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Strategic questions of a horizontal policy or regulatory nature:

Road safety

The Inland Transport Committee and the implementation of the ECE Road Safety Action Plan (2011–2020)

Note by the secretariat*

Summary

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) continued to make progress on road safety related mandates, by implementing the ECE Road Safety action Plan that is coming to its conclusion in 2020. This work has been supported by the Inland Transport Committee and its working parties, in particular: the Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (WP.1), the Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1), the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29), the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (WP.15), and the Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24), among others, as well as by the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety and the United Nations Road Safety Fund, both serviced by ECE.

This document is an executive overview of accomplishments in the implementation of the Road Safety Action Plan since its adoption in March 2012. A detailed account of our work from March 2012 to December 2019 is contained in Informal document ITC (2020) No. 5.

The Committee may wish to:

- **Take note** of progress in implementing the ECE Road Safety Action Plan that comes to its conclusion in 2020.
- **Express its support** for the activities of the secretariat in the area of road safety, especially for those countries which have yet to fully benefit from it, particularly in Africa, Latin America and South-East Asia.
- **Provide guidance**, in light of the ongoing road safety crisis, on revising the ECE Road Safety Action Plan, as both the current Action Plan and the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety reach their end.

* This document was scheduled for publication after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.

I. Introduction

1. At its seventy-fourth session in 2012, the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) adopted the ECE Action Plan for the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011–2020) (ECE/TRANS/2012/4 and Corrs.1 and 2).
2. The goal of the Decade (2011–2020) is to stabilize and then reduce the forecast level of road traffic deaths around the world. At the midpoint of the Decade of Action, in 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals also acknowledged the need to reduce road traffic fatalities and Target 3.6.1 aims to halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents by 2020.
3. In response to the motivation to increase road safety and save lives as well as the implications that road traffic safety have on the overall sustainability of the transport sector, ITC, as well as its subsidiary bodies, related groups and other stakeholders rose to the challenge to reduce road fatalities and injuries. To this end, the Inland Transport Committee adopted an Action Plan to implement the United Nations Global Action Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety.
4. The plan is directly aligned with the United Nations Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011–2020) and aims to achieve the overall road safety goals of ECE by addressing priority areas of work as well as implementing continuous for each goal in its geographical area and beyond. It includes actions, initiatives and measures for several ITC Working Parties, with the Global Forum on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) being the main coordinating entity in the area of road safety.
5. The ECE Action Plan is structured around 11 objectives that were derived from the five original pillars from the Decade's Action Plan. These 11 objectives are:
 - (a) Boost Political Will and Support Government Strategies;
 - (b) Protect Road Users;
 - (c) Make Vehicles Safer;
 - (d) Improve Safety of Transport of Dangerous Goods;
 - (e) Make Technologies Work for Safer Mobility;
 - (f) Make Roads Safer;
 - (g) Improve Cargo Safety;
 - (h) Turn Road Safety, Training, Education and Behaviour into Knowledge Management;
 - (i) Learn from Road Crashes;
 - (j) Mitigate the Impact of Road Crashes;
 - (k) Raise Awareness, Fundraise, and Advocate for Road Safety.
6. The annex to this document provides an overview of the contributions of the work of the Committee to the eleven pillars of the ECE Road Safety action plan.

II. Major accomplishments in the implementation of the ECE Road Safety Action Plan

7. The Inland Transport Committee has demonstrated a 360-degree approach and clear commitment to global and regional road safety throughout its 72-year history through its regulatory, analytical and capacity-building activities. The Committee has developed and updated United Nations legal instruments and provided technical assistance to Governments in the area of road safety; it has also monitored trends, collected statistics and published reports. The Committee works on such diverse topics as user behaviour, vehicles and infrastructure, harmonization and enforcement of traffic rules and measures, rules for safe

road vehicles, dangerous/hazardous goods accident reduction/prevention vehicles standards, and driver standards, which all have direct impacts on increased road safety.

8. As such, the Committee played a critical role in the activities for the Decade of Action on Road Safety. The principal achievements of the Committee during this Decade, grouped by type of work, are outlined below.

A. Institutional and policy accomplishments

9. During the Decade of Action for Road Safety, the Committee affirmed its role as the United Nations platform for inland transport through the adoption of the ITC Strategy until 2030 (ITC Strategy). Indeed, a central goal of its mission as elaborated in the ITC Strategy is to strengthen its role as a leader in road safety by advocating for a holistic approach to the issue and lead global efforts to curb the road safety crisis. In this sense, the ITC as the UN platform for inland transport, provides a comprehensive regulatory framework for, inter alia, road safety comparable to the role of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for maritime transport and International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) for aviation.

10. Several permanent ITC Working Parties contribute through their regulatory work to the international regulatory framework on road safety, in particular the Global Forum for Road Traffic Safety (WP.1), the Working Party on Road Transport (SC.1), the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations (WP.29), the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (WP.15), and the Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24), among others. Furthermore, the secretariat also services other intergovernmental bodies, such as the ECOSOC Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, as well as the treaty bodies, i.e. the Administrative Committees of 12 United Nations Conventions many of which deal with road safety issues.

11. United Nations General Assembly Resolutions stress the global role of the legal instruments under the purview of the ITC and encourage all United Nations Member States to accede to, including Resolution 72/271 adopted in April 2018 and other biennial road safety resolutions.

12. To respond to the surge in global demand for enhanced international regulatory support, several Working Parties of the Inland Transport Committee have increasingly refocused their attention to the global level. WP.1 and WP.29 have both worked on ensuring that their work is appropriate to contexts not only in the ECE region, but the larger world. Furthermore, one of the priorities of the ITC Strategy is to amend the legal instruments with geographical and procedural barriers by 2025 to facilitate the accession of non-ECE member States. For example, WP.15 amended the title of the 1957 European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road to remove the word “European” and, if no objection is raised, this amendment will enter into force on 1 January 2021. These important changes reinforce the global scope of the Working Parties of the Committee.

13. Furthermore, the secretariat has contributed to a “paradigm shift” in decision-makers thinking about road safety by developing the Global Framework Plan of Action for Road Safety (GFPA) that was adopted by the governing bodies of the United Nations Road Safety Fund and by deriving from GFPA and regularly updating draft ITC Recommendations for Enhancing National Road Safety Systems (ECE/TRANS/2020/9).

B. Regulatory Accomplishments

14. The Decade of Action for Road Safety also ushered in an era of regulatory accomplishments. Since its establishment, the Committee has evolved into the centre for multilateral legal instruments on road safety, for regulations for road vehicle construction and rules for periodic inspection at the global level; unified road traffic rules, signs and signals on a global basis; dangerous goods transport at the global level; development of coherent regional infrastructure networks.

15. The Committee maintains seven Core United Nations Road Safety Conventions:

- (a) 1949 Convention on road traffic;
- (b) 1968 Convention on road traffic;
- (c) 1968 Convention on road signs and signals;
- (d) 1958 Agreement on UN Regulations for vehicle type-approval;
- (e) 1997 Agreement on periodic technical inspection;
- (f) 1998 Agreement on UN Global Technical Regulations on vehicle construction;
- (g) 1957 European Agreement Concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road.

16. The implementation of the Road Safety Action plan saw numerous accessions during the Decade of Action to these core instruments that correspond to an increase not only in the number of Contracting Parties, but also the geographical scope of the new signatories. In total forty-four countries from all regions of the world acceded to the core instruments during the decade. For some of these contacting parties, road safety conventions are the only UN inland transport conventions to which they have acceded.

17. In addition to the core road safety legal instruments, the Committee also services other road safety legal instruments, including:

- 1949 Protocol on Road Signs and Signals
- 1975 Agreement on Minimum Requirements for the Issue and Validity of Driving Permits (APC)
- 1971 European Agreement supplementing the 1968 Convention on Road Traffic
- 1971 European Agreement supplementing the Convention on Road Signs and Signals
- 1950 European Agreement on the Application of Article 23 of the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic concerning the Dimensions and Weights of Vehicles Permitted to Travel on Certain Roads of the Contracting Parties
- 1950 European Agreement supplementing the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic and the 1949 Protocol on Road Signs and Signals
- 1957 European Agreement on Road Markings
- 1973 Protocol on Road Markings, Additional to the European Agreement supplementing the Convention on Road Signs and Signals
- Infrastructure Agreements: AGR, AGTC
- European Agreement Concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles Engaged in International Road Transport (AETR)
- CTU code (in full, (IMO/ILO/UNECE Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units)

18. As of 2019, there are 1,767 Contracting Parties to the United Nations Legal Instruments on Transport in 148 United Nations Member States, in addition to two Permanent Observers and one non-State Contracting Party.

19. In addition, many legally binding technical regulations were negotiated, adopted and entered into force during the Decade of Action, including regulations on child restraint systems, pedestrian safety performance of vehicles and the safety of hybrid/hydrogen vehicles, among others. At the end of the decade of action, 89 per cent of all new vehicles globally are built according to legally binding safety and environmental regulations set by ECE. These regulations reflect technological advancements such as increased use of autonomous vehicles or hybrid/electric/hydrogen vehicles or to reflect the global scope of these regulations, as detailed above. Updating these legal instruments to keep pace with technological advancements and expanding their reach by improving ease of implementation in non-ECE contexts are important steps in reducing road traffic accidents.

20. Certain instruments, such as those on vehicle regulations and transport of dangerous goods, are directly transposed into European Union legislation and implemented for international and domestic transport in the European Union while continuing to be administered at ITC Working Parties. There are also similar application in individual countries, e.g. in the Russian Federation.

21. A detailed account of regulatory achievements during the implementation of the ECE Road Safety Action Plan can be found in Informal document ITC (2020) No. 5.

C. Analytical Accomplishments

22. During the Decade of Action, the Committee also collected and analysed transport statistics, and contributed to increased understanding of traffic safety through its publications. This collection and analysis of data allows for not only understanding the current situation, but also enables the Committee and its Working Parties to identify challenges and trends, which then allows them to draft recommendations or craft policies backed by evidence. This work resulted in several significant publications that broadened the Committee's understanding of the state of road safety. Some of the most influential ones are outlined below.

23. One of the first, significant publications is *Improving Global Road Safety: Setting Regional and National Road Traffic Casualty Reduction Targets* (2010), which outlines the road safety situation in the ECE region as well as activities undertaken in other United Nations regional commissions, establishes targets to reduce road deaths by region and lists a number of recommendations for the different regions on how to achieve the agreed upon targets.

24. Another publication that focused on the ECE region is *Transport for Sustainable Development in the ECE Region* (2011), which dedicates a chapter to the beginning of the Decade of Action. Recognizing that road safety is a cornerstone for sustainable transport, this text identifies key challenges to preventing and mitigating road accidents. It identifies best practices for increasing road safety in national contexts and outlines the activities conducted by ECE to improve road safety.

25. A third significant road safety publication of the decade is *Together with UNECE on the Road to Safety* (2015), which was prepared at the midpoint of the Decade of Action and specifically addresses the Action Plan for the Decade. It acts as a progress report at the midpoint of the Decade of Action, providing a look back on major achievements as well as areas where the international community has fallen short of its goals in 2015. It also lists challenges faced by the road safety community, especially in its primary goal of halving the number of deaths due to road accidents by the end of the decade. It offers a major conclusion: political will and the use of national strategies play an outsize role in achieving this goal.

26. A fourth major publication was the *Transport for Sustainable Development: The case of Inland Transport* (2015), which was the result of the cooperation among the five Regional Commissions of the United Nations and key global stakeholders, particularly, the International Road Transport Union (IRU) and the International Union of Railways (UIC), led by ECE. The study examined issues, progress and challenges in global efforts to achieve the transition to sustainable mobility of freight and people using inland modes of transport and promoted an in-depth and real-world understanding of the five defining dimensions of sustainable transport, including safety. Vis-à-vis the link between increasing level of motorization and fatalities, the study showed that only ECE countries had achieved absolute decoupling of the two (i.e. the latter decreases while the former increases), while two other regions (ECLAC and ESCWA) had achieved relative decoupling (the latter increases at a slower pace than the former) and the remaining two regions (UNECA and ESCAP) had not yet achieved decoupling.

27. Finally, the Working Party on Transport Statistics published the fifth edition of the Glossary of Transport Statistics (2019) in partnership with Eurostat and the International Transport Forum. This publication allows a variety of policymakers, researchers and other stakeholders researching transport statistics to have common definitions of modern and

relevant transport terms. This allows for increased compatibility of international data and facilitate the monitoring of the transport-related Sustainable Development Goals indicators in a consistent way. There is also an online Transport Statistics Database that is regularly updated at least three times per year, allowing for high-quality, relevant, user-friendly and timely statistics. Collection and analysis of information related to road safety and statistics allows ECE to monitor progress on the Decade of Action in an accurate way and thus is extremely important to achieving the goals for this Decade.

D. Capacity-Building Accomplishments

28. The implementation of the ECE Road Safety Action Plan also witnessed great progress in the capacity-building activities of ECE.

1. Road Safety performance reviews

29. Road Safety performance reviews (RSPR) assist countries to enhance national road safety management capacities and also help countries raise public awareness on road safety issues and sensitize the public and non-governmental sectors on the need to set ambitious road safety targets and adopt specific measures to meet them. Several RSPRs have been or are being conducted in various regions of the world, including Albania, Cameroon, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia (ongoing), Georgia, Uganda, Viet Nam, Zimbabwe (ongoing). These Reviews are prepared either by United Nations regional commissions or with the support of the United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy for Road Safety.

2. Safe Inland Transport Systems (SafeFITS) policy converter tool

30. A significant development during the implementation of the ECE Road Safety Action Plan was the development and application of the Safe Future Inland Transport Systems (SafeFITS) policy converter tool. SafeFITS is a tool that facilitates knowledge-based transport policy decision-making related to reducing road traffic injuries. SafeFITS consists of a database on road safety indicators, a set of statistical models of global causalities and a tool comprised of three modules for different types of analysis: intervention, forecasting and benchmarking. These models can be used for the assessment of various policy scenarios of individual countries, and for road safety benchmarking and forecasting.

3. Country-level capacity building

31. In addition to RSPRs and SafeFITS, numerous capacity development events were held with the goal of increasing understanding, awareness and competencies in becoming part of and implementing the international regulatory framework for road safety administered by the Committee. Informal document ITC (2020) No. 5 contains a more detailed record.

E. Outreach and funding for Road Safety

1. Special Envoy

32. Road traffic accidents have a severe impact on the wellbeing and health of all people and detrimental economic consequences for societies, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. This prompted the United Nations Secretary-General to announce on 29 April 2015 the appointment of Mr. Jean Todt as his Special Envoy for Road Safety. The Special Envoy is charged with helping mobilize political and financial commitment to improving road safety. He also helps to raise awareness, share established road safety good practices and generates financial support through advocacy work in partnership with public, private and non-governmental sectors.

33. ECE provides the secretariat to the Special Envoy, due to the 360-degree approach to Road Safety by the ITC and its subsidiary bodies, which includes servicing of the global Road Safety Conventions, analytical and statistical work in this area, as well as promoting policy dialogues on road safety.

34. Thus far, the Special Envoy has participated in hundreds of meetings, consultations, and awareness raising initiatives, advocating for and encouraging accession to the United Nations Conventions on Road Safety. As support towards accession to UN Conventions on Road Safety and improving national road safety records, the Special Envoy has hosted and will continue to host a series of capacity building workshops for relevant stakeholders, with an emphasis on the most vulnerable countries in this respect. A set of dedicated materials, such as brochures and guidelines, to support the advocacy and capacity building efforts have been produced by the secretariat of the Special Envoy.

2. Funding for road safety: United Nations Road Safety Fund

35. Following the adoption of Resolution A/70/L.44 “Improving Global Road Safety”, by the UN General Assembly in April 2015, ECE has been requested by the UN Secretary-General to lead the process exploring of the establishment of the UN Global Road Safety Fund. Following an intensive consultation process with UN regional commissions and agencies, member States, NGOs, civil society and academia, a proposal for the establishment of the United Nations Road Safety Fund was submitted to the UN Secretary General in September 2017.

36. Following these efforts, in 2018 the Road Safety Trust Fund (UNRSF) was established to provide funding to low- and middle-income countries with the purpose of creating or improving effective national road safety systems in order to save lives and reduce the economic losses resulting from road accidents. The Fund was established in order to provide international support to building comprehensive, national road safety systems and to fill some gaps in the original Action Plan for the Decade on Road Safety. The first formal call for proposal was launched in 2019, with a requirement that funds go to providing technical assistance to improving national road safety systems.

III. Next steps following the end of the Decade of Action and the completion of the ECE Action Plan

37. The year 2020 will signal the end of the Decade of Action for Road Safety and of the ECE Road Safety Action Plan. Despite the numerous accomplishments detailed above, the stated goal of the Decade of Action — to stabilize and then reduce the forecast level of road traffic fatalities around the world by 2020 — will not be met by the end of the decade. Sustainable Development Target 3.6.1, to halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic will similarly not be achieved.

38. Clearly, the mission has not been accomplished. In the ITC Strategy until 2030, the Committee affirmed its role as the United Nations Global Platform for Inland Transport. In this Strategy, road safety was given space as a special priority of global interest in the Action Plan for achieving the Strategy. In addition to this affirmation, in 2018 the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution A/RES/72/271 on improving global road safety where it acknowledges the work of the Inland Transport Committee and urges member States to develop road safety systems in line with the Decade of Action. Due to the continued importance of road safety and the unacceptably high number of deaths and injuries from road accidents, as well as the fact that the main goals of this Decade of Action were not achieved, it is imperative that the assets of the Committee are leveraged efficiently and effectively, in order to contribute to global efforts to curb the road safety crisis.

39. In light of the critical importance of the issue, the Committee may wish to:

- **Take note** of progress in implementing the ECE Road Safety Action Plan that comes to its conclusion in 2020.
- **Express** its support for the activities of the secretariat in the area of road safety, especially for those countries which have yet to fully benefit from it, particularly in Africa, Latin America and South-East Asia.
- **Provide guidance**, in light of the ongoing road safety crisis, on revising the ECE Road Safety Action Plan, as both the current Action Plan and the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety reach their end.

Annex

ECE Action Plan Objectives	Areas of International Regulatory Support Work			
	Institutional (ITC and subsidiary bodies)	Regulatory	Analytical	Capacity-Building
1. Boost Political Will and Support Government Strategies	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Protect Road Users	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Make Vehicles Safer	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. Improve Safety of Transport of Dangerous Goods	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. Make Technologies Work for Safer Mobility	✓	✓	✓	✓
6. Make Roads Safer	✓	✓	✓	✓
7. Improve Cargo Safety	✓	✓	✓	
8. Turn Road Safety, Training, Education and Behaviour into Knowledge Management			✓	✓
9. Learn from Road Crashes			✓	✓
10. Mitigate the Impact of Road Crashes		✓	✓	✓
11. Raise Awareness, Fundraise, and Advocate for Road Safety	✓			✓