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**Economic Commission for Europe****Inland Transport Committee****Eighty-sixth session**

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Item 10 (h) of the provisional agenda

**Strategic Questions of a Horizontal and  
Cross-Sectoral Policy or Regulatory Nature:  
Capacity Development Activities in United Nations  
Programme Countries in the United Nations  
Economic Commission for Europe Region****Capacity Development for the Successful Implementation of  
Key Legal Instruments under the Purview of the Inland  
Transport Committee****Note by the secretariat***Summary*

The present document covers current trends and increased demands for capacity development, especially from non-ECE members of the Committee, and the strategic importance of addressing them. The Committee is **invited to take note** of the capacity/resource requirements and **consider** the options on how to address the capacity/resource gaps. The Committee may wish to **invite** member States to engage in additional resource mobilization efforts.

**I. Introduction**

1. The endorsement of the revised Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on 16 February 2022 (E/RES/2022/2) marked a new era for ITC and its subsidiary Working Parties by recognizing the ITC as the United Nations platform for consideration of all aspects of inland transport development and cooperation, thus expanding ITC's mandate to a global scale with special attention to interregional and intraregional regulatory governance through the United Nations transport conventions and other means (E/RES/2022/2, para. (b)).

2. Following this development, at its eighty-fifth annual session, the Committee welcomed the statements by States, Members of the United Nations and contracting parties to inland transport conventions and agreements on their national and regional experiences, including challenges and special needs, in their efforts to implement conventions to which they have acceded. The Committee also welcomed Member States' accession and implementation of their concerned instruments, including conventions, General Assembly

Resolutions and requested the secretariat to provide technical assistance and services to the requesting states, within existing resources (ECE/TRANS/328, para. 43).

3. The Committee further invited the secretariat to explore additional resources to reflect on the needs of the concerned countries and encouraged Member States to continue their valuable support through sharing their experiences and informing about challenges and particular requirements that pave the way for interested countries to finalize procedures for accession (ECE/TRANS/328, para. 43).

4. Noting that improving implementation worldwide is a core element of the ITC Strategy and its vision in the run-up to 2030, the Committee further welcomed ECE/TRANS/2023/16 that contains an overview of monitoring of implementation issues and dynamics as well as of regional accession trends and dynamics in relation to key clusters of United Nations inland transport conventions and agreements. The Committee noted with interest the gaps and needs for capacity building identified in the statements and the paper and invited its contracting parties and other interested United Nations Member States to share with the secretariat their needs for capacity building, advisory services or other technical assistance for the implementation of the Conventions to which they are already contracting parties and, if appropriate and relevant, their interest in acquiring further knowledge on the Conventions that their Government may wish to accede to in the future (ECE/TRANS/328, para. 45).

5. Under the purview of the ITC lie 60 United Nations legal instruments, 49 of which are currently in force. At the time of preparation of this note, 152 United Nations Member States are contracting parties to at least one of these instruments. In recent years, the total numbers of accession from outside the ECE region increasingly exceed those from within the ECE region. Thus, at its eighty-fifth annual session, the Committee also noted the need for capacity building from non-ECE regions on accession and implementation of the United Nations legal instruments on inland transport and requested the secretariat to explore various ways to undertake such capacity building. In this context, the Committee requested the secretariat to prepare with the support of the ITC Bureau a detailed note with analysis of these demands and options to address them and submit it to the Committee for its consideration and possible decisions at its eighty-sixth session in 2024 (ECE/TRANS/328, para. 45). This document was prepared in direct implementation of this request.

## **II. Inland Transport Committee's Current Framework for Capacity Development**

6. The current ITC framework for capacity development is composed of the ITC Strategy until 2030 (hereafter the ITC Strategy) (ECE/TRANS/288/Add.2) and the ITC Capacity Development Action Plan (ECE/TRANS/2020/18). According to the ITC Strategy, in its future activities, the ITC will act as:

- The United Nations platform for regional and global inland transport conventions;
- The United Nations platform for supporting new technologies and innovations in inland transport;
- The United Nations platform for regional, interregional and global inland transport policy dialogues;
- The United Nations platform for promoting sustainable regional and interregional inland transport connectivity and mobility.<sup>1</sup>

7. The ITC Strategy mandated the secretariat to develop new or adjust/update existing capacity-building programmes, training manuals, guidelines, standards and competency criteria in cooperation with other organizations and institutions, to assist in enhancing capacity in the accession and implementation of the legal instruments and organize training courses [Timeline: Short-, Medium- and Long-term] and to develop indicators for contracting parties to evaluate status and progress in the implementation of the legal instruments

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<sup>1</sup> See ECE/TRANS/2020/18, para. 10 for more details.

[Timeline: Short-, and Medium-term]<sup>2</sup> (Action Plan for achieving the ITC vision, A (c) and (d), Page 5). The ITC Strategy identifies several capacity development priority areas until 2030 as shown in Table 1 of the Strategy (ECE/TRANS/288/Add.2, section V, para. 13), reproduced in the Annex to this document for easy reference.

8. The ITC Strategy further identifies road safety as a special priority of global interest. For this purpose, the ITC and its subsidiary bodies will strengthen their activities related to the United Nations legal instruments on road safety under the purview of the ITC, as contained in Table 2 of the Strategy, (a) to support contracting parties in developing, improving and sustaining their national road safety systems; (b) to further promote the accession and effective implementation of the United Nations legal instruments; (c) to support the efforts of the United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy for Road Safety in promoting global accession to the United Nations legal instruments; and (d) to play an effective role as the international regulatory support provided in the United Nations Road Safety Trust Fund Global Framework Plan of Action for Road Safety (see ECE/TRANS/288/Add.2, para. 15 and Table 2 for details).

9. The largest funding area required for the implementation of the ITC Strategy is capacity building in connection with new and/or adjusted/updated existing training manuals, guidelines, standards and competency criteria as well as organization of training courses, which should be financed by XB or other funding options outside ECE Regular Budget which is dedicated to the ECE region. The next is research and analysis on regional and global challenges and solutions in inland transport under the 2030 development agenda, development and application of tools and indicators.

10. The ITC Strategy is complemented by the ITC Capacity Development Action Plan (ECE/TRANS/2020/18), which contains five general principles of ITC capacity development, namely:

- Offering A-Z solutions to member States: Working hand-in-hand with member States on the efficient implementation of United Nations transport legal instruments through different actions (see ECE/TRANS/2020/18, para. 21 (a) for more details);
- Recognizing capacity development as a long-term relation and effort by member States and ECE;
- Seeking synergies with other international and regional institutions involved in development of the sustainable transport system (see ECE/TRANS/2020/18, para. 21 (c) for more details);
- Influence of capacity development activities on all three levels of capacity development (individual, organizational and national) to reach optimal results with available resources, with special emphasis on the national level (see ECE/TRANS/2020/18, para. 21 (d) for more details);
- Using the Capacity Development Action Plan to mobilize XB funds ((see ECE/TRANS/2020/18, para. 21 (e) for more details).

11. The ITC Capacity Development Action Plan incorporates these principles and provides four strategic areas for the implementation of activities (ECE/TRANS/2020/18, para. 22):

- (a) Awareness-raising - Inform Member States on United Nations transport legal instruments and on benefits of its efficient implementation;
- (b) Capacity enhancement - Assist member States in developing capacities for efficient implementation of United Nations inland transport legal instruments;
- (c) Seek synergies - Develop standards and competence criteria for accreditation of entities (academia, training centres, etc.) to promote United Nations inland transport legal instruments;
- (d) Monitor and evaluate results and effectiveness of applied actions/methods.

<sup>2</sup> ITC Strategy until 2030, page 5, 2019.

### III. Current Trends and the Importance of Capacity Development

12. For United Nations inland transport legally binding instruments to have an effect for their contracting parties and for citizens at large, they must be implemented. Unimplemented instruments affect the reputation of the ITC and the credibility of the international regulatory system as a whole. This in turn increases the risks of regulatory fragmentation (ECE/TRANS/2024/17, para. 17). Implementation of such instruments requires that they be applied domestically to have a legal or practical effect, and the enforcement of their provisions, both of which depend on each country's national legal systems. This responsibility to implement instruments falls solely to the contracting parties of those instruments (ECE/TRANS/2024/17, para. 18).

13. Since the adoption of the ITC Strategy until 2030, a notable shift in accession dynamics has taken place. On at least three occasions in the past six years, the number of accessions from outside the ECE region has been equal or exceeded those of ECE member States (see ECE/TRANS/2024/17, para. 11, Figure I). This is an important development, considering the enhanced needs for the development of capacities for the implementation of these conventions and agreements (ECE/TRANS/2024/17, paras. 11 and 12).

14. Servicing and updating the existing legal instruments under its purview as well as developing new ones will continue to be the top priority for the Committee, which will rely on Regular Budget resources. The Working Parties and the secretariat will schedule their activities by 2030 and beyond to evenly distribute the workload according to the strategy action plan and list of priorities as well as resources available. Taking experience from globalized WP.1, WP.29 and WP.30, no budget implications are foreseen with the expansion of contracting parties to the legal instruments under the purview of those Working Parties (ECE/TRANS/288/Add.2, para. 16). ECE has a proven competitive advantage in inland transport normative production and the identification of best practices, which is relevant for all its member States, independently of the level of economic development. Alongside administering United Nations legal instruments – which shape the international legal framework for inland transport – and analytical work conducted by the Working Parties and the secretariat, technical assistance activities represent one of the three pillars of ITC and the Sustainable Transport Division's activities (ECE/TRANS/2020/18, para. 16).

15. Technical assistance activities from RPTC funding primarily focus on improving the capacities of member States to accede to United Nations inland transport legal instruments, with special focus on 17 United Nations programme countries in the ECE region. As a high level of accession has been achieved in the ECE region, attention has shifted further towards supporting efficient implementation, both at national and subregional levels. Furthermore, in line with the 2030 Agenda, capacity development activities are also being pooled towards supporting achievement of transport-related Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard, transport policy dialogue, targeted capacity-building activities to support the implementation of its normative outputs and related transport policy advisory work are the main forms of the technical assistance that the secretariat carries out (ECE/TRANS/2020/18, para. 17).

16. Section 23 of the 2023 “Regular programme of technical cooperation” (RPTC) (A/77/6 (Sect. 23)) addresses programmatically and budget-wise the intra-regional aspects of the above-mentioned ITC mandate for the 56 ECE member States, especially the 17 programme countries of ECE that are eligible to benefit from RPTC support. The 17 programme countries of ECE collectively account for a total of 373 accessions to legal instruments. By contrast, the vast majority of the 96 non-ECE United Nations Member States who are contracting parties to inland transport legal instruments under the purview of the ITC and therefore would need support in line with the above ECOSOC mandate are not covered by the RPTC budget. They account for a total of 429 accessions to legal instruments under the purview of ITC/ECE (ECE/TRANS/2024/17, paras. 13 and 14).

17. The share of ECE under “Regional and subregional advisory services” in the 2023 RPTC budget, which is rather consistent with previous years can be seen in table 1 below:

Table 1  
2023 RPTC Budget

<i>Regional Commission</i>	<i>2023 estimate before recosting ('000 USD)</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)	8,531.7	36%
Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)	4,669.3	20%
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)	4,757.3	20%
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)	3,443.0	14%
Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)	2,335.0	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,736.3</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: A-77/6 (Sect.23) table 23.1 and own calculations

#### IV. Capacity Development Requests Received by non-ECE Members of the Committee

18. The secretariat has received specific requests for technical assistance and capacity development by the following non-ECE States Members of the United Nations (table 2):

Table 2  
Requests received by non-ECE members of the Committee

<i>Country/RC</i>	<i>Country/RC (cont'd)</i>
Argentina (ECLAC)	Nigeria (ECA)*
Australia (ESCAP)	Lao PDR (ESCAP)
Botswana (ECA)*	Pakistan (ESCAP)
Burundi (ECA)	Peru (ECLAC)
Cameroon (ECA)*	Saudi Arabia (ESCWA)
Dominican Republic (ECLAC)*	Seychelles (ECA)
Ethiopia (ECA)*	Sri Lanka (ESCAP)
India (ESCAP)	Thailand (ESCAP)
Iran (Islamic Republic of) (ESCAP)	Uganda (ECA)*
Jordan (ESCWA)	United Arab Emirates (ESCWA)*
Kenya (ECA)	Viet Nam (ESCAP)*
Liberia (ECA)	Zimbabwe (ECA)*
Morocco (ECA and ESCWA)	

\* related to Road Safety/Road safety performance reviews

#### V. Capacity Development for the Implementation of the Inland Transport Committee Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Inland Transport

19. The implementation of the ITC Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Inland Transport (ECE/TRANS/2024/3), which was developed as per the request of the Committee at its eighty-fifth session (ECE/TRANS/328, para. 60 (a)) and will be presented to the Committee at its eighty-sixth session for consideration and possible adoption, will further require the mobilization of additional resources to

- (a) Oversee and coordinate its implementation, centrally through the ITC in close cooperation with its subsidiary bodies;
- (b) Raise awareness of the United Nations inland transport legal instruments and the benefits of their implementation and ratification/accession;
- (c) Provide advisory services on amending the legal instruments and developing additional ones, where warranted;
- (d) Enhance capacities of Member States by assisting them with dedicated projects to foster implementation of the legal instruments to which they are contracting parties, and build the capacities of non-parties to accede, through technical assistance projects and activities, such as the organization of national or sub-regional seminars, workshops and training courses;
- (e) Develop new and/or adjusted/updated existing training manuals, guidelines, standards and competency criteria for accreditation of entities (academia, training centers, etc.) to promote the legal instruments and support their implementation within and beyond the ECE region;
- (f) Research and analysis on climate change and inland transport;
- (g) Monitor and evaluate results and assess the effectiveness of applied actions/methods.

20. Member States and contracting parties to the legal instruments are invited to consider providing extrabudgetary financial resources to enable an effective implementation of the ITC Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Inland Transport (ECE/TRANS/2024/3) following its envisaged adoption.

## VI. Increasing Capacity through Extrabudgetary Funds

21. The regular budget for human resources that supports the work of the secretariat has not increased in recent years. The last increase in the number of regular budget posts, through a redeployment of two posts from the Trade Division, followed Decision A(65) of the 2013 Review of the 2005 ECE reform. Since then, a GS post was lost in the 2016-2017 biennium. Following the reduction of both post and non-post resources at ECE in early 2019<sup>3</sup> and the liquidity crisis in the middle of 2019<sup>4</sup>, regular budget resources were further *de facto* limited. The most recent and currently ongoing liquidity crisis is further limiting the existing resources and has a direct impact on the secretariat's ability to fully implement the Programme of Work. For example, the GS post in the ITC secretariat has been vacant since July 2023.

22. On the demand side of the services provided by the Committee and the secretariat, the workload is constantly increasing. In addition to the standard programme of work, new areas of high interest for member States and contracting parties are on the rise, demanding more attention and more resources. They include: (a) new emerging areas, such as regulatory work on automated/autonomous vehicles, digitalization and Intelligent Transport Systems, as reflected in the ITC Strategy until 2030; (b) overwhelming challenges in road safety, which ITC and the secretariat need to meet through enhancing its international regulatory work and its assistance to member States in the implementation of the legal instruments; (c) advisory

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<sup>3</sup> Earlier in 2019, the ECE secretariat was asked to cut USD 348,400 in 2020, comprising USD 291,500 in post and USD 56,900 in non-post resources. The Sustainable Transport Division, with no room for further post cuts, had to reduce its travel/publication/consultant budget lines, which therefore impaired by equal measure its ability to deliver its mandated work.

<sup>4</sup> The secretariat was informed in May 2019 about the budget liquidity issue affecting the United Nations and in particular ECE, through Sections 20 (Economic development in Europe) and 23 (Sectoral advisory services; Regional and subregional advisory services) of the UN Regular Budget. The budget liquidity crisis leads to resource limitations that in turn impact the immediate and long-term delivery of the programme of work under Section 20 for ECE. While the situation appears to be improving, the repercussions still exist, such as the timely filling of vacant posts and the full implementation of travel plans.

services support to the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety and the UN Road Safety Fund; (d) a constantly increasing number of prospective, new and existing contracting parties, whose increasing needs for accession and/or implementation of legal instruments under the purview of the Committee need to be serviced.

23. In addition to the standard workstreams of the Programme of Work, the implementation of the ITC Strategy until 2030, which sets a vision to make the ITC comparable to the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), significantly raises demands and needs for the services and products provided by the ITC and its subsidiary bodies.

24. Following the adoption of the ITC Strategy on Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Inland Transport (ECE/TRANS/2024/3), this trend will continue: It is expected that significant additional demand for the services and products provided by the ITC and its subsidiary bodies will arise, and new needs will emerge, or existing needs will be further intensified, due to the nature of the priorities set by the Committee's member States. At the same time, exogenous and unpredictable factors as explained above impact the availability of planned and approved regular budget resources to provide the demanded services, which would affect the effective implementation of the Strategy.

25. Extrabudgetary (XB) funded posts and projects allow for the expansion of services provided and also provide more stability for activities and projects, *when additional and complementary to RB resources*, as they are not subject to liquidity issues. The XB option is currently underutilized by the Transport subprogramme.

## VII. Conclusions and Options for Addressing the Urgent Needs

26. There are number of options to meet the increasing demand for capacity building with the enlarged geographical scope of the Committee, but most promising are extrabudgetary funding (XB) and/or increase of RPTC budget to cover inter-regional functions of the Committee in its revised ToR.

27. The XB option could be realized through the creation of a pooled XB Fund, an open-ended "Fund" for a multi-year and multi-donor Project, namely the "Sustainable Inland Transport Fund", with the aim of supporting the Transport subprogramme with additional post resources, while best suited to the needs of Member States. It would take the form of an open-ended account under the main ECE Trust Fund for voluntary contributions from ECE and non-ECE Member States. Contributions from NGOs, IGOs and the private sector would also be possible following EXCOM guidelines as well as standard United Nations policy and practice. Contributed funds would either be (a) unearmarked, and as such intended for the broad implementation of the Programme of Work and the strategies, with governance decisions on the utilization of the funds provided by the ITC on an annual basis, or (b) earmarked, which can be legal instrument-specific or thematic/horizontal, e.g. monitoring of implementation of certain legal instruments or strategies.

28. The RPTC funding currently supports one regional advisor in the Sustainable Transport Division to provide capacity building for the 17 programme countries in the ECE region. The increased RPTC budget could support one *inter-regional* advisor to cover capacity building for non-ECE members of ITC.

29. The Committee is invited to discuss this paper and the options presented to enhance capacity development.

## Annex

## List of Priorities under the ITC Strategy until 2030

Table 1  
List of Priorities until 2030

<i>Theme/ Related SDG</i>	<i>Long-term Action</i>	<i>Priority Actions until 2030</i>	<i>Indicative budget (RB/XB); Ways to manage; Partnerships</i>
The United Nations Platform for inland transport conventions  RELEVANT SDGs: SDG 3, SDG 6, SDG 7, SDG 8, SDG 9, SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 13	Servicing of legal instruments	The servicing and administering of legal instruments, especially in the fields of vehicle regulations harmonization, transport of dangerous goods, border crossing facilitation and road safety, represent the most important task of the ITC. This includes, in particular, the regular and timely amendments as well as the consolidation of amendments to legal instruments and discussion on their implementation.	<b>RB and XB in some cases</b>
	Promotion of accession by non-ECE member States to the United Nations legal instruments	- Amendments to the TOR of ITC by 2020  - Amendments to the legal instruments with geographical and procedural barriers by 2025  - Review of relationship of the existing legal instruments and recommendations by 2022  - identification of additional necessary legal instruments	<b>RB</b>
	New legal instruments under the Sustainable Development Agenda	- Finalizing three new legal instruments that are under development: URL, OmniBUS and Rail Passenger Convention - Exploring possible new legal instruments from 2020	<b>RB, maybe also XB as necessary</b>
	New or adjusted/updated existing capacity building programme, training manuals, guidelines, standards and competency criteria as well as training courses	- Comprehensive Plan on capacity building by 2020  - adjustment/updating of existing training materials from 2020  - new training materials, standards and competency criteria from 2022  - training courses from 2019	<b>RB to support incorporation of training standards and competencies in legal instruments if necessary</b>  <b>XB for training materials and courses through partnerships with training institutions</b>
	Development of indicators	From 2019	<b>Non ECE-RB (e.g. UNDA) or XB</b>



<i>Theme/ Related SDG</i>	<i>Long-term Action</i>	<i>Priority Actions until 2030</i>	<i>Indicative budget (RB/XB); Ways to manage; Partnerships</i>
The UN Platform for supporting new technologies and innovations in inland transport	Regional and global platforms for digitalization, automated driving and intelligent transport systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Further expand global participation in, and cooperation between, WP.1 and WP.29</li> <li>- Update DETA and host it at ECE from 2022 onwards</li> <li>- Promote the accession and operationalization of the e-CMR within the ECE region and beyond from 2019</li> <li>- Gradually develop e-TIR leading to the possible full implementation of the e-TIR system by 2023, subject to the entry into force of new Annex 11 to the TIR Convention</li> <li>- Identify, foster and facilitate the introduction of new technologies in the rail, road, road-based mobility, inland waterway, logistics, intermodal transport until 2030</li> </ul>	<b>RB for regular staff, meeting facilities and services and DETA</b>
RELEVANT SDGs: SDG 3, SDG 6, SDG 7, SDG 8, SDG 9, SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 13			<b>XB for the rest</b>
	Regulatory environment to promote automated vehicles, as well as low-carbon and low-emissions vehicles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhance support to automated vehicles from 2019, including continuation of amendments to the existing legal instruments and standards, and possible development of new agreement(s), both if necessary</li> </ul>	<b>RB</b>
The UN Platform for regional, interregional and global inland transport policy dialogues	- Organize regional, interregional and global thematic segments on sustainable inland transport during the ITC sessions	High-level segments of ITC on various topics of sustainable inland transport from 2019	<b>RB, as part of the Committee session</b>
RELEVANT SDGs: SDG 3, SDG 6, SDG 7, SDG 8, SDG 9, SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 13	Include ITC agenda items on challenges facing inland transport in different regions	ITC Agenda items on challenges in different regions from 2020	
The United Nations Platform for promoting sustainable regional and interregional inland transport connectivity and mobility	Regional integrated intermodal infrastructural connectivity and mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support to integrated intermodal connectivity and mobility from 2020, including TEM, TER, intermodal and logistics</li> </ul> <p>Transport Statistics: Continuation and improvement of the data gathering, validation and dissemination processes to produce accurate statistics that allow evidence-based</p>	<b>RB and XB</b>

<i>Theme/ Related SDG</i>	<i>Long-term Action</i>	<i>Priority Actions until 2030</i>	<i>Indicative budget (RB/XB); Ways to manage; Partnerships</i>
RELEVANT SDGs: SDG 3, SDG 6, SDG 7, SDG 8, SDG 9, SDG 11, SDG 12, SDG 13	Interregional connectivity including through various corridors	transport decisions. From 2019 to 2030  - Support to interregional inland transport connectivity and corridors from 2019,	<b>RB and XB</b>
	Promoting sustainable transport and urban mobility;	- New tools and activities from 2019, e.g. - THE PEP; further development of local pollutant module of ForFITS; reviews on green transport and mobility	<b>XB</b>
	Climate resilient transport infrastructure	Investigate the influence of climate change on transport infrastructure	