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Ninth session

Geneva, 11–12 April 2016

Report of the Group of Experts on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for Transport Networks and Nodes on its ninth session

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I. Attendance

1. The Group of Experts (hereafter called the Group) on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for Transport Networks and Nodes held its ninth session from 11 to 12 April 2016.
2. Representatives of the following United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) member States participated: Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain.
3. Representatives of the following United Nations organizations and specialized agencies attended the meeting: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and World Meteorological Organization (WMO).
4. The following non-governmental organization was represented: International Union of Railways (UIC).
5. Representatives of the following bodies attended the meeting at the invitation of the secretariat: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Institute for Ubiquitous Meteorology (UBIMET), Federal Highway Research Institute (BAST) and University of the Aegean.

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.5/GE.3/17

6. The Group adopted the agenda.

III. Climate Change and Transport Networks and Nodes: Presentations of initiatives at national and international levels (agenda item 2)

Documentation: Informal Document 1

7. The Group considered presentation made by the external consultant (Informal document No. 1) on an overview of recent climate change trends and projections affecting transportation in the ECE region which will be the first chapter of Group's report. Since the document was not distributed well before the meeting, the discussions were limited on the exchange of views and on some comments concerning geographical coverage, the sources of relevant data as well as the structure and the format of the document. The Group was informed by the secretariat that the document will be submitted as formal document for the next session of the Group in July in order for the experts to have more time to review it and provide more concrete comments.

8. In general, the Group appreciated the work done by the external consultant on the review of the scientific background and existing literature contained in Informal document No. 1 and took note of the following information:

(a) Review of Climate Change trends including temperature and precipitation, sea level, arctic ice, snow and permafrost, extreme climate events, the climate in the last 5 year period and forcing mechanisms;

(b) Review of recent climate Change projections including temperature and precipitation, sea level, arctic ice, snow and permafrost as well as extreme events;

9. Furthermore, the Group was informed by its members about related initiatives at national and international levels.

(a) Mr. Martin Klose (BAST) presented the landslide losses for European road networks: an integrated cost and risk assessment.

(b) Dr. Nicolaos P. Theodossiou (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki) presented the impacts of extreme rainfall to transport networks;

10. The Group appreciated the presentations made by the experts on initiatives at national and international levels on climate change impacts and adaptation for transport networks and nodes. Considering these initiatives as very useful for the future work of the Group, the experts requested the secretariat and the consultant to include these initiatives in the final report of the Group as among the existing national/international case studies and possible best practices. The presentations can be found at the following link: http://www.unece.org/trans/main/wp5/wp5_ge3_09.html.

IV. Partners and expected contributions (agenda item 3)

11. The Group recalled that at its first and second sessions, discussed potential partners for possible collaboration. The Group was informed by the secretariat on its efforts to establish collaboration with different relevant UN bodies such as the UNFCCC, the WMO, the Trans-European Motorways (TEM), Trans-European Railways (TER) and Euro-Asian transport Links (EATL) projects.

12. Mr. Paul Bridge (WMO) informed the Group about WMO's initiatives and possible contribution to Group's work. Mr. Bridge provided an overview of WMO's ad hoc expert team towards seamless integration of meteorological service delivery in support of multimodal surface transport. He also provided information on projections for temperature, mean sea level rise, precipitation and wind. Furthermore, he pointed out that WMO can contribute to Group's work mainly with the provision of sufficient data regarding projections of climatic factors. A WMO representative specialized on such data will attend the meeting of the Group in July in order to present data available.

13. Furthermore, Mr. William Kojo Agyemang-Bonsu (UNFCCC) provided information on UNFCCC secretariat's work, projects and initiatives. Furthermore he informed the Group about the National adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs) which could eventually contribute to Group's work. However, the representative of UNFCCC secretariat pointed out that transport infrastructure is not being addressed by NAPAs. It was agreed that collaboration between the Group and UNFCCC secretariat should strengthen and some case studies should be prepared and presented by the UNFCCC secretariat at the next session of the Group in July.

14. Mrs. Regina Assariotis (UNCTAD) provided information on different initiatives of the secretariat that would eventually contribute to the Group's program of work, including in particular an UNCTAD technical assistance project on climate change impacts and adaptation for coastal transport infrastructure in Caribbean SIDS. The project builds on the secretariat's earlier work in the field, since 2008. The Group welcomed the information provided by UNCTAD secretariat and asked to report developments on these initiatives at its next session.

15. Mr. Stefan Eisenbach, (UBIMET) provided information on Institute's 10 years research and development on rail weather forecast and alarm systems. He pointed out that their efforts and technological solutions intend to increase safety, network availability and efficiency as well as reductions of costs and reliable winter operations.

16. Mr. Andrea Braschi (UIC) presented a case study from railways undertakings, this of Network Rail, on technical measures taken in order to adapt their infrastructure to climate change impacts.

V. Discussions on the structure of the final report of the Group of Experts (agenda item 4)

17. The Group recalled that at its previous session, following an exchange of views on the possible structure of its final report and on the questionnaire that it should be distributed in order to collect all relevant data and information, approved as amended both the structure of the report and the questionnaire. The Group requested the secretariat to send the questionnaire to Group's focal points in order for them to start collecting the relevant information.

18. The secretariat informed the Group that the questionnaire has been sent to all focal points by electronic message. Furthermore, a letter was prepared to be sent at Ministries of Transport of those focal points that requested so or of those Governments that did not nominate focal points for the Group. Also, the questionnaire was uploaded on Group's web site at the following link: http://www.unece.org/trans/main/wp5/climate_change_questionnaire_2016.html.

VI. Other business (agenda item 5)

19. There were no other items.

VII. Date of next session (agenda item 6)

20. The Group of Experts tenth session is tentatively scheduled to take place in Geneva on 7–8 July 2016.

VIII. Summary of main decisions (agenda item 7)

21. The Group adopted its main decisions of its ninth session and requested the secretariat and the Chair to prepare the full and complete report to be circulated to the members of the Group for comments on items other than those contained in its main decisions.
