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Strategic questions of a sectoral nature:

Intermodal transport and logistics

IMO/ILO/UNECE Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units (CTU Code)

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This note provides information on the approval of the the Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units (CTU Code) by the Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24), following more than 2 years of intensive efforts. The text of the new CTU Code is available in Informal document No. 7.

The Committee may wish to underline the opinion of WP.24 that the new CTU Code would enhance the safety of workers and the general public during handling and transportation of containers at sea and on land. The Committee may wish to express the hope that the CTU Code would soon be extensively used and referred to by key stakeholders, including Governments and the transport industry. The Committee may also wish to endorse the new non-mandatory CTU Code and assist in its wide dissemination and application.

I. Background and mandate

1. At its previous session, the Inland Transport Committee (the Committee) was informed about the progress of the UNECE secretariat in preparing, in cooperation with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the International Labour Organization (ILO), a new global Code of Practice for Packing of Cargo Transport Units (CTU Code) that would improve the safety of workers and the general public during the handling and

transport of containers. The Committee requested the secretariat to present the results at its seventy-sixth session (ECE/TRANS/236, para. 40).

2. This document has been prepared in accordance with the programme of work of the Committee (ECE/TRANS/208, para. 106; ECE/TRANS/2010/8 and Corr.1, programme activity 02.9: Intermodal transport and logistics, item (k)). It provides background information on the preparation of the new CTU Code and summarizes achievements made by the Working Party on Intermodal Transport and Logistics (WP.24) in the area of safe handling of containers and other cargo transport units (CTUs).

II. Revision of the IMO/ILO/UNECE Guidelines for Packing of Cargo Transport Units

3. In 1997, the Committee approved the IMO/ILO/UNECE Guidelines for Packing of Cargo Transport Units: a document finalized by WP.24 in cooperation with IMO and ILO and providing guidance for the safe packing of cargo in freight containers and vehicles. These guidelines applied to transport operations in all surface and water modes of transport and to the entire intermodal transport chain. The Committee expressed the hope that the guidelines would help reduce personnel injury while handling containers and would minimize physical hazards to which cargoes were exposed in intermodal transport operations (ECE/TRANS/119, paras. 124–126).

4. In 2009, WP.24 agreed to contribute to a review and update of the guidelines initiated by IMO and requested the secretariat to coordinate with ILO and IMO to this end. It also acknowledged the need to follow a holistic approach in the revision of the guidelines in close cooperation with concerned industry groups (ECE/TRANS/WP.24/127, paras. 56-60).

5. In 2011, WP.24 adopted the terms of reference of a joint group of experts with the mandate to prepare and recommend for endorsement to IMO, ILO and UNECE a revised version of the guidelines in the form of a non-mandatory code of practice. The code of practice would reflect the latest information, best practices and requirements on the subject (ECE/TRANS/WP.24/2011/5).

6. The Group of Experts for the revision of the IMO/ILO/UNECE Guidelines for Packing of Cargo Transport Units (the Group of Experts) comprised experts from the transport, shipping and insurance sectors with a balanced representation of United Nations Member States and employers' and workers' organizations. It held four sessions from 2011 to 2013 in Geneva and was supported in its task by a working group on container safety that met in parallel to the IMO Sub-Committee on Dangerous Goods, Solid Cargoes and Containers (IMO DSC) in September 2013.

III. Finalization of the CTU Code

7. In November 2013, after more than two years of intensive efforts, the Group of Experts completed a comprehensive and globally applicable CTU Code that would improve the safety, quality and efficiency of international transport.

8. The CTU Code, which is more detailed than the previous guidelines, outlines theoretical information for packing and securing of cargo and gives practical measures to ensure safe transport. It provides guidance to all parties in the supply chain, not only packers, but also those who receive and unpack CTUs. Moreover, it addresses the issues of training packers and the packing of dangerous goods.

9. The CTU Code consists of 13 chapters supplemented by 10 annexes (see table of contents in the annex of this document). The full text is available, in English only, in Informal document No. 7.

10. WP.24 approved the CTU Code in October 2013, subject to minor amendments subsequently agreed by the Group of Experts at its November 2013 session, and requested the secretariat to transmit it to the Committee for consideration and endorsement. The competent bodies within IMO and ILO also plan to endorse the CTU Code in 2014 (ECE/TRANS/WP.24/133, paras. 59–67).

IV. Follow-up

11. In line with the terms of reference of the Group of Experts, IMO will be responsible for the publication of the English version of the CTU Code.

12. Following a suggestion by the Group of Experts, IMO DSC recommended that the CTU Code should be made more user-friendly and be available on the web, free of charge, to facilitate its wide dissemination and usage. IMO DSC also recommended that the secretariats of the three organizations should consider creating a website dedicated to the packing of cargo transport units.

13. WP.24 supported this idea and noted that the UNECE secretariat had already explored possibilities for hosting such a website.

14. Further information on the activities of the Group of Experts can be found at www.unece.org/trans/wp24/guidelinespackingctus/intro.html.

V. Conclusion

15. In light of the above, the Committee may wish to:

- Endorse the new non-mandatory CTU Code and assist in its wide dissemination and application, including translation into the official UNECE languages and the setting-up of a specific website.
- Express the hope that the CTU Code would soon be extensively used and referred to by Governments, the transport industry and other stakeholders in international container transport and might become an important element in transport and cargo insurance contracts.
- Congratulate WP.24 and the Group of Experts for completing the CTU Code within a very short time frame and for the effective cooperation with IMO and ILO on this important matter.

Annex

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