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Working Party on Rail Transport

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Item 16 (c) of the provisional agenda

Programme of work, biennial evaluation and terms of reference of the Working Party

Terms of reference

Note by the secretariat

I. Mandate

1. The guidelines for the establishment and functioning of Working Parties within UNECE stipulate that each Working Party prepares its terms of reference which must be adopted by its parent Sectoral Committee (ECE/EX/1, para. 3 (a)).
2. In accordance with this request, the Working Party on Rail Transport (hereafter SC.2) may wish to consider and adopt its terms of reference on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat.
3. This draft is based on the SC.2 programme of work for 2010–2014 and the main expected accomplishment and indicators of achievement for 2010–2011, as adopted by the sixty-third session of the Working Party in November 2009 (ECE/TRANS/SC.2/2009/5 and ECE/TRANS/SC.2/212, para. 20) and approved by the Inland Transport Committee at its seventy-second session in February 2010 (ECE/TRANS/208 and Corr.1).

II. Terms of reference of the Working Party on Rail Transport

4. The Working Party on Rail Transport will act within the framework of the policies of the United Nations and the Economic Commission for Europe (hereafter UNECE) and under the general supervision of the Inland Transport Committee (hereafter ITC) and in conformity with the Terms of Reference of UNECE (E/ECE/778/Rev.4).
5. SC.2 will operate in accordance with the Guidelines for the establishment and functioning of Working Parties within UNECE as approved by the UNECE Executive Committee at its fourth meeting on 14 July 2006 (ECE/EX/1). These guidelines refer to its

status and characteristics, including the review of its mandate and extension every five years, its membership and officers, its methods of work and its secretariat provided by the UNECE Transport Division.

6. In line with the objective of the UNECE transport subprogramme to facilitate the international movement of persons and goods by inland transport modes and improve safety, environmental protection, energy efficiency and security in the transport sector to levels that contribute effectively to sustainable transport, SC.2 will carry out the following activities:

(a) Update and extend the geographical scope of the European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC) network, increase the number of contracting parties to the AGC agreement, consider the AGC Agreement with a view to possibly implementing and, whenever feasible, improving existing standards and operational parameters including railway connections to seaports; review the coherence between the AGC parameters and infrastructure standards established within the European Union (EU) with a view to harmonizing them as appropriate.

(b) Improve intermodal coordination and integration of railway with other transport modes with a view to contributing to the development of pan-European sustainable transport systems taking into account the interrelationship of the UNECE E-Networks;

(c) Follow-up the developments of the UNECE Trans European Railway (TER) Project, and explore further interaction between TER activities and that of SC.2;

(d) Evaluate, study and review Euro-Asian rail traffic trends, developments and opportunities and explore possibilities for further contribution to and interaction with the Euro-Asian Transport linkages (EATL) project;

(e) Facilitate international rail transport in the pan-European region through improved border crossing procedures and harmonization of technical specifications of different railway systems and their operations at borders;

(f) Support the implementation of expert group programmes and task forces as established by the Working Party and the Inland Transport Committee and review rail market trends, needs and challenges through the establishment of ad hoc expert groups and the elaboration of studies, as appropriate;

(g) Develop, improve and maintain constantly updated online tools, such as the web tool developed to monitor the AGC and the European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) network and its infrastructure standards;

(h) Monitor developments on the pan-European Rail Transport Corridors in cooperation with the European Commission;

(i) Review general trends in rail transport developments and rail transport policy, analyse specific rail transport economic issues, assist in the collection, compilation and dissemination of rail transport statistics, in cooperation with the Working Party on Transport Statistics (WP.6), other governmental and non-governmental organizations, expert groups and task forces and prepare reports, reviews and publications concerning rail transport development and best practices.

7. SC.2 will promote and provide technical cooperation and capacity-building in the field of rail transport.

8. SC.2 will encourage participation in its activities by fostering cooperation and collaboration with the European Commission, intergovernmental and non-governmental

organizations and other United Nations regional commissions and organizations or bodies of the United Nations system;

9. SC.2 will collaborate closely with other subsidiary bodies of ITC and other UNECE body on matters of common interest.
