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WP.1 and road safety related to Sustainable Development Goals

Contribution to the draft Strategy of the Inland Transport Committee

Note by the Chair of WP.1

At the last session, Inland Transport Committee invited Working Parties to consider preparing contributions to the draft strategy of the Inland Transport Committee that will be considered by the Committee at its session in 2018. This document, submitted by the Global Forum Chair, is based on the Resolution as endorsed by the Global Forum in its seventy-third session and by ITC at its seventy-ninth session. On this basis, the Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety is invited to consider how best to formulate its contribution to the envisaged Inland Transport Committee Strategy.

I. Introduction

1. In February 2017, the Ministerial Resolution¹ on “Embracing the new era for sustainable inland transport and mobility” marked the seventieth anniversary of UNECE. This document has underlined the importance of prioritizing actions to address the challenges of sustainable development of mobility and inland transport. In particular, in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, and by supporting intergovernmental transport and transport related multidisciplinary cooperation. In consequence, at its seventy-ninth session, the Inland Transport Committee, invited Working Parties to work more closely on implementing transport-oriented Sustainable Development Goals.

2. To this end, the Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety would consider how its own agenda and work plan could offer inputs to contribute to Inland Transport Strategy; this strategy would be discussed by the Committee at its 2018 session.

II. Context

3. Within the framework of promoting development and progress, transport issues in the global context are part of the problem, and part of the solution. Figures related to road traffic death toll and life-changing injuries clearly underline how this issue is both an important public health and also a development issue. Road safety and safe mobility potentialities are embedded as a concept – even though differentiated – in many United Nations agendas and strategy papers. This comes as no surprise as we are living in a new transformational era. Technology and digital advances have created a networked society in which we exist, share and nurture – for the best and the worst-vision, concepts, ideals. This is true not only for people, but for institutions. At the end of the day, national domestic policy is validated by the fact that it mirrors worldwide acknowledged principles, and also values enshrined in the Treaties agreed between Contracting Parties and international organizations.

4. The United Nations Millennium Declaration² embodied an international appeal for globalization to become a positive force³, leveraging on principles of solidarity, equality, dignity and respect for nature. Since then, the United Nations regional commission development policies have been instrumental in galvanizing international efforts on global priorities and promoting sustainable development. At both regional and national level, countries were invited to work on sustainability; reduction in inequalities; governance; and stability. These issues were highlighted since they are all regarded as critical components, for a constant improvement in the well-being of individuals.”⁴

5. In the recent United Nations strategic document⁵, ⁶ related to development and “liveability” of human settlements, transport is regarded as being a prominent promoter of social sustainability. In this innovative policy context, the relevance of transport and safe mobility strategy stands out as a quintessential element, if the overall aim is global prosperity. Unless transport issues have been included as part of the strategy, there would

1 www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/doc/2017/itc/Final_Resolution_ITC_70_years.

2 Para 5. www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm

3 See also Monterrey agreement, United Nations Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey

4 un.org/documents/ga/res/41/a41r128.htm

5 habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda

6 www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

be no way ahead to enable targets to be fixed for education, gender equality, sustainable human settlements (cities) employment and livelihood protection. Sustainable Development Goals – 3.6 and 11.2 – make mobility a key factor for the positive definition of the quality of life; and, for cities to be inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Road safety is therefore set to follow a new path within the United Nations vision as a factor of societal development and governance.

6. In the last Resolution on road safety⁷, a set of comprehensive, far reaching , people - centred transformative targets and goals were described under three elements of Sustainable Development – namely economic, social and environmental- as being “ integrated and indivisible” from road safety targets.

7. More recently, given the increasing number of fatalities at global level, the main concern has been to elevate the issue of road safety so that it falls to be considered as a general human rights⁸ related issue. Hence road safety must be considered as a non-negotiable fundamental principle linked to the dignity of a human being.

8. Within this new framework, the endeavor of promoting road safety at the global level has transformed mobility from being a mere administrative task to one which includes a political mandate; and, more particularly, to one which calls for governments to be involved in cross – cutting actions where road safety stands out prominently as being an essential mean to an end. For all these reasons, international organizations and their subsidiary bodies, dealing with transport safety, have gained significance, weight, duties and global responsibilities.

III. Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety

9. The Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety has, in its formal mandate, responsibility for the 1949 Geneva Convention and 1968 Vienna Convention on Road Traffic, and 1968 Vienna Convention on Road Signs and Signals. In addition, it has responsibility for two additional non –binding sets of recommendations known as R.E.1 (on Road Traffic) and R.E.2 (Road Signs and Signals).

10. Since it is the custodian of international road safety principles and legal assets, the Forum is called upon to assess strategically its agenda. In order to do so, it needs to address different aspects of mobility, including the benefits and challenges offered by technological advances. This is essential in order to ensure that, in addition to providing an upgraded transportation system for the future, new automotive technology can be delivered within a framework of rules which will also continue to safeguards all road users (and especially vulnerable road users). At the same time, legal instruments and road safety policies also need to offer solutions for visible results dedicated, in particular, to multifaceted developing environments which very often have areas with only basic conditions existing side- by- side with areas with industrialization and urbanization in full swing.

11. Nevertheless, it is clear that in order to empower the overall United Nations Sustainable Development Goals strategy, and to make it visible worldwide, it is necessary to bridge the gap between “conceptualized road safety” envisaged under the treaties and legal asset on the one hand, and the “practical road safety” on the other, where several complex factors hinder the application and safe mobility principles.

7 A/RES/70/260 Improving Global Road Safety, UNGA, 2nd May 2016

8 www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=21201&LangID=E

12. It is therefore very clearly the case that the strategy serves not only to administer the *status quo* of treaties, conventions and guidelines. On the contrary it gains its vital strength in adapting these instruments in order to secure changes for the better, thus providing a solution to the need for shaping a safe, transformational mobility.

13. Eventually, road safety has to be seen as an overarching concept, which embraces a common platform of principles and values these are in full support of the connected goals which aim to improve and protect the quality and value of life in all its aspects, including helping to boost economies and opportunities.

14. These goals are already represented in the Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety resolution⁹, as endorsed by Inland Transport Committee in its last session.¹⁰

15. In the above-mentioned document, it was already pointed out that although being a global issue, road safety policies should generally be implemented at a local level through improved cooperation with several actors.

IV. Elements for Contribution

16. In this context, ITC, as the transport committee in UNECE, and having the Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety among its subsidiary bodies, has a newly expanded opportunity and responsibility to play a major role at the global level to provide guidance.

17. In order to achieve this objective, coherent and close cooperation between ITC/ECE and the regional commissions is obviously of paramount importance to enable that strategy to reach into areas where properly implemented road safety policies can make the difference that matters; and to enable the planned endeavours to act as a catalyst for economic and societal transformation.

18. Furthermore, coordination with other international entities would help to emphasize the global stance of ITC. The involvement of relevant stakeholders who have interest in being part of the significant engagement in promoting rules and principles for safe mobility of the future will also empower ITC vision and the eventual outreach at regional level. In this synergistic process, ITC would act as global platform, leading the global regulatory approach and new dedicated capacity building projects. This would allow high numbers of institutions and high profile stakeholders to engage, and would engender the possibility of complimentary efforts to be progressed in order to meet the mobility policy architecture envisaged under goals 3.6 and 11.2.

19. The ITC strategy will definitely contribute to transport-related goals, to calibrated inclusiveness and sustainability of the related policies and dedicated regulatory measures. By doing this, other factors will, by inference, be enhanced, in terms of improved access to health care and education, to employment opportunities, to investment and growth, to resources management.

20. All of these actions will help to foster a healthier, better educated, and prosperous world – in short, a better world- and one which will also be more stable and secure.

⁹ www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/doc/2016/wp1/ECE-TRANS-WP1-155e.pdf

¹⁰ www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/doc/2017/itc/List_of_Decisions_79th_ITC_Final_eng.pdf