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COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS AND ON THE GLOBALLY HARMONIZED SYSTEM OF CLASSIFICATION AND LABELLING OF CHEMICALS

Sub-Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods

(Twenty-second session, 2-6 December 2002,
agenda item (6))

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2003-2004

Comments on ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2002/72 (UIC)

Transmitted by the International Technical Committee for the prevention and Extinction of Fire(CTIF)

The CTIF supports the proposal of UIC with respect to enable the discussion about coded information¹ in the next biennium.

CTIF is deeply concerned about the position of SCETDG outlined in the 21st session² that "emergency response was not part of transport conditions and that marking, labelling and placarding provisions of the Model Regulations were mostly intended to provided for effective hazard communication elements rather than to recommend precise and uniform emergency response guidance".

The legal requirement to have written information on board transport units carrying dangerous goods is very often the only source of information for emergency personnel – especially in developing countries. In these countries no written information, guide books or even data banks are available. Thus response actions are very often inefficient, and sometimes incorrect – as experience has shown. Because of financial constraints in those countries coded information in the future will be the most cost-effective means of hazard communication when dealing with dangerous goods transport accidents.

CTIF therefore wish to emphasize that it is the responsibility of UN bodies such as SCETDG to provide an efficient and effective marking system, not only for members of the transport and production chain, but also for emergency responders.

CTIF has therefore participated very actively in the GHS work within the ILO Working Group on Hazard Communication which acknowledged the emergency responders as a special target audience because of their special needs³.

CTIF kindly asks the SCETDG to consider in depth discussion of the issue of coded information within the next biennium.

¹ As defined in the GHS working definitions in document IOMC/ILO/HC4/99.7

² Reference is made to the discussions at the last session of the Sub-Committee on document ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/2002/28 and Add.1 and to para. 142 to 144 of the report ST/SG/AC.10/C.3/42.

³ **ST/SG/AC.10/C.4/2002/16/Add.1**

"1.4.3.5 Emergency responders

Emergency responders need information on a range of levels. To facilitate immediate responses, they need accurate, detailed and sufficiently clear information. This applies in the event of an accident during transportation, in storage facilities or at workplaces. Fire fighters and those first at the scene of an accident for example, need information that can be distinguished and interpreted at a distance. Such personnel are highly trained in the use of graphical and coded information. However, emergency responders also require more detailed information about hazards and response techniques, which they obtain from a range of sources. The information needs of medical personnel responsible for treating the victims of an accident or emergency may differ from those of fire fighters."