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Economic Commission for Europe**Inland Transport Committee****Working Party on Inland Water Transport****Working Party on the Standardization of Technical
and Safety Requirements in Inland Navigation****Fifty-second session**

Geneva, 14-16 February 2018

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

**Third meeting of the ad hoc group for the preparation
of the Global Conference on Inland Water Transport****Draft ministerial declaration of the International Conference
on Inland Waterway Transport****Note by the secretariat****Mandate**

1. This document is submitted in line with cluster 5: Inland Waterway Transport, paragraph 5.1 of the programme of work 2018-2019 (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/2017/24) to be adopted by the Inland Transport Committee at its eightieth session (20-23 February 2018).
2. At its sixty-first session, the Working Party on Inland Water Transport (SC.3) took note of the “zero” draft ministerial declaration of the International Waterway Transport (Wrocław (Poland), 18-19 April 2018) (Informal document SC.3 No. 5 (2017)). SC.3 asked member States and other stakeholders to send written proposals and amendments to the secretariat. The secretariat was asked to prepare the first draft and to circulate it to member States (ECE/TRANS/SC.3/205, paras. 60-70).
3. The first draft of the Ministerial Declaration, as amended following the proposals from Austria, Belgium, Croatia, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, the Danube Commission and the International Sava River Basin Commission, is represented in the annex. Belarus and Czechia had no comments to the draft. The summary of the comments is represented in Informal document SC.3/WP.3 No. 3 (2018).

Annex

Draft ministerial declaration of the International Conference on Inland Waterway Transport

Wrocław, Poland, 18-19 April 2018

First draft

Preamble

We, the Ministers of all countries having a vested interest in inland waterway transport and representatives of international organizations and observers, meeting at the International Conference on Inland Waterway Transport in Wrocław, Poland, on 18 April 2018,

Reaffirming the commitment to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals relevant to inland water transport to ensure its safety, accessibility, affordability and links with energy and the environment;

Recognizing the importance of international high-level events for the promotion of inland water transport at the international level, such as: the Pan-European Ministerial Conference held on 11 September 1991 in Budapest, the Pan-European Conference on inland waterway transport held on 5 and 6 September 2001 in Rotterdam (Netherlands), the pan-European Conference on inland waterway transport (Bucharest, 13-14 September 2006) “Inland navigation: A key element of the future pan-European transport system” and the International High-Level Conference on inland water transport held on 22 February 2017 in Geneva,

Recognizing the advantages of inland water transport as a significant part of a balanced transport system including its intrinsic economies of scale, safety, efficiency in terms of energy and costs, low emissions and congestion, contribution to reducing transport and logistics costs,

Emphasizing the role of inland water transport for the sustainable functioning of national transport and cross border systems and its contribution to social and economic development, in particular, for landlocked regions and regions with inadequate or missing road and rail network,

Appreciating the ongoing work on the establishment of a sustainable transport system in the pan-European region by member States and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, international projects on eliminating administrative barriers, the rehabilitation of the fairway of international rivers, removing bottlenecks on waterways, national transport strategies and projects aimed at the development of inland water transport infrastructure,

Conscious that common challenges in the sector, such as the need to integrate inland water transport into multimodal transport chains and to adopt efficient financial and economic measures to support inland water transport, and the desirability of reducing the administrative burden, unification of technical and safety standards and combatting climate change, should be addressed at the international level through policy dialogue and the exchange of technologies, views and good practices,

Emphasizing the role of the human factor in inland navigation, ensuring adequate competencies and skills for navigation safety and *calling for* combining efforts on making the sector more attractive for inland water transport workers,

Keeping in mind the links between inland water transport and multimodal terminals, deep-sea shipping and other modes of transport,

Acknowledging the role of modern technologies, innovations and digitalization in ensuring navigation safety and better logistics integration,

Recognizing the need for joining forces to extract the significant, still untapped, potential of the sector and, therefore, significant political support at the highest level,

Convinced that the outcome of this Conference should bring practical value for all key players of the sector in terms of safety, environmental aspect and benefits for the economy,

Hereby *endorse* the following objectives and actions and invite governments and international organizations to develop action plans for their implementation:

(a) To put efforts on fostering the role of inland water transport as safe, high-quality and accessible to all, ecologically sound, economically efficient and a significant contributor to local, national and international development by ensuring the appropriate balance among all transport modes, streamlining cargo and passenger flows and promoting the multimodality;

(b) To address the challenges of sustainable development of mobility with reference to inland water transport, particularly within the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, by supporting intergovernmental transport and transport-related multi-disciplinary cooperation and by placing due emphasis on the importance of mobilizing resources and aligning financing flows with sustainable development objectives;

(c) To encourage investment in the sector aimed at modernizing the inland waterway infrastructure, the fleet and ports as well as fostering innovation to increase the appeal of inland water transport and ensuring that it is resilient to climate change, and using benefits of new and alternative fuels, undertaking measures for that;

(d) To take the necessary steps to promote the attractiveness of the sector to the market and increasing its competitiveness and to include these issues in national transport strategies and monitor the progress at the national level.

Strategic actions to pursue based on these objectives

Building up a solid regulatory framework aimed at increasing the efficiency of inland water transport

1. Ministers recognize that the United Nations international conventions relevant to inland water transport are effective tools for establishing a regulatory framework for inland navigation, developing modern and resilient infrastructure and a solid basis for eliminating administrative bottlenecks.
2. Ministers recognize the importance of bilateral and multilateral treaties and agreements for the development of navigation on transboundary rivers and lakes of international importance, in particular, for landlocked countries.
3. Ministers encourage efforts to harmonize, develop and/or update the existing regulatory basis within the framework of the United Nations Economic Commission for

Europe with the aim to ensure adequate safety, environmental safety and security on inland water transport.

4. Ministers support harmonizing and building up a solid and harmonized regulatory framework under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe for the development of navigation on transboundary waterways and integration of inland water transport in transport chains. Ministers welcome the exchange of good practices and maintaining a policy dialogue on this issue aimed at increasing the efficiency of inland water transport.

Ensuring the appropriate balance among all transport modes, streamlining cargo flows and promoting the multimodality

5. Ministers recognize that inland water transport due to its advantages such as safety, efficiency in terms of energy and costs, low emissions and congestion, is competitive with other inland transport modes.

6. Ministers recognize a strong need for ensuring the appropriate balance among all transport modes and therefore encourage elaborating recommendations on streamlining cargo flows at the international level.

7. Ministers agree to set out the national development targets aimed at ensuring that full capacities of the inland waterway system are used and facilitating the increase of the modal share of inland water transport.

8. Ministers invite governments and international organizations to facilitate free movement of cargo and passenger flows on inland waterways, in particular:

Ministers welcome efforts aiming to ensure that the rivers of international importance are fully integrated into international transport corridors.

9. Ministers emphasize the role of international agreements and legislation in the field of infrastructure for the coordinated development of all transport modes.

10. Ministers agree to undertake and coordinate measures to facilitate integration of inland water transport in multimodal transport and logistics chains.

11. Ministers acknowledge the role of inland water transport as an urban transport mode contributing to balance urban air pollution and connecting cities with suburban areas.

Encouraging the construction of new vessels and fostering innovations

12. Ministers acknowledge that modernization of inland fleet is of major importance for the navigation safety, efficiency and environmental safety. Ministers call upon the sector to put efforts on creating new types of vessels, the harmonization of standards, introducing innovations and modern technologies for ensuring safety, minimizing the risk of accidents, environmental impact and combatting climate change, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions from inland vessels, through the introduction of new and alternative fuels and refuelling infrastructure.

13. Ministers recognize the need for the modernization of inland navigation fleet. Ministers encourage efforts aimed at creating favourable financial and economic regimes to encourage the construction of new vessels and support the exchange of good practices on this issue.

14. Ministers recognize that the development of digital technologies and data exchange, River Information Services, Vessel Traffic Services and the traffic management on inland waterways, the digitalization and other opportunities given by new technologies is a significant step forward to a sustainable and efficient transport mode and invite

governments and international organizations to promote its cross-border harmonized development.

Building the inland waterway infrastructure resilient to climate changes

15. Ministers agree that immediate actions should be undertaken to ensure the resilience of the sector to climate changes. To this end, Ministers support the work on determining the climate trends affecting navigation to allow the planning of business activities for longer periods.

16. Ministers welcome the initiatives by Governments on the fairway maintenance and rehabilitation plans of international rivers and invite other river basins to consider the experience of River Commissions.

17. Ministers encourage activities aimed at minimizing the impact on the environment of navigation. Ministers invite governments, international organizations and the private sector to contribute to this issue.

Promoting the attractiveness of the sector to the market and increasing its competitiveness

18. Ministers call upon the sector to improve the quality of transport services in terms of availability, safety, reliability and other needs of transport users.

19. Ministers recognize the need for stronger support from the state and representation of the interests of the sector at the public and private levels. Ministers call upon to join efforts to achieve this.

20. Ministers welcome efforts to more actively engage the private sector in ongoing projects aimed at the development of inland waterways.

21. Ministers recognize the need to improve the quality of education and training and to join efforts to make the profession more attractive and future-proof through improving working and social conditions.

22. Ministers acknowledge the contribution of the recognition of crew certificates and vessel documents for eliminating barriers and improving mobility of vessels and crews and welcome efforts to promote this.

23. Ministers propose to consider a possibility of setting up a Global knowledge centre on inland water transport (provided that it is equally accessible for all member States) as a facility allowing the exchange of information on issues of common interest, relevant to most of the countries possessing navigable waterways, capturing good practices and lessons learned.

24. Ministers encourage measures aimed at using modern technologies and Geographic Information System applications to increase inland water transport safety.

Implementation

25. Ministers encourage Governments including governmental executive bodies, the private sector, associations and academia, to maintain policy dialogue on good practices and measures relevant to the implementation of the objectives under the aegis of the Inland Transport Committee of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe with the aim of ensuring that the development of Inland Water Transport is pursued in an internationally harmonized manner. Ministers invite regional integration organizations, United Nations Regional Commissions, River Commissions, international and public organizations, international financial institutions, and academia to contribute to the dialogue.

26. Ministers invite governments and international organizations to develop action plans and allocate funding for the implementation of these objectives and strategic actions.

27. Ministers invite countries to support the unification of documents on freight and passenger transport statistics and the development of transport statistics on inland water transport relevant to qualitative and quantitative indicators of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in order to support effective decision making at national and international level in the sector.

28. The Ministers invite the secretariat of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe to prepare a report on progress achieved in relation to these objectives to be presented at a subsequent international conference on Inland Water Transport to be held in 2023.
