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Strategic questions of a horizontal policy nature:

Assistance to countries with economies in transition

Funding of technical cooperation activities

Note by the secretariat

Summary

Technical cooperation activities in the area of transport are first of all required to strengthen the capacity of countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia, in particular landlocked countries, to implement relevant United Nations legal instruments, norms and standards in transport.

The ITC is invited to:

- discuss this paper, and
- give guidance to the secretariat on the further improvement of capacity building and technical assistance activities in the field of transport through better opportunities in fund raising.

1. The work of the UNECE Transport Division is based on three pillars: regulatory work and relevant transport policy dialogue, analytical work and capacity-building/technical assistance activities. Technical assistance is seldom spontaneous and can only be successful when it is connected to the two other pillars of activity.

2. Acceding to and implementing United Nations legal instruments, norms and standards, transferring know-how and sharing best practices as well as implementing global commitments in transport have been a motto for the past decades and remains so.

3. The assistance is based on the main principles that it should be:

- demand driven;

- results oriented;
- focused on the countries with economies in transition; and
- linked to UNECE's normative work.

4. Seminars, workshops, conferences or field visits require careful preparation and financial coverage, which cannot be quickly achieved. As these activities are demand-driven, they also warrant many consultations with the recipient government, as well as extensive preparatory work. Lack of continuity in policies developed and partner-professionals involved may, therefore, be counterproductive to capacity-building efforts.

5. Technical cooperation activities in the area of transport are first of all required to strengthen the capacity of countries of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia, in particular landlocked countries, to implement relevant United Nations legal instruments, norms and standards in transport. In addition, as a response to increased demand by member States instead of trying to address all the tasks in each biennium with the same emphasis, comprehensiveness and depth, the UNECE transport subprogramme selectively identified strategic areas that deserve special attention.

6. While keeping the traditional areas of technical assistance, i.e. support to multi-country cooperation of transport investment planning, the four broad areas of strategic importance in the current biennium have been: sustainable transport development; climate change mitigation and adaptation; road traffic safety and Intelligent transport systems (ITS).

7. Nonetheless, over the longer term, technical assistance and capacity-building activities cover almost all the clusters of the Division. Most of the senior staff of the Division participated in these activities. The Regional Adviser ensures proper coordination of the work carried out in the Division and the assistance brought forward to countries with economies in transition.

8. In 2013, this budget was evenly divided between the three categories of work and devoted to SPECA countries. Consultancy work on road safety to improve the knowledge on this matter was carried out and the final report should be made available at the forthcoming session of the Working Party on Road Safety (WP.1) in 2014. A workshop conducted by UNECE staff on the international transport of dangerous goods by road, to which representatives of each SPECA countries¹ had been invited, was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in October 2013.

9. To support more specific actions towards SPECA countries and encourage these countries to join and implement the legal instruments managed by the UNECE Transport Division, Kazakhstan has been providing for the past three years a specific grant of US\$20,000 and this autumn, Kazakhstan provided a grant of US\$39,970² for the activities of the SPECA Programme Working Group on Transport and Border Crossing Facilitation (PWG-TBC) until 2015. As the former grant received for 2013 gave a non-spent amount of US\$26,600, the total sum available for technical assistance in Central Asia in 2014-2015 amounts to US\$66,570.

10. Besides the budget of the Regional Adviser for consultancy work, advisory missions and seminars and workshops, which amounts yearly to around US\$32,500, the Transport Division must raise extrabudgetary funding for technical assistance activities.

¹ SPECA (Special Programme for the Countries of Central Asia) countries: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.

² Note verbale Kazakh Mission to the UN in Geneva N°250 dated 18 October, 2013

11. All types of technical assistance services have been employed by the Division: advisory services, consultations, conferences, technical assistance in national or regional workshops. The demand for technical cooperation, consultations and capacity-building activities on transport matters outside the ECE region is increasing with the global nature of the legal instruments administered by the subprogramme. In 2013, technical assistance provided in this respect was most of the time outsourced:

(a) The Vehicle Regulations and Transport Innovations section provided technical assistance on the three Agreements on vehicles administered by the World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations through additional advisory missions:

- in a Conference of the countries of Arabic Gulf to inform them about the contents of the 1958 Agreement and the process to vehicle type-approval. This activity was funded by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).
- in an inter-ministerial Conference for countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, financed by the Inter-American Development Bank;
- in a national conference held in Ecuador at the request of the Ecuadorian Ministry of Transport and financed by the Ministry;
- in a workshop aimed at raising awareness on the 1958 and 1998 Agreements in Argentina and Uruguay. This mission was financed by the Swiss Embassy in Uruguay.

(b) As far as dangerous goods transport is concerned, the secretariat provided technical assistance in the international transport of dangerous goods by road (ADR) in Kenya at the request of UNEP, which financed the mission.

12. In the framework of the Transport, Health and Environment Pan-European Programme (THE PEP), THE PEP relay race (staffete) continued its journey in 2013 by passing the "baton" of key messages on sustainable mobility across cities in the ECE region. Following the last THE PEP workshop at Moscow in 2012, the 2013 THE PEP relay race workshop took place in Almaty (Kazakhstan) with the topic: Green and health-friendly sustainable mobility: Focus on urban transport in Central Asia. The workshop, organized in cooperation with the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Kazakhstan, the municipal authority of Almaty (AKIMAT) and UNDP, brought together over 100 experts from national and municipal authorities, private sector, civil society and academia. During the workshop, policy and scientific lectures were given as well as case studies presented by eminent city planners and urban transport experts on transport-related air pollution and emissions, on policies to foster active mobility in city centres and linking them with efficient and seamless public transport systems as well as on appropriate mobility management systems and investment needs in central Asian cities. At the end of the workshop, participants adopted a series of action points for policymakers in seven key areas that could create conditions conducive to the integration of sectoral policies and the achievement of more sustainable urban transport systems in Central Asia. Financial support was provided by the Governments of Austria, France, Norway and Switzerland.

13. The EuroMed Road, Rail and Urban Transport regional programme is funded by the Directorate General on Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid of the European Commission and entrusted to a consortium led by Safège. Its aim is to support the implementation of the Trans-Mediterranean Transport Network (TMT-N) through development of an appropriate regulatory framework and operational conditions. In the field of road transport and facilitation, the EU led project is based on close cooperation with the UNECE Transport Division and the IRU. It has organized several awareness raising workshops with speakers from the Transport Division (e.g. Jordan Awareness Raising Workshop on Main United Nations Road Transport Agreements was held in Amman on

28–29 May 2013 to present the objectives, key provisions and benefits of a number of UNECE conventions and agreements with the aim of assisting Jordan to accede to them). It has also resulted in a brochure on the United Nations legal instruments in road transport.

14. To promote the implementation of and accession to the TIR Convention, the Working Party on Customs Questions affecting Transport (WP.30), and in particular the TIR Unit, has the task to carry out capacity-building and technical assistance activities as well. Based on the PPP arrangements the TIR Unit and all its activities are funded through revenues in the TIR Carnets, thus from extrabudgetary resources. However, this extrabudgetary funding is not to be counted for technical assistance, even though there are some Technical Assistance activities involved as well. In 2013 they were:

- the TIR secretariat had organised and delivered, jointly with Finnish customs and the European Commission, a 2-day TIR technical seminar in Finland (June);
- the TIR secretariat gave presentations on TIR at several international conferences (e.g.: International Theoretical and Practical Conference on e-Government, Customs in Gabala/Azerbaijan, WCO IT conference on effective solutions for Coordinated border management in Dubai, United Arab Emirates);
- Capacity-building workshops were held in May 2013 in Baku/Azerbaijan and Dubai/UAE back to back with the Conferences mentioned above. In September 2013, a capacity-building workshop on the TIR Agreement and its implementation, organized together with UNESCAP, took place in Beijing, the People's Republic of China.

15. Border Crossing Facilitation (BCF) activities have been carried out mostly based on United Nations regular budget and whenever possible at the cost of inviting organizations:

- UNECE officers are regular lecturers/trainers at the OSCE Staff College on Border Crossing Management in Tajikistan;
- Staff of the Transport Division goes on advisory missions such as the International Trade Centre (ITC) conference on “Making the Most of WTO Accession: Transport Services Commitments and Liberalization”, where border crossing facilitation activities were presented (Tajikistan, April 2013).

16. The Euro-Asian Transport Links (EATL) project was exclusively financed, in its second phase, by the Russian Federation. Proposals have been made, at the request of the Russian Federation, to ask for extrabudgetary funding for the third phase, but this has not yet been achieved. A capacity-building workshop on “Financing Transport Infrastructure” was held in Geneva on 10 September 2013, back to back with the annual meeting of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics (WP.5) and the EATL Group of Experts. This workshop demonstrated the complexity of the substantive issues involved in financing transport infrastructure and the need to further analyse the issue in the ECE region.

17. In June 2013, the Belarus Government, through a letter from the Ambassador to the UNECE, asked the Transport Division to assist the Government to evaluate the existing potential of transport and logistics system and their contribution to better integration of the Belarus in international supply chains, to enhance its transit capacity and competitiveness in international transport market and contribute to overall economic development of the country. For this purpose, a Belarusian consultant was hired to support the preparation of the analysis of the transport and logistics system of Belarus. The report will serve as a background material for a national capacity-building round table in Minsk in December 2014. The results of the study will be presented to a wide variety of national stakeholders (Government Ministries, transport operators, logistics experts, businesses, academia, etc.), and policy recommendations will be discussed. The Ministry of Transport and

Communications, Ministry of Trade and the Ministry of Economy of Belarus are supporting this project.

18. A subregional capacity building workshop on Road Safety had been planned for 2012-2013 in Yerevan, Armenia. The event would have been mainly financed by a Global Road Safety Facility (GRSF) grant of the World Bank, with additional contributions from the host country and UNECE. UNECE had joined forces with the Government of Armenia to create a platform for discussion of relevant road safety issues, in the form of a targeted subregional workshop. The workshop should have brought together a wide range of interested parties from the public and private sectors to share their insights and discuss relevant issues and numerous aspects arising from the pillars of the Decade's Action Plan. Unfortunately, the break-down of communication on behalf of the Ministry of Transport of Armenia had rendered the organization impossible. A similar event in another country is now under consideration.

19. Delegates are invited to:

- (a) discuss this paper, and
 - (b) give guidance to the Secretariat on the further improvement of capacity-building and technical assistance activities in the field of transport through better opportunities in fund raising.
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