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Decade of Action for Road Safety:

Revision of the terms of reference and rules of procedure for WP.1

Decade of Action for Road Safety

Revision of the terms of reference and rules of procedure for WP.1

Submitted by Japan

This document, submitted by the Government of Japan, provides Japan's position on the country's status in WP.1.

Subject: Japan's position paper on its participation status
in the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1)
of the Inland Transport Committee
of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Submitted by the Government of Japan

on 16 September 2015

On the occasion of the Seventy-first session of WP.1

Due to the recent trend of globalization and the rapid development of related technologies, the Government of Japan recognizes that the issue of road traffic safety requires more and more international coordination and cooperation among countries regarding their policies.

Japan understands that the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is now going beyond the geographical scope of its member states in its aim of achieving road traffic safety at the global level, and that the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) is set to play a very important role as the main platform for coordination of such efforts.

In fact, WP.1 is already playing an important role, and it is for this reason that Japan has attended the last two sessions of WP.1. However, unfortunately, this participation has been on a limited basis, and now Japan sincerely hopes that we can participate in, and contribute to, the discussion at WP.1 as a full participant with the voting right.

For example, substantial discussion has been taking place at WP.1 on the amendment to the 1968 Vienna Convention and to the 1949 Geneva Convention in the context of introducing autonomous driving. Not only because Japan is a contracting party to the Geneva Convention, but also because autonomous driving is one of the highest-priority issues in the field of economic and social policy in Japan, it is essential for us to join this

discussion at WP.1 as a full participant.

In addition to this, WP.1 is dealing with other important issues related to road traffic safety. Japan is committed to continuously participating in the activities of WP.1 with full status. If this can be achieved, Japan firmly believes that we can greatly contribute to WP.1 by sharing our knowledge of, and experience in, road traffic safety, including that in the area of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS).

In relation to this point, Japan would like to refer to the following excerpt from paragraph 2 of “Guidelines for the Establishment and Functioning of Working Parties within UNECE” set out by the Executive Committee of UNECE (document reference ECE/EX/1) as of 9 October 2006.

“2. Membership and Officers

Working Parties are open for participation by all UNECE member States. Non-UNECE member States can participate as observers or, if agreed by the parent Sectoral Committee, as full members. (excerpt) ”

In accordance with the above-mentioned provision, the Government of Japan strongly hopes that it would be accepted as a full participant with the voting right by UNECE member states at the forthcoming Seventy-first Session of WP.1 scheduled to be held from 5 to 7 October this year, and that such participation would be subsequently agreed by the Inland Transport Committee during the Seventy-eighth Session scheduled to be held in February 2016.

Furthermore, taking into account the role of WP.1 as the main international platform in the arena of road traffic safety and the increasing necessity of global cooperation in this field, Japan firmly believes that it is essential for WP.1 to further develop as a global forum beyond its current geographical scope. In relation to this, in our view, making amendments to the Rules of

Procedure of WP.1 is well worth considering, taking note of, as a similar case in point, the Rules of Procedure of the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulation (WP.29) whose activities Japan has been actively participating in and contributing to as a full participant.

With reference to Subsection (a) "Revision of the terms of reference and rules of procedure for WP.1" of Section 11. "Decade of Action for Road Safety" of the Annotated Provisional Agenda for the forthcoming session of WP.1, the Government of Japan thus hopes that the amendment to the Rules of Procedure of WP.1 be carried out as soon as possible so that non-UNECE member states who are interested in participating in WP.1 as full participants can be allowed to do so.

The Government of Japan would like to seek the valuable support and cooperation of the UNECE member states and WP.1 Secretariat with regard to the above-mentioned points concerning Japan's position on its participation status in WP.1.