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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Inland Transport Committee

#### Seventy-ninth session

Geneva, 21-24 February 2017

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

#### Past and Future of the Inland Transport Committee

### **Concept note and draft programme of the Ministerial Meeting of the Seventieth Anniversary of the Inland Transport Committee (Geneva, 21 February 2017) “Past and Future of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee”, and related high-level side events**

#### Note by the secretariat

##### *Summary*

This document outlines the concept and the main themes for the panels of the Ministerial Meeting on the “*Past and Future of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee*”. The document also contains guidelines for the panel discussions and the draft programme, including planned activities and planned side events to be organised such as the VIP tour of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) exhibition, the ceremonial signing of the poster “The future Inland Transport we want”, the ITC lunch/cocktail and the award ceremony of the Global Road Safety Film Festival. The Bureau of ITC, at its June and September 2016 meetings, agreed on the themes of the panels of the Ministerial Meeting. The highlight will be the adoption / signing of the Draft Ministerial Resolution on “Embracing the new era for sustainable inland transport and mobility”.

## I. Background

1. In 2017, the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) will mark its seventieth anniversary. In seven decades, the Committee and its subsidiary bodies have faithfully served their mandate and mission, initially to support the re-construction of post-World War II Europe, and therefrom to develop inland transport on the pan-European and global levels.

2. With the purpose of honouring not only the anniversary, but also the accomplishments of the Committee over seven decades, it is fitting and warranted, to celebrate this anniversary with the meeting of Ministers of transport, on 21 February 2017, during the seventy-ninth annual session of the ITC, to be held 21-24 February 2017.

## **II. Ministerial session: *Past and Future of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee***

3. Building on recommendations by the ITC and Bureau debates, the Ministerial Session's theme will be on "*Past and Future of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee*". This theme will create space for reflection of the Committee's past achievements, current performance and future trajectory, highlighting its evolution and underlining its future potential.

4. The draft programme on *Tuesday, 21 February 2017 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.*, includes:

- (a) Opening statements;
- (b) One keynote speech on the importance of inland transport for the future of mobility and the role of ITC;
- (c) Three consecutive panel debates with up to 6 participants each and followed by up to three scheduled interventions from the floor;
- (d) Following the keynote speech and the panels, at the end of the day, signing of a ministerial resolution on: "Embracing the new era for sustainable inland transport and mobility".

### **A. Opening and Keynote speeches**

5. After the opening statements, a keynote speech on the importance of sustainable inland transport in the global economy and emerging geopolitical developments will address challenges for the future of sustainable mobility as well as the strategic role of the Committee in providing viable solutions and enhancing international cooperation. Sustainable transport is essential to any credible efforts to advance the Sustainable Development Agenda and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Recognizing this, and knowing that the UNECE Inland Transport Committee is most effective when it works in partnership with a wide range of leaders from across the public and private sector, a strong political commitment is needed to ensure that the stage is solidified for the solutions demanded by the transport community. The Committee's achievements in the past 70 years show that its decisions have direct impact on the daily lives of people and businesses and provide a solid foundation for it to play a key role in shaping the "Future Inland Transport We Want".

### **B. Panel debates**

6. Three Ministerial panel debates will follow, with themes on critical cross-cutting issues of direct relevance to the future of sustainable mobility and the work of the ITC and its subsidiary bodies. The panel themes are:

- (a) ITC - Gateway to promote connectivity;

(b) ITC - Platform to link regulators and innovators: technologies for sustainable mobility;

(c) ITC - the Centre of UN Transport Conventions: the benefits of internationally harmonised regulatory governance for inland transport.

7. Each panel debate will accommodate up to 6 high-level panellists.

8. Each debate will be moderated, and will last 45 minutes, starting with short statements of 5-7 minutes by the panellists. The Panellists' statements will be followed by scheduled interventions (up to 3' each). Priority will be given to scheduled interventions by other Ministers. Statements and interventions will be followed by an open discussion.

#### **1. Panel I: ITC - Gateway to promote connectivity**

9. This ministerial panel will address the continued need for improving infrastructure connectivity, but will also look into non-traditional ways of connectivity that rapidly change the mobility environment. The panel will focus on taking stock of, as well as identifying challenges, opportunities and solutions in strengthening international and local connectivity and the role of the ITC.

10. Transport is a key economic sector that provides access to markets and supply chains for exports and imports. As such, it is essential for economic growth, for alleviating poverty and overall for promoting sustainable development.

11. Despite the acceleration in the application of technological innovations, still too many countries do not share the benefits of this progress because their economic sectors are excluded from unimpeded access to global markets. These include, for example, landlocked developing countries that are impacted by transit and border crossing bottlenecks.

12. Since its establishment in 1947, the ITC has played a pioneering role in facilitating the international movement of persons and goods by inland transport modes and improving the competitiveness of their economies. This has been achieved primarily through the development, maintenance and implementation of international legal instruments that promote the development of coherent international infrastructure networks, uniform and simplified border-crossing procedures and standardized rules and regulations for ensuring a high level of efficiency, safety and environmental performance of inland transport.

13. The Committee has been pioneering the work on, *inter alia*, developing legislation on the construction of sound transport infrastructure and reliable services; these are the critical backbone for enhancing productivity, national economic growth, competitiveness, and quality of life. Projects such as the Trans-European Motorways (TEM), the Trans-European Railways (TER) and the Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) aim to enable economies of member countries, businesses and people, to better integrate into the global economy and to benefit from changing economic conditions and opportunities. Furthermore, the Committee has always placed particular emphasis on the importance of harmonized procedures at border-crossings, as ever growing cross-border transport makes the movement of goods more time-consuming and costly; border crossing continues to be one of the most complicated elements in international trade and transport and of crucial importance to landlocked countries. ITC promotes the use of well-established Conventions addressing these issues such as, but not limited to, the Customs Convention on International Transport of Goods under cover of TIR Carnets (TIR, 1975). Abreast of the evolution of Information Communication Technologies, and in keeping with the needs of the transport industry of our era, the Committee is spearheading computerization of customs procedures thus increasing the speed, quality and efficiency of transport across borders. With the further development and promotion of the relevant legislation, the Committee will continue to address effectively these and other burning issues for its member countries.

14. This panel will focus on identifying challenges, opportunities and solutions in strengthening international connectivity and access to opportunity. How do existing international structures and legal frameworks need to adapt and what role does the Inland Transport Committee need to play in the future?

**2. Panel II: ITC - Platform to link regulators and innovators: technologies for sustainable mobility**

15. The point of departure for this ministerial panel is the fourth industrial revolution and its potential impact on future mobility and inland transport. It will explore policy responses to technological changes and the conditions for creating a conducive environment for innovations, as well as how ITC can facilitate the transition. Relevant topics include: increased use of automated driving and autonomous vehicles and their impact on road safety; going electric not only on roads, but also in other inland modes; Intelligent Transport Systems and the growing use of Information and Communication Technologies; the gains and challenges of technological innovations, including cyber security and data protection.

16. Innovation in transport has been revolutionizing mobility across the continents, changing everything from the way people move, communicate, pay for the services, and to how transport legislation is designed. Pure and traditional sectoral approaches are no longer adequate: e-transport warrants reforms and harmonised development not only in transport, but also in energy; higher-level automation in road vehicle technology, especially autonomous vehicles call for close collaboration between transport and telecommunication regulators, but their future also depends on holistic transport policies. Despite delays, digitalisation and e-docs in transport are already happening and are improving efficiency and governance. They also open new horizons for service provision, as well as for leapfrogging development stages.

17. Nonetheless, much remains to be understood about the challenges and limitations of the promised breakthroughs. For one thing, the deployment of these solutions nationally and internationally may face obstacles that range from interoperability to data collection. These obstacles may delay or derail the effective use of otherwise promising technological advances. This is why internationally harmonized regulatory frameworks play such an important role in shaping the future of sustainable mobility.

18. The ITC and its subsidiary bodies work tirelessly to facilitate and accelerate the pace of the successful introduction of innovations in infrastructure, vehicles and mobility management that, in turn, will make mobility safer, more efficient and more environmentally friendly. For example, the work of the ITC World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29) has provided tangible results in the efficient development and implementation of globally harmonized regulatory provisions for new technologies in the automotive sector. Similarly, the ITC Road Safety Forum (WP.1) has agreed on the amendment of the Vienna Conventions and has been addressing the traffic rule consequences of higher-level automation.

19. This panel will discuss the conditions for converting technological changes to the benefit of sustainable mobility and transport. It will also address how technology can improve road safety. Other questions will also be raised, such as: Are new international frameworks, for example on autonomous mobility, needed or should existing frameworks be amended or modernized? If the latter, in what ways? What is the role of the ITC and its subsidiary bodies in meeting this historic challenge?

### 3. Panel III: ITC - the Centre of UN Transport Conventions: the benefits of internationally harmonised regulatory governance for inland transport

20. This ministerial panel will deal with global regulatory governance in transport. It will highlight experiences from countries with the highest number of accessions to UN transport conventions under the purview of the Committee, and countries that have recently become Contracting Parties. The discussion will focus on the role of the national and international regulatory framework in transforming the inland transport sector to achieve sustainable mobility, meet the SDGs, implement the Climate Change Action Agenda, implement the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety, and improve the national and international governance for inland transport.

21. Since its creation in 1947, the Inland Transport Committee has provided a framework for intergovernmental cooperation and concerted action in order to facilitate international transport while improving its efficiency, safety and environmental performance. Nowhere are the main results of this work reflected better than in the 58 UN Transport agreements and conventions under the purview of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies which provide the international policy, legal and technical platform for the development of international road, rail, inland waterway and combined transport.

22. At the same time, we are at the dawn of a new era for international and domestic transport and mobility. The implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development has begun, with transport and mobility rooted in the Sustainable Development Goals. Undoubtedly, international governance of inland transport has a major role to play in the implementation of the 2030 agenda. For example, evidence shows that higher levels of adoption and implementation of key United Nations Transport Conventions under the purview of the ITC are associated with better performance in the implementation of key Sustainable Development Goals, such as those related to road safety. At the same time, with growing impatience for predictable rules and regulations, with the changing relationships between governments and regional integrations, as well as with the growing political voice of megacities in global rules ex-ante harmonisation is much warranted. The fast development of national and regional transport regulations call for especially fast harmonization at the international level in order to avoid new obstacles to international trade and transport and thus contribute to the implementation of the 2030 agenda.

23. This panel debate will offer different perspectives and vision by top policy makers around the world on the role of the international institutional and regulatory frameworks in improving the national and international governance of inland transport, while contributing to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda.

### C. Signing of Ministerial resolution

24. At the end of the day, the debates will be followed by the adoption and signing of a ministerial resolution on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the Committee and with a motto: "Embracing the new era for sustainable inland transport and mobility". The resolution is intended to convey the appreciation of the highest level of constituency for the work carried out by the Committee and its subsidiary bodies and to encourage further outputs within existing mandates. Most importantly, the collective affirmation, through this resolution, of the relevance of the Committee for the advancement of the Sustainable Development Agenda through paving the way toward sustainable inland transport and mobility will ensure that it will be in a position to deliver a strong message and presence for the future inland transport we want.

### **III. Scheduled high-level side-events**

#### **A. Exhibition, VIP tour for Ministers and signing of poster**

25. The 2017 ITC exhibition will take place at the Salle des Pas Perdus of the Palais des Nations. The exhibition will be reflective of the work the ITC carried out during the past seven decades as well as a glimpse into the future. It will emphasize the achievements of the ITC in the broader context of history, culture, scientific development and transport and communication innovations - for each of the past seven decade.

26. The whole exhibition will be designed to resemble a traffic setting using road signs and signals included in the Convention on Road Signs and Signals of 1968. The Ministers' VIP tour will be a guided tour through the exhibits by traffic signs so that they can experience the provided contents in an immersive way.

27. The VIP tour will be complemented with the ceremonial signing of the poster "The Future Inland Transport we Want" by Ministers during the VIP tour, available also online:

[https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/events/2017/ITC/poster\\_signing\\_the\\_future\\_inland\\_transport\\_we\\_want.jpg](https://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/events/2017/ITC/poster_signing_the_future_inland_transport_we_want.jpg)

#### **B. Award ceremony of the Global Road Safety Film Festival**

28. The Global Road Safety Film Festival will take place on Monday 20 February 2017 in the Palais des Nations in conjunction with the Committee session. The Festival is held, among others, to raise awareness and promote the visibility of the work of the Committee on road safety to specialized and general audiences alike.

29. The Festival's theme is "creating a road safety culture". Films promoting correct user behaviour and thus addressing issues such as speeding, drink driving, use of seat belts, of child restraint systems and helmets, distracted driving but also promoting rules of the road, safe infrastructure or safe vehicles will be screened at the Festival.

30. From the films screened during the Festival, the Jury will choose the best three films to receive the first, second and third Festival's prize. In addition, films will be competing for special awards in categories such as best road safety film in Spanish, best film to prevent drink-driving, best film promoting safe and smart vehicle, or best film for making motorcycle riding safer.

31. The Jury of the Festival will be chaired by Mr. Jean Todt, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety. The Jury also includes other prominent persons and VIPs, among them:

- Mr. Christian Friis Bach, Executive Secretary of UNECE;
- Mr. Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights;
- Mr. Thomas Bach, President of the International Olympic Committee,
- Mr. Luc Besson, Film director, screenwriter and producer;
- Ms. Michelle Yeoh, Actress.

32. The Jury will be supported by a Film Selection Committee that will shortlist films for the Festival.

33. The Festival welcomes Governmental representatives, business representatives, local authorities and associations, producers, directors, multimedia users on road safety,

civil society representatives, students and other young people involved in road safety, journalists, communication professionals and all the United Nations road safety partners. Film submission, registration to the Festival and other information around it can be found on the Festival's official website at [www.roadsafetyfilmfestival.org](http://www.roadsafetyfilmfestival.org).

34. The award ceremony of the Film Festival will take place during the lunch of the Ministerial Meeting on Tuesday 21 February 2017.

### **C. UNECE/ITC-UNEP Global Conference (20 February)**

35. A UNECE/ITC-UNEP on "Climate change, air pollution and vehicle emissions: how essential is a global phase-out of high-polluting vehicles?" is planned on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the Committee. Reducing the emissions of the global fleet is a priority for both climate and air quality issues. The Inland Transport Committee (ITC) and the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29), its subsidiary body, have done extensive work on technologies reducing the harmful effects of both diesel and petrol internal combustion engines, primarily on the reduction of toxic gaseous emissions and of particulate matter (expressed both in terms of particulate mass and particle number).

36. Progress achieved notwithstanding, a special concern are emissions of vehicles in low- and middle-income countries, as growth in the global fleet is forecasted to take place mostly there. Two out of three cars globally will be found in these countries by 2050. Many of them currently have no policies or incentives in place to promote cleaner and more efficient vehicles and over the past decade the import of used vehicles has increased sharply.

37. Important policy questions thus need to be tackled, especially in light of the Paris Agreement (COP21) and the need to commit to reduce global emissions from the transport sector. The Conference is expected to bring together ministers and senior policy makers from low and middle income countries, particularly in Africa and Asia, in order to take stock of the state of the art of existing legal instruments on vehicle technologies and tackle policy issues associated with reducing vehicle emissions.

### **D. High-level meeting on Inland Water Transport (22 February)**

38. A half-day "High-Level Global Meeting on Inland Water Transport" will take place on 22 February. Transport Ministers of countries with major navigable inland waterways from the UNECE region and beyond will share their vision for the future development of Inland Water Transport. This will be an opportunity to exchange views on key issues affecting Inland Water Transport in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century as well as where the main opportunities lie for a crucial transport sector considering the contribution that inland waterways can make to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda.

### **E. Capacity-Building Workshop on United Nations Inland Transport Conventions (22 February)**

39. The aim of the planned workshop is to present the benefits of accession and implementation of UN transport legal instruments, especially to the 11 common member States between the EATL project and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), as well as to exchange information on implementation practices and challenges. Since its creation in 1947, the Inland Transport Committee has been a framework for intergovernmental cooperation and concerted action in order to facilitate the development of transport while

improving its safety and environmental performance. High-level participants from non-UNECE countries supported by the IsDB will have the opportunity to get an overview of the 58 UN transport agreements and conventions under the purview of the ITC and its subsidiary bodies. These conventions provide the international legal and technical framework for the road, rail, inland waterway and combined transport. They also provide for uniform and simplified border-crossing procedures, rules and regulations for transport of dangerous goods and harmonization of vehicle regulations. All legal instruments have triple impacts as they contribute to improved traffic safety, as well as to improved environmental performance of the sector, and finally they serve as facilitators for international movement of people and goods. Participants will also gain understanding of the mechanism whereby the UN legal instruments are kept updated through the activities of the treaty bodies, i.e. the Administrative Committees, supported in this work by the Working Parties of the Inland Transport Committee.

## IV. Draft Programme

### Ministerial Meeting

“Past and Future of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee”

21 February, 10 a.m. - 6 p.m., Salle XVII

Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

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| 10.00-10.30 | <b>Opening Statements and welcome speeches</b>   |
| 10.30-11.00 | <b>Keynote speech: The importance of sustainable inland transport in the economy and world politics</b>  |
| 11.00-11.45 | <i>Coffee break and VIP tour of the ITC exhibition<br/>Signing of the poster “The Future Inland Transport We Want” by Ministers during the VIP tour</i>  |
| 11.45-13.00 | <b>Panel I: ITC - Gateway to promote connectivity</b><br><i>Discussion and scheduled interventions (3’ each max)</i><br><br>This ministerial panel will address the continued need for improving infrastructure connectivity and border crossing facilitation, but also look into non-traditional ways of connectivity that rapidly change the mobility environment. It will focus on taking stock and identifying challenges, opportunities and solutions in strengthening international and local connectivity and the role of the ITC.  |
| 13.00-15.00 | <i>Lunch Break: ITC Lunch with the award ceremony of the Global Road Safety Film Festival</i>  |
| 15.00-16.15 | <b>Panel II: ITC - Platform to link regulators and innovators: technologies for sustainable mobility</b><br><i>Discussion and scheduled interventions (3’ each max)</i><br><br>The point of departure for this ministerial panel is the fourth industrial revolution and its potential impact on future mobility and inland transport. It will explore policy responses to technological changes and the conditions for creating a conducive environment for innovations, as well as how ITC can facilitate the transition. Relevant topics: increased use of automated driving and autonomous vehicles and their impact on road safety; going electric; ITS and the growing use of Information and Communication Technologies; and the gains and challenges of technological innovations, including cyber security and data protection.   |
| 16.15-17.30 | <b>Panel III: ITC - the Centre of UN Transport Conventions: the benefits of internationally harmonised regulatory governance for inland transport</b><br><i>Discussion and scheduled interventions (3’ each max)</i><br><br>This ministerial panel will deal with global regulatory governance in transport. It will highlight experiences from countries with the highest number of accessions to UN transport conventions under the purview of the Committee, and countries that have recently become Contracting Parties. The discussion will focus on the role of the national and international regulatory framework in transforming the inland transport sector to achieve sustainable mobility, meet the SDGs, implement the Climate Change Action Agenda, implement the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety, and improve the national and international governance for inland transport. |
| 17.30-17.45 | <b>Signing of the Ministerial Resolution</b>   |
| 17.45-18.00 | <b>Closing statements</b>  |

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