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**ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

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Geneva, 19-21 February 2008  
Item 5 of the provisional agenda

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE,  
THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL AND  
OTHER UNITED NATIONS BODIES AND CONFERENCES**

Note by the Secretariat

*Summary*

This document provides an overview of the matters arising from the sixty-second session of the Commission and the outcome of the high-level panel on “secure transport development: a key to regional cooperation” held in April 2007, and the recommendations of its Bureau for a possible follow-up to the above mentioned transport panel, of interest to the Committee.

It also presents an overview of two resolutions of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly pertaining to the cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC) and the Almaty Programme of Action and its mid-term review, adopted in October and December 2006, respectively, as well as the resolutions of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) on Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals, and on the Europe-Africa fixed link through the Strait of Gibraltar, adopted at its 2007 substantive session.

The Committee is invited to consider the proposed follow-up actions to the high-level panel on secure transport development and to take these resolutions into account when adopting its programme of work under agenda item 15.

**I. PROVISIONS OF INTEREST TO THE INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE  
ARISING FROM THE SIXTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE ECONOMIC  
COMMISSION FOR EUROPE**

**A. Introduction**

1. The sixty-second session of the Commission was held from 25 to 27 April 2007, marking the sixtieth anniversary of the UNECE.<sup>5</sup> (see Annual Report E/2007/37 - E/ECE/1448). This session of UNECE defines the overall direction of work of the organization. As decided in the context of the UNECE reform, Commission sessions are as of 2007, held biennially, while the UNECE Executive Committee meets several times annually to more closely monitor and guide the implementation of the UNECE programme of work.

2. In the “Declaration of the sixtieth anniversary of the UN Economic Commission for Europe”, adopted on 26 April 2007, member States “acknowledge achievements (...) in fostering cooperation and integration and reaffirm their commitment to support and strengthen the effective implementation of the organization’s mandate and to ensure its continued substantive relevance, greater visibility and improved transparency.” The Declaration recognizes that the UNECE is well positioned to contribute to addressing challenges the region is faced with, in terms of economic and institutional development, and environmental protection, through “further exercising its role as a multilateral platform which facilitates greater economic integration and cooperation among its fifty-six member States and which promotes sustainable development and economic prosperity”.

3. The Commission reaffirmed UNECE’s role in continuing to address the developmental and environmental goals laid down by the international community at the regional level. The work of the Sectoral Committees in this regard was recognized as forming “the major asset of the organization and constituting the basis for its intergovernmental work”, assisting countries through sectoral activities and technical cooperation, “thereby serving as a bridge and shaping experiences and best practices among member States”. B. Implementation of the UNECE reform

4. During its sixty-second session, the Economic Commission for Europe undertook an interim review of the UNECE reform, which will be formally reviewed at its next session in 2009, as stipulated by the Work Plan on UNECE reform. It was recognized that implementation of the reform had moved forward at a rapid pace. A new governance structure became fully operational with the institution of the Executive Committee. This Committee meets regularly to oversee the activities of the Sectoral Committees and the secretariat and monitor the implementation of the UNECE reform. Through the reform, UNECE refocused its programme of work, with well-defined priority areas, thus demonstrating that it has the capacity to respond to the evolving needs of member States and provide them with highly specialized services in recognized areas of expertise. The UNECE member States welcomed the report of the Executive Secretary on the Implementation of the Reform and invited the Executive Committee to develop further any issues which can contribute to the well functioning of the secretariat and the Sectoral Committees.

**C. High-level panel on “secure transport development: a key to regional cooperation”**

5. The discussion on Agenda item 8 “Promoting sustainable development in the ECE region: some decisive factors” was organized around the following three high-level panels: (a) Sustainable energy policies: the key to energy security, (b) Secure transport development: a key to regional cooperation, and (c) The economic of gender in the European economy.

6. Under the secure transport development: a key to regional cooperation panel, two keynote speakers and a large number of panellists emphasized the need for a coordinated development of transport links in the framework of appropriate mechanisms such as those the ECE has been promoting.

7. The panel recalled that the development of transport links is an indispensable precondition for the socio-economic development of countries as well as for regional cooperation and integration. However, the degree to which transport links are developed varies among countries and subregions of the ECE. In many ECE countries, transport links are insufficiently developed. The uneven progress in the development of transport links reflects a host of factors, including historical reasons, the political priorities of countries, their stage of economic development and level of economic prosperity, availability of financing, their openness to international economic cooperation and trade, their geographical location and proximity to major transport axes and trading routes. The panel also recalled that the development of transport links requires considerable financial outlays and over a long period. This makes it a complex exercise, requiring governments to strike a balance with other national priorities, weigh national versus international interests, ascertain the economic, social and environmental net benefits, coordinate programmes and timetables with neighboring countries, determine the degree of private versus public participation and weigh security considerations.

8. The meeting agreed that, while the development of international transport links is complex and long-term in nature, major requirements are that there be strong political and financial commitment at the national level as well as effective international mechanisms for cooperation and coordination of national strategies and approaches. The participants were informed of the institutional and financial mechanisms that the European Union and the European Investment Bank have put in place for the development of transport links in its Member States. They were also informed about the proposals the European Commission is making for the development of five trans-European transport axes that go beyond the EU territory. The meeting underlined the strategic importance of developing efficient and secure transport links in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe as well as Euro-Asian transport links, and stressed that the ECE Infrastructure Agreements define the long-term pan-European and Euro-Asian transport networks.

9. The panel noted that, in order to coordinate the development of these networks, a number of Central, East and South-East European countries had established, under ECE auspices, two subregional cooperation frameworks, namely the Trans-European Motorway (TEM) and Trans-European Railway (TER) Projects. In this respect, the panel stressed the importance of the TEM and TER Master Plan, which was elaborated with ECE support and with the participation of 21 Central, East and South-East European countries, and which has identified priority transport links and priority projects. With regard to the development Euro-Asian transport links, the meeting underlined the usefulness of the inter-country cooperation promoted by ECE, jointly

with ESCAP, which has also led to the identification of priority Euro-Asian routes as well as the evaluation and prioritization of a large number of projects.

10. The meeting brought to the fore that the development of transport links is not only about infrastructure. It also requires efficient border crossings, harmonized transport regulations, greater interoperability of rail systems, a higher level of safety and security and greater convergence of transport policies and strategies.

11. In conclusion, the panel agreed that the ECE work on TEM and TER as well as on Euro-Asian links have been instrumental in focusing attention and promoting the development of transport links in the subregions concerned. Both ECE exercises have provided robust and tangible results in all those areas, from which the countries concerned but also the European Union and International Financial Institutions could benefit.

12. In looking forward, the meeting agreed that this work needs to be strengthened and practical steps taken to facilitate the further development of the priority transport links and priority projects that have been identified. Finally, the meeting agreed to invite the European Commission and the European Investment Bank to consider incorporating the results of the TEM and TER Master Plan and of the Euro-Asian Transport Links Project into their future work and supporting their implementation, in close cooperation with ECE, for the benefit of all ECE member countries.

**D. Possible follow-up to the high-level panel on “secure transport development: a key to regional cooperation” proposed by the secretariat**

13. The following proposals for a possible follow-up to panel on “Secure transport development: a key to regional cooperation”, held in the framework of the 62<sup>nd</sup> ECE session on 27 April 2007, prepared by the secretariat, were submitted to the ITC Bureau for consideration at its June 2007 meeting.

a) The development of efficient, secure and integrated transport links in Eastern and South-eastern Europe as well as between Europe and Asia is a key for the socio-economic development of the member countries concerned as well as for regional cooperation and integration. ECE work on TEM and TER as well as on Euro-Asian links has been instrumental in promoting the coordinated development of transport links in those countries. This work needs to be strengthened and practical steps taken to facilitate the further development of the priority transport links and priority projects that have been identified.

b) The European Commission and European Investment Bank are invited to consider taking the results of this work better into account in their future work and supporting the implementation of the TEM and TER Master Plan and of the Euro-Asian Transport Links Project, in close cooperation with ECE, for the benefit of all ECE member countries.

14. On this basis, the following practical steps could be considered:

- (i) Invite Member States participating in the TEM and TER Projects to strengthen their involvement in the Projects' activities, in particular, in the implementation of the TEM and TER Master Plan and its monitoring, as well as in its overall review, which will take place in 2008;
- (ii) Invite all interested Member States that are not yet full participants in the TEM and TER Projects to sign the relevant UN Trust Fund Cooperation Agreements;
- (iii) Invite Member States in the Euro-Asian region to strengthen their cooperation under (joint) ECE (and ESCAP) auspices towards the development of Euro-Asian transport links;
- (iv) Invite all potential donors to consider providing financial support to the establishment and operation of a permanent mechanism for cooperation among countries in the Euro-Asian region for the further development of Euro-Asian transport links;
- (v) Invite interested Member States to consider organizing a Euro-Asian Ministerial Transport Conference to endorse the results of the work carried out so far on Euro-Asian transport links and provide impetus to the further development of those links;
- (vi) Invite Member States, the European Commission and the European Investment Bank to take into account the results of the TEM and TER Master Plan and of the joint ECE-ESCAP work on Euro-Asian transport links in their future work and to consider providing technical and financial support to their implementation, monitoring and review;
- (vii) Consider ways and means of strengthening its support to the implementation of the TEM and TER Master Plan and to the development of Euro-Asian transport links and ask the Executive Committee to also strengthen its support to these activities.

15. The ITC Bureau considered the above proposals and recommended to the Committee to endorse them. The Committee may wish to consider the matter and provide guidance to the secretariat.

## **II. GENERAL ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS**

### **A. Cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation organizations**

16. The Committee may wish to note that at its sixty-first session, held in New York, 20 October 2006, the General Assembly adopted the resolution on the cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization 61/4.

17. With its resolution 61/4, the General Assembly, recalling the report of the Secretary-General submitted to it *welcomes* the activities of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization aimed at strengthening regional cooperation in various fields, including transport;

*Encourages* the activities of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization aimed at the elaboration and realization of specific joint regional projects, particularly in the field of transport and energy infrastructure; *takes note* of the cooperation established between the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization and other regional organizations and initiatives; *invites* the Secretary-General to strengthen dialogue with the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization with a view to promoting cooperation and coordination between the two secretariats; *invites* the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system to cooperate with the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization in order to continue programmes with the Organization and its associated institutions for the achievement of their objectives.

18. The Committee may wish to recall that by its resolution 54/5 of 8 October 1999, the general Assembly granted observer status to the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization and that by its resolutions 55/211 of 20 December 2000, 57/34 of 21 November 2002 and 59/259 of 23 December 2004, invited the Secretary-General and the United Nations Regional Commissions, the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations system to strengthen dialogue and cooperation with the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization.

19. The Committee may also wish to note that in the relevant report of the General-Secretary to the General Assembly on the UNECE and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization in the field of transport, the following elements are included: “ECE assisted in the process of harmonization of national transport legislation of the BSEC member States on the basis of their accession to and implementation of the main ECE legal instruments on transport. ECE contributed to the coordinated development of transport infrastructure in the BSEC region through the elaboration of the ECE Trans-European Motorway (TEM) and Trans-European Railway (TER) Projects’ Master Plan. In particular, the TEM and TER Master Plan identified the backbone road and rail networks and evaluated and prioritized a large number of transport infrastructure projects in 21 Central, Eastern and South-Eastern European countries, 9 of which are BSEC member countries, and elaborated a realistic investment strategy to gradually develop those networks. ECE has also assisted in the development of Euro-Asian transport links, including through the BSEC region. In close cooperation with the BSEC Transport Working Group, a large number of data on major Black Sea and Mediterranean ports of Euro-Asian importance have been collected and processed, which served as an input to the further development of the ECE-ESCAP joint Euro-Asian transport links project. The ECE has participated in the semi-annual meetings of the meetings of Ministers of Transport of BSEC member States”.

## **B. The Almaty Programme of Action: mid-term review**

20. The Committee may wish to note that at its sixty-first session, held in New York, 20 December 2006 the General Assembly adopted the resolution 61/212 concerning holding a midterm review meeting of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2008.

21. The resolution calls upon the relevant organizations of the United Nations system, including the regional commissions, to integrate the Almaty Programme of Action into their programmes of work. It also encourages them to continue support the landlocked and transit developing countries.

22. The resolution decides to hold a midterm review of the Almaty Programme of Action in 2008. The review should be supported by the regional commissions within their respective mandates.

### **III. SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF 2007 OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

23. The Committee may wish to note that the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) adopted, at its 2007 substantive session (New York, 2 to 27 July 2007), resolution 2007/6 on the work of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals. It is recalled that the Committee of Experts is a subsidiary body of the Council, serviced by the UNECE secretariat. ECOSOC adopted also resolution 2007/16 on “Europe-Africa fixed link through the Strait of Gibraltar”.

24. With regard to Part A of resolution 2007/6, operative paragraph 2(a) and to Part B, operative paragraph 3(a), the Committee may wish to note that the new and amended recommendations on the transport of dangerous goods, and the amendments to the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) have been issued as documents ST/SG/AC.10/34/Add.1 and -/Add.1/Corr.1, -/Add.2 and -/Add.2/Corr.1 and -/Add.3 and -/Add.3/Corr.1 in all United Nations official languages.

25. With regard to the request in Part A, operative paragraphs 2(b) and (c) and Part B, operative paragraph 3(b), the Committee may wish to note that the 15<sup>th</sup> revised edition of the Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, Model Regulations, Amendment 2 to the fourth revised edition of the Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods, Manual of Tests and Criteria, and the second revised edition of the GHS have already been published in English and French, and the Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish versions should be available by the end of 2007.

26. In Part A, operative paragraph 4, the Council invited, *inter alia*, all interested Governments and regional commissions to take into account, when developing or updating appropriate codes and regulations, the recommendations of the Committee. The Committee may wish to note, in this respect, that the new recommendations have already been taken into account by the Working Party on the Transport of Dangerous Goods when preparing the set of draft amendments to the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR), the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Inland Waterway (ADN) and the Regulations concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail (RID), which are expected to enter into force on 1 January 2009.

27. Attention is also drawn to operative paragraph 5 of Part A, which requests the Committee of Experts to study (in consultation, *inter alia*, with regional commissions) the possibilities of improving the implementation of the UN Model Regulations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods. In Europe, ADR, RID and ADN are regularly updated and kept in line with the UN Model Regulations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods. Nevertheless, 14 out of the 56 UNECE Member States are still not parties to ADR, 22 are not parties to RID. Member States which are not parties to the COTIF are often parties to the SMGS and apply its Annex 2, rather than RID, to regulate rail transport of dangerous goods. Although work is going on to bring Annex 2 of SMGS in line with RID, this harmonization has not yet been achieved. The entry into force of ADN is expected for 2008. The number of Contracting Parties has reached 7.

A new European directive is under preparation which will make the application of the ADN provisions mandatory for domestic traffic in EU countries on relevant inland waterways. Although all Member States of the European Union have also to apply the requirements of ADR and RID to domestic traffic, this is not always the case in other UNECE countries, and even though some of these other Member States are known to apply most of the provisions of the UN Model Regulations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods to domestic transport, this is not done systematically or simultaneously and, therefore, there are still difficulties in international transport, in particular multimodal transport. The Committee may wish to provide comments on this request for cooperation.

AnnexDECLARATION AND LIST OF RESOLUTIONS REFERRED TO  
IN THE PRESENT DOCUMENT

Declaration for the Sixtieth Anniversary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (E/ECE/2007/37 – E/ECE/1448).

- 61/4 General Assembly Resolution on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, adopted at its sixty-first session (A/RES/61/4).
- 61/212 General Assembly Resolution on Groups of countries in special situations: specific actions related to the particular needs and problems of landlocked developing countries: outcome of the International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, adopted at its sixty-first session (A/RES/61/212).
- 2007/6 Resolutions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council on the Work of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (E/2007/INF/2/Add.1, pages. 18-23).
- 2007/16 Resolutions of the United Nations Economic and Social Council Europe-Africa fixed link through the Strait of Gibraltar (E/2007/INF/2/Add.1, pages. 49-51).

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