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**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

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**Mapping of the reach of UNECE products**

## **Norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE: A mapping of the status quo and opportunities for a broader reach**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Over the nearly seventy years of its history, the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) has focused on improving economic cooperation and integration among its member States via technical assistance and the development of norms, standards, conventions and guidelines. The wealth of knowledge generated by UNECE benefits its member States and in many cases reaches well beyond the region. This has been welcomed by member States: “The Economic Commission for Europe [...] welcomes the global outreach of ECE’s instruments, norms, standards and activities for the benefit of other countries and regions that underlines the importance of further improving and streamlining the already close cooperation and relations between ECE and other partners in the region.”<sup>1</sup>
2. In April 2016, the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) published an evaluation of “the relevance and effectiveness of UNECE work, and the extent to which it is prepared to support member States in the post-2015 development agenda” (IED-16-003; also published as EXCOM, 2016/33). As one of its findings, OIOS observed that “UNECE lacks a common understanding and clear strategy on its global reach beyond its regional role.” (p.17, finding E). Briefly assessing the status quo, the evaluation pointed out that “numerous UNECE conventions, norms and standards are global”<sup>2</sup>. In addition, it noted that non-UNECE member States participate in some UNECE sectoral committees and its subsidiary bodies. It also highlighted that UNECE engaged in some capacity building and technical cooperation in non-UNECE countries.
3. OIOS concluded that “the extent and nature of UNECE’s global work have not been deliberate” and that there was “no formal document discussing in which areas and to what degree UNECE should pursue the globalization of its work” (para 43). In this context, and in light of the opportunities presented by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, OIOS made the following recommendation:

The UNECE secretariat should develop a proposal for presentation to the EXCOM which explores the nature of its global focus, including both possible advantages and disadvantages to extending its worldwide reach. Given that a large proportion of UNECE’s products are currently being used by a global audience, this proposal will facilitate discussion among member States regarding a strategic long-term vision for UNECE’s regional and global role. The proposal should explore resource mobilization and partnership alternatives that will allow UNECE to adequately respond in the future to global demands.

4. At its 85<sup>th</sup> meeting on 20 June 2016, EXCOM deliberated on this recommendation. Delegates called for a prudent approach to exploring opportunities for further extending the reach of UNECE products and services. They acknowledged that the wide adoption of UNECE products outside the region was a testament to their quality and brought benefits to UNECE countries as

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<sup>1</sup> Decision A64 (E/2011/37, chapter IV, op 5)

<sup>2</sup> OIOS deemed conventions global if they were acceded to or used by at least one non-UNECE country.

well. However, they also noted that widening the availability of UNECE products could require additional resources to support implementation in non-UNECE countries. Another factor mentioned was the potential impact on the organization's regional mandate. In conclusion, "EXCOM encouraged ECE to work towards the implementation of the recommendations in close consultation with ECE member States"<sup>3</sup>.

5. The objective of this paper is to map the geographic reach of norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE, focusing in particular on those used outside the UNECE region. Accompanying analysis explores opportunities for and constraints to broadening the geographic reach of norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE, in order to inform strategic discussions among member States on the issue.

## II. THE REACH OF UNECE PRODUCTS

6. The 2015 Compendium of Legal Instruments, Norms and Standards<sup>4</sup> lists UNECE products developed by the eight subprogrammes (Environment; Transport; Statistics; Economic cooperation and integration; Sustainable energy; Trade; Forestry and timber; Housing, land management and population.) The availability of such products to member States outside the UNECE region varies greatly across subprogrammes and types of product:
  - a) A relatively small portion of products was, from the outset, developed with a global audience in mind. Depending on the respective mandate, these products are under the purview of either an ECOSOC or an UNECE subsidiary body.
  - b) Other UNECE products were developed without a specific global scope, and gained a broader reach when their relevance and usefulness were recognized outside the region and by global UN bodies – this often occurs when member States endorse these products at the UNECE sectoral committees or the Commission and propose that the relevant global UN bodies recommend their use worldwide.
  - c) A third category encompasses products whose use is specifically limited to UNECE member States.
  - d) Finally, there are UNECE public goods such as guidelines, recommendations and standards, which all countries are free to use. A number of UNECE products fall under this category.

### a) GLOBAL SCOPE FROM THE BEGINNING:

#### Under the purview of an ECOSOC subsidiary body:

7. Transport subprogramme: The UNECE Transport division services the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals of the Economic and Social Council.<sup>5</sup> This Committee is the custodian of the United Nations Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals. These ECOSOC-mandated products are developed by experts from all regions, addressed to all UN Member States, and widely applied around the world.

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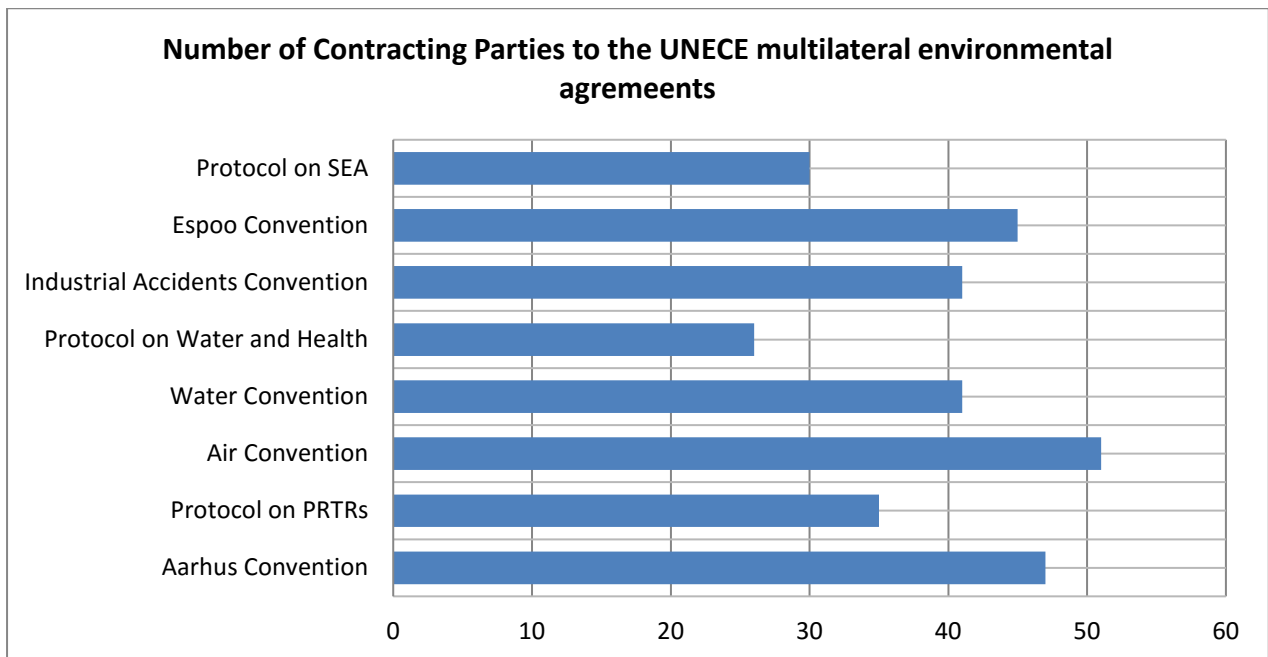
<sup>3</sup> EXCOM/CONCLU/85, para 24.

<sup>4</sup> 2015 Compendium of Legal Instruments, Norms and Standards (ECE/INF/2015/2)

<sup>5</sup> See Strategic Framework 2018-2019 (A/71/6 (Prog.17)\*, para 17.15.

**Under the purview of a UNECE subsidiary body:**

8. **Environment subprogramme:** Of the five multilateral environmental agreements serviced by UNECE, one has been open to all UN Member States since the beginning: the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention). The Convention’s Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs), which can be acceded to independently from the Convention, as well as the Espoo Convention’s Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment, have likewise always been open to all UN Member States. It should be noted that there have yet been no accessions to these instruments from outside the region (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Additionally to the above-mentioned agreements, the eight Protocols to the Air Convention are open only to UNECE member States.

9. **Transport subprogramme:** The UNECE Inland Transport Committee (ITC) hosts 58 UN transport conventions/agreements. A significant percentage are open to accession from outside the region. (UNECE has historically often been chosen to provide the secretariat for such conventions as it is the only UN body with significant focus on inland transport.) In total, there are 25 international transport conventions, protocols and agreements which are open to only UNECE member States (20 of them are in force and active), and 33 involve non-UNECE member countries (20 of them are in force and active). The number of Parties to transport conventions is shown in Figure 2 below. These 33 cover such fields as border crossing facilitation (13 agreements), road traffic and road safety (8 agreements), and include legal instruments related to road transport (5 agreements), road vehicles (3 agreements), and dangerous goods and special cargoes (4 agreements). Overall, of the transport agreements that are in force and active, half are open to all UN Member States and the other half to only UNECE member States.

Similarly, the ITC develops non-legally binding products, as well as tools to support the decision-making capacity of governments. Some have been developed on regional demand, but can be replicated or used globally. Some have been developed for global relevance, such as the IMO/ILO/UNECE Code of Practice for the Packing of Cargo Transport Units, or the ForFITS model.

The Strategic Framework calls for “increased number of Contracting Parties to these conventions, **including from outside the region**, to United Nations legal instruments and recommendations on transport administered by ECE”<sup>6</sup>. General Assembly resolutions 70/197 and 64/255 encourage all UN Member States to become Contracting Parties to the UN conventions and agreements on transport and transit facilitation and on road safety, respectively. The past few years have seen an increase in the number of new accessions to these transport conventions and legal agreements. For example, since 2011, over 25 new accessions to the road safety legal instruments and agreements have taken place, including by countries from outside the region such as Egypt, Nigeria and Qatar.

10. Trade subprogramme: The UNECE Trade subprogramme has the objective to strengthen “trade facilitation and trade-related economic cooperation in the ECE region and beyond.”<sup>7</sup> Non-UNECE countries participate in the development of related standards and recommendations and make wide use of them. The recommendations and standards developed by the UNECE Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation & Standardization Policies, the UNECE Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards, and the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business, for example, fall under this category.

#### **b) GLOBAL SCOPE EVOLVED AFTER LAUNCH:**

11. Environment subprogramme: Three of the five environmental conventions under the purview of this subprogramme have either recently opened or are in the process of opening to accession by all UN Member States, following decisions by the Meeting of the Parties or the Conference of the Parties.
- The Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) was amended to allow accession from outside the region in 2001 by the second Meeting of the Parties (ECE/MP.EIA/4, Annex XIV). The Parties welcomed “closer cooperation with States outside the UN/ECE region in an effort to extend the area of application of the principles of the Convention” (ECE/MP.EIA/4, Annex XV, para 13).
  - The Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) was similarly amended by the Meeting of the Parties in 2003 (ECE/MP.WAT/14).
  - For the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention) the Conference of the Parties considered a similar amendment at its 9<sup>th</sup> session in November 2016. A decision on the matter was postponed to the 10<sup>th</sup> session in 2018.

The proposed Strategic Framework 2018-2019 states that the subprogramme will “work with interested non-ECE countries, in particular those interested in joining the multilateral environmental agreements that are open to global accession.”<sup>8</sup> While no accessions from outside the region have taken place yet, expressions of interest have been received for all three conventions that became open for accession for non-UNECE countries after their launch, mainly from countries in Asia and Africa.

12. Sustainable energy subprogramme: Two products from this subprogramme are widely used worldwide: The United Nations Framework Classification for Fossil Energy and Mineral

<sup>6</sup> A/71/6 (Prog.17)\*, section “Subprogramme 2 Transport”.

<sup>7</sup> A/71/6 (Prog.17)\*, section “Subprogramme 6 Trade”.

<sup>8</sup> A/71/6 (Prog.17)\*, section “Subprogramme 1 Environment”.

Resources (UNFC) and the Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Use in Coal Mines. On UNFC, the Committee on Sustainable Energy “recommended the promotion of UNFC application to countries endowed with energy reserves/resources worldwide, bearing in mind the fact that most of the energy deposits are located outside the UNECE region. For this purpose, the Committee invited the Commission to submit a proposal for an ECOSOC decision to be considered by the next ECOSOC annual session in 2004.”<sup>9</sup> Similarly, on the invitation of the Committee, the Commission “endorsed the Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Use in Coal Mines” and proposed to the Economic and Social Council that it recommend its application to all countries worldwide<sup>10</sup>. ECOSOC subsequently issued Decisions 2004/233 and 2011/222, respectively, inviting all UN Member States to consider the possibility of taking appropriate measures to ensure the application of the United Nations Framework Classification for Fossil Energy and Mineral Resources (UNFC) and the Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Use in Coal Mines worldwide.

13. Statistics subprogramme: The United Nations Statistical Commission has in several cases adopted standards and recommendations that were initially developed by the UNECE. The Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, for example, were adopted by UNECE in 1992, and became a global standard of the UN Statistical Commission in 1994. Similarly, UNECE recommendations for the population and housing censuses, on climate change statistics, and the manual on developing gender statistics are also widely used outside the region. All of these standards and recommendations have been developed by the Conference of European Statisticians hosted by UNECE. The national statistical offices of Australia, Brazil, China, Japan, South Africa and many others participate regularly, which greatly enhances the level of expertise contributing to this work.

**c) UNECE-SPECIFIC SCOPE:**

14. Environment subprogramme: The Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (Air Convention), the eight Protocols to the Air Convention, and the Water Convention’s Protocol on Water and Health are only available to UNECE member States.
15. Transport subprogramme: 25 out of 58 UN transport conventions, protocols and agreements under ITC’s purview are only open to UN member States in Europe<sup>11</sup>. Of these, 20 are in force and active. As some of these agreements are open to “countries admitted to the Commission in a consultative capacity” in addition to UNECE member States, there have occasionally been accessions from non-UNECE countries. These legal instruments have to a large extent been developed according to the needs of the region.

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<sup>9</sup> ECE/ENERGY/54, para 16.iv

<sup>10</sup> E/2011/37, para 4

<sup>11</sup> Among them, certain UN Transport conventions under the ITC’s purview, such as the European Agreement concerning the international carriage of dangerous goods by inland waterways, are open to accession only by subsets of UNECE member States.

### Number of Contracting Parties to the UN Transport Conventions under ITC's purview

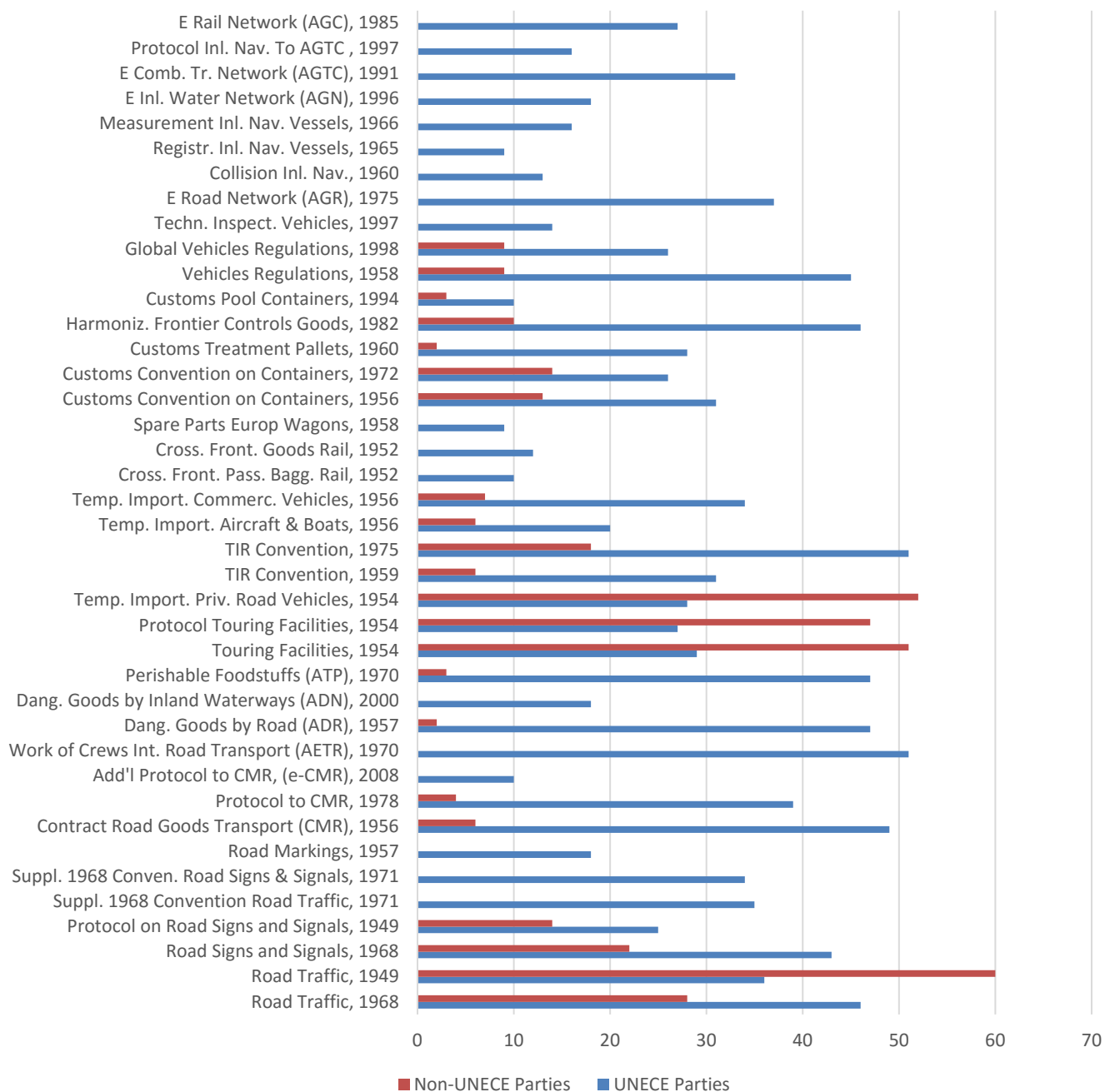


Figure 2

**d) UNDEFINED SCOPE:**

16. Most UNECE public goods such as voluntary guidelines, recommendations and standards are developed in accordance with the region’s needs but many have relevance beyond the region. They are made available free of charge to all countries and actors who wish to use them. A number of UNECE products falls under this category, including:

- Public-private partnerships (PPPs) guidelines and standards
- Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme products
- Environmental Performance Reviews
- Guidelines and tools such as the Shared Environmental Information System on environmental indicators, on developing national strategies to use biodiversity monitoring
- Studies on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade, innovation policies, country housing and land management profiles
- Statistical recommendations
- Transport statistics
- Terminology on Combined Transport
- Database of Intermodal Transport Policies
- E-Road and E-Rail Census
- Recommendations on safety in tunnels
- Guidelines/recommendations/standards on inland waterways
- Energy best practice guidances
- Carbon Capture and Storage recommendations
- Housing and forestry guidelines

17. Because UNECE products or services are designed to fill a particular niche where no other alternative exists, they are known to attract interest also from outside the region. Examples for use of such instruments outside the UNECE region include:

- a. International Specialists Centres of Excellence on PPPs are established in non-UNECE countries (with no financial implications for UNECE) with a view to collecting best practices and contributing to the development of PPP standards, e.g. in China on transport in support of the One Road One Belt initiative.
- b. An Environmental Performance Review (EPR) of Morocco was carried out in 2011 in cooperation with the Economic Commission for Africa and an EPR of Mongolia is forthcoming in cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, demonstrating the relevance of EPR methodology in other regions.

18. On rare instances, the secretariat provides capacity-building/advisory services to non-UNECE countries related to their use, with costs covered by these countries.

### III. EXPERIENCES WITH REACH BEYOND THE UNECE REGION

#### 1) BENEFITS:

19. The reach beyond the region of norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE has yielded significant benefits, both for UNECE member States and for non-member States using them. These include, among others:
- a. Access to a wider pool of expertise, free of charge, which enhances the development of standards, guidelines, norms, recommendations and legal instruments;
  - b. Strengthened transboundary normative and legislative frameworks;
  - c. Broader availability of global public goods to a larger beneficiary community;
  - d. Wider political support and broader achievement of UNECE-mandated programme objectives;



- e. Enhanced support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals;
- f. Harmonization and improved comparability of data;
- g. Greater visibility for UNECE activities.

20. Some examples for UNECE experiences in different subprogrammes are provided below.

21. Environment subprogramme: The opening of UNECE multilateral environmental agreements beyond the UNECE region has brought higher visibility to issues such as environmental democracy, reduction of emissions, environmental impacts, and transboundary water cooperation. The uptake of EPRs or guidelines for environmental indicators outside the region further harmonizes and streamlines data collection and improves comparability. It also strengthens environmental policy-making and environmental legislation in neighbouring countries whose activities have a transboundary impact on the region.
22. Transport subprogramme: The participation of UN Member States from all over the world in the transport conventions has broadened the number of beneficiaries. For example, the work on vehicle regulations at a global scale has provided a basis for entry into the world automotive market and for world-wide harmonization of vehicle safety and environmental requirements. Similarly, the work on road traffic rules and road signs and signals ensures a global framework for road safety rules. The legal instruments concerning the transport of dangerous goods ensure worldwide harmonization of legal conditions in all modes of transport. In the area of border crossing facilitation, the value of the time and costs saved for traders is significant and both the TIR and the Harmonisation Conventions are essential tools for the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement. Furthermore, these increase the capacity of countries and businesses to participate in regional and global supply chains.
23. Statistics subprogramme: Broadening the reach of statistics work beyond the region has led to better and more widely usable guidelines and recommendations applicable in countries with different situations and levels of development, and improved international comparability of statistics. The uptake of many UNECE recommendations and guidelines by the UN Statistical Commission improves the data needed to implement and monitor the progress of the Sustainable Development Goals worldwide
24. Economic cooperation and integration subprogramme: Some 20 non-UNECE member States (e.g. Australia, Brazil, China, India, Japan and South Korea) participate in the yearly sessions of the only intergovernmental body in the UN system dedicated to PPPs. This participatory and inclusive approach contributes additional expertise to the development of standards and guidelines and to PPP capacity building activities, and enriches the knowledge generated. Several countries outside the region also host PPP Specialist Centres of Excellence who, at no cost to UNECE, collect best practices that inform the development of PPP standards by UNECE. Implementation and familiarity with PPP standards and guidelines outside the region improves conditions for PPPs which can be a form of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), to the benefit of the large number of UNECE member States who are net providers of FDI.
25. Sustainable Energy: The use of the products of this subprogramme (such as the UNFC or the best practice guidance on coal mine methane) outside the region brings benefits to member States as well. The quality and relevance of UNFC improves with global application and is of particular benefit to UNECE member States if applied in countries who are net receivers of FDI from UNECE member States. Likewise, the application of the coal mine methane best practices has a positive

impact on environmental (climate change mitigation) and societal (safety) considerations. Implementation in States that neighbor the UNECE region translates into mitigation of negative transboundary impacts.

26. Trade subprogramme: All UNECE member States trade with countries from outside the region. Therefore, a worldwide scope of the trade-related norms and standards has been imperative. In fact, it would be counter-productive to have regional standards, because this would require traders to modify their classifications, data and procedures for every trading partner separately. The adoption of this subprogramme's products outside the region benefits both UNECE and non-UNECE countries and deepens its relevance and impact. Moreover, the pool of volunteer experts who regularly contribute to advisory missions and capacity building activities in UNECE member States is broadened by expanding the reach of the subprogramme's work. Recognizing the relevance of these products, many outside stakeholders have in fact promoted and sponsored their use outside the region. For example:
- a. UN/CEFACT has regional rapporteurs who promote UNECE deliverables in Asia and Africa at their own expense.
  - b. The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the International Trade Centre have, together with UNECE, developed guidelines for the implementation of UNECE recommendations and standards.
  - c. The African Regional Standards Organization has a project for the implementation of the UNECE Recommendation on Risk Management in Regulatory Frameworks in Ugandan and Namibian fisheries.
27. Forestry and Timber: The UNECE/FAO/Eurostat/international Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) Joint Forest Sector Questionnaire provides for a joint nomenclature and standard for collecting forest products data. FAO and ITTO administer the questionnaire for countries outside the UNECE region, and UNECE administers it for those of its member States that are not part of the European Union. The participation of countries from outside the region improves the comparability of forest information.
28. Housing, Land Management and Population: Due to the highly regional character of housing and land management, these two areas of work do not have much engagement with countries outside the region. The Population Unit coordinates the Generations and Gender Programme where Australia and Japan, among others, have helped to complete two panels of the Generations and Gender Survey. This has enriched the availability of data that can improve understanding of the various factors, including public policy and programme interactions, that affect the relationships between parents and children and between partners.

## 2) CHALLENGES

29. Broadening the reach of norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE beyond the region is often perceived to imply potential disadvantages, such as:
- a. increased demand for staff time and resources to finance additional meeting servicing, advisory and capacity-building activities, etc;
  - b. the risk of undertaking activities that exceed the scope of UNECE mandates;
  - c. jeopardizing UNECE quality standards.
30. Resource implications: The UNECE secretariat has identified several low-cost methods of broadening the reach of its products and minimizing additional expenditures. In cases where

additional resources and in-kind contributions can be attracted from UNECE- and non-UNECE member States, additional benefits from the norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE can be offered to countries, including outside the region. Often, it is also possible for non-UNECE countries to adapt their national legislation based on UNECE principles, without requiring servicing from the secretariat. Experiences from different subprogrammes are provided below:

- a. The opening beyond the UNECE region of some of the multilateral environmental agreements has attracted additional resources to the secretariat from both UNECE and non-UNECE stakeholders according to their development cooperation priorities. The Espoo Convention has received expressions of interest from donors wishing to support the implementation of a global instrument.
- b. Many non-UNECE countries participate in the work of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES), providing increased in-kind and financial contributions that enhance the quality of the products and cover resource requirements related to a broader participation. For example, the work on modernization of statistical production was partly financed by Australia. The increase in workload for the secretariat due to the participation of non-UNECE stakeholders has been manageable (i.e. a somewhat higher number of replies to summarise from electronic consultations etc.). The participation of non-UNECE delegates at the meetings and in the development of the guidelines is self-funded.
- c. With a few exceptions, such as the UN Code for Trade and Transport Locations, most of the Trade subprogramme's deliverables can be adopted outside the region with no resource implications for the UNECE Secretariat. Sometimes funding is provided by UNECE member states: The Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide, for example, was financed by a UNECE member State further to its national development cooperation focus, given its usefulness for African countries.
- d. Given the relevance of PPPs as a financing mechanism for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, this work has attracted financial resources from UNECE as well as non-UNECE countries. Various countries are hosting PPP International Specialist Centres of Excellence free of charge. These only require some secretariat resources for communications and the processing of inputs. These are, to a large extent, covered by extrabudgetary financing. Further, additional resources are made available, for example by China, to support the development of PPP standards.
- e. In the area of agricultural quality standards, advisory missions are funded only by resources made available by the requesting member States; capacity-building events are available to non-UNECE countries only at their own expense or, occasionally, by way of relevant UN Development Account projects. Within UN/CEFACT, capacity-building and advisory missions are carried out with extrabudgetary funds or with contributions from a partner. In advisory missions, volunteer experts often undertake work that would otherwise be done by a consultant or staff member, allowing the organization to save resources. In the area of regulatory cooperation, due to limited secretariat resources, capacity-building activities are carried out through partnership arrangements with organizations such as UNIDO, the International Trade Centre etc.
- f. For non-UNECE countries participating in sessions of the World Forum on Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations and its sub-groups, UNECE provides administrative and

secretariat support. In addition, the secretariat has to meet requests for capacity building and travel of UNECE experts to these countries. These activities are covered by the UNECE regular budget, however UNECE regularly cooperates with global and regional partners in order to decrease the financial burden of capacity-building. Advisory services are mostly funded by extrabudgetary sources. In the areas of border crossing facilitation and road safety, non-UNECE delegates attend meetings at their own cost. In the area of dangerous goods, most advisory/capacity building missions are carried out by individual UNECE Contracting Parties under their national technical cooperation programmes, by other entities such as the European Commission or by NGOs such as the International Road Transport Union, with or without participation of UNECE staff subject to time availability and provision of travel and subsistence costs.

31. Scope of UNECE mandates: As shown in section I above, UNECE is guided by its member States in all its activities, including those reaching beyond the UNECE region. The programmes of work of each subsidiary body are aligned to the organization's overall Strategic Framework and are approved by member States at the sectoral committees and then the Executive Committee, or at the relevant Meeting of the Parties, and any engagement with non-UNECE countries is undertaken only following these decisions.
32. Quality assurance: UNECE is committed to results-based management and has to deliver on clearly defined outputs and indicators of achievement, which are monitored regularly and reported to member States. Additional quality control is exercised through regular evaluations of programme activities. Experience from different subprogrammes shows that a broadening of the reach of UNECE products usually goes along with access to additional expertise available in non-UNECE countries. A wider use of norms and standards developed by UNECE was found to deepen the impact of the programmatic activities.

#### **IV. OPTIONS FOR BROADENING THE IMPACT OF UNECE PRODUCTS**

33. As the mapping of norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE has shown, the geographic scope of some have been global from the origin while others have broadened their impact organically over time, based on needs and priorities identified by member States and interest expressed from outside the region. The uptake of the products remains uneven, both within the region and worldwide. Presented below for consideration by member States are different options to further promote the use of norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE, together with recent examples of when such options have been implemented.
34. Option 1 - Promote wider use of norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE: Many UNECE member States have not acceded to the full spectrum of conventions hosted in UNECE. Moreover, many of the activities which are global in scope have not reached a high level of uptake. Possible actions to encourage wider use and better implementation of norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE, both within the region and beyond, are as follows:
  - a. Capacity-building to enable and improve implementation: The most important avenue to promote the wider use of the norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE is to show their positive relevance and impact by ensuring also their implementation at the country level. The UNECE secretariat expands considerable effort in promoting the implementation of its products via technical

assistance and capacity-building activities. Capacity-building activities can only be financed by extrabudgetary funds. UNECE has recently adopted a resource mobilization strategy and hopes that its implementation will support this option for broadening the impact of its products.

b. Outreach campaign to encourage accession to legal instruments:

Raising awareness and showcasing the benefits associated with UNECE's regional and global public goods can create a strong incentive to use the available norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE more broadly. Outreach activities can be undertaken in many different ways and by various actors, involving UNECE, the wider UN system and UNECE member States.

UNECE is, within the limits of the travel budget, undertaking outreach through the missions of its Executive Secretary and UNECE staff and its communication programme that informs of UNECE activities and its legal instruments. Within the UN system, UNECE is collaborating with Specialized Agencies, Funds and Programmes as well as Special Envoys to create synergies. It is working closely with the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety, for example, to raise awareness and promote accession to its road safety legal instruments. Such strategic outreach could be broadened to encourage accession to legal instruments also on other issues. Member States are also encouraged to promote norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE in their development cooperation and diplomacy policies. The success of this approach was demonstrated, for example, when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of one member State sent a letter to 16 countries encouraging accession to the Water Convention, which resulted in concrete expressions of interest from some of these countries.

c. Broadening partnerships and institutional arrangements:

Deepening the network of partners and institutions with whom UNECE collaborates is another means to generate broader support and uptake of its instruments.

This can be done through Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) that are pursued in line with agreed programme priorities and carry no financial implications for UNECE. In recent years, UNECE has stepped up its partnership approach, keeping the Executive Committee (EXCOM) apprised as such arrangements are being developed. Examples for such arrangements include MoUs with the Government of Kazakhstan to support the implementation of the Water Convention and its Protocol on Water and Health in Central Asia; with the International Air Transport Association to promote the trade facilitation standards developed under UN/CEFACT in developing countries; and with a Chinese coal producer to disseminate UNECE's Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Use in Coal Mines in China and beyond.

d. Targeted information sharing on norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE with actors outside the region:

UNECE also engages with interlocutors from outside the region who seek information and possible support. UNECE works closely with a large number of other regional and international organisations in other regions to promote the use of the norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE outside the region. One example is the cooperation under the UNECE Water Convention with the International Network of Basin Organizations (INBO) on climate adaptation in river basins which involves a number of key basin organizations in Africa and Asia.

Another concrete example is UN/CEFACT where there are two regional rapporteurs who promote CEFACT recommendations and standards in Asia and Africa. As these rapporteurs are voluntary, this is an effective method for the Trade subprogramme to advance its mandate of improving trade facilitation in the UNECE region and beyond.

35. Option 2 – Strengthening existing intergovernmental support to norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE :

To enhance understanding of UNECE's work, another approach can be to ensure active endorsement and engagement in intergovernmental processes beyond the region, and to establish mechanisms to facilitate non-UNECE participation in the norms, standards and conventions. Possible actions include:

a. Deepening engagement with interlocutors at UN Headquarters:

Recent experience has shown that there is often insufficient awareness or limited understanding of the nature and relevance of UNECE's work at the UN Headquarters in New York. The UNECE Executive Secretary has, on multiple visits to New York, organized briefings for UNHQ-based delegates on the nature and relevance of UNECE's work. Geneva-based delegates are encouraged to liaise closely with their New York counterparts as well to inform of the activities in the region and ensure that UNECE's interests are well represented during relevant negotiations occurring at UN Headquarters.

b. Formal endorsement of norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE through GA and/or ECOSOC :

Another avenue to deepen engagement beyond the UNECE region is for member States to promote further endorsement of the norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE by the General Assembly or ECOSOC.

As mentioned in sections II.a and II.b, pertinent resolutions or decisions have been adopted for transport conventions on transit and road safety, the United Nations Framework Classification for Fossil Energy and Mineral Resources (UNFC) and the Best Practice Guidance for Effective Methane Drainage and Use in Coal Mines. This could also be done more structurally by broadening reporting arrangements. At the 79<sup>th</sup> session of the ITC in February 2017, a ministerial resolution was signed requesting the Commission to mandate the ITC to report directly to ECOSOC for information purposes, in addition to its reporting to the Commission, while leaving the organisational structure of the UNECE secretariat, as well as the programme-budgeting functions and oversight unchanged.

c. Formal recommendations on the implementation of norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE by other UN entities, especially Regional Commissions:

While respecting that legal instruments and conventions are governed by their contracting parties, it can benefit their implementation if UNECE, as is already the case in several areas, cooperated with other UN entities and especially the Regional Commissions. A more formal recommendation on norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE in the intergovernmental process of the other Regional Commissions could, for instance, help to extend the use of these instruments and broaden ownership. This practice has already been in place in the field of transport,

where an ESCAP Ministerial Declaration lists the UN inland transport conventions as being of the highest priority for their countries.

Adaptation to regional circumstances and conditions, as has been the case with the Aarhus Convention and the Environmental Performance Reviews, could also be possible.

This approach could allow more UN Member States to benefit from regional initiatives, strengthen the cooperation between the Regional Commissions and help bridge the regional and global levels.

d. Facilitation of participation from outside the region in UNECE's work:

As noted in the previous sections, a number of non-UNECE countries, including low-income countries, have already expressed interest in or acceded to some of the norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE. Facilitating the participation of delegates from these countries in the work of the UNECE, where applicable, would help incorporate the perspective of all relevant stakeholders, increase political support, and ensure better implementation in these countries. This option could be explored further subject to availability and/or mobilization of resources.

36. Option 3 – Knowledge sharing with other key stakeholders:

The principles of norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE can, of course, be reproduced in, or adapted to, countries even without formal accession to these products. To that end, UNECE has often engaged with outside stakeholders in the past. Possible actions under this option include:

a. Knowledge exchange with partners, especially other Regional Commissions:

UNECE is, as stated, already liaising closely with its sister Commissions in other parts of the world. The collaboration is ranging from information exchange and knowledge sharing to joint action. The Aarhus Convention secretariat, for example, is providing advisory support to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean for the initiative to establish a regional instrument on Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration in Latin America and the Caribbean, and participates in Global Round Tables on PRTRs which are perceived as a major driver for innovative and stronger implementation of PRTR systems worldwide. There is also cooperation on extending the methodology of the EPRs. Such collaboration could be broadened, subject to available capacity. Other examples are the cooperation with the other Regional Commissions on sustainable energy including joint support for the Sustainable Energy for All Global Tracking Framework.

37. In summary, the following options could be considered by member States with regard to broadening the impact of norms, standards and conventions hosted in UNECE:

OPTION	POSSIBLE ACTIONS
1. Promote wider use of norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE.	a. Capacity-building to enable and improve implementation
	b. Outreach campaign to encourage accession to legal instruments
	c. Broadening partnerships and institutional arrangements
	d. Targeted information sharing on norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE with actors outside the region
2. Strengthening intergovernmental support to norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE	a. Deepening engagement with interlocutors at UN Headquarters
	b. Formal endorsement of norms, standards and conventions, hosted in UNECE through GA and ECOSOC
	c. Formal recommendations of the implementation of norms, standards and legal instruments, hosted in UNECE by other UN entities, especially Regional Commissions
	d. Facilitation of participation of governments of low-income countries from outside the region in UNECE's work
3. Knowledge sharing with other stakeholders	a. Knowledge exchange with key stakeholders, especially with the other Regional Commissions

## V. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

38. As member States have noted, the reach of norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE beyond the region is a testament to the quality, relevance and positive impact of these products. Developing a strategy for a more deliberate and systematic uptake of norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE can yield additional benefits both for UNECE member States and non-member States. Deepening such uptake within and beyond the region should be pursued in a considered manner, guided by approaches that are specific to each instrument under consideration and the outcomes intended. Member States may wish to identify specific norms, standards and legal instruments hosted in UNECE whose reach they would like to see expanded, and request the Secretariat to develop a targeted proposal on how their impact could be deepened.

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