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INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on the Construction of Vehicles

A. REPORT OF THE WORKING PARTY ON ITS ONE-HUNDRED-AND-FIFTEENTH SESSION

(23-26 June 1998)

Addendum 1

SPEECHES GIVEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING FOR SIGNATURE
OF THE AGREEMENT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHING
OF GLOBAL TECHNICAL REGULATIONS FOR WHEELED VEHICLES,
EQUIPMENT AND PARTS WHICH CAN BE FITTED AND/OR BE USED
ON WHEELED VEHICLES
(Geneva, 25 June 1998)

Note: Transcripts of the addresses received by the secretariat are reproduced below (TRANS/WP.29/638, paras. 35-38).

Ms. Margo Oge,
Director,
Office of Mobile Sources,
Office of Air and Radiation,
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Good afternoon ...

I am honoured to be here today at the meeting of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Working Party on the Construction of Vehicles.

I am especially honoured to represent the United States at the signing of the Agreement Establishing Global Technical Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles. This Agreement offers an unprecedented opportunity for the cooperative development of environmental and safety regulations. We believe it provides the means to protect the health of our citizens and environment, while at the same time providing a predictable regulatory framework for a global automotive industry.

We are, more and more, citizens of the world, not only our individual country, state or community. This is just as true when we are representing our country, our industry or our interest group.

Pollution does not know political boundaries. While we have made progress in cleaning and protecting our environment, the job is not done. We cannot rest. We still face tremendous environmental and public health challenges. Vehicles still contribute too much to our air pollution and global warming problems.

A critical element of this Agreement is that present levels of environmental protection or vehicle safety will not be lowered in order to achieve regulatory harmonization.

Let me state explicitly that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will maintain our high standards to provide the greatest possible environmental protection for all. We will do this as we have in the past - working with industry, environmental groups and Governments toward this common goal. This Agreement provides a global process for any country to develop the same protections for its citizens.

We can take pride in the progress we have made in providing a cleaner, healthier environment for our citizens. Our air is generally cleaner and healthier today than 20 years ago, preventing tens of thousands of respiratory illnesses and deaths every year. Despite this progress, however, air pollution remains a major public health issue around the world. Even though current vehicles are much cleaner than they were not long ago, the number of vehicles being driven and the number of miles driven is increasing steadily.

And, threats to the global environment are mounting from global warming. President Clinton is committed to securing realistic and binding Agreements that ensure that all countries - both industrial and developing - participate in this process and do their part to address the challenge of global warming.

The challenge of global warming is an excellent example of the principle that the nations of the World "are all in this together".

Economic prosperity is vital to sustainable development. So too is a healthy environment. Both are essential for creating opportunity and prosperity for communities around the Globe. As we have learned in the United States, we can - and must - have both.

Environmental protection and economic progress go hand-in-hand. In the United States, we have proved that you can have strong environmental protection and still have strong economic growth and prosperity. We do not have to choose between our health and our jobs. In fact, the two are inextricably linked.

As we intensify the World Trade Organization's ability to invigorate trade, let us also strengthen its ability to safeguard our global environment. As we stand on the threshold of the twenty-first century, we must establish the tools needed to get the job done. We must infuse the institutional process with strong public health, environmental and safety values. We must empower every country - and every citizen - to protect the air, land and water on which we all depend.

This forum is a catalyst to promoting and achieving vehicle pollution standards that will benefit all countries around the world. As automotive technology advances, we must keep in mind the importance of the cooperative efforts of industry, environmentalists and Government toward achieving parallel advances in our regulations.

Most importantly, we must promote environmental well-being and encourage economic progress, so that people living today and generations to come have the chance for full and healthy lives.

The Global Agreement we are signing today is a significant step in that direction. The successful implementation of this Agreement will be an even more profound step toward achieving our common goal of clean, safe vehicles around the world.

Thank you.

Mr. Ricardo Martinez, M.D.,
Administrator,
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration,
U.S. Department of Transportation

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to be here for this historic occasion.

Before we sign this Agreement Concerning the Establishing of Global Technical Regulations, allow me a few brief remarks on what has been accomplished here this week; what made this Agreement possible; and, what this Agreement holds for the future of motor vehicle safety around the world.

This Agreement makes possible the development of global regulations concerning the safety performance of motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment. And it does this in a transparent manner that encourages the widest participation by all interested parties: the public; industry; and Governments.

By establishing a Compendium of candidate regulations, we are afforded the opportunity to share our knowledge and expertise and create a forum for ensuring that best practices are incorporated in the establishment of global regulations. The results of safety performance assessments of our respective regulations based on real world injury data should be helpful in identifying those best practices.

The Agreement respects the sovereignty of each Contracting Party to adopt safety regulations at the levels it deems necessary while facilitating the participation of each and every interested nation. This is especially important for developing nations. When it is estimated by the WHO that by the year 2020, the economic health burden of motor vehicle crashes will rank as second after depression and before heart disease in developing nations, the availability of regulations that address the problem should help reduce that burden.

It is the culmination of efforts that began more than nine years ago when WP.29 agreed on a mission statement that set forth a vision of creating a world forum for the harmonization and development of motor vehicle safety regulations that would improve safety the world over.

By creating this forum, the major motor vehicle producing regions of the world are committing themselves to seeking best safety practices in establishing global regulations.

This Agreement, in parallel with the 1958 Agreement, will serve our public, our industry and our Governments for many years as motor vehicle safety regulations are made more responsive to safety research and changing and innovative automotive technology around the world.

With regard to safety research, at the recent International Technical Conference on the Enhanced Safety of Vehicles (ESV), the International Harmonized Research Activity (IHRA) - an activity that includes many of the countries around this room - has decided to add side impact protection as an activity and also to seek ways of involving the developing nations.

The most interesting aspect of what made this Agreement possible was that all interested parties agreed on what I believe to have been the essential criterion in crafting this Agreement - and that is - that the Agreement would not be a procedure for seeking and establishing the lowest common safety denominator. On the contrary, they agreed that its primary purpose is to continuously improve safety - the essence of the missions of the regulatory agencies of the many Governments represented here this week.

It is also most appropriate that we recognize the contributions of our constituents in this achievement. From the outset of the negotiations that led to this Agreement, the public and our regulated industry have been vocal and consistent in their position that we should harmonize upward. The public has underscored the importance of high standards and openness in the processes that are part of this Agreement. This organization, WP.29, has responded, as evidenced by the availability of its documents on the Internet, and the opening of this meeting to the public.

But we need to do more. We must do everything we can to ensure that all parties interested in vehicle safety have the opportunity to comment on and discuss the proposals that will be made for establishing global harmonization of regulations under this Agreement. This includes the general public and their organizations because they buy and use the vehicles; the industry because they build them and must meet the requirements; the medical and public health professionals because they best understand safety in terms of real injuries to real people; and the regulatory agencies of Governments because, by law, their mission is to develop regulations that will provide the social benefits that are the ultimate goal.

We, the Governments and our regulatory agencies, need to provide those opportunities at the earliest stages of the process and also keep the stakeholders informed of the progress of our proposals. Of course, while each of us has different ways of seeking comment or input, all of us should make it clear that we welcome it.

This policy has been affirmed at the highest political level. In his speech at the Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the WTO, President Clinton proposed that "the WTO provide a consultative forum where business, and labour, and environmental, and consumer groups can provide regular and continuous input to help guide further the evolution of the WTO".

If all interested parties are given an opportunity to be heard at the earliest possible stage, then when a global regulation is established, and we are at the stage of initiating our respective processes for considering its adoption into our domestic law, we should have a high level of public support.

My agency is currently in the process of developing ways of encouraging and facilitating the participation of these groups at the very inception of activities in the United States relating to this Agreement. Just last week, we held a public meeting at which we continued our public dialogue on this subject with a view to gathering ideas for a notice requesting comment on how NHTSA should promote participation. Given the response we received, let me assure you that there is great interest in what this Agreement may produce.

Thus, we need to put an appropriate and workable process in place in time to be able to implement this Agreement the minute it enters into force.

In closing, I congratulate all of you for your perseverance, your good will, and patience in achieving an agreement that makes possible the development of globally harmonized regulations for a global industry that will yield safety benefits around the world.

Ambassador George E. Moose,
Permanent Representative of the United States of America
to the Office of the United Nations and other
international organizations at Geneva

On behalf of the United States, it is my pleasure to join you in this meeting of Working Party 29 and share this special event in which we open for signature the new Agreement Concerning the Establishing of Global Technical Regulations for Wheeled Vehicles, Equipment and Parts.

In this regard, it is my particular pleasure to announce that I bring with me today the full power authority of my Government to sign this new Agreement, and that on behalf of the United States of America I will today sign the new Agreement.

The United States wishes to express its appreciation to the many delegations that have participated in the development of this Agreement, for their efforts in working in a spirit of cooperation and compromise to develop the final text that we have before us today.

We want to note in particular our appreciation of, and respect for, the diligence and spirit of cooperation on the part of Japan and the European Communities in the resolution of issues between our respective authorities during intensive negotiations over the past several months.

We also wish to extend special thanks to the conscientious and skilful work of the Chairman of the Working Party 29 in presiding over this process and to the tireless efforts of the secretariat who provided technical counsel and prepared and distributed the many drafts of the Agreement.

From the perspective of the United States, one of the most important aspects of the new Agreement is the possibility it provides to interested parties to pursue simultaneously policy objectives relating to health, safety and environmental protection, on the one hand, and international trade, on the other.

My colleagues from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) have highlighted the many ways in which the new Agreement will promote health, safety and environmental policy objectives within the global community.

I would like to build upon their remarks by emphasizing our belief that the new Agreement should also promote trade policy objectives in a number of important ways.

First, work towards harmonization should permit manufacturers and others to have a greater measure of certainty and predictability as to what is required of them as they design and sell their products.

Second, as this work towards harmonization proceeds, the participants in the global marketplace are likely to face fewer divergences in regulatory systems. This should have the beneficial result of reducing manufacturing and testing costs.

By eliminating what is in effect a barrier to international trade in automobiles, harmonization will further enhance the competitiveness of, and create jobs at, the world's most efficient vehicle manufacturers.

As indicated by my colleagues before me, the Agreement demonstrates that we can, and will, pursue these objectives, while simultaneously promoting high levels of health, safety and environmental protection, without compromising the ability of our societies to maintain stringent domestic measures.

In short, the Agreement can help us find common ground in international efforts to better integrate trade policy and health/safety/environmental policies, in support of the broader objectives of sustainable development.

Ms. Viola Groebner,
Head of Unit,
European Commission,
representing the European Community

Mr. Chairman, Ambassador, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear colleagues and friends,

The European Community is pleased to be able to declare that it can accept the content of the Agreement as presented at today's meeting, and that it is committed to completing its internal procedures at the earliest opportunity in order to sign the Agreement without delay.

The harmonization of technical regulations for motor vehicles at the international level is an issue of utmost importance. In view of the trend towards globalization, and ever increasing co-operation across countries and oceans, and with a view also to bringing down remaining barriers to trade such as varying technical standards, it is the duty of legislators to develop and adopt regulations at the international level, and to promote and ensure their application.

International harmonization is not only in the interest of automobile manufacturers and suppliers who will benefit from economies of scale. It is equally in the interest of consumers who will be better able to afford products which assure a high level of safety, which are energy efficient and which - last but not least - contribute to the protection of the environment.

Participating in and furthering harmonization at the international level has long been one of the major goals of the EC and its Member States in the motor vehicles sector. It is for that reason that Member States were either among the founding members of the 1958 Agreement or have since acceded to this important international Agreement. Most recently the EC itself became a Contracting Party to the Agreement, alongside its Member States.

I would like to take this opportunity to underline the important work which has been carried out over the last 40 years under the 1958 Agreement, and to express our gratitude in particular to the secretariat of WP.29 and its Chairman as well as to the Chairmen of the various Working Parties for their most efficient and most valuable work undertaken in the framework of this Agreement.

In this context the EC would also like to congratulate, once again, the Government of Japan for its decision also to accede to the 1958 Agreement - I hope that other countries will do likewise. We are reassured by Mr. Shimodaira's statement yesterday that once Japan has gained some experience with the functioning of the 1958 Agreement it will give positive consideration to accede progressively to a larger number of Regulations.

The Agreement to be signed today is the result of active negotiations undertaken by all participants in the framework of WP.29. It is a further important step with regard to international harmonization, with the intention of extending such harmonization across the globe. Since November last year and based on a mandate from WP.29, over the course of a number of meetings, the United States, Japan and the EC have negotiated a compromise text which takes into account the comments and observations which other participants had made

at earlier WP.29 meetings. The trilateral negotiations were held in a spirit of mutual understanding and confidence, and on behalf of the EC's negotiators I would like to thank our colleagues from Japan and the United States for the excellent rapport which has been established throughout the negotiations.

I am confident that this spirit of co-operation and understanding will prevail once it comes to putting flesh on the bones, that is to say, once we start negotiating global technical regulations to be established in the global registry.

Since the Agreement is to operate in parallel with the 1958 Agreement, the task of establishing global regulations is greatly facilitated by the fact that we can rely on the expertise and experience of all those involved in such extensive work on the latter.

Before concluding my remarks I would like to recall that the new, global/parallel Agreement is a compromise text, the content of which can be accepted by the EC. It is true that we would have liked to have a more ambitious text as far as the obligations of Contracting Parties are concerned, and on the mutual recognition of type approvals, etc., but compromise entails "give and take". We are anxious, of course, to see that a detailed review of the implementation of the new Agreement is conducted once we and our partners have a few years' experience in the functioning of the Agreement in parallel with the 1958 Agreement. On that occasion a number of issues should be taken into consideration, including the role of type approvals and mutual recognition. Since there is no provision for such a review in the text of the Agreement, it has been agreed between the United States, Japan and the EC that a text on such a review should be attached to the minutes of WP.29. A draft text was distributed at the last WP.29 meeting in March.

It is our understanding that, once the Agreement has been signed by the EC, this text - which has already been agreed between the three parties - is included in the minutes of the next WP.29 meeting.

Let me assure this audience that the EC is committed to co-operating actively under both of the Agreements.

Mr. Malcolm Fendick,
Chief Mechanical Engineer,
Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions,
United Kingdom,
on behalf of the presidency of the European Community

On behalf of the many European Community Member States represented here today, may I add my warm welcome to this historic event. Since its inception, WP.29 has striven for international harmonization of vehicle technical standards. The fact that so many countries have been drawn into its work is a testament to its effectiveness.

The renewal of WP.29's mission around 10 years ago confirmed two key elements of its work. The first, that of improving both safety and environmental standards, almost goes without saying, and yet as our knowledge increases, so the opportunity to make further significant advances still presents itself. But as the quantity of regulations increases we need to make extra efforts to sustain the quality of our regulatory efforts. Good quality regulations are those which clearly meet their primary objective, but do so with the minimum of impact on the industry and ultimately, the consumer in terms of cost and bureaucracy.

In this signing we are witnessing the United States' individual renewal of commitment to the international work of WP.29, and the creating of this new Agreement creates a new international legal base for this participation. I believe this move is an essential step in the process of confidence building. Knowing the immense goodwill that has characterized the putting together of this new Agreement, I am sure that we can look forward to substantial regulatory harmonization in the future.

Mr. Kazuyoshi Matsumoto,
Director,
Office of International Affairs,
Engineering and Safety Department,
Road Transport Bureau,
Ministry of Transport,
Japan

It is a great pleasure for Japan that the Global Agreement has been adopted after a long and sincere deliberation on the text.

The negotiation process of this Agreement was not an easy one. Although we shared a common objective of the enhancement of safety, environmental protection, energy efficiency and anti-theft performance, we had to overcome a lot of difficulties which arise from the difference of legal and technical systems in different countries and regions.

Japan, together with the European Community and the United States, has been engaged in enthusiastic negotiation to tackle these difficulties, driven by a strong motivation to establish a framework in which the difference among systems are bridged, and global harmonization of regulations is achieved.

The adopted Agreement clearly provides the transparent process to establish global technical regulations concerning vehicles' safety, environmental protection, energy efficiency and anti-theft performance, that can be, and should be, applied by all countries in the world.

Although we cannot make concrete reference to the time frame for Japan's accession to this Agreement, which is subject to our domestic legal procedures, we believe it is very important that many countries join this process and cooperate in this forum towards the global harmonization of technical regulations.

We are happy to have this day the adoption of the Agreement on the eve of the next century, into the new era of global harmonization of vehicle regulations.

Mr. Joc White,
Assistant Secretary,
Motor Transport,
Federal Office of Road Safety,
Department of Transport and Regional Development,
Australia

Chairman, Ambassador Moose, Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The completion of the Global Agreement represents a major milestone in efforts to establish international harmonization of vehicle standards.

Harmonization of standards will ensure the world community is provided with best practice vehicle regulations covering safety, environment and anti-theft.

Major contributions have been made by many countries to achieve the outcome we are witnessing today. However, without the commitment of the United States from the outset, it would not have come to fruition at this time.

Establishment of Global Technical Regulations under the new Agreement has the potential to achieve all the benefits being sought by Governments and the business sector - resulting in safer vehicles at lower cost.

Australia has been a strong and enthusiastic supporter of initiatives to develop mechanisms to facilitate international harmonization of vehicle standards.

The next most important phase is to use the Agreement to develop Global Technical Regulations. This will require the cooperation of all parties. Australia trusts that Global Regulations will be developed through the Agreement in a speedy fashion.

Australia would like to take this opportunity to record its appreciation of the contributions made by the United States, the EC and the Japanese delegations - as well as by the secretariat - to the development and finalization of the Global Agreement.

Australia would like to acknowledge, in particular, the contributions made by Mr. Frank Turpin of the United States delegation, Mr. Gauvin as Chairman of the Working Party, and the hardworking secretariat led by Mr. Jan Jerie.

We believe that the finalization and signing of the Agreement by the United States today is a significant step forward. Of course, there needs to be widespread support for the full potential benefits to be achieved.

Mr. Chairman, Australia looks forward to these benefits being achieved as soon as possible and welcomes the commitments made today.

Mrs. Nicole Pageot,
Director General,
Road Safety,
Transport Canada

We express our support in principle with the intent of the Agreement Concerning the Establishing of Global Technical Regulations which will ensure high levels of safety, environmental protection and energy efficiency. We have circulated the March 1998 draft of the Agreement to other Federal Government Departments, other levels of Government, the automotive manufacturing industry, as well as other interested stakeholders.

Although the consultations with interested parties are well advanced, we are not yet in a position to make a commitment to sign the Agreement. However, we will continue to actively pursue our consultations in order to develop a national position that is widely accepted in Canada.

We would like to particularly commend the work of the United States, the EC and Japan for their efforts in finalizing this Agreement.

Mr. John Summersell,
Manager,
Motor Vehicle Liaison,
South African Bureau of Standards

The Republic of South Africa congratulates the principal participants on the recent progress which has been made in providing a document which would appear to be at an acceptable level to most participants of the ECE WP.29. We also congratulate the tireless dedication of the secretariat in meeting the never-ending demands which were placed upon them.

In South Africa, the majority of people do not own private transport, therefore whilst we are committed to a high level of standards, we must also give consideration to those which are affordable. We must also be cautious that, whilst we progress in our development, we do not leave others behind. Therefore, it is responsible for us to think on a regional basis, and in so doing give consideration to such needs as they occur.

It is with these thoughts in mind that we favour the new Global Agreement as it not only addresses the requirements of developed nations, but also provides considerations to those regions which are in the process of developing, and gaining a higher economic level.

We consider that the Global Agreement will encourage various non-member countries to be drawn into the process of international harmonization, and as such will build bridges between regions of all economic levels.

South Africa is in the process of communicating the principles of both the 1958 Agreement and the Global Agreement to all stakeholders, and with their agreement will motivate the formal processes through the various channels.

Mr. Andrew H. Card, Jr.,
President,
International Organization of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers (OICA)
Chief Executive Officer,
American Automobile Manufacturers Association (AAMA)

The International Organization of Motor Vehicle Manufacturers (OICA) welcomes the successful completion of the United Nations Agreement on Global Technical Standards as a major development in the effort to harmonize global automotive standards.

Automotive regulations and testing procedures currently vary across countries. These variations have substantially little impact on improving vehicle safety or environmental protection. Instead, they increase the costs of vehicle development and production by requiring automakers to design, test and build vehicles differently for different global markets. Variations in regulations and test procedures create significant non-tariff trade barriers that reduce choices for consumers and marketing opportunities for all manufacturers.

The Agreement on Global Technical Standards seeks to eliminate these non-tariff barriers by providing a forum in which its signatories can discuss differences in regulations and work together to achieve uniform global standards. The Agreement is a significant step forward in the international effort to reduce the duplicative testing and overlapping standards that burden consumers and manufacturers around the world.

Dr. Nicolas M. Rogers,
Secretary-General,
International Motorcycle Manufacturers Association (IMMA)

IMMA's mission statement includes a commitment to global harmonization.

IMMA's philosophy is to be actively involved wherever and whenever appropriate. In relation to global harmonization this has meant:

- moving IMMA's headquarters to Geneva,
- supporting the development of the Global Agreement wherever possible,
- in future, actively participating in the development of Global Regulations (IMMA's harmonization group has already identified seven subjects for action).

IMMA wishes to congratulate WP.29 on the achievement marked by today's ceremony and is very pleased that it is happening in our home town.

Mr. Louis Sylvain Ayrat,
Technical Secretary,
Liaison Committee for the Manufacture of
Automobile Equipment and Spare Parts (CLEPA)

Mr. Chairman, Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,

CLEPA, the Liaison Committee for the Manufacture of Automobile Equipment and Spare Parts, was established here in Geneva in 1959 and became associated with the work of WP.29 the following year, 1960, with the aim of promoting the harmonization of the technical regulations.

Since the inception of the harmonization process, WP.29 has constantly increased its influence; numerous countries have acceded to the 1958 Agreement, while new harmonized regulations have been drawn up and signed by a large number of countries, thus eliminating many obstacles to the free movement of our products and guaranteeing the consumer a high level of safety and environmental protection.

At the same time, the companies belonging to our association have become "global"; they now sell their products throughout the entire world and now also have production sites and development centres throughout the entire world. You will understand from this that the world-wide harmonization of the technical regulations is an important factor in our development.

A major advance was initiated in the early 1990s with the Revision of the 1958 Agreement, allowing countries which are not members of ECE and the regional integration organizations to become Contracting Parties. We actively supported this new development and the recent accessions to the Revised Agreement of the European Union and Japan show that our efforts have not been in vain.

When it became clear that the Revised Agreement could not incorporate all the important forces in the motor-vehicle world, CLEPA welcomed and supported the new WP.29 initiative to draft a new International Agreement.

The work on this initiative has reached a successful conclusion today with the signing of this Agreement by the United States of America, and we welcome this fact. This demonstrates even more clearly WP.29's role as a forum.
