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Item 5 (c) of the provisional agenda

Strategic questions of a modal and thematic nature:

Road safety

Japan's request to become a full participant with voting rights in the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety of the Inland Transport Committee

Submitted by the Government of Japan¹

1. Due to the recent trend of globalization and the rapid development of related technologies, the Government of Japan recognizes that the issue of road traffic safety requires more and more international coordination and cooperation among countries regarding their policies.
2. Japan understands that the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is now going beyond the geographical scope of its member States in its aim of achieving road traffic safety at the global level, and that the Working Party on Road Traffic Safety (WP.1) is set to play a very important role as the main platform for coordination of such efforts.
3. In fact, WP.1 is already playing an important role, and it is for this reason that Japan has attended the last three sessions of WP.1. However, unfortunately, our participation has been on a limited basis, and now Japan sincerely hopes that we can participate in, and contribute to, the discussion at WP.1 as a full participant with voting rights.
4. For example, substantial discussion has been taking place at WP.1 on the amendment to the 1968 Vienna Convention and to the 1949 Geneva Convention in the context of introducing automated driving. Not only because Japan is a Contracting Party to the Geneva Convention, but also because automated driving is one of the highest-priority issues in the field of economic and social policy in Japan, it is essential for us to join this discussion at WP.1 as a full participant.

¹ on 12 November 2015, on the occasion of the seventy-eighth session of ITC.

5. In addition, WP.1 is dealing with other important issues related to road traffic safety. Japan is committed to continuously participating in the activities of WP.1 with full status. If this can be achieved, Japan firmly believes that we can greatly contribute to WP.1 by sharing our knowledge of, and experience in, road traffic safety, including that in the area of Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS).

6. In relation to this point, Japan would like to refer to the following excerpt from paragraph 2 of “Guidelines for the Establishment and Functioning of Working Parties within UNECE” set out by the Executive Committee of UNECE (document reference ECE/EX/1) as of 9 October 2006.

“2. Membership and Officers

Working Parties are open for participation by all UNECE member States. Non-UNECE member States can participate as observers or, if agreed by the parent Sectoral Committee, as full members. (excerpt)”

7. At the seventy-first session of WP.1 held in October 2015, WP.1 unanimously endorsed Japan’s request to become a full WP.1 participant with voting rights by citing the above-mentioned guidelines and agreed to support Japan at the next ITC session based on Japan’s official request at the ITC (ECE/TRANS/WP.1/151).

8. At the seventy-eighth session of ITC, the Government of Japan would like to formally request that the Committee consider Japan’s request to become a full WP.1 participant with voting rights and subsequently agree to it.

9. The Government of Japan would like to seek the valuable support of the UNECE member States and the ITC secretariat for this request.
