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Economic Commission for Europe

Executive Committee

115th meeting

Geneva, 5 March 2021

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

Update on Special Procedures during the COVID-19 period

Extension of Special Procedures during the COVID-19 period

Background

1. As of end February 2021, the scheduling of meetings of the official calendar is still impaired by mitigating measures to the COVID-19 pandemic and significantly reduced availability of conference servicing capacity at the United Nations Office at Geneva. Currently, only select meetings of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) can be held with full interpretation and under special arrangements that are being reviewed periodically, as host country guidance is evolving.

2. To ensure business continuity, and also taking into account a potential continuation of COVID-mitigation measures, the secretariat proposes to extend the Special Procedures during the COVID-19 period. This would permit the membership to retain the option of taking business-critical decisions, as needed. It is understood that the applicable special procedures would not be used if formal meetings can be held.

Draft Decision

The Executive Committee:

3. Authorizes the Chair of the Commission to continue using the Special Procedures during the COVID-19 period, initially adopted on 6 April 2020, for taking decisions of the Executive Committee until 31 May 2021;

4. Extends until 31 May 2021 arrangements for the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships to conduct business remotely during the COVID-19 period as contained in document ECE/EX/2020/L. 14 initially adopted on 14 December 2020.

5. Extends until 31 May 2021 the Special Procedures approved for subsidiary bodies of the:

(a) Inland Transport Committee as contained in document ECE/EX/2020/L.4, initially adopted on 29 May 2020;

(b) Committee on Sustainable Energy, as contained in document ECE/EX/2020/L.4, initially adopted on 29 May 2020;

(c) Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards, as contained in

document ECE/EX/2020/L. 10, initially adopted on 5 October 2020; and

(d) Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships, as contained in document ECE/EX/2020/L. 11, initially adopted on 5 October 2020.

6. Extends until 31 May 2021 procedures to take decisions in formal meetings with remote participation, as contained in document ECE/EX/2020/L.12, and initially adopted on 5 October 2020 by the Executive Committee;

7. Underlines that these arrangements are exceptional and time-limited and requests the Secretariat to report back to the Executive Committee on their implementation throughout the COVID-19 situation.
