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Inland Transport Committee

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Item 3 (b) (i) of the provisional agenda

Strategic questions of a horizontal policy nature:

Climate change and transport – ITC follow-up to Rio+20

Sustainable transport in the post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The importance of transport and mobility for accelerating the pace of achieving sustainable development is undeniable. The development of a new sustainable development framework for the post-2015 era in the form of the Sustainable Development Goals provides an opportunity to position the sector and highlight transport and mobility challenges in a way that actions for their safe, clean and efficient development can become feasible.

The Committee is invited to:

- exchange information about the governments' views and expectations on the transport related decisions in the post-2015 process. It may wish to **express its support** for including transport priorities in a coherent and comprehensive way within the Sustainable Development Goals framework;
- consider messages and the outcome of the policy segment of its seventy-sixth session; and
- decide how the up-dated study on "Transport for Sustainable Development" can best be disseminated.

I. Introduction

1. Transport affects, and is a precondition for, social, economic and environmental sustainability. By making mobility safer, cleaner and more efficient, the transport sector can meet its full potential in contributing to sustainable development and poverty alleviation. Transport is central to economic and social development and a driver for sustainable growth, by providing access to markets and supply chains. In spite of this, it has not been included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) framework and has, therefore, not been seen as a political or financial priority for development policies. As a result, many people still do not have access to affordable, safe and clean transport, and many countries lack efficient and affordable access to world markets. Transport is also one of the key areas in ensuring the shift to sustainable low carbon societies but a high level of political will is needed to decouple it from impacts like air pollution and traffic accidents. Therefore, the key challenge is to ensure transport's proper place in the post-2015 agenda.

II. Post-2015 development agenda

2. In preparation for the implementation of the post-2015 Agenda, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon launched an extensive consultation process involving all stakeholders: United Nations Member States, the UN system, civil society, national and international organizations, industry, science and academia. The process should lead to the definition of a single and comprehensive post-2015 Development Agenda with sustainable development in the form of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at its core.

3. The main work streams are:

(a) The Open Working Group (OWG) on SDGs. The composition of the OWG at any time comprises 30 Member States drawn from each of the 30 countries or groups of countries listed in accordance with the annex to General Assembly decision 67/555. The OWG was mandated by the Rio+20 outcome document to prepare a proposal on SDGs for consideration by the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session (Sept. 2013 – Sept. 2014). In terms of forms of participation, according to para. 8 of the Open Working Groups methods of work (rules of procedure):

“8. The following may participate as observers in the meetings of the open working group in the manner outlined in ECOSOC decision 1993/215:

- Representatives of Specialised Agencies and related organizations; and*
- Representatives of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with ECOSOC.”*

(b) The United Nations System Task Team (UNTT) on the post-2015 UN Development Agenda: a team of representatives from over 60 UN entities and international organizations. An inter-agency technical support team (TST) has been established to support the Open Working Group, under the umbrella of the UNTT. The TST is co-chaired by DESA and UNDP, and consists of over 40 UN entities. The TST provides technical support, including analytical inputs, background material and expert panellists.

(c) National, regional and global consultations have taken place in more than 60 countries on 11 thematic topics,¹ contributing all to the Secretary-General's report to the General Assembly.

(d) Regional consultations have also been organized with inputs from the United Nations Regional Commissions and resulting in their joint report on regional perspective on the post-2015 development agenda.

III. Post-Rio+20 support for an SDG on Transport

4. The inclusion of sustainable transport as a priority in Chapter V (Framework for Action and Follow-up) of the Outcome Document "The Future We Want"² positioned the Rio+20 Conference (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 20–22 June 2012) as a pivotal event for scaling up and mainstreaming sustainable transport.

5. According to the Rio +20 Outcome document:

*"We note that transportation and mobility are central to sustainable development. Sustainable transportation can enhance economic growth as well as improving accessibility. Sustainable transport achieves better integration of the economy while respecting the environment. We recognize the importance of the efficient movement of people and goods, and access to environmentally sound, safe and affordable transportation as a means to improve social equity, health, resilience of cities, urban-rural linkages and productivity of rural areas. In this regard, we take into account road safety as a part of our efforts to achieve sustainable development. We support the development of sustainable transport systems, including energy efficient multi-modal transport systems, notably public mass transportation systems, clean fuels and vehicles, as well as improved transportation systems in rural areas. We recognize the need to promote an integrated approach to policy-making at the national, regional and local levels for transport services and systems to promote sustainable development. We also recognize that the special development needs of landlocked and transit developing countries need to be taken into account while establishing sustainable transit transport systems. We acknowledge the need for international support to developing countries in this regard."*³

6. In 2012, the United Nations Secretary-General announced that, as part of his post-2015 development agenda, he would like to achieve consensus over a sustainable development framework, including the definition of a new generation of sustainable development goals. Sustainable transport was identified as one of the key building blocks for sustainable development, together with energy, food and nutrition, water and oceans.

7. The UN System Task team in its first report (Realizing the Future We Want for All, May 2012) identified sustainable transport as one of the priority areas.

"Within the Rio+20 negotiations, member States have identified a number of priority areas for sustainable development. Among these are poverty eradication; food security and sustainable agriculture; water and sanitation; energy; sustainable tourism; sustainable transport; sustainable cities and human settlements; health and population; full and productive employment, decent work and social protection;

¹ Inequalities, governance, growth and employment, health, education, environmental sustainability, food security and nutrition, conflict and fragility, population dynamics, energy, water.

² For the full text, please refer to: <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/futurewewant.html>

³ A/RES/66/228

oceans and seas; disaster risk reduction and resilience; sustainable production and consumption; gender equality and women's empowerment, among others."

8. The Technical Support Team (TST) drafted an Issues Brief on Sustainable Transport, to which UNECE contributed as a co-author together with UNEP and UNDESA. In the end, UNEP took the lead and finalised the Brief without much consideration of other views. Despite the differences on the details, the value of the Brief is that it argues for an independent SDG on sustainable transport:

"Recognizing the importance that the transport sector plays in achieving sustainable development, transport interventions as suggested in this brief should be combined into one dedicated SDG, as they are closely interlinked."

IV. Transport for sustainable development in the ECE region and beyond

9. In 2011, UNECE published a study entitled "Transport for sustainable development in the ECE region" to present transport's role and contribution to achieving sustainable development. The study aimed at linking the general dimensions of sustainability – economic, social and environmental – with transport sector goals and policies. In particular, it discussed access and affordability (for individuals and societies), safety, security and environmental externalities.

10. As a contribution to the ongoing negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda and to ensure the proper treatment of sustainable transport, the 2011 UNECE study is being up-dated in cooperation with key partners in inland transport.

V. For consideration by the Inland Transport Committee

11. The importance of transport and mobility for accelerating the pace of achieving sustainable development is undeniable. The development of a new sustainable development framework for the post-2015 era in the form of the Sustainable Development Goals provides an opportunity to position the sector and highlight transport and mobility challenges in a way that actions for their safe, clean and efficient development can become feasible.

12. The proper inclusion of transport in the SDG framework would send the global development community a strong signal that would offer much needed direction for deliberate and coordinated actions. The stakes are high. In the absence of strong direction, the necessary transport priorities could be diluted or even excluded from the SDG framework, thus compromising their potential for change and transformation.

13. The Committee is invited to exchange information about the governments' positions and expectations towards the transport related decisions in the post-2015 process. It may wish to **express its support** for the inclusion of transport priorities in a coherent and comprehensive way within the Sustainable Development Goals framework.

14. It is also invited to consider messages and the outcome of the policy segment of its seventy-sixth session; and to decide how the up-dated study on "Transport for Sustainable Development" can best be disseminated.