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Economic Commission for Europe

Executive Committee

Forty-first meeting

Geneva, 10 May 2011

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

Decisions on matters relating to Inland Transport

Committee: establishment of two new groups of experts

Establishment of a Group of Experts on Climate change impacts and adaptation for international transport networks

Note by the secretariat

1. At its seventy-third session (Geneva, 1–3 March 2011), the Inland Transport Committee agreed on the establishment of a Group of Experts on Climate change impacts and adaptation for international transport networks and on its Terms of Reference (ToR). The Committee requested its approval by the UNECE Executive Committee.
2. The ToR of the Group of Experts on Climate change impacts and adaptation for international transport networks have been prepared in line with the UNECE Guidelines for the Establishment and Functioning of Teams of Specialists within the UNECE. The expert group will collect information on climate change impacts and adaptation for international transport networks in the ECE region and beyond with a view to raising awareness, sharing good practices and preparing recommendations to member Governments.
3. In accordance with the Guidelines, the Inland Transport Committee decided that the Group of Experts on Climate change impacts and adaptation for international transport networks should be composed of experts in the relevant fields, including in particular international transport and climate change, appointed by member Governments, as well as competent representatives of relevant international governmental and non-governmental organizations and academia.
4. The expert group will be established without the need for additional resources. Support work will be provided within the existing capacity of the UNECE secretariat. UNOG resources will be used for translation and conference services. It is expected that the expert group would complete its work by the end of May 2013.
5. The Executive Committee is invited to approve the establishment of the Group of Experts on Climate change impacts and adaptation for international transport networks according to the attached Terms of Reference.

Annex

Terms of reference of the Group of Experts on Climate change impacts and adaptation for international transport networks

1. The Group of Experts will define the scope of activities of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics and its involvement in this area.
2. The Group of Experts, based on existing resources of the secretariat, along with additional financial support provided by participating countries and in close collaboration with other international organizations concerned, will take stock of the available data and analyses of climate change impacts on international transport networks in the ECE region and beyond.
3. The Group of Experts will collect information on all relevant planning, management, organizational and other initiatives for an adaptation of transport networks to climate change with a view to raising awareness and sharing and drawing on good practices and different national strategies.
4. The Group of Experts will prepare in a coordinated manner recommendations or proposals to member Governments for the consideration by the Inland Transport Committee, through the Working Party in Transport Trends and Economics, with a view to improving the adaptability of transport networks to climate change in some areas, including infrastructure; risk-assessment methodology; evaluation of adaptive measures; risk management; training tools; and cross-border information sharing by national transport authorities.
5. The above recommendations should aim to improve long-term sustainability of international transport and set best examples of national policies addressing the issues of vulnerability of transport networks amongst member Governments, including developing and landlocked countries, as well as small island States.
6. It is proposed that the Group should be composed of experts in the relevant fields, including in particular international transport and climate change, appointed by member Governments, as well as competent representatives of relevant international governmental and non-governmental organizations and academia.
7. The Group of Experts is expected to start its work in May 2011, following the approval by the Inland Transport Committee and the UNECE Executive Committee. It will terminate its activities within two years with a submission of a full report of its accomplishments, including policy-oriented recommendations. The report will be considered by the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics and, if approved, submitted to the Inland Transport Committee for its endorsement.
8. If a government decides to host the International Conference on Adaptation of Transport Networks to Climate Change that was proposed by the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics at its twenty-third session, the Group of Experts will also act as a steering committee for its preparation.
9. The Group of Experts will be assisted in its work by the UNECE secretariat and will report to the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics. The UNCTAD secretariat would be invited to join efforts and assist the work.