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**Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and  
Connectivity (TWG-STTC)**

21<sup>st</sup> Session  
7-8 September 2016  
Ashgabat, Turkmenistan

**International Conventions and Agreements**

(Item 4.2 of the Agenda)

*Note by ECE/ESCAP*

1. Harmonizing the legal regimes relating to international transport continues to be a prerequisite to ensure the smooth and efficient movement of goods through national borders. During its previous sessions, the Working Group reaffirmed the importance of the international legal instruments listed in the protocol of its second session and re-iterated the invitation to SPECA countries to intensify their efforts to accede to all of them as soon as possible. The Working Group stressed that accession to the international legal instruments would only serve transport facilitation if followed by proper implementation/enforcement measures.

2. The accession status to the conventions recommended by ESCAP resolution 48/11 and the Group is shown in Annex 1. Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan have acceded to all the seven conventions recommended by ESCAP resolution 48/11, and Kazakhstan has acceded to six of the seven conventions. There is a need for other SPECA countries to take concrete steps towards accession to the rest of the seven core conventions.

3. Unfortunately, with respect to UN legal instruments identified by the second Session of SPECA PWG- TBC, the situation is the same as last year, i.e.:

- Taking into consideration the fact that the new Annex 8 to the “Harmonization” Convention has already been in force since 20 May 2008, it would be beneficial for the whole region if Afghanistan and Turkmenistan ratify this Convention and if all SPECA countries improve its implementation, with a view to ensuring territorial continuity and consequently facilitating transport within the sub region and beyond;

- At the previous sessions of the Working Group, detailed information has been provided on the Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR). Bearing in mind that such type of transport is at high risks for safety and security, it might be opportune that SPECA countries consider the relevance of joining the Agreement.

4. Taking into consideration the complexity of dealing with different international, subregional and bilateral agreements, SPECA countries may avail the Regional Network of Legal and Technical Experts on Transport Facilitation, which was established by the ESCAP Secretariat in February 2014. The Network provides advice and promotes the harmonization and coordination of different legal instruments on transport facilitation. It is a key modality for building an effective legal regime and technical capacity for international transport facilitation in the region.

5. The Inter-Governmental Agreement of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on the Facilitation of International Road Transport, which was developed with ESCAP's assistance and signed during the annual Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in September 2014 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, is expected to open more than 15,000 km of Asian Highway routes for transport operation and services, with the longest route stretching more than 9,000 km from Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation to Lianyungang, China. The Agreement will also develop landlocked Central Asia's access to sea by road through China and Russian Federation.

6. International transport is regulated by bilateral or multilateral legal instruments. Often, these instruments do not produce the expected positive effects because they are not effectively implemented. The most common reasons for that are: the complexity of texts, difference between the agreements concluded on the same subject by one country with each of its neighbors, or lack of implementation capacity. On the basis of several comparative studies on subregional and bilateral agreements, ESCAP has developed draft models, which can be used as guidelines for gradual region-wide harmonization of legal instruments on cross-border and transit transport by road at both multilateral and bilateral levels.

7. Two Regional Meetings have been organized by ESCAP Transport Division, in December 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand and in May 2016 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on Harmonization of Legal Instruments and Documentation for Cross-border and Transit Transport by Road. The meetings reviewed and finalized the draft Models for Subregional Agreement on Transport Facilitation and for Bilateral Agreement on International Road Transport, and

proposed to submit them for adoption at the Ministerial Conference on Transport to be held in the fourth quarter of 2016.

8. The Database of Agreements on International Road Transport was developed by ESCAP Transport Division under the project on “Harmonization of Legal Environment for Operations of International Road Transport in the ESCAP region” financed by the Government of the Russian Federation, fulfilling the request of the Second Meeting of the Regional Network of Legal and Technical Experts on Transport Facilitation (25-26 March 2015, Incheon, Republic of Korea). It includes the texts of over 200 documents, including bilateral agreements and other legal instruments related to international road transport or related to it, as well as selected major multilateral agreements containing provisions on international road carriage.

9. The texts of the bilateral and multilateral agreements in the database were collected by the secretariat from ESCAP member countries and international organizations and from different other sources, including official websites of Government agencies (Ministries of Transport, Chambers of Commerce, etc.) and legal databases. The secretariat has made every effort to ensure that information and documents provided in this database are accurate and up-to-date based on available information. However, SPECA countries are invited to access the database and review the information for accuracy. The countries are also encouraged to send updates on the agreements when they appear so allowing the secretariat to include them in the database. The database can be accessed under the following web link:  
<http://www.unescap.org/resources/database-agreements-international-road-transport>

**The Thematic Working Group may wish to**

- Reaffirm the importance of the UN legal instruments listed in the protocol of its second session and reiterate the invitation addressed to SPECA countries to intensify their efforts to accede all of them as soon as possible;
- Stress the importance of proper implementation/enforcement measures for international legal instruments;
- Encourage concerned SPECA countries to proceed swiftly with the ratification of the SCO Agreement on Facilitation of International Road Transport to ensure its soonest entry into force;

- Invite SPECA countries to encourage their experts to join the ESCAP Regional Network of Legal and Technical Experts on Transport Facilitation and to participate more actively in its activities;
- Indicate further technical assistance needed from ECE and ESCAP secretariats in relation to the accession and/or implementation of the transport-related UN legal instruments.
- Provide the text of missing agreements, additions, corrections or updates to the Database of Agreements on International Road Transport

**Accession Status to the UN International Agreements and Conventions Listed in the  
Protocol of the Session of the TWG-STTC  
as of 1 August 2016**

№	Agreements and Conventions	AFG	AZE	KAZ	KGZ	TJK	TKM	UZB
<b><u>Conventions Recommended by UNESCAP Resolution 48/11</u></b>								
1	Convention on Road Traffic (1968)		X (2002)	X (1994)	X (2006)	X (1994)	X (1993)	X (1995)
2	Convention on Road Signs and Signals (1968)		X (2011)	X (1994)	X (2006)	X (1994)	X (1993)	X (1995)
3	Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR, 1956)		X (2006)	X (1995)	X (1998)	X (1996)	X (1996)	X (1995)
4	Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Commercial Road Vehicles (1956)	X (1977)	X (2000)		X (1998)			X (1999)
5	Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention) (1975)	X (1982)	X (1996)	X (1995)	X (1998)	X (1996)	X (1996)	X (1995)
6	International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods (1982)		X (2000)	X (2005)	X (1998)	X (2011)		X (1996)
7	Customs Convention on Containers (1972)		X (2005)	X (2005)	X (2007)			X (1996)
<b><u>Additional Agreements and Conventions:</u></b>								
8	European Agreement on Main International traffic arteries (AGR) (1975)		X (1996)	X (1995)				
9	European Agreement on Main International Railway Lines (AGC) (1985)							
10	European Agreement on Important International Combined Transport Lines and Related Installations (AGTC) (1991)			X (2002)				
11	European Agreement supplementing the Convention on Road Traffic opened for signature at Vienna on 8 November 1968 (1971)			X (2011)				
12	European Agreement supplementing the Convention on Road Signs and Signals (1971)		X (2011)	X (2011)				
13	European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles Engaged in International Road Transport (AETR) (1970)		X (1996)	X (1995)		X (2011)	X (1996)	X (1998)
14	Customs Convention on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles (1954)							
15	European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR) (1957)		X (2000)	X (2001)		X (2011)		
16	Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be used for such Carriage (ATP) (1970)		X (2000)	X (1995)	X (2012)	X (2011)		X (1999)

- Notes: 1. X - Final signature, ratification, accession;  
2. AFG – Afghanistan; AZE – Azerbaijan; KAZ – Kazakhstan; KGZ – Kyrgyzstan; TJK - Tajikistan; TKM – Turkmenistan; and UZB – Uzbekistan.