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TRANSPORT AND TOURISM ISSUES

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**ORGANIZATION AND FORMAT OF A FORUM OF ASIAN MINISTERS
OF TRANSPORT***

Note by the secretariat

SUMMARY

The Ministerial Conference on Transport held in Busan (Republic of Korea) in November 2006, adopted a Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and a Regional Action Programme (RAP) for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2007-2011. Subsequently, the Commission, noting the strong support expressed by the Ministerial Conference for the establishment of a Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport (FAMT), adopted by Resolution 63/9 of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific at its 63rd session held in Almaty (Republic of Kazakhstan) in May 2007 both the Declaration and the Regional Action Programme. The Commission, through Resolution 63/9 requested, among others, the Executive Secretary to undertake a detailed study on the establishment of the Forum, including its organization and format, and submit the findings to the Committee on Managing Globalization at its fourth session and the Commission at its sixty-fourth session for their consideration. The secretariat prepared the present document for the consideration by the Committee on Managing Globalization at its fourth session, as well as an Information Paper providing details of the organization and format of other similar bodies of relevance for the matter. The Committee is invited to express its preferences for the organization and format of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport and provide the secretariat guidance for further work to assist the Commission. The establishment of the FAMT should be seen as a parallel, integrated process with the review of the conference structure of the Commission, including its thematic and sectoral priorities and subsidiary structure.

* Issued without editing owing to late submission.

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(This document will be accompanied by an Information paper containing details on the organization and format of similar bodies, in the original official languages of those bodies.)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Ministerial Conference on Transport held in Busan (Republic of Korea) in November 2006, adopted a Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and a Regional Action Programme (RAP) for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, 2007-2011. The establishment of a Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport is contained as a specific action in the RAP. In the Report of the Conference the secretariat was also requested to undertake a detailed study on the organization and format of the forum to be considered at the intergovernmental level.

2. Subsequently, the Commission, noting the strong support expressed by the Ministerial Conference for the establishment of a Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport (FAMT) as a formal regional mechanism to facilitate close collaboration and more frequent interaction in order to address emerging issues, adopted Resolution 63/9 "Implementation of the Busan Declaration on Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific and the Regional Action Programme for Transport Development in Asia and the Pacific, phase I (2007-2011)" at its 63rd session held in Almaty (Republic of Kazakhstan) in May 2007. The resolution requests, among others, the Executive Secretary to undertake a detailed study on the establishment of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport, including its organization and format, and submit the findings to the Committee on Managing Globalization at its fourth session and the Commission at its sixty-fourth session for their consideration.

II. BACKGROUND

3. Given the rapid pace of growth in the region and the need to promote regional cooperation and policy leadership in transport, policy direction at the ministerial level is paramount to the successful development of regional transport policies to enhance capacities and improve access in the Asian and Pacific region and to meet common economic and social interests.

4. Past experience with the Ministerial Conferences held in Seoul (2001) and Busan (2006) clearly indicates the substantial and speedy progress that can be achieved following Ministerial decisions; the Intergovernmental Agreements on the Asian Highway Network and on the Trans-Asian Railway Network are the most convincing examples in this sense.

5. Establishing a Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport to promote regional cooperation and policy leadership at the ministerial level for the advancement of transport as a key to regional development will further assist ESCAP members and associate members in their efforts to cooperate in improving transport in and across the region. The frequency of the meetings could be adapted as to ensure the best coordination with the regular meetings of ESCAP bodies, taking into account the outcome of the review of the conference structure of the Commission, including its thematic and sectoral priorities and subsidiary structure.

6. In this most dynamic region, it is anticipated that the Forum would play a major role in ensuring a proper coordination of transport policies at the regional level, in a rapidly changing environment; through coordinated and consistent action responsive to changing conditions while working towards achieving the long-term vision of an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system.

7. Transport needs longer-term thinking and care in decisions because of their long-term impacts on economies and on the society in general. To become a reference body, to improve the understanding of the key role played by transport and in order not to jeopardize the financial, time and human resources required by this policy making process, the Ministers could focus on a limited number of essential issues at each of their meetings.

8. The Forum will be concerned with every aspect of the organization and operation of land transport including infrastructure, its technical operation, economic and commercial side of transport operations. Transport being closely bound up with patterns of economic development, it must act accordingly; the possible areas of debate and political guidance by the Ministers could therefore be:

- a) **Transport infrastructure development**, which would include, but will not be limited to promoting the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks and adopting policy guidelines for the development of inland container depots and dry ports and information and communication infrastructure for an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system.

- b) **Transport facilitation**, which would include, but will not be limited to harmonizing transport laws, rules and regulations at sub-regional and eventually regional levels so as to simplify/harmonize the border-crossing procedures and documentation for international transport and facilitate the movement of goods and passengers. Creating, implementing and administering a system of multilateral transport permits granting increased access to markets in the region could also be an area of debate for the Ministers.
- c) **Transport logistics**, which would include, but will not be limited to creating common standards for the operation of logistics service providers as well as promoting the development of efficient logistics service centres and clusters throughout the region.
- d) **Road safety**, which would include fostering better awareness and understanding of road safety issues and potential interventions, and improved international collaboration in the region
- e) **General policy** issues, such as:
 - i. Fostering a deeper understanding, among policy makers and wider audiences, of the role of transport as a key to economic growth and of its impact on the society as a whole;
 - ii. Defining compatible sub-sectoral policies that may be necessary to ensure the optimal use and most rational development of an international integrated intermodal transport and logistics system;
 - iii. Cooperating with other subregional and regional organizations/entities, with a similar profile;
 - iv. Optimizing the utilization of public and private financial, human and other resources and the effective allocation of existing scarce resources.

9. As requested, the secretariat, bearing in mind the UN Rules of Procedure, undertook an in-depth study of the possible organization and format of the Forum, reviewing past or present examples of similar bodies among which the European Conference of Ministers of Transport(ECMT), the Asia-

Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Organization for Railways Cooperation (OSJD), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Inter-governmental Commission of the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (IGC-TRACECA), the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

10. The results of the study, synthesized in part III of this document, present various options with respect to the establishment of the Forum, its legal status, membership, structure, leadership, administrative arrangements, venue of the meetings, official and working language, frequency and duration of the meetings, financing the operation of the Forum, working methods and follow-up. The first option is the option that appears to be the most appropriate and therefore the most feasible. Where one option has been directly inspired by one of the similar bodies, the source was indicated explicitly; if there is no indication of the source, the options are the result of compilation by the secretariat.

11. The secretariat prepared the present document for the consideration by the Committee on Managing Globalization at its fourth session, as well as an Information Paper providing details of the organization and format of other similar bodies of relevance for the matter, in the original language of those bodies. The Committee is invited to express its preferences for the organization and format of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport and provide the secretariat guidance for further work to assist the Commission. The establishment of the FAMT should be seen as a parallel, integrated process with the review of the conference structure of the Commission, including its thematic and sectoral priorities and subsidiary structure.

12. During the course of the Ministerial Conference on Transport held in Busan (Republic of Korea) in November 2006, the ministers also proposed that “consideration be given to the establishment of a cooperative mechanism in which transport ministers of the Pacific countries could exchange experiences, and that this matter should be considered with Pacific regional organizations, including the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the secretariat of the South Pacific Community”.

13. In this regard, the Committee might wish to consider this proposal for a future debate, taking into account the results of the establishment of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport. The Committee might also wish to advise the secretariat on further work in this respect.

III. PROPOSALS FOR THE ORGANIZATION AND FORMAT OF THE FORUM OF ASIAN MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT

A. Establishment

14. There are several possibilities to formalize the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport. Considering the national legislation of the countries in the region, UNESCAP Rules of Procedure as well as precedents, the most feasible options include the following:

(a) Option 1

15. The Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport may be established by Resolution of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Such a resolution will be time bound, providing a procedure to report on its implementation and for possible revisions.

16. In this case, the preparatory procedures will be the same as for an ESCAP resolution where an individual country or a group of countries may decide to sponsor a draft resolution for consideration by member States.

17. The detailed Rules of Procedure of the Forum could then be submitted to Ministers for consideration and approval at the first meeting of the Forum.

18. This procedure has been followed in the establishment of the Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and Other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (ACPR).¹

(b) Option 2

19. The Forum is established through an intergovernmental legal instrument such as Agreement. However, this might require a long preparatory process at the regional and national level, requiring negotiation of the Agreement followed by approval by the various ministries, Government etc.

¹ "Resolution 143 (XXX) Rationalization of the conference structure of the Economic Commission of Asia and the Far East, 490th meeting, 5 April 1974".

including designation of the representative of the Government and issuance of full powers to sign the Agreement. The advantage of this proposal is that it would provide better guarantees for the implementation of the Agreement. This approach has been used in the establishment of the ECMT, IGC- TRACECA, OSJD, ASEAN, SADC.

B. Legal status

(a) Option 1

20. The Forum is established as an intergovernmental body. The Forum was imagined as a formal regional mechanism to facilitate close collaboration and more frequent interaction in order to address emerging issues in the region. Being an intergovernmental body would add weight to the Forum's agreed policies and would ensure international recognition of its work. This was the process followed in the establishment of the ECMT, ASEAN, SADC.

(b) Option 2

21. The Forum is established as a non-governmental body. In this case, the rules governing its functioning may be more flexible but, at the same time, the Forum may not be recognized as policy maker at regional level.

C. Membership

(a) Option 1

22. The Forum is composed of full members, associate members and observers. The full members of the body will be the States which are members of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. The associate members of the Forum are the associate member States of ESCAP and States with a direct interest in or link to Asian transport, if they so request. Any other Government/international organization including the development banks may become observer, after its application for observer membership has received the unanimous approval of the Forum. Associate members may be represented by delegates who may express views at all meetings of the Forum, all documents originating in the body will be communicated to them, but they

will not have the right to vote. The observers may attend the meetings and express views on subjects within their specific competencies, upon approval by the Chairperson.

(b) Option 2

23. The Forum is composed of full members and observers. The full members of the Forum will be the States which are members or associate members of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. Any other State/international organization including the development banks may become observer after its application for observer membership has received the unanimous approval of the Forum.

D. Structure

24. The Forum will be composed of those Ministers who are responsible for transport in their own Governments. In those cases where, in one Government, different transport questions are dealt with by two or more Ministers, any of those Ministers may participate in the work of the Forum provided that no member Government will have more than one vote in the body.

(a) Option 1

25. There will also be established a “subsidiary” body composed of senior officials appointed on the basis of one alternate/deputy for each Minister. The subsidiary body called Senior Officials’ Meeting (SOM) will meet, in principle, one day before the meeting of the Forum and between the meetings (in case the Forum will meet every two years). The function of the subsidiary body will be:

- To agree on and prepare the decisions to be taken by the Forum;
- To deal with questions delegated to it by the Forum;
- To liaise with the secretariat on the measures taken in different countries to implement the conclusions reached within the Forum.

26. Depending on the subjects on the agenda of the meeting the Ministers may decide to include in their national delegation experts from other areas than transport, such as Customs, insurance, banking etc.

27. The Forum may establish Working Groups, time bound, on sub-sectoral issues or on specific issues (ad hoc).

28. The secretariat of the Forum will act as Rapporteur of the meeting.

29. This has been the agreed structure of the ECMT, ASEAN, SADC

(b) Option 2

30. No subsidiary body will be established, it will belong to the Forum itself to agree on and prepare the decisions to be taken and to liaise with the secretariat. The Forum will not have the competence to establish Working Groups.

E. Leadership

(a) Option 1

31. The leading figures of the Forum will be the Chairperson and two Vice Chairpersons (First and Second); they will be elected, as representatives of their Governments, at the beginning of each meeting from the participating ministers, endeavouring to reflect a balanced representation of the Forum's member Governments.

32. The chairpersonship will be assumed on a semi- automatic basis namely the Chairperson will be succeeded by the first Vice Chairperson etc. Basically, each meeting will elect the Second Vice Chairperson.

33. This option has the advantage of ensuring continuity, predictability and transparency. In case a meeting is held outside the administrative seat of the Forum, the minister representing the host Government will take automatically the Chairpersonship, in conformity with the rules to be established in the Rules of Procedure of the Forum.

34. This format of leadership functioned successfully for decades in the ECMT.

(b) **Option 2**

35. The Chairperson and one Vice Chairperson will be elected at the beginning of each meeting, by the participating ministers or their mandated representatives. This option would be more time consuming and would ensure a lower degree of predictability in terms of planning the meetings.

(c) **Option 3**

36. Election of a Board of the Forum, composed of five members, of which one will be designated as the Chairperson and the other four as Vice Chairpersons. The mandate of the Board should be limited in time (for two sessions of the Forum), as to give the possibility to other ministers to take over the responsibility.

F. Administrative arrangements

37. The administrative seat of the Forum will be in the UNESCAP, Bangkok, Thailand. The secretariat shall be composed of staff of the UNESCAP-TTD. Members of the Forum can contribute in kind by sending, at their expense, national experts to support the work of the secretariat.

38. The secretariat will be responsible for the preparation of the agenda, records and minutes of the meetings of the Forum. They will also act as Rapporteur of the meeting, will take note of the conclusions of the Forum and will be responsible for the distribution of documents and the safekeeping of the archives of the Forum.

G. Venue of the meetings

(a) **Option 1**

39. The Forum will meet at its administrative seat, UNESCAP, Bangkok. In this case, the participants will bear their own costs; the cost of the meeting facilities will be borne by the regular budget of the UNESCAP. This option has the advantage of ensuring a better predictability of the activities.

(b) **Option 2**

40. The Forum will meet in other place than Bangkok, upon invitation by one of the members. In this case the inviting Government will bear the costs of the meeting facilities (room, interpretation in all the languages etc.) and all the costs of the secretariat, except their salaries.

H. Official and working languages

(a) **Option 1**

41. The official languages will be the same as for ESCAP namely Chinese, English, French, and Russian. This option would be the most appropriate in case the Forum will be an inter-governmental body established through a Commission resolution. Should the Forum meet in a different place than Bangkok, the host country will bear the costs of interpretation in all the four languages.

(b) **Option 2**

42. The official and the working language of the Forum will be English. This option would reduce financial implications, in terms of translation of documents and interpretation during the meetings, especially when meetings are convened in other place than the administrative seat of the Forum and the host country will bear the costs related to translation and interpretation. The decision of having a unique official and working language was taken by APEC and ECO.

I. Frequency and duration of meetings

(a) **Option 1**

43. The Forum will meet every two years for two days. The meeting of the Ministers will be preceded by a one day meeting of the subsidiary body composed of senior officials. This option would ensure a reasonable frequency for the decisions to be possibly passed through national procedures of approval and at least start being implemented and would provide ministers with substance for their consideration, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the Forum. At the same time, meeting every two years would ensure a consistent approach of the major directions in transport development, taking into account the biennial Work Programme of the ESCAP. This proposal could also be appropriate to ensure the best coordination with the regular meetings of

ESCAP bodies, taking into account the outcome of the review of the conference structure of the Commission, including its thematic and sectoral priorities and subsidiary structure.

(b) Option 2

44. The Ministers will meet every year: it has to be taken into account that Ministers are public persons and have numerous responsibilities and commitments at national level and might therefore not be available for annual meetings. The Ministers are supposed to discuss a limited number of strategic issues with long-term impact on the regional transport policy; an annual meeting might thus dilute/diminish the substance of the debate, while increasing the costs of the functioning of the Forum.

(c) Option 3

45. The Ministers will meet every three years: in this case the time between meetings would be too long and could negatively influence the continuity, consistency and coherence of the debate.

J. Financing the operation of the forum

(a) Option 1

46. Each participating Government will bear the costs incurred by the participation of its representatives in the meetings of the Forum. In case the meetings take place at the administrative seat of the Forum, the expenses relating to the organization of the meeting (room, interpretation etc) will be born by the regular budget of the UNESCAP.

(b) Option 2

47. The functioning of the Forum will be financed through annual contributions by member Governments. This is the way most of the similar bodies' activities are financed: IGC-TRACECA, ASEAN, ECMT, SADC.

K. Working methods

48. The main objective is to avoid the creation of a bureaucracy therefore the operating procedures should be flexible, enabling the Forum to reconcile the factors of national interest to member Governments while smoothly adapting to the changes in the region. The Ministers are

supposed to agree on transport policy approaches and guidelines and frameworks for cooperation, prepared for their consideration by the Senior Officials' meeting, based on documents prepared by the secretariat.

49. As a rule, the Forum should make its decisions/reach its conclusions through consensus; however, should there be a need for a vote, decisions will be taken with a majority to be established through the Rules of Procedure of the Forum. Each Government has only one vote, irrespectively of the number of representatives it empowers to be members of the Forum.

50. At each meeting, the Forum will deal with whatever subjects would be useful to Ministers but, as a rule, no more than three strategic issues should be included on the agenda of the meeting. Discussion could cover all modes of transport but should avoid overlap with sectoral or modal organizations such as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO). Depending on the strategic issues included on the agenda and upon indication by the Forum, the secretariat will facilitate contacts and involve specialized organizations as required by Ministers.

L. Follow-up

51. The Forum (through its Chairperson) or a restricted group mandated to this effect by the Forum (the Board, in case this option will be chosen) may, by unanimous agreement, transmit its conclusions to the ESCAP with a request that the ESCAP should adopt the conclusions concerned as its own decision. The conclusions reached within the Forum and approved by the ESCAP shall be put into effect in the countries, in agreement with them. The Ministers of Transport, members of the Forum, acting individually within the area of their national competence, will take or propose whatever measures may seem to them to be the most appropriate for the implementation of the agreed policies.

IV. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE COMMITTEE

52. The Committee is invited to consider the options and to express its preferences with respect to the organization and format of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport. The Committee is also invited to advise the secretariat with respect to the further steps, time frame and any other matter deemed necessary by the Committee in order to enable the secretariat to best assist the Commission.

53. During the course of the Ministerial Conference on Transport held in Busan (Republic of Korea) in November 2006, the ministers also proposed that “consideration be given to the establishment of a cooperative mechanism in which transport ministers of the Pacific countries could exchange experiences, and that this matter should be considered with Pacific regional organizations, including the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the secretariat of the South Pacific Community”. Taking into account the results of the establishment of the Forum of Asian Ministers of Transport, the Committee might wish to consider this proposal for a future debate. The Committee might also wish to advise the secretariat on further work in this respect.

Annex I

RELEVANT EXAMPLES OF SIMILAR BODIES

1. In undertaking the study, the secretariat reviewed past or present examples of similar bodies among which the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT), the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Organization for Railways Cooperation (OSJD), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Intergovernmental Commission of the Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (IGC-TRACECA), the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). This Annex is an outline of the main aspects of interest in the organization and functioning of those bodies; more details are contained in the Information paper accompanying the present document.

A. EUROPEAN CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF TRANSPORT (ECMT)

2. The European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) is an intergovernmental organization established by a Protocol signed in Brussels on 17 October 1953. It comprises the Ministers of Transport of 44 full Member countries, 7 Associate countries and 1 Observer country.

3. The ECMT has been attached to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) from the very beginning for purposes of general administration. From its budget, made of members' contributions, the OECD pays the salaries and expenses of the administrative secretariat and provides whatever facilities may be required for the proper working of the ECMT. Whenever a body of the ECMT meets elsewhere than at its administrative seat, the host country pays all the expenses incurred by the meeting except the salaries of the administrative secretariat which are paid by the OECD. Member Governments of the ECMT who are not members of the OECD contribute to the expenses of the ECMT under special arrangements concluded between them and the OECD.

4. Following developments in Europe including the enlargement of the European Union to 27 member States, in May 2006, the Council of Ministers agreed on the transformation of the Conference into an International Transport Forum. This new supporting structure replaces the former ECMT

Committee of Deputies and nearly all working groups which will cease during a transitional period. The only group to be retained as a permanent structure is the Working Group on Road Transport, which will continue to manage the European multilateral quota and any related issues.

B. ASIA-PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION (APEC)

5. Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is an informal forum that promotes economic growth and trade expansion among its 21 “Member Economies”; it operates as a cooperative, multilateral economic and trade forum. The official language of APEC is English.

6. Every year one of the 21 APEC Member Economies plays host to APEC meetings and serves as the APEC Chair. The host economy is responsible for chairing the annual meetings of the APEC and also fills the Executive Director position at the APEC Secretariat. The Deputy Executive Director position is filled by a senior diplomat from the economy which will host in the next year.

7. Sectoral Ministerial Meetings are covering areas such as education, energy, environment and sustainable development, finance, human resource development, regional science and technology cooperation, small and medium enterprises, telecommunications and information industry, tourism, trade, transportation and women's affairs. Recommendations from these meetings are provided to APEC Economic Leaders for their consideration. The Transportation Ministers Meetings (TMM) were held in 1995, 1997, 2002, 2004 and 2007 in Bali (Indonesia), Lima (Peru), Victoria (Canada), Washington DC (United States) and Adelaide (Australia).

8. The APEC Secretariat is based in Singapore and operates as the core support mechanism for the APEC process. It provides coordination, technical and advisory support as well as information management, communications and public outreach services.

9. APEC activities are centrally funded by small annual contributions from APEC Member Economies; they also provide considerable resources to assist in the operations of APEC. These include the secondment of professional staff to the Secretariat; the hosting of meetings; and partial (or full) funding of some projects. Additional contributions from the public or private sectors of any APEC Member(s) and other sources may also be made directly to APEC activities on a voluntary basis.

C. ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)

10. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was established in 1967 in Bangkok by five original Member Countries, and comprises today ten Member Countries. The highest decision-making body in ASEAN is the annual meeting of the ASEAN Heads of State and Government. The framework of cooperation in transport is established through the Ministerial Understanding on ASEAN Cooperation in Transportation, signed in Bali (Indonesia) in 1996.

11. The ASEAN Transport Ministers (ATM) meet twice a year on rotational basis to discuss issues of common interest and to set policy directions in the transport sector. The Meeting of ASEAN Transport Ministers is chaired by the host country, which is also bearing the costs of the Meeting. It is rather common that travel and accommodation for Ministers are also born by the host country. The ASEAN Senior Transport Officials Meeting (STOM) is the executive body to supervise, coordinate, and review programmes and directions set by ASEAN Transport Ministers. The STOM is also the consultative body on developing consensus on transportation issues in areas of common interest in the international fora. Normally, only the costs of the STOM meeting facilities (room, etc) are born by the host country.

12. The ASEAN Secretariat, headed by the Secretary-General of ASEAN, is mandated to initiate, advise, coordinate, and implement ASEAN activities. The operational budget of the ASEAN Secretariat is prepared annually and funded through equal contribution of all ASEAN Member Countries.

D. ORGANIZATION FOR RAILWAYS COOPERATION (OSJD)

13. The highest authority of OSJD is the meeting of ministers responsible for railways. The meeting considers and makes decisions at the governmental level on all the issues relating to OSJD activities, taking into account recommendations of the OSJD conference of directors general. The meeting, as a rule, takes place once a year. The OSJD conference of directors general considers and makes decisions on issues relating to OSJD activities within the competence of the member railways. The conference takes place, as a rule, once a year, one or two months prior to ministers' meeting.

14. Both the meeting and the conference are held by rotation in the countries of the member railways. The functioning of the OSJD is funded by contribution of member railways.

E. SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC)

15. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) is an intergovernmental organization established in 1980 and comprising fourteen member States. The main objective of the organization is the economic and social integration of its members.

16. The common transport policy of the SADC has been established through the Protocol on Transport, Communications and Meteorology. The Protocol provides for the creation of a Southern African Transport and Telecommunications Commission (SATCC) composed of the Committee of Ministers responsible for transport, communications and meteorology portfolios in the SADC member States, the Committee of Senior Officials, sub-sectoral committees (e.g. road transport, railway transport, infrastructure etc.), ad hoc working structures as well as a Technical Unit. The Technical Unit has monitoring functions and provides, among others, technical, secretarial and administrative support to the SATCC.

17. The Committee of Ministers meets at least once per year and is chaired on a rotating basis by the nominated Minister representing the country responsible for coordinating the transport, communications and meteorology sectors. The Committee of Senior Officials meets at least twice per year and is chaired on a rotating basis by the nominated official representing the country responsible for coordinating the sector.

18. The functioning of the Southern African Transport and Telecommunications Commission (SATCC) including the Committee of Ministers is funded through annual contributions by SADC member States.

F. INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COMMISSION OF THE TRANSPORT CORRIDOR EUROPE-CAUCASUS-ASIA (IGC-TRACECA)

19. The Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) was established in 1998 through the Basic Multilateral Agreement on International Transport for Development of the Europe-the Caucasus-Asia Corridor (MLA) to regulate the issues regarding the implementation and the application of provisions

of the Agreement. The IGC functions as a Meeting of representatives of the Highest Governmental Authorities of the twelve Parties or their authorized representatives. Any representative, one for each Party, shall be nominated by the Government of that Party with full authority to make decisions for the purposes of the MLA; usually the Ministers of transport from the countries concerned are appointed as members of the IGC. The IGC is not a legal body.

20. The IGC meets regularly, not less than once a year; the Chairpersonship of the IGC rotates every year, according to the English alphabetical order. All decisions of the IGC are taken by consensus. The functioning of all the structures is financed through annual equal contribution by the Parties.

G. ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (ECO)

21. The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) is an intergovernmental regional organization established in 1985 for the purpose of promoting economic, technical and cultural cooperation among the Member States. ECO is the successor organization of Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) which functioned since 1964 up to 1979. ECO Secretariat is based in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran. The organization has embarked on several projects in priority sectors of its cooperation including energy, trade, transportation, agriculture and drug control.

22. The Council of Ministers (COM) is the highest policy and decision-making body and is composed of Ministers of Foreign Affairs or such other representatives of the Ministerial rank as may be designated by the Government. The council of Ministers meets at least once a year by venue rotation among the Member States.

23. The Council of Ministers may propose the convening of meetings of other Ministers for the formulation and recommendation of Plans and projects in their respective fields.

24. The Council of Permanent Representatives (CPR) consists of the Permanent Representatives/Ambassadors of the Member States accredited to the Islamic Republic of Iran as well as to the ECO and the Director General for ECO Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

25. The Regional Planning Council (RPC) is composed of the Head of the Planning Organization of the Member States or such other representatives of corresponding authorities. The General Secretariat consists of six Directorates under the supervision of the Secretary General and his Deputies. Two Specialized Agencies and six Regional Institutes are acting under the supervision of the General Secretariat.

26. The activities of the organization are financed through member contributions. For the meetings organized at the ECO Secretariat, each participating delegation shall bear their own expenses. For the meetings held in the Member States, local hospitality and internal travel for the duration of the meeting shall be provided by the host country, while the international travel to and from the venue of the meeting shall be borne by the participating Member State. English is the official and working language of ECO.

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