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Report of the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport on its 135th session

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I. Attendance

1. The Working Party (WP.30) held its 135th session from 1 to 4 October 2013 in Geneva. The session was attended by representatives of the following countries: Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tajikistan, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Uzbekistan. Representatives of the European Union (EU) were also present. The following intergovernmental organizations were represented: Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), Eurasian Economic Commission (EurAsEC) and Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD). The following non-governmental organizations were represented: Bureau international des containers et du transport intermodal (BIC) and the International Road Transport Union (IRU).

II. Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 1)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/269

2. WP.30 adopted the provisional agenda, prepared by the secretariat (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/269), subject to the inclusion of the issue "Application of the TIR procedure in the Russian Federation" after agenda item 7 (a).

III. Opening statement

3. In her opening statement, Ms. Eva Molnar, Director, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Transport Division, pointed out that the TIR Convention was undergoing a crucial point in its history with both opportunities and challenges. While several countries were knocking on the TIR door (Afghanistan, China, Pakistan), the application of the TIR system in the Russian Federation was at risk. She called upon all parties concerned to safeguard the TIR Convention as a unique facilitation tool and reported on the actions by UNECE to prevent the crisis. According to Ms. Molnar, the ongoing TIR crisis highlighted several major issues which are relevant for the TIR system as whole, for example, the lack of communication and transparency of all parties involved in the conflict. She also recalled the entry into force of a new part III of Annex 9 to define the responsibilities of the authorized international organization. While welcoming this important development, she invited delegations to provide further transparency on the financial aspects of the functioning of the TIR system by means of extended audits of the international organization. Another challenge for WP.30 would be to launch the eTIR project — an initiative which will give considerable benefits to all TIR Contracting Parties and the transport industry, in particular to developing countries/countries in transition who would gain access to a computerized international Customs transit system. She encouraged delegations to select the best legal options for eTIR for further development, as well as to consider and possibly endorse the Cost-Benefit Analysis (CBA) of eTIR. Finally, Ms. Molnar invited WP.30 to provide guidance to the secretariat on how to incorporate border performance measurement and benchmarking into the Harmonization Convention.

IV. Activities of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe bodies and other United Nations organizations of interest to the Working Party (agenda item 2)

4. The Working Party took note that, for consideration and approval at its next session, the secretariat would prepare documents on the Programme of Work and Biennial Evaluation. These documents would then be submitted to the February 2014 session of the Inland Transport Committee (ITC) for endorsement.

V. Activities of other organizations and countries of interest to the Working Party (agenda item 3)

A. European Union

5. WP.30 noted that on 1 July 2013, Croatia had joined the European Union and thus became part of the EU Customs territory. The Working Party was also informed about the recent adoption of the new EU Customs Code which would become applicable as of May 2016 and introduce, inter alia, EDI technologies and simplification of various Customs procedures, including transit.

B. Economic Cooperation Organization

6. WP.30 welcomed information that, in September 2013, the TIR system had been reactivated in Afghanistan and that, already, more than 20 trucks had undertaken TIR transports from Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Turkey to Afghanistan. To achieve this goal, the Government and the private sector of Afghanistan had successfully implemented, within about two years, a concrete Action Plan with the assistance of the ECO secretariat and IRU. Under this Action Plan, a number of training courses were organized by Iran (Islamic Republic of), Turkey and IRU for Afghan experts. Cooperation on further enhancing the implementation of the TIR Convention in Afghanistan will be continued under the aegis of the ECO Project for establishment of a Road Corridor between the Kyrgyz Republic-Tajikistan-Afghanistan-Iran (KTAI). The Working Party was also informed about the progress in implementing the TIR Pilot Project on Islamabad – Tehran – Istanbul (ITI) road corridor, whose launch was foreseen before the end of February 2014 in line with the measures agreed upon by the third ECO High Level Working Group Meeting on ITI (Ankara, September 2013). It was also noted that, with the support of the ECO, Pakistan had acceded to COTIF and was intensifying its efforts to join the TIR Convention. WP 30 also took note of the activities of the ECO to interconnect the landlocked countries of Central Asia and to promote United Nations legal instruments in the areas of transport and transit among the ECO member States. WP 30 hoped that, notably, these efforts would be instrumental in expeditious accession of the remaining ECO member States to the Harmonization Convention and the ADR Agreement.

C. EurAsEC Customs Union

7. The Eurasian Economic Commission informed the Working Party about enhancing the legislation of the Customs Union, for example, by preparing amendment proposals for the Customs Code or by drafting trilateral agreements on various Customs related issues, including TIR and temporary importation. As of 1 October 2014, advance cargo information would be required for goods imported by rail transport. The priorities of the

Customs Union include speeding up Customs formalities by introducing modern technologies, like EDI, single window, post clearance audits and the concept of Authorized Economic Operator (AEO). WP.30 also noted the ongoing process of integrating Armenia and Kyrgyzstan into the Customs Union.

D. World Customs Organization

8. WP.30 noted that the Secretary-General of the United Nations, acting in his capacity as depositary, had communicated that Lebanon had acceded to the Customs Convention on Containers, 1972, on 29 August 2013. The Convention would enter into force for Lebanon on 28 February 2014 in accordance with its Article 19 (2) (Depositary Notification C.N.572.2013.TREATIES-XI.A.15).

VI. International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982 (“Harmonization Convention”) (agenda item 4)

A. Status of the Convention

9. The secretariat reported that no changes had occurred in the status of the Convention and also recalled its intention to convene the next session of the Administrative Committee in June 2014.

B. Annex 8 on road transport

10. The representative of Ukraine reported on achievements in organizing joint controls with neighbouring countries, such as the European Union and the Russian Federation.

1. International Vehicle Weight Certificate

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/3

11. WP.30 continued its discussion of the proposal by Ukraine to introduce a new box "Weight of empty vehicle" into the International Vehicle Weight Certificate (IVWC) (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/3). While some delegations did not see the value added of this proposal, some others pointed out that such a box could speed up Customs and other border formalities, thus facilitating international transport. At the same time, a clear-cut definition of the term "Weight of empty vehicle", together with a mechanism on how to measure or calculate it would need to be developed. Finally, WP.30 decided to keep this issue on the agenda.

2. Outcome of the 2012 UNECE survey

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/7

12. The Working Party recalled the outcome of the UNECE survey to monitor the progress in implementing Annex 8 (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/7) and noted that the next survey would be undertaken in 2014, in line with Annex 8 to the Convention.

3. X-ray scanning certificate

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/6

13. WP.30 took note of the opinion of the Customs administration of Azerbaijan that X-ray scanners are produced by various manufacturers and differ in technical parameters, thus making it impossible for other countries to analyse the attached X-ray image. In addition, the issuance of an X-ray certificate could lead to delays and queues at borders. The delegation of EU supported this conclusion and felt that there was no need for such a certificate.

C. Annex 9 on rail border crossing

14. The Working Party took note that the secretariat of the Working Party on Rail Transport (SC.2) had drafted a questionnaire on the national application of Annex 9 which would be discussed at the forthcoming SC.2 session (23-25 October 2013). Following the approval of SC.2, it would be distributed to Contracting Parties. The representative of OSJD reported that facilitating the implementation of Annex 9 at the national level remains a priority of his organization. He pointed out the great practical importance of the provisions of Annex 9, in particular, the minimum infrastructure requirements for border stations and the use of the combined CIM/SMGS consignment note. Under this item, OSJD also informed WP.30 about the forthcoming Eighth International Interdepartmental Meeting of OSJD member States (May 2014) which would address border crossing facilitation in rail transport.

D. Border performance measurement and the Harmonization Convention

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/4

15. The Working Party continued its consideration of different options for introducing performance indicators into the Harmonization Convention as a tool for monitoring its implementation and benchmarking (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/4). Various delegations spoke in favour of a flexible solution which would cater for the needs of countries with different economic situations, would cover different modes of transport and would give Contracting Parties a set of tools for optional use. It was pointed out that not only indicators, but also methods for obtaining them should be developed for interested countries. Some delegations highlighted the importance of WCO tools and the need to cooperate with WCO on this issue. As a further step, WP.30 invited delegations to study Chapter 9 of the OSCE-UNECE Handbook of Best Practices at Border Crossings to see which indicators mentioned could be selected for the purposes of the Harmonization Convention and if there was a need to develop new indicators. Finally, the Working Party decided to revert to this issue at its next session.

VII. International Convention to Facilitate the Crossing of Frontiers for Passengers and Baggage carried by Rail, of 10 January 1952 (agenda item 5)

16. OSJD presented a number of arguments in favour of drafting a new convention in this field, rather than acceding to the outdated 1952 Convention (Informal document No. 15 (2013)). The Working Party was informed by OSJD that authorities of Belarus, Bulgaria, Latvia, Kazakhstan, Poland, Republic of Moldova and the Russian Federation support this idea, particularly in view of the rapid development of the international high-speed train

network which requires the introduction of new EDI technologies and other innovative solutions to ensure fast border crossing procedures. WP.30 felt that there seemed to be a demand for a new Convention and invited SC.2, at its forthcoming session on 23-25 October 2013, to express its position on this matter as well. The Working Party also noted the readiness of OSJD and OTIF member States to create a taskforce to prepare a first draft of a new Convention for further consideration by WP.30 and SC.2.

VIII. Customs Conventions on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles (1954) and Commercial Road Vehicles (1956) (agenda item 6)

17. Having recalled its deliberations at the previous session (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/268, para. 27), WP.30 noted that the International Touring Alliance and the International Automobile Federation (AIT/FIA) would report to the next session on follow-up actions undertaken. The Working Party also took note that, on 12 August 2013, the Republic of Moldova had acceded to the 1956 Convention (C.N.557.2013.TREATIES-XI.A.10). The delegation of Belarus informed WP.30 about their interest in studying the current practice of using CPD (Carnets de Passages en Douane) and was referred, with the assistance of the secretariat, to AIT/FIA for detailed information.

IX. Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention, 1975) (agenda item 7)

A. Status of the Convention

18. The Working Party was informed that, by 10 July 2013, none of the Contracting Parties had communicated to the Secretary-General an objection to the proposals of amendments to Article 6.2 bis and Annex 9 to the TIR Convention. Consequently, these amendments will enter into force on 10 October 2013 for all Contracting Parties (C.N.433.2013.TREATIES-XI.A.16).

B. Application of the TIR procedure in the Russian Federation

19. WP.30 took note that, in July 2013, the Federal Customs Service of the Russian Federation (FCS) announced that TIR operators transporting goods in the territory of the Russian Federation would be required to provide other guarantees prescribed by the Customs Code of the EurAsEC Customs Union. The introduction of this measure, originally scheduled for 14 August, had been postponed until 14 September 2013. On that date, FCS started implementing the envisaged measure in Siberia and Far East regions and later extended its application to the Ural region.

20. The Working Party was further informed that, on 27 August 2013, the TIR Executive Board (TIRExB) held an extraordinary session to assess the situation created by the above decision. Mrs. A. Dubielak (Poland), Chair of TIRExB, presented to the Working Party the conclusions of TIRExB at this session (Informal document WP.30/AC.2 (2013) No. 6). According to the information available to TIRExB, two arguments were put forward by FCS to justify this measure: (a) the huge amount of debts due to TIR infringements, accumulated since 1994 and (b) the requirement for the national guaranteeing association ASMAP to provide stricter financial coverage of its liabilities. With regard to both issues,

TIRExB urged all parties involved to seek solutions within the framework of national law, the TIR Convention and international legal treaties, while fully respecting, in case of conflict, the priority of international law over national law. Furthermore, TIRExB was of the opinion that, as long as ASMAP remains the guaranteeing association, authorized in accordance with Article 6 of the Convention, its guarantee is valid and should be the only one required to perform TIR operations in the territory of the Russian Federation. Finally, TIRExB pointed at the far-reaching consequences of the announced measure, which would have repercussions for Customs and would affect national and international trade and transport alike.

21. In summary, TIRExB was of the view that the announced measure would constitute, on various counts, a breach of the Convention and, thus, urged FCS to properly apply the TIR Convention and abandon, or, at least, postpone its introduction. Pending any such decision, all parties concerned were strongly encouraged to accelerate their negotiations so as to find satisfactory solutions for all outstanding concerns. TIRExB expressed its willingness to assist the Russian Federation in finding ways and means to ensure the smooth functioning of the TIR system in the Russian Federation, in line with modern customs and business requirements. The member of TIRExB from the Russian Federation expressed his reservations with regard to some of the Board's conclusions.

22. In addition to the above measure, on 3 September 2013 FCS notified ASMAP of its intention to terminate, as of 1 December 2013, the TIR guarantee agreement signed between the two organizations.

23. This step could lead to suspension of the TIR procedure in the Russian Federation from that date, because no other association had expressed its interest to become a TIR guarantor.

24. The representatives of FCS, IRU and ASMAP informed WP.30 about the activities of a task force established between FCS and ASMAP, with participation of IRU as observer, with the aim to clarify the amount of outstanding Customs debts, as well as to review the TIR guarantee agreement. The Working Party noted that, so far, no major progress had been achieved by the task force and that the parties still maintained diverse positions on the figures for settled claims and outstanding debts, responsible debtors and the mechanisms of claims settlement, according to Article 11, and financial coverage of ASMAP's liabilities.

25. The delegation of the Russian Federation stressed the importance of the TIR Convention for facilitation of transport and trade and informed WP.30 about the ongoing domestic inter-ministerial dialogue aimed at achieving a common position of the Government on the related issues and observing the international obligations of the Russian Federation under the TIR Convention. The bodies of the TIR Convention, as well as the secretariat, will be duly informed about any actions taken by the Russian authorities. The Russian delegation also stressed the need to undertake the necessary actions in order to eliminate the current controversies in the interpretation of some core provisions of the Convention.

26. Numerous delegations pointed out severe negative implications of the situation with TIR in the Russian Federation for trade and transport from/to/through the Russian Federation, such as business uncertainty due to lack of information and unexpected decisions, reducing the trade volumes and number of contracts, additional costs for buying national guarantees, etc. The delegation of EU expressed its disappointment that the law had been broken and that no prior information had been given. It also pointed out at the provisions of Articles X and V of GATT and of the Vienna Convention on the International Law of Treaties, 1969.

27. WP.30 urged all stakeholders in the Russian Federation and IRU to find solutions that would ensure an uninterrupted application of the TIR procedure in the Russian Federation. The Working Party, except for the Russian delegation, called for withdrawal of the FCS measure and regretted that, in spite of non-compliance of this measure with the provisions of the TIR Convention, FCS had started its limited implementation in the three regions.

28. IRU informed WP.30 that ASMAP and IRU had recently made various proposals in writing to the FCS chair to further improve the existing guarantee agreement before 1 December 2013. IRU also reiterated that, in case it appears that some TIR claims in the Russian Federation are still due by ASMAP as per TIR Convention and Russian law, these cases would be immediately paid. Finally, IRU proposed, in case FCS is not opposed, to make public all documents related to past claims (payment confirmations, lists, copies of court judgments, etc) so that these can be independently reviewed.

29. The representative of the EurAsEC informed the Working Party about the measures undertaken to ensure road transport operations under cover of TIR Carnets on the territory of the Customs Union and the single economic space. This issue is under continuous consideration at the sessions of the EurAsEC Council and EurAsEC Board. While expressing its concerns over the TIR situation and calling upon the parties involved for its settlement, EurAsEC dialogues with FCS and provides a forum for negotiations between the authorities of the Customs Union member States and all persons concerned.

30. Under this agenda item, several delegations also raised concerns that dozens of foreign transport companies had recently been excluded by FCS from the TIR procedure in the Russian Federation, with reference to Article 38 of the Convention, mainly due to non-respecting the itineraries prescribed for TIR operations in the Russian Federation. According to these delegations, many excluded companies are reliable operators and committed only minor infringements which would not justify the application of such severe measures as exclusion from the TIR procedure. These delegations also pointed out that the related infringements had been committed because of practical problems involved in respecting the Customs requirements, such as the absence of parking lots, bans on road freight traffic in cities and limited opening hours of local Customs offices, which FCS had not taken into account.

C. Revision of the Convention

1. Preparation of Phase III of the TIR revision process

Use of new technologies

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/8, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/10, ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/11

31. The Working Party endorsed the report of the twenty-second session of the Ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Procedure (GE.1) (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/10). It took note that the twenty-third session of GE.1 would take place in Brussels on 20 and 21 November 2013, at the kind invitation of the European Commission.

32. WP.30 took note of the finalization of the Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) of the eTIR project, together with its summary, assessment and the resulting recommendations by GE.1 (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/10). The secretariat gave a presentation on this document and, in reply to questions by various delegations, further clarified a number of issues concerning some of the assumptions and results of CBA.

33. The delegation of Iran (Islamic Republic of), referring to document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/10 and in particular to IRU's concerns and questions listed in its para. 17, stressed that caution was needed in order not to underestimate the costs and that a decision should not be taken before all issues were clarified. The secretariat recalled that, in para. 18 of the above document, GE.1 had already taken on board in CBA or replied to most of IRU's concerns and questions and considered that the remaining issues, included in the assessment of CBA, did not provide sufficient grounds to require a revision of CBA and, therefore, decided to maintain its recommendation and attach the summary of CBA, together with its assessment and recommendations, to the eTIR Reference Model. The Iranian delegation also pointed out that, in the ECO region, the required infrastructure for implementing eTIR is not available and requested WP.30 to shed lights on the importance and the effective implementation of the system and to study the possible adverse effects of such project on developing and least developed Contracting Parties. With regard to the Iranian assumption that an incomplete implementation of the project could have negative impacts on facilitation provided by the TIR Convention, WP.30 was assured that the planned step-by-step geographical expansion of eTIR, as described in the eTIR Reference Model, would have no negative consequences on countries not implementing eTIR, as it is foreseen that, before all countries would be in a position to use eTIR, the paper TIR procedure would remain available. The Working Party also noted that measures would need to be envisaged to remove such concerns.

34. WP.30 took note of document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/8 in all official languages, containing an analysis of various legal options for providing the legal basis allowing the implementation of eTIR. Considering that some delegations were not yet in the position to discuss substantively the various legal options, nor other legal aspects related to the implementation of eTIR, WP.30 decided to postpone its discussions on the issue to its next session.

35. The Working Party was also informed that, since its previous session, little progress had been achieved in the eTIR pilot project between Italy and Turkey. The fourth meeting of the pilot project was tentatively scheduled to take place in conjunction with the twenty-third session of GE.1 in Brussels. Finally, WP.30 took note of the progress made with regard to the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project: "Strengthening the capacities of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to facilitate legitimate border crossing, regional cooperation and integration". It took note that a consultant was being hired to undertake a gap-analysis for Georgia. WP.30 also took note that a provisional arrangement had been made to hold the first interregional Expert Group meeting in Geneva on 18 December 2013.

2. Amendment proposals for the Convention: Vehicles with sliding sheets

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2012/6/Rev.4

36. WP.30 took note of revised document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2012/6/Rev.4 which had incorporated the comments made by CLCCR in Informal document No. 13 (2013). The delegation of Belarus reiterated the concerns expressed at the previous session (ECE/TRANS/WP.30/268, para. 33) and informed WP.30 about its internal considerations of additional photographs and sketches that it had received, before taking a decision on the proposed amendments. Awaiting the outcome of these considerations, WP.30 decided to revert to this issue at the next session.

3. Amendment proposal to the TIR Convention: Use of the TIR procedure in a Customs Union with a single Customs territory or in a single country

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/9

37. The secretariat introduced document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/9 which analysed the relevant provisions of the TIR Convention in the context of international law (Articles 2, 48 and 49) and which came to the conclusion that their current wording does not seem to allow for a clear-cut application of the TIR procedure in the case of Customs Unions with no internal Customs borders. To give new Customs Unions the necessary flexibility to adapt the use of the TIR procedure to their economic and political needs, the secretariat proposed several options on how to amend Article 2. One option, if adopted, would also allow for the use of the TIR procedure in a single country, however, the particular details and potential complications of such application did not form part of the substantive analysis contained in the document.

38. The delegation of EU was of the view that the present text of the Convention gives enough freedom to Customs Unions with a single Customs territory for any decision on the use of the TIR procedure. Thus, EU was not in favour of amending the Convention. The Russian Federation shared this position. On the other hand, the delegation of Kazakhstan supported the amendments.

39. Regarding the use of the TIR procedure in a single country, the delegations of EU, Belarus and the Russian Federation were of the opinion that the TIR Convention, being an international agreement, should not be used for such transport operations. The delegations of Ukraine and Uzbekistan supported the use of the TIR procedure in a single country for the transport of foreign goods and pointed out its important facilitation aspect. IRU reiterated that it is prepared to support such domestic operations, either within the framework of the TIR Convention or under a separate, yet similar, regime. WP.30 concluded that further analysis and discussion was required to reach a decision on whether or not an amendment is warranted and thus requested the Secretariat to prepare, for the next session, further analysis on the possibility to use the TIR procedure within a single country.

4. Amendment proposals to the Convention: Audit requirements for an authorized international organization

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2011/6

40. This issue was not discussed due to lack of time.

D. Application of the Convention

1. TIR-related electronic data interchange systems

41. The Working Party was informed by IRU about the latest statistical data on the performance of Contracting Parties in SafeTIR as well as on the use of TIR-EPD (Informal document No. 16 (2013)).

2. Settlement of claims for payments

42. WP.30 noted the current situation on the settlement of claims for payments made by Customs authorities against national guaranteeing associations, as reported by IRU (Informal document No. 16 (2013)).

3. Increase in the number of loading and unloading places

43. This issue was not discussed due to lack of time.

4. TIR Handbook

44. The Working Party noted that an updated edition of the TIR Handbook will be issued by the end 2013 in English, French and Russian.

5. Other matters

45. No new information was reported to WP.30 under this agenda item.

X. Prevention of the abuse of Customs transit systems by smugglers (agenda item 8)

46. The Working Party was informed that, on 14 August 2013, the secretariat had posted a new fraud report at the password-protected website for Customs focal points, informing of an incident where Bulgarian customs authorities had terminated a TIR transport because of tampering with the TIR Carnet, involving changes to the order of vouchers No. 1 and No. 2.

XI. Round table on using modern technologies to raise efficiency and security of Customs transit procedures (agenda item 9)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/12

47. WP.30 recalled its June 2013 round table on using modern technologies to raise efficiency and security of Customs transit procedures and took note of its outcome, as summarized by the secretariat in document ECE/TRANS/WP.30/2013/12.

XII. Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Working Party (agenda item 10)

48. The discussion on this issue was postponed to the next session.

XIII. Other business (agenda item 11)

A. Dates of the next sessions

49. The Working Party decided to hold its 136th session in the week of 3–7 February 2014.

B. Restriction on the distribution of documents

50. The Working Party decided that there were no restrictions on the distribution of documents issued in connection with its current session.

XIV. Adoption of the report (agenda item 12)

51. During the adoption of the report and with reference to para. 16 above, the secretariat informed the Working Party about its intention to solicit views of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of UNECE member States whether their Governments support the idea of elaborating a new convention to facilitate border crossing for passengers and baggage carried by rail.

52. In accordance with established practice, the Working Party adopted the report on its 135th session on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat.
