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Economic Commission for Europe**Inland Transport Committee****Seventy-eighth session**

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Item 5 (e) of the provisional agenda

Strategic questions of a modal and thematic nature:**Rail transport****Terms of Reference of the UNECE Group of Experts towards Unified Railway Law****Note by the secretariat****I. Terms of Reference****A. Scope of issues and achievements expected**

1. In line with the Joint Declaration on Euro-Asian Rail Transport and Activities towards Unified Railway Law, signed at the UNECE Ministerial Meeting “Making the Euro-Asian Transport Network Operational” on 26 February 2013, as well as with the draft legal provisions towards Unified Railway Law prepared by the Group of Experts, the Group during this phase will focus its work on the following issues:

(a) Coordinate the preparation and /or review the already prepared necessary documents for rail transport by the relevant international associations in the railway sector meaning the Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD), the Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF) and the International Rail Transport Committee (CIT), following the draft legal provisions prepared during the previous phase of the group of experts. The documents that should be prepared and/or reviewed during this phase are the following:

- Standard Model for the Consignment Note;
- Formal Report;
- Wagon List;
- Container Note;
- Charges Note;

- Subsequent Orders;
- Circumstances Preventing;
- Notification of Payment;
- Authorization to Escort;
- Missing Goods Report;
- Notification Correction;
- Provisional Analysis to Transit;
- Wagon Labels.

(b) The ITC resolution on Unified Railway Law (ECE/TRANS/2016/17) encourages Railway Undertakings and International Organizations for railways to test the draft legal provisions towards Unified Railway Law prepared, whenever possible, in practice. The Group of Experts should monitor the results of these pilot tests and prepare recommendations accordingly.

2. The Group of Experts should base its considerations on previous work of UNECE in this field, in particular the provisions of articles 2 and 5 of the Joint Declaration and the legal provisions prepared by the Group of Experts on Unified Railway Law.

B. Methods of work

3. The Group of Experts will be established and function in accordance with the UNECE Guidelines for teams of specialists approved by the Executive Committee of UNECE on 31 March 2010 (ECE/EX/2/Rev.1). At its first meeting, the Group of Experts will adopt a work plan, clearly defining its objectives and activities, including a time schedule for their implementation.

4. The Group of Experts is expected to meet twice in 2016, at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, before concluding its activities with the transmission of a report to the Working Party on Rail Transport at its seventieth session (November 2016, Geneva). This report shall also contain proposals for monitoring procedures and follow-up activities.

5. Translation of documents and simultaneous interpretation of its sessions in English, French, and Russian shall be provided by UN services (UNOG) for the two sessions held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

6. Participation in the Group of Experts is open to all concerned United Nations member countries and experts. Concerned intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as concerned railway companies, freight and forwarding industries are invited to participate and provide expert advice in compliance with United Nations rules and practices.

C. Secretariat

7. UNECE will provide secretariat services for the Group of Experts and shall ensure close cooperation with all stakeholders, including the European Commission, the Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF), the Organization for Cooperation between Railways (OSJD), the International Rail Transport Committee (CIT) and concerned regional commissions of the United Nations, particularly the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).