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## Economic Commission for Europe

### Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

#### Second session

Geneva, 26-27 May 2016

## Report of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards on its second session

### I. Overview

1. The second session of the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards (SCTCS) was held from 26 to 27 May 2016.
2. The first day was dedicated to discussing the results of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) study on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in the Republic of Albania and the initial findings emerging from a similar study in the Republic of Moldova. In addition, ongoing and planned reform efforts in the Republic of Kyrgyzstan were highlighted, including follow-up to the recommendations from ECE assessment study carried out in 2015.
3. The second day featured discussions on the programmes of work for the SCTCS and its subsidiary bodies.

### II. Attendance

4. Representatives from the following ECE member States attended the meeting: Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
5. A representative of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) attended the meeting.
6. A representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) attended.
7. The following non-governmental organizations with a consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) also attended the session: International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML).

### **III. Agenda item 1. Adoption of the agenda**

8. The Chair presented the annotated provisional agenda (ECE/CTCS/2016/1).

#### **Decision 2016-1:**

9. The SCTCS adopted the agenda of its second session (ECE/CTCS/2016/1) with agreed minor changes.

### **IV. General segment**

#### **A. Agenda item 2. Matters arising**

10. The secretariat reported on matters arising from the ECE Executive Committee (EXCOM) meetings as well as from the UN General Assembly that had approved the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda in September 2015.

#### **Decision 2016-2:**

11. The Steering Committee took note of the information provided by the secretariat on matters arising since the first session of the Steering Committee.

#### **B. High-level segment: Removing regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in the ECE region**

#### **Agenda item 3. Supporting the removal of regulatory and procedural barriers to trade**

##### **(a) The Republic of Moldova: Initial findings**

12. The secretariat introduced the study on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade, which the ECE was in the process of undertaking in the Republic of Moldova at the request of the Government and with financing from the Government of Switzerland.

13. The study was meant to contribute to the economic development efforts of the Republic of Moldova by supporting the removal of regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in goods. It involved an in-depth analysis of the current regulatory and procedural framework for imports and exports in the country using the ECE Evaluation Methodology. This methodology involves, for each country, including the Republic of Moldova:

- (a) In-depth analysis of the country's trade facilitation conditions;
- (b) In-depth analysis of the country's system of quality control, including standardization, technical regulation, quality assurance (conformity assessment) and metrology;
- (c) A survey of traders engaged in strategic sectors that make major contributions to gross value-added and exports;
- (d) Sector-focused analyses of regulatory and procedural barriers to trade for selected products of strategic importance.

14. Once completed, the study would also highlight the implications of the identified regulatory and procedural barriers for the trade sector's future development prospects. At the time of the meeting, this part of the research work was still in progress. The discussions, therefore, focused on the initial results emerging from the trader's survey, which were presented by the ECE lead consultant who had supervised the implementation of the survey of 40 traders from across the country.

15. The Vice Prime Minister for Reintegration and Head of Delegation of the Republic of Moldova to the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards, noted that their Government was committed to trade facilitation and to making export and import procedures available on an equal basis to all traders; including those from the region of Transnistria. That region was heavily dependent on trade with the rest of Moldova, and so all measures were being taken to facilitate trade. When discussing foreign markets, the most important market for the entire country was the EU market.

16. He noted that when discussing economic conditions in the country, there were difficult challenges due to a lack of political stability in the region. At the time of the meeting, the Government was new and facing challenges to establishing its credibility at the international level. The government of the Republic of Moldova was trying to improve these conditions and would take measures to improve the economic conditions on the ground. The Government was negotiating an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and had signed a road map with the EU in which the government committed to further reform measures. He believed that the support of international partners was very important and indicated that the Republic of Moldova was ready to have as many studies and recommendations as possible in order to support the implementation of structural and strategic reforms.

17. In terms of priorities, the country attached great importance to achieving full harmonization with EU legislation, with a special focus on improving export competitiveness and attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) and transport development. Trade was focused on traditional sectors, and the Government had adopted an export promotion strategy focusing on: machinery and equipment, the automobile industry, construction, information technology, agriculture and textiles.

18. The Republic of Moldova hoped to maintain good cooperation with the ECE and other international organizations in order to ensure the successful implementation of reforms.

19. Statements on recent achievements and priority areas were also made by the State Secretary of the Ministry of Economy and representatives from the Customs Service, the National Accreditation Centre (MOLDAC), the National Institute for Standardisation, and the National Food Safety Agency.

20. The representative of the UNDP country office in the Republic of Moldova highlighted that traders from the region of Transnistria did not benefit from export opportunities emerging from the country's trade relations due to a lack of information and the fact that development aid did not target the development of trade in that region. UNDP had undertaken focused interventions to help through confidence building measures, including business education, joint study tours, training, participation in international events and multi-sectoral approaches that addressed trade and economic issues. It was important to take into account the development needs and priorities of all parties, to undertake practical support activities and to enhance the capacities of all parties, targeting the most vulnerable, in order to deliver on trade facilitation and to support incremental changes. In this context, any support and assistance from international agencies would be welcomed.

21. The representatives of IEC highlighted work areas and activities that could be of direct relevance to the Republic of Moldova in developing standardization and conformity

assessment systems for electrical and electronic products. They also provided a number of proposals for consideration by the Government.

22. The representative of ILAC reported that MOLDAC was on the verge of signing mutual recognition agreements with ILAC and praised their efforts to implement fully international standards.

23. The representative of Switzerland also commended the Government's commitment to trade development and reform.

24. Presentations and speeches delivered under this agenda item can be found on the ECE website.<sup>1</sup>

### **Decision 2016-3.1:**

25. The Steering Committee noted the initial findings of the Study on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade in the Republic of Moldova. The Steering Committee requested the secretariat to incorporate the views expressed and to finalize the study and report to the 3rd session of the Steering Committee.

#### **(b) The Republic of Albania: Findings and recommendations**

26. The secretariat presented the main findings and recommendations emerging from the ECE study on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade in Albania (ECE/CTCS/2016/3), conducted in 2015. The Albanian Ambassador to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva informed delegates that the Government had already started implementing some of the study's recommendations. However, complete implementation required financial assistance and support from the EU and members of the international community.

27. The Ambassador, who headed the Albanian delegation to the Steering Committee session, briefed the delegates on ongoing reform efforts in the areas of transparency, simplification and standardization of documentary requirements, border control, technical regulations, standardization, conformity assessment and metrology. Preparations were underway for establishing a national trade facilitation committee and ensuring the successful implementation of the new customs code, which had been harmonized with the new EU common customs code. The Government had also adopted a new investment strategy and a strategy for the development of the agricultural and energy sectors as a key requisite for ensuring economic diversification and export competitiveness. Efforts were also underway to complete the harmonization of Albania's regulations with EU requirements in the areas of quality assurance and to establish a market surveillance body.

28. The representative of Albanian Customs provided an overview of the recent achievements and planned future reforms of Albanian Customs. She noted that decisions on these reforms took into account ECE recommendations and, particularly, those related to risk management; the establishment of a Single Window facility that brings together all agencies involved in supporting export-import activities; the abolishment of unnecessary fees, and improving inter-agency coordination. She noted that clearance time was only one aspect of improving trade logistics chains, as was the need to further engage traders in reform discussions.

29. The representative from the General Directorate of Metrology of Albania (DPM) informed delegates that the ECE recommendations in the study brought forward pertinent

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=42312#/>

needs that should be accorded priority treatment, particularly in relation to training and laboratory equipment. She also noted that the study provided a clear mapping of the country's needs in trade facilitation and product quality, and would be used for mobilising support for technical assistance projects.

30. The representative of CEFTA noted that the report highlighted a number of priority needs to ensure compliance with the EU *acquis communautaire's* requirements. Harmonization of legislation should be followed by intensive capacity building efforts to ensure successful implementation. Representatives of IEC highlighted work areas and activities that could be of direct relevance to the Republic of Albania in developing standardization and conformity assessment systems for electrical and electronic products. They also provided a number of proposals for consideration by the Government, stressing the importance of ensuring an efficient use of resources.

31. The representative of OIML provided an overview of the organization's areas of work and activities that could be of benefit, and joined the IEC in stressing the need for an efficient use of resources when developing national metrology laboratories.

32. The secretary of the ECE Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) highlighted areas that might be of direct relevance to the Republic of Albania, including WP.6's recommendation D on Reference to Standards that had been revised in 2013 and was widely used as the basis of standardization law in the region. She also noted that WP.6 worked closely with ISO, IEC and other organizations on conformity assessment. The next round of high-level discussions would take place during the WP.6 annual session in early December 2016, which would table the revision of two recommendations on conformity assessment. Albania was invited to participate in the discussions.

33. WP.6 and, in particular, its Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (MARS) could offer their support. The Group's next meeting in Ankara would discuss cooperation between customs and market surveillance authorities, based on a new risk management methodology that seeks to help Customs identify those consignments that have the highest probability of being dangerous when non-compliant. Given sufficient resources, the Group could pilot this best practice in Albania.

34. Another important aspect that the report underscored was the need for a regulatory impact assessment methodology in order to identify the implications for Albania of the transition to the EU *acquis communautaire* for key technical regulations. The WP.6 Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM) develops and implements best practice in the use of risk management tools in policy-making, especially as regards the development and implementation of technical regulations.

35. The representative of the ECE Transport Division noted that Albania, which is a signatory to 30 ECE transport conventions and agreements, should consider increasing its participation in the ongoing discussions surrounding the implementation of these and other conventions as well as their revision. These conventions and agreements were constantly revised in order to reflect the contracting parties' emerging needs and changes at the international level, which Albania needs to keep abreast of.

36. She encouraged Albania to adopt the ECE international vehicle-weighing certificate, as it dispenses with the need for repetitive weighing of vehicles as they cross borders. She also noted that the Republic of Moldova was among the first countries to adopt this certificate.

37. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed his country's appreciation of the ECE studies. He noted that simplification and harmonization of trade procedures were at the heart of the international development agenda and the SDGs both within the United

Nations and within the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC). He added that his delegation appreciated the ECE's collaboration with the EEC on the Single Window. He also informed the meeting that the Russian Federation was supporting extra-budgetary projects on the implementation of ECE recommendations emerging from similar studies on Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.

38. He added that, for the Russian Federation, key sectors of priority included agriculture, machinery and equipment, construction, vehicles and the IT sector, and that the SCTS subsidiary bodies should consider these priority sectors as they proceed in their standards setting work.

39. The Albanian Ambassador noted that better coordination between donor agencies and implementing agencies was necessary, especially at the country level in order to avoid duplication of efforts. Donors should also take into consideration national needs and priorities.

40. The Director of the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division of the ECE provided a brief overview of the ECE's Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide (TFIG), which was of direct relevance to the Republic of Albania and the Republic of Moldova as they were forging ahead in designing and implementing trade facilitation reforms.

41. The secretariat took note of the comments made during the meeting, and will reflect them in the final study that will be presented to the stakeholders and published.

42. Presentations and speeches delivered under this agenda item can be found on the ECE website.<sup>2</sup>

**Decision 2016-3.2:**

43. The Steering Committee noted the Study on Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade in the Republic of Albania and congratulated the Government for their efforts to remove barriers to trade in the country. The Steering Committee requested that the secretariat support the Government's efforts to implement the recommendations made in the study and to report on the progress of work undertaken at the 3rd session of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee invited ECE member States and international organizations to support the implementation efforts of the Government of Albania.

**(c) Regulatory and procedural barriers to trade: A gender perspective**

44. As part of the ECE's contribution to the implementation of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination's (CEB's) UN System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN-SWAP), ECE had been incorporating a gender perspective into all its work areas. This mainstreaming was guided by the ECE policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women and the associated action plan.

45. Delegates were invited to consider the secretariat's reflections on avenues for incorporating a gender perspective into ECE studies as presented in document ECE/CTCS/2016/5 and to send proposals to the secretariat for the Bureau's consideration.

**Decision 2016-3.3:**

46. The Steering Committee noted the secretariat's report and invited member States to support a broad analysis as part of the ECE studies, with a view to informing broader discussions on increasing the contribution of trade to women's empowerment and gender

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=42312#/>

equality. To this end, a gender perspective should be incorporated into the ECE methodology for studies on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade.

**(c) On-going work**

47. The secretariat reported that it was in the process of preparing an analytical report with reflections on the findings and recommendations emerging from the studies that had been undertaken to date. The secretariat had conducted six studies covering, in sequence according to their publication dates, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Albania and the Republic of Moldova. While these studies revealed a number of common challenges, they also highlighted country specific conditions and factors that set the limits to successful implementation. These issues would form the focus of the report.

48. The secretariat was also in the process of mobilising the required resources for undertaking further demand driven studies.

**Decision 2016-3.4**

49. The Steering Committee noted the member States' and the secretariat's ongoing work.

**Agenda item 4. Country follow-up to ECE studies on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade**

50. The secretariat informed the delegates that it would be presenting for EXCOM's approval in June 2016 an extra-budgetary project, funded by the Russian Federation, for follow-up activities to support Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in removing regulatory and procedural barriers identified in the studies.

51. The representative of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan informed the Steering Committee of their country's follow-up activities for implementing the ECE recommendations emerging from the ECE study, which had been completed in 2015. The representative noted that the recommendations had been adopted by the Government and integrated into action plans. The Government had been working with the ECE to bring in other international development organizations to implement key recommendations and, in particular, those concerning:

(a) Improvement of transparency through the establishment of "training facilities, equipped with trained staff and training material adapted to the local context, within relevant market support institutions, such as the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in order to familiarize traders with emerging trends in supply chain management marketing, outsourcing and financial management".

(b) Preparation of a comprehensive road map for each of the targeted products, which would include activities on preparing a single strategy for eliminating trade barriers, as well as development and implementation of specific policy and normative documents.

(c) Establishment of an electronic database of best international practices to eliminate regulatory and procedural barriers to trade and ensure continuous monitoring to avoid the appearance of new barriers.

52. ECE, together with other international organizations, would be helping Kyrgyzstan implement these recommendations. Projects to this effect could be presented to ECE's EXCOM. The Government would also be using the study as input to decisions on the categorization of measures under the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation.

**Decision 2016-4:**

53. The Steering Committee noted the updates made by the secretariat and by the Government of Kyrgyzstan on progress made in the implementation of the recommendations made in previous studies. The Steering Committee requested the secretariat to further support these Governments in their implementation efforts and report to the 3rd session

**D. Continuation of the General Segment****Agenda item 5. Programme of work****(a) Updates from subsidiary bodies**

54. The SCTCS was briefed on activities undertaken during 2014-2015 by its subsidiary bodies: the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6) and the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7). The secretariat to WP.6 briefed the Steering Committee on ongoing and future activities. The Chair also informed the delegations that the Steering Committee needed to endorse the renewal the mandates of two WP.6 expert groups for approval by the ECE Executive Committee.

55. The chair drew the delegates' attention to a letter that he had received from the Institute of International Business and Law (IMBIP) from the Russian Federation, proposing cooperation with WP.6 and the Steering Committee in the area of education on standardization. The letter had been published as an informal document (Informal document no.1) and could be found on the ECE website.

56. A representative of the Republic of Moldova expressed her country's support to this proposal. She emphasized the need for providing intensive training on the international trading system, and requested the ECE to cooperate with all national stakeholders to change the curricula of universities. She emphasized that her Government attached great importance to this initiative and was looking forward to the Steering Committee's decision.

57. The secretary to WP.7 briefed the delegates on ongoing and future activities. She also drew their attention to new areas of work that the subsidiary body was considering. The first related to food security, since food security was not only about the availability of food but also about nutrition. The second area related to food waste and food loss.

58. The representative of the Republic of Belarus expressed his country's appreciation of the two subsidiary bodies' work, and noted that his country looked forward to hearing the Steering Committee's proposals for cooperation with regional bodies, such as the Eurasian Economic Commission. The secretary to WP.7 noted that the WP.7 Conference on Traceability in November 2015 had been live broadcast to the Eurasian Economic Commission; and further collaboration could be envisaged in the future.

59. Presentations delivered under this agenda item can be found on the ECE website.<sup>3</sup>

**Decision 2016-5.1:**

60. The Steering Committee noted the updates made by Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policy (WP.6) and Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7) and commended the working parties for their work. The Steering Committee endorsed the mandates and Terms of Reference of the WP.6 subgroups:

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=42312#/>

Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (MARS), Ad hoc Team of Specialists on Standardization and Regulatory Techniques, Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM) and requested the ECE Executive Committee to renew these for 2016 – 2018. The Steering Committee requested WP.6, in coordination with the Bureau of the Steering Committee, to respond to the letter from the Institute of International Business and Law (IMBIP) from the Russian Federation and to report to the 3rd session. The Steering Committee requested the Bureaux of the two Working Parties to review how further cooperation could be created among them and with the Steering Committee, in particular in support of the studies on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade and in support of the implementation of the recommendations of the studies in the respective substantive areas of the working parties. The Steering Committee requested the working parties to report on their work and on cooperation with the Steering Committee to the 3<sup>rd</sup> session.

**(b) Capacity-building and technical assistance activities**

61. The secretariat invited delegates to take note of the relevant sections of the Trade Subprogramme's report on capacity-building and technical assistance activities (ECE/CTCS/2016/6), noting that these activities were limited since the ECE was focused on standard setting. The secretariat also noted that sections implemented by the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) were for information only.

62. Presentations delivered under this agenda item can be found on the ECE website.<sup>4</sup>

**Decision 2016-5.2:**

63. The Steering Committee took note of the secretariat's report on capacity-building and technical assistance and requested the secretariat to report on this work to the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the Steering Committee.

**(c) Reports from other ECE bodies and international organizations on related work and potential areas for collaboration with the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards**

64. The ECE Regional Advisor on trade and trade facilitation and the secretariat to the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and e-Business (UN/CEFACT) briefed the Steering Committee on ongoing and future activities.

65. The secretariat drew the delegates' attention to the work undertaken by the ECE Committee in Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships (CICPPP). Updates on these activities as well as its plans for the coming year were provided in document ECE/CECI/2016/5 containing the CICPPP's "Intersessional implementation plan for 2016-2017".

66. The secretariat also reported on the trade subprogramme's systematic efforts to collaborate with other ECE bodies and other organizations in order to avoid duplication of work, as explained in the document ECE/CTCS/2016/7.

67. Presentations delivered under this agenda item can be found on the ECE website.<sup>5</sup>

**Decision 2016-5.3:**

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=42312#/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=42312#/>

68. The Steering Committee took note of the reports on cooperation and requested the Steering Committee to develop further relevant cooperation, in particular in support of the studies on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade and in the implementation of the recommendations of the studies. The Steering Committee requested the secretariat to report on progress made to the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the Steering Committee.

**(d) Contribution to the sustainable development goals**

69. The secretariat informed the delegates that, in line with the United Nations General Assembly decision on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Steering Committee and the ECE Trade subprogramme should look into how to support the Sustainable Development Goals. The secretariat presented a first analysis of those Sustainable Development Goals relevant to Trade (ECE/CTCS/2016/8). Delegates were invited to inform the secretariat on their current efforts to ensure the successful achievement of the trade-related Sustainable Development Goals and provide guidance to the Bureau and the secretariat on this area of work.

**Decision 2016-5.4:**

70. The Steering Committee took note of the secretariat's report and requested that the relevant Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda be incorporated in the ECE methodology for studies on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade. The Steering Committee requested the Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policy (WP.6) and the Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7) to incorporate the relevant SDGs and the 2030 Agenda in their Programmes of Work.

**(e) Stakeholder needs and priorities**

71. The Chair invited the delegates to inform the secretariat on arising needs for further work that could be undertaken by the Steering Committee or its subsidiary bodies. If aligned and relevant, such needs could be added to the ongoing work, and additional extra-budgetary funding would be identified and a mandate sought from the Executive Committee of ECE, as appropriate.

**Decision 2016-5.5:**

71. The Steering Committee took note of the stakeholder needs and priorities and requested that the Bureau of the Steering Committee, in cooperation with the secretariat, seek additional resources to support the work and to report to the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the Steering Committee.

**(f) Plan for inter-sessional implementation for the programme of work**

72. Delegates were invited to approve the implementation plan for the period between the 2016 and 2017 sessions of the Steering Committee (ECE/CTCS/2016/9).

**Decision 2016-5.6:**

73. The Steering Committee took note of the inter-sessional implementation plan (ECE/CTCS/2016/9) and requested the Bureau of the Steering Committee to monitor the implementation and to report to the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the Steering Committee.

**(g) Strategic Framework 2018-2019: Subprogramme 6 - Trade**

74. The secretariat presented the Strategic Framework for 2018-2019 for the ECE subprogramme 6 on Trade (document ECE/CTCS/2016/10).

**Decision 2016-5.7**

75. The Steering Committee took note of the Strategic Framework for 2018-2019 for ECE's Subprogramme 6 on Trade (ECE/CTCS/2016/10) and requested the Bureau to prepare a programme of work in support of the implementation of the strategic framework and to report to the 3<sup>rd</sup> session.

**Agenda Item 6. Proposed joint conference with the Republic of Belarus and the Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships**

76. The representative of the Republic of Belarus presented a proposal for a joint conference on "Laying the foundation in the ECE region for greater integration, economic development and achievement of the sustainable development goals" (ECE/CTCS/2016/NONE/1). This conference was to be organized jointly with Committee on Innovation, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships in Minsk, Belarus in October 2016.

77. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed his country's support for this proposal, noting that the ECE was well placed to address issues on harmonization and integration from a broad, scientific and practical approach. The Russian Federation believed that the conference would be an important contribution to the ECE 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

78. The representative of the Republic of Armenia expressed his country's support for the conference. The conference would be relevant and timely in that it would look into concrete avenues for increased cooperation and collaboration.

79. The representative of Kyrgyzstan expressed her country's support to the conference, noting that much of the focus to date had been on what the goals should be and how should they be measured, meaning indicators. Of equal importance was how the SDGs were to be implemented – what policies and actions would drive progress. The participants to the conference would contribute to that by applying the regional perspective of the Economic Commission for Europe to SDG implementation with a particular focus on leaving no one behind.

80. The representative of Kazakhstan also expressed support for the conference, which would provide a platform for fruitful discussions.

81. Presentations delivered under this agenda item can be found on the ECE website.<sup>6</sup>

**Decision 2016-6:**

82. The Steering Committee took note of the background paper for the proposed conference (ECE/CTCS/2016/NONE/1, ECE/CECI/CRP/6). It agreed to organise the

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=42312#/>

conference jointly with the Committee on Integration, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships (CICPPP) in Minsk in October 2016. The Committee requested that the Government of Belarus and the secretariat report on the Conference to the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the Steering Committee.

### **Agenda Item 7. Other business**

#### **Decision 2016 - 7.1**

The Steering Committee agreed that its eleventh session would, provisionally, take place in Geneva from 23 to 24 March 2017.

#### **Decision 2016 – 7.2**

The Steering Committee requested that its bureau make an analysis of the type of delegates who were attending the SCTCS session and those of the Committee on Integration, Competitiveness and Public-Private Partnerships since they began meeting back to back in order to determine the impact, if any, of organizing the two sessions back to back. It will report the results of this analysis, with any relevant recommendations, to the UNECE Executive Committee for discussion.

### **Agenda item 8. Adoption of the report**

#### **Decision 2016-8:**

The Steering Committee adopted the report of its 2<sup>nd</sup> session and requested the secretariat to translate it into French and Russian and publish it on the UNECE website. The Steering Committee requested the Bureau and the secretariat to implement the decisions made and to report on their implementation to the 3<sup>rd</sup> session.

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