

REPORT
OF THE 22nd SESSION OF THE SPECA THEMATIC WORKING GROUP
ON SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT, TRANSIT AND CONNECTIVITY¹

1-2 November, 2017
Astana, Kazakhstan

¹ This report has been issued without formal editing

INTRODUCTION

Organization

The 22nd session of SPECA Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity (TWG-STTC) was held from 1 to 2 November 2017 in Astana, Kazakhstan and was hosted by the Ministry of Investment and Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The session was conducted in English with simultaneous interpretation into Russian language.

Attendance

Representatives of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Republic of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Tajikistan participated in the session. The session was also attended by representatives of UNECE, UNESCAP, and the Islamic Development Bank. The list of participants is enclosed at the end of the present document.

PROCEEDINGS

1. Opening of the Session

The session was opened by Mr. Dauren Sabitov, Deputy Chairman of Transport Committee of the Ministry of Investment and Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the chair of the SPECA Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity (SPECA TWG-STTC). In his statement, the Chair welcomed the participants to the 22nd session of the SPECA TWG-STTC, which provided an opportunity to promote regional transport cooperation and dialogue on improvement of transport system efficiency in the SPECA sub-region. The Chair expressed his gratitude to the Islamic Development Bank for its continuous support to TWG-STTC. Opening statements were also delivered by the representatives of UNECE and UNESCAP.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

The Project Working Group reviewed and adopted the draft agenda as contained in documents SPECA/TWG-STTC (22)/2.

3. Adoption of the report on the 21st Session of the TWG-STTC

The report of the 21th Session of the TWG-STTC, held on 7-8 September 2016 in Ashgabat, available in English and Russian, was presented by Kazakhstan. The Project Working Group adopted the report.

4. Review of transport projects, activities and initiatives:

- 4.1 Transport infrastructure projects, activities and initiatives at national and international level, including development of dry ports to facilitate intermodal transport in SPECA countries

Background document: SPECA/TWG-STTC (22)/2;

Representatives of UNESCAP and UNECE presented their respective initiatives and efforts aimed at promoting the development of transport infrastructure in SPECA countries.

The TWG encouraged SPECA member States to become Parties to the Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports, to actively participate in the Intergovernmental Agreement on the TAR network and the AH network, and in the planned 2018 international conference for launching the “operationalization of Euro-Asia Transport Links”.

- 4.2 Accession and implementation of International Conventions and Agreements

Background document: SPECA/TWG-STTC (22)/3

After a presentation made by the UNECE representative, UNESCAP presented the activities related to the establishment of the UNESCAP Regional Network of Legal and Technical Experts on Transport Facilitation.

The TWG requested the states to: intensify their efforts to accede to and effectively implement UN transport-related legal instruments, and ask any further assistance needed from UNECE and UNESCAP secretariats for its efficient implementation. The Project Working Group also encouraged SPECA member countries to assign members to UNESCAP Regional Network of Legal and Technical Experts on Transport Facilitation.

- 4.3 Establishment and operation of national coordinating mechanisms for transport facilitation

This topics was discussed within the Agenda item 4.2.

Background document: SPECA/TWG-STTC (22)/4

- 4.4 Identification, isolation and elimination of major bottlenecks along international transport routes

Background document: SPECA/TWG-STTC (22)/5

UNECE secretariat informed the Group of the latest activities related to the Annex 9 on rail border crossing and Annex 8 on road border crossing to the International Convention on Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods. UNECE secretariat also outlined the developments related to the implementation of the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention-1975) and e-TIR procedures. ESCAP secretariat informed the Group on the outcomes of the Third Session of the Ministerial Conference on Transport held in Moscow

(December 2016) including the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017-2021) and the Intergovernmental agreement on International Road Transport along the Asian Highway Network.

ESCAP secretariat briefed the TWG about various activities, meetings and workshops undertaken in the framework of strengthening transport connectivity, development of railways in the ESCAP member States, building more efficient legal regime to facilitate cross-border and transit transport - including Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport, Regional Cooperation Framework for the Facilitation of International Railway Transport, and Transport Facilitation Tools. ESCAP secretariat also informed about the development of the Regional Study “The use of Logistics Information Systems for increased efficiency and effectiveness“. The representative of Kazakhstan reported on national activities in identification, isolation and elimination of major bottlenecks along international transport routes (road, rail and ports).

4.5 Progress towards Unified Railway Law

Background document: SPECA/TWG-STTC (22)/6

UNECE reported on the state-of-the-art in preparing the draft Unified Railway Law.

The TWG welcomed progress on the pilot tests, encouraged member States to actively participate in the activities of the Group of Experts towards the Unified Railway Law and provide comments on the draft legal provisions.

4.6 Progress report on the development of the SPECA TWG-STTC transport databases

Background document: SPECA/TWG-STTC (22)/7

UNECE reported on the recent developments in transport data collection and on the progress in setting-up indicators for the SDG Targets.

The TWG encouraged SPECA member States to provide statistical data on the inland transport sector for the regional databases to support SDGs monitoring. The TWG welcomed transport statistics capacity building initiatives; in particular SPECA Workshop on Transport related SDGs, to be held back-to-back with the 22nd SPECA TWG-STTC meeting and encouraged SPECA member States to implement the Workshop conclusions.

4.7 Establishment and strengthening of public-private partnerships in the SPECA region

Background document: SPECA/TWG-STTC (22)/7

4.8 Road safety issues and policy interventions in the SPECA region

Background document: SPECA/TWG-STTC (22)/8

UNECE and UNESCAP secretariats representatives made a presentation on their activities as regards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.6 target and the UN Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020, as well as road safety projects (Road Safety Performance Review (RSPR) and SafeFITS) and capacity

building events.

The TWG invited SPECA member States to raise efforts to develop and implement national road safety strategies and action plans with goals and targets in line with the Decade of Action for Road Safety and SDG Target 3.6. Building on the results of Road Safety Performance Review and SafeFITS projects, the TWG encouraged SPECA member States to identify the most pressing road safety issues which could be subject to technical assistance in road safety through RSPR preparation.

5. Programme of Work 2018-2019

Background document: SPECA/TWG-STTC (22)/9;

The TWG reiterated its commitment to achieving SDGs reflected in the future SPECA TWG-STTC activities and adopted the TWG Programme of work 2018-2019.

6. Review of the draft agenda for the 23rd session of the SPECA TWG-STTC

Background document: SPECA/TWG-STTC (22)/10

The TWG reviewed the draft agenda of the 23rd session of the Project Working Group.

8. Adoption of the conclusions and recommendations

The Project Working Group reviewed and adopted the conclusions and recommendations of its 22nd session, included below.

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

22nd Session
1-2 November 2017
Astana, Kazakhstan

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
OF THE 22nd SESSION OF THE SPECA THEMATIC WORKING GROUP ON
SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT, TRANSIT AND CONNECTIVITY¹**

1-2 November 2017
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CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the presentation and consideration of the session documents as stipulated in the Agenda of the 22nd session of SPECA Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Transport, Transit and Connectivity (TWG-STTC), the Thematic Working Group (TWG) adopted the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. The TWG adopted the report of its 21st session.
2. The TWG encouraged those SPECA States which have not already done so, to take measures towards becoming parties to or implementing the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Asian Highway Network, the Intergovernmental Agreement on the Trans-Asian Railway Network and Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports and actively participate in the ESCAP's activities related to the development of aforementioned Intergovernmental Agreements.
3. The TWG invited SPECA member States to exchange information with the secretariat (e-mail: escap-ttd@un.org) on a regular basis on the latest status of key national and regional road and rail infrastructure projects, and provide the secretariat with information on ongoing and/or planned initiatives relating to policies and projects aiming at developing dry ports of international importance in their respective States.
4. The TWG encouraged SPECA member States to implement the recommendations of Phase III of the EATL Project. The TWG invited SPECA member States to actively participate in the planned 2018 international conference for launching the "operationalization of Euro-Asia Transport Links" and to work closely with UNECE and other interested parties in organizing it.
5. The TWG reaffirmed the importance of the UN transport-related legal instruments and invited SPECA member States to intensify their efforts to accede to and effectively implement them.

6. The TWG encouraged SPECA countries to take actions to support the implementation of the Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, including the Regional Action Programme for Sustainable Transport Connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2017-2021).
7. The TWG highlighted the importance of identifying any outstanding issues related to the accession to and implementation of the transport-related UN legal instruments, and took note of UNECE and UNESCAP secretariats readiness to provide assistance in this regard.
8. The TWG took note of the UNESCAP transport facilitation efforts including the Regional Strategic Framework for the Facilitation of International Road Transport, and the Regional Cooperation Framework for the Facilitation of International Railway Transport.
9. The TWG invited SPECA countries to apply transport facilitation tools including the Model Subregional Agreement on Transport Facilitation, Model Bilateral Agreement on International Road Transport, Model Multilateral permit for International Road Transport and Standard Model of Logistics Information Systems.
10. The TWG encouraged SPECA member States to consider acceding to the Intergovernmental Agreement on International Road Transport along the Asian Highway Network.
11. The TWG appreciated the development of the regional online database of bilateral agreements on international road transport by the UNESCAP secretariat and invited SPECA member States to further update and refine the database.
12. The TWG invited SPECA member States to delegate members to the UNESCAP Regional Network of Legal and Technical Experts on Transport Facilitation and to further participate in its activities.
13. The TWG invited SPECA member States to consider introducing new technologies in the implementation of the UN transport-related legal instruments by joining those

allowing electronic information processing (additional protocol to CMR (e-CMR), and TIR Convention (e-TIR).

14. The TWG welcomed progress on the pilot tests, in relation to the development of Unified Railway Law and encouraged member States to actively participate in the activities of the Group of Experts towards the Unified Railway Law and provide comments on the draft legal provisions.
15. The TWG encouraged SPECA member States to provide statistical data on the inland transport sector for the regional databases to support SDG monitoring. The TWG welcomed transport statistics capacity building initiatives; in particular SPECA Workshop on Transport related SDGs, to be held back-to-back with the 22nd SPECA TWG-STTC meeting and encouraged SPECA member States to use the Workshop conclusions.
16. The TWG invited SPECA member States to raise efforts to develop and implement national road safety strategies and action plans with goals and targets in line with the Decade of Action for Road Safety and SDG Target 3.6. The SPECA member States should ensure the collection of quality road safety data and seek technical assistance in data collection to facilitate the regular monitoring of the SDG on road safety.
17. The TWG acknowledged the updated Regional Road Safety Goals, Targets and Indicators for Asia and the Pacific;
18. Building on the results of Road Safety Performance Review and SafeFITS projects, the TWG encouraged SPECA member States to identify the most pressing road safety issues which could be subject to technical assistance in road safety through RSPR preparation.
19. The TWG reiterated its commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) reflected in the future SPECA TWG-STTC activities and adopted the TWG Programme of work 2018-2019.
20. The TWG approved the Draft Agenda for the 23rd session of the SPECA TWG-STTC.

21. The TWG encouraged all SPECA countries to actively participate in the forthcoming sessions of SPECA TWG-STTC.
22. The TWG agreed that the date and location of the next session would be decided later and invited SPECA member States to express their interest in hosting the 23rd session of SPECA TWG-STTC.
23. The TWG expressed high appreciation to the Islamic Development Bank for the continuous support to SPECA TWG-STTC activities.
24. The TWG expressed its sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Investment and Development of the Republic of Kazakhstan for hosting the 22nd session of SPECA TWG-STTC and excellent arrangements made for the session.
25. The conclusions and recommendations of the 22nd session of SPECA TWG-STTC were unanimously adopted on 2 November 2017 in Astana, Kazakhstan.