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**Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and  
Connectivity (TWG-STTC)**

24<sup>th</sup> Session  
18-19 November 2019  
Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

**PROGRAMME OF WORK 2020-2021**  
(Item 5 of the Agenda)

*Note by the UNECE / ESCAP*

1. This document presents the draft Programme of Work 2020-2021 of the SPECA Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity (TWG-STTC).
2. The draft Programme of Work 2020-2021 has been prepared by UNECE/ESCAP in line with the Vienna Programme of Action (2014), the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific (2016), the Inland Transport Committee Strategy until 2030 (2019) and the recommendations on 11<sup>th</sup> SPECA Governing Council (2016).

**Issues for consideration**

At its twenty-fourth session in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, the TWG-STTC is invited to:

- (a) Review and, if necessary, modify the Draft Work Programme 2020-2021;
- (b) Adopt the Programme.

## Background

3. In 2018-2019 period the following activities were implemented:

- Support the efforts of SPECA countries to implement the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, facilitate regional transport cooperation in SDGs implementation and collection and dissemination of transport statistics for SDGs monitoring.
- Support SPECA countries in accession and efficient implementation of United Nations Transport Legal Instruments to facilitate sub-regional and international land transport (e.g. legal instruments recommended by ESCAP resolution 48/11, intergovernmental agreements on Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks and Dry Ports of international importance)
- Oversee the implementation of transport-related activities and initiatives at national and sub-regional level, including development of road and railway infrastructure, dry ports/intermodal terminals as well as facilitate intermodal transport in SPECA countries;
- Support the establishment and operation of national coordinating mechanisms for transport facilitation.
- Assist in identification and elimination of major bottlenecks (both physical and non-physical) along international transport routes in SPECA region and beyond.
- Facilitate the collection of transport statistics on transport and border crossing activities for the SPECA countries.
- Promote public-private partnerships in the SPECA region
- Work towards improving road safety to reduce road traffic fatalities and casualties in the SPECA region.

4. Based on the 10<sup>th</sup> SPECA Governing Council decision, the Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity served as a platform for supporting the efforts of SPECA countries towards achieving the transport-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets. The TWG-STTC mostly focused on the following transport-related SDGs:

- a) **Goal 3.** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages (Road Safety)
- b) **Goal 9.** Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation (Sustainable infrastructure)
- c) **Goal 11.** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (Sustainable (urban) transport for all)

## **PROGRAMME OF WORK 2020-2021**

In line with the Vienna Programme of Action (2014), the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific (2016), the Inland Transport Committee Strategy until 2030 (2019) and the recommendations of 11<sup>th</sup> SPECA Governing Council (2016).

### **1. Organization of regular sessions of SPECA TWG-STTC**

**Activity 1.1** The SPECA countries will host the twenty fifth and twenty sixth sessions of SPECA TWG-STTC with assistance of UNECE/ ESCAP. The TWG-STTC agreed that venue and date of the next meeting will be decided at the later stage.

### **2. Sustainable transport development to enhance transport connectivity in SPECA region**

**Activity 2.1.** The SPECA countries will pursue strategic discussions on the national and sub-regional policies in support of sustainable transport connectivity in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;

**Activity 2.2** Subject to funding availability, SPECA countries and ESCAP/UNECE develop/implement sub-regional transport projects of common interest to enhance sustainable transport connectivity in the sub-region and beyond.

### **3. Enhancement of legal frameworks for efficient and sustainable transport, transit and connectivity**

**Activity 3.1** SPECA members States take necessary actions to implement the ESCAP Resolution 73/4 of 22 May 2017 on the Implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017-2021)<sup>1</sup>;

**Activity 3.2** SPECA members States take necessary actions to implement goals and activities defined in the Inland Transport Committee Strategy until 2030<sup>2</sup>;

**Activity 3.3** SPECA countries take steps to accede to and efficiently implement United Nations transport legal instruments, recommended for accession at the second session of SPECA TWG-STTC, as well as Conventions relating to transport of dangerous goods and perishable foodstuffs.

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<sup>1</sup> Adopted at the Third Session of the Ministerial Conference on Transport held on 5-9 December 2016 in Moscow, Russian Federation

<sup>2</sup> Adopted at the 81st session of the ITC held in Geneva on 19-22 February 2019

**Activity 3.4** SPECA countries, which have not already done so, take measures towards becoming parties to or implementing the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network, the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network and Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports and participate in relevant Working Groups;

**Activity 3.5** SPECA countries, with technical assistance from the ESCAP secretariat, consider becoming parties to the Intergovernmental Agreement on International Road Transport along the Asian Highway Network. The agreement is open for accession by other Asian Highway Network member countries.

**Activity 3.6** SPECA countries, which have not already done so, are encouraged sign/accede to key UNECE infrastructure agreements (AGR, AGC and AGTC) and participate in relevant Working Groups.

**Activity 3.7** SPECA countries take policy measures for transport facilitation in line with the UNESCAP Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport and UNESCAP Regional Cooperation Framework for the Facilitation of International Railway Transport.

**Activity 3.8** SPECA countries provide the text of agreements, additions, corrections or updates to the Database of Agreements on International Road Transport which was developed by ESCAP Transport Division.

**Activity 3.9** UNECE provide technical assistance to SPECA countries, upon request, in the form of capacity development workshops, seminars or advisory services, on accession to, and implementation of major United Nations transport legal instruments.

#### **4. Increased international and sub-regional cooperation in inland transport infrastructure development for better connectivity and sustainability (SDG 9)**

**Activity 4.1** SPECA countries actively participate in the meetings of the UNECE Inland Transport Committee and its subsidiary bodies, ESCAP Ministerial Conference on Transport and Committee on Transport, and other international fora that will assist the integration of the transport systems within and beyond SPECA region as well as harmonization with existing international standards and norms, set by agreements and conventions.

**Activity 4.2** SPECA countries regularly report on transport infrastructure developments, especially those within the SPECA region and those linking to neighboring countries and international transport corridors. SPECA countries are advised to use results of the Euro Asian Transport links project Phase III.

**Activity 4.3** SPECA countries take steps to ensure adequate fund allocation for transport infrastructure development and maintenance and improved business environment for strengthened public-private partnership in transport infrastructure development.

**Activity 4.4** National transport authorities in the SPECA countries develop national transport infrastructure in accordance with the Intergovernmental Agreements on Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railway Networks and Dry Ports, as well as the Infrastructure agreements under the purview of the ITC (AGR, AGC and AGTC) as a priority.

## **5. Assistance to SPECA countries for sustainable and efficient transport operations in the SPECA region (SDG 9)**

**Activity 5.1** Subject to availability of resources, UNECE/ESCAP provide technical assistance to SPECA countries upon request in identifying/isolating/addressing major contributors for more efficient sub-regional and international inland transport operations, including within the framework of the results of the EATL project. Special attention should be paid to development of railways and intermodal transport and to the use of new technologies.

**Activity 5.2** SPECA countries take measures for the application of ESCAP transport facilitation models<sup>3</sup>, and the UNECE/OSCE handbook on best practices at border crossings – a trade and transport facilitation perspective.

**Activity 5.3** ESCAP/UNECE provide technical assistance to SPECA countries, upon request, in the form of workshops, seminars or advisory services, in establishing or strengthening national facilitation coordinating mechanisms, simplification/harmonization of border-crossing procedures and documentation for international transport and the application of new technologies, including information and communication technology. Transport facilitation frameworks/models/tools developed by UNECE/ESCAP could serve as a reference in that respect.

**Activity 5.4** SPECA countries take an active part in the work carried out towards unified railway law, on the basis of the Joint Declaration on the promotion of Euro-Asian rail transport and activities towards unified railway law<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> The model bilateral agreement on international road transport; the model sub-regional agreement on transport facilitation; the model multilateral permit for international road transport; the efficient cross border transport models; the standard model of logistics information systems; the model on integrated controls at the border crossing; and the secure cross border transport model (<https://www.unescap.org/resources/transport-facilitation-tools>)

<sup>4</sup> Signed in Geneva on 26 February 2013

**6. Assistance to SPECA countries in developing transport-related SDGs monitoring mechanism and development and maintenance of SPECA TWG-STTC databases on transport indicators.**

**Activity 6.1** ESCAP/UNECE and relevant institutions in Kazakhstan to establish and maintain the databases with inputs of necessary data/information from SPECA countries (indicators related to road routes of international importance; rail routes of international importance; intermodal transport infrastructure and border crossing).

**Activity 6.2** SPECA countries provide data and national focal points for the relevant WebCoQ jointly managed by UNECE/EUROSTAT/ITF.

**Activity 6.3** UNECE/ESCAP provide technical assistance to SPECA countries, upon request, in collection and harmonization of data and indicators on transport-related SDGs and targets with the particular focus on the sustainable aspects of transport infrastructure and operations.

**7. Increased awareness and understanding of road safety issues and potential interventions, and improved collaboration in the SPECA region (SDG 3)**

**Activity 7.1** SPECA countries take steps to address road safety issues in line with Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020, including the updated Regional Road Safety Goals and Targets for Asia and the Pacific 2016-2020<sup>5</sup>. SPECA countries are encouraged to deposit their instrument of acceptance of the new Annex II bis to the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network on the Asian Highway design standards for road safety. SPECA countries are invited to volunteer for preparation of Road Safety Performance Review (RSPR). Subject to availability of resources, UNECE will provide technical assistance to SPECA countries in RSPR preparation.

**Activity 7.2.** UNECE/ESCAP provide technical assistance to SPECA countries in supporting their efforts to improve road safety and in setting regional/national goals, targets and indicators on road safety, improving vehicle safety and safety of vulnerable road users, based on the best practice and existing United Nations legal instruments.

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<sup>5</sup> Adopted at the Third Session of the Ministerial Conference on Transport in December 2016