organizations and institutions and build on its recognized areas of expertise.

5. It encouraged the ECE to continue its work relating to economic aspects of security and its cooperation with OSCE whilst ensuring coordination and complementarity of the work between the two organizations. It further expressed its support for the private sector's involvement as an important component of future work.

6. The attention of member States was also drawn to the contribution of the European economic integration process to the security and economic prosperity of the region, as well as to further positive effects anticipated in this regard as a result of the enlargement of the European Union. In view of this, the ECE should also cooperate with the European Commission to ensure complementarity and synergies in the work relating to the economic aspects of security in the region.

7. The chairpersons of PSBs were invited to look closely at the work programmes of PSBs in the context of security and safety. This would provide a basis for a cross-sectoral examination of the challenges and potential threats to security that pertain to ECE work. The Executive Secretary was encouraged to continue to monitor this aspect of the activities of the Commission.

8. The Committee may recall its discussion on security related aspects of transport during the Committee's sixty-fourth session. In this connection, it may bear in mind the Commission's conclusions when considering the position of ITC subsidiary bodies regarding future activities.

The ECE Steering Group: Conclusions and recommendations on the functioning of the Principal Subsidiary Bodies and the Programme of Work

9. During the Commission session, the ECE Steering Group met and confirmed its role in strengthening the overall policy coherence of and communication in ECE. To this end, it recommended that :

- the monthly briefing by the Executive Secretary to the permanent missions be continued;
- the PSBs and the concerned Divisions present their work to member States once a year, possibly during the annual session;
- the theme of the annual session be selected following consultations between the ECE Bureau, the GEPW, the PSBs and the secretariat;
- the theme chosen should take into account the interests of all member States, the need for ECE to contribute to global events, and the cross-sectoral and multidisciplinary character of ECE;

- the preparations for the annual session should be accelerated so that the theme can be decided at the ad hoc informal meeting in June;

10. The Steering Group, in the context of its discussion on technical assistance, also stressed the need to develop mechanisms to facilitate the participation of representatives from countries with economies in transition in meetings and activities of the Commission. It also discussed the use of regional advisers and operational activities. It was observed that operational activities should be better targeted, coordinated, demand driven and transparent.

Strengthening the Organization

11. In February 2002, the Secretary-General launched an initiative to continue the process of strengthening the Organization in the light of the Millennium Declaration principles and priorities. Part of this initiative involved a review of the Secretariat's programme of work and each UN department had been asked, as a first step, to prepare self-assessments. The contributions prepared by Departments form part of the report on Strengthening the Organization that the Secretary-General presented to the General Assembly in September 2002.

12. To involve ECE member States as early as possible in the process, the Executive Secretary presented the self-assessment document for information and comment. In presenting her proposals, she stressed the importance of avoiding duplication with other organizations and building new strengths on existing ones. In particular, she proposed for ECE's activities to include the social dimension of growth and to increase policy-dialogue and support to policy making in the Commission. She also underlined that the Commission was not expected to take a formal decision on the proposed "reform package" at the current meeting, but to have the first in a series of many discussions on strengthening the Organization. She looked forward to hearing the Commission's preliminary reactions to the proposals contained in CRP.3.

13. The Commission welcomed the opportunity to discuss the proposals set out in CRP.3. Delegations' initial comments on them were very diverse. The Commission believed that further discussion was needed on important matters such as: introducing more policy dialogue, the social dimension and security issues into the Commission's work programme, reforming ECE's intergovernmental structure, strengthening the role of the annual session and the Bureau, as well as the proposed orientation of technical assistance and operational activities.

14. The following points were made:

- It was suggested to agree at the session on clear recommendations for further advancement of inter-governmental negotiations on the "reform package" including the format and time-frame for this process. As an option, the existing Group of Experts on the Programme of Work (GEPW) could be authorized to undertake a preliminary expert-level examination of proposals and its conclusions and recommendations could be subsequently considered at an ad hoc informal meeting of the Commission.
- Support was expressed for the endorsement by the annual session of the recommendations recently prepared by the GEPW concerning the organization and holding of the annual

sessions of the Commission, without linking them to the “reform package” which should be agreed upon in the future.

- The Plan of Action adopted in 1997 remained the basic reference for ECE and, in accordance with this Plan, ECE’s activities should focus on those areas where it has recognized expertise and comparative advantages.
- In ECE activities a combination should be retained of various functions, namely exchange of views on topical issues related to development in the region, norms and standards setting, collection of statistical data and economic analysis, provision of technical assistance.
- Transparency in ECE secretariat procedures should be strengthened and consultation with member States should be enhanced on implementation of programme activities, preparation of budgetary requests, and spending of budgetary and extra-budgetary resources.
- The ECE role in European affairs and seeking solutions to global problems should be increased, and its image in political and business circles should be improved. This will require refreshing the priorities and introducing tangible result-oriented working methods.
- The need to agree on the strategic vision of the Commission’s role and tasks and to prepare its medium-term plan of action (with the possibility of up-dating the plan at the annual sessions) was also noted.
- Measures aimed at any changes in the subsidiary machinery and reallocation of means and resources among the secretariat entities should be based on the results of a comprehensive review of the ECE activities both sector-wise and function-wise.
- The Commission should build on its existing strengths in areas of norms and standard setting and strengthen the implementation and monitoring of them.
- The work programme should be focused.
- Activities should respond to the needs and interests of all member countries and sub-regions.
- Any changes should take into account the mandates of other bodies in the UN system, European regional institutions and organizations in order to avoid overlapping, inefficiencies and ensure appropriate coordination.
- Any measures taken should be demand-driven and taken with the full participation of and consultation with member countries, the Bureau, the Steering Group, GEPW and PSBs.
- Any new activities must be taken on only when other activities are dropped.
- The modalities and timing of the process would have to be agreed at future ad hoc meetings of the Commission, following consideration by the GEPW, the Bureau and the PSBs.

ECE technical Assistance and Operational Activities

15. The Commission underlined the importance it accorded to ECE’s work on technical assistance and operational activities. It was considered that further improvements were necessary to make them more effective. These activities needed to be better targeted and more coordinated with a view to producing tangible results, at the national and sub-regional levels and thus having a real impact on the development of

recipient countries. It was also felt that they needed to be more transparent and that more information should be provided to clarify the understanding of the procedures involved in these activities from conception through funding, implementation and on to follow-up and evaluation.

16. Delegations made the following points:

- ECE technical assistance should respond to member States' real needs and necessities, be demand-driven and action-oriented and not be carried out at the expense of ECE's core activities, and be based on ECE's proven competencies.
- Technical assistance activities should benefit in particular those transition economies which have not yet achieved strong economic and social performance, are resource constrained and have limited support from various donor sources.
- Given ECE's limited budget for such activities, efforts should be made to mobilize extra-budgetary contributions from the donor community and develop diversified sources and funding schemes for technical assistance with civil society groups, foundations and the business community.
- The Commission should continue its cooperation with the EU, OECD, WTO and OECD with a view to supporting and developing joint technical cooperation programmes and seeking funding.
- A stronger overall horizontal coordination would be necessary to provide for priority setting in line with member countries' demands and increasing flexibility in the use of resources.
- Within the framework of ECE's technical assistance activities, it is important to address the problem of supporting the participation of experts from low- and middle-income transition economies in various activities, especially in PSBs and related work.
- It was considered that greater transparency and accountability was required regarding these activities. Member States needed to be provided with regularly updated information of the requests coming from individual countries or groups of countries, project proposals and a list of completed, ongoing and planned projects and priorities and analysis of project efficiency for end-users.

17. The following decisions were taken:

- The Commission adopted paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 and the ECE Technical Assistance Project Outline contained in document E/ECE/1393.
- It was agreed that document E/ECE/1393 will be the basis for the continuation of the dialogue between the Group of Experts on the Programme of Work and the secretariat on technical support issues.

- An ad hoc informal meeting will be convened during the course of 2002 to further discuss ECE's technical assistance and operational activities in more detail.

Preparation and follow-up to World Conferences

18. The Executive Secretary underlined the importance of ECE contributions to the preparations and follow-up to world conferences including the Second World Assembly on Ageing, Madrid (Spain), 8 to 12 April 2002; the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), Geneva (Switzerland), 10-12 December 2003; the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), Johannesburg (South Africa), 26 August to 4 September 2002; and the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey (Mexico), 18 to 22 March 2002.

II. SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF 2002 OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

19. The attention of the Committee is drawn to the fact that no resolutions on the "Work of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling Chemicals" and "Europe-Africa permanent link through the Strait of Gibraltar" have been adopted at the ECOSOC substantive session of 2002, since these issues are considered on a biannual basis.

20. The Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling Chemicals will meet from 11 to 13 December 2002 to consider the work of its Sub-Committees (Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and Sub-Committee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals) over the 2001-2002 biennium. The report will be transmitted to the Council at its 2003 substantive session which may consider it and adopt a new resolution on the work of the Committee. This resolution should lead to the publication in 2003 of a new thirteenth revised edition of the "Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, Model Regulations"; the fourth revised edition of the "Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, Manuals of Tests and Criteria" and the first version of the "Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals".

21. The Economic and Social Council adopted the following resolution on mainstreaming a gender perspective dimension at its 2002 substantive session:

2002/23

Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolution 2001/41 of 26 July 2001, in which it decided to include in its agenda a sub-item entitled "Mainstreaming a gender perspective into all policies and programmes of the United Nations system" in order to, inter alia, monitor and evaluate achievements made and obstacles encountered by the United Nations system, and to consider further measures to strengthen the implementation and monitoring of gender mainstreaming within the United Nations system,

Also recalling its agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system,^{2/} and its subsequent decision to devote a coordination segment before 2005 to a review and appraisal of the system-wide implementation of those agreed conclusions,

Affirming that gender mainstreaming is a globally accepted strategy for promoting gender equality,

Reaffirming that gender mainstreaming constitutes a critical strategy in the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action^{3/} and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,^{4/}

Underlining the catalytic role played by the Commission on the Status of Women in promoting gender mainstreaming,

1. *Welcomes* the report of the Secretary-General on follow-up to, and progress in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly,^{5/} especially concerning the measures taken by the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies to mainstream a gender perspective into their work;

2. *Calls upon* Member States and all other actors of the United Nations system to continue to mainstream a gender perspective into all activities at all levels;

3. *Decides* to intensify its efforts to ensure that gender mainstreaming is an integral part of all activities in its work and that of its subsidiary bodies, and therefore to give appropriate attention to gender perspectives and the particular obstacles that women face in all its segments and agenda items, both during discussions and in the drafting of outcomes;

4. *Expresses its appreciation* to its subsidiary bodies for the progress made in giving attention to situations that are specific to women and to the mainstreaming of gender perspectives into their work, for example by:

(a) Identifying gender equality as an essential element for the realization of social, people-centred and sustainable development, and approaching gender as an issue that cuts across all areas of policy rather than only addressing women as a social group to be targeted;

(b) Stressing the need to include women in planning, decision-making and implementation processes at all levels;

(c) Emphasizing the link between human rights and gender equality by using specific agenda items to focus attention on gender equality issues and ensuring the general consideration of gender perspectives throughout their respective agendas;

(d) Recognizing that men and women are often affected differently by political, economic, social and environmental factors, and the consequent need to develop gender-sensitive policies that address the different experiences of men and women in response;

(e) Continuing to use and call for data disaggregated on the basis of sex and using indicators that provide separate analysis by sex;

5. *Calls upon* its subsidiary bodies to intensify their efforts to mainstream gender perspectives in their work;

^{2/} See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/52/3/Rev.1), chap. IV, para. 4.

^{3/} *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

^{4/} General Assembly resolutions S-23/2 and 3.

^{5/} E/2002/66.

6. *Also calls upon* its subsidiary bodies to continue their efforts to address gender perspectives in relation to the thematic issues of their multi-year programmes of work or in relation to annual themes;

7. *Calls upon* the bureaux of its subsidiary bodies to consider how best to facilitate specific gender discussions in their work;

8. *Encourages* its subsidiary bodies to increase their collaboration with the Commission on the Status of Women, and encourages the Commission to continue its efforts to highlight gender perspectives in the work of the Council and its other subsidiary bodies;

9. *Invites* its Bureau to consider, during meetings with the bureaux of its subsidiary bodies, progress made and obstacles encountered in gender mainstreaming, and encourages the President of the Council to consider, during meetings with the Chairpersons of its subsidiary bodies, enhanced coordination in the area of gender mainstreaming across the Council and its subsidiary bodies;

10. *Encourages* the collection, provision and use by the United Nations system and its subsidiary bodies of data disaggregated by sex and other gender-specific information, as one of the means by which obstacles to the integration of a gender perspective can be monitored and addressed;

11. *Encourages* the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women and the Division for the Advancement of Women of the Secretariat to expand their efforts to raise awareness across the United Nations system of gender issues;

12. *Notes with appreciation* the work of the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, especially its efforts to ensure that gender perspectives are addressed systematically by the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, and in that regard encourages the Board in its efforts to mainstream gender perspectives throughout the United Nations system;

13. *Also notes with appreciation* the work of the regional commissions to promote gender mainstreaming and improve the situation of women by, inter alia, convening meetings of experts, issuing publications, developing indicators and deriving programmes specifically focused on women's issues, and encourages the regional commissions to intensify those efforts;

14. *Underlines* the importance of reports to intergovernmental bodies presenting issues and approaches in a gender-sensitive manner so as to give concrete and practical recommendations and serve as an analytical basis for those bodies to undertake gender-responsive policy formulation, in accordance with its agreed conclusions 1997/2;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to it at its substantive session of 2003 a report on the follow-up to and implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, including progress in the area of gender mainstreaming.

37th plenary meeting
24 July 2002
