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INLAND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Working Party on Customs Questions

affecting Transport

(23-26 September 2003)

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE ONE-HUNDRED-AND-FIFTH SESSION

**to be held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
starting at 15.00 hours on Tuesday, 23 September 2003 ^{*/}**

^{*/} For reasons of economy, delegates are requested to bring copies of the documents mentioned in this provisional agenda to the meeting. There will be no documentation available in the meeting room. Before the meeting, missing documents may be obtained directly from the UNECE Transport Division (Fax: +41-22-917-0039; e-mail: Poul.Hansen@unece.org). Documents may also be downloaded from the Internet web site of the UNECE Transport Division (<http://border.unece.org>). During the meeting, documents may be obtained from the UNOG Documents Distribution Section (Room C.111, 1st floor, Palais des Nations).

The full text of the Conventions in English, French and Russian as well as complete lists of Contracting Parties to the Conventions referred to in this agenda are available on the UNECE web site: <http://www.unece.org/trans/conventn/legalinst.html#customs>.

In accordance with the accreditation procedures applicable for all meetings held at the Palais des Nations, delegates are requested to fill-in the attached registration form (also available from the web site of the UNECE (www.unece.org)) and to transmit the duly filled-in form at the latest one week before the session to the UNECE Transport Division, either by fax (+41-22-917-0039) or by e-mail (Poul.Hansen@unece.org). In Geneva, prior to the session, delegates are requested to present themselves at the Pass and Identification Unit of the UNOG Security and Safety Section, located at Villa Les Feuillantines, 13 Avenue de la Paix (see attached map), for issuance of an identification badge. In case of difficulties, please phone the UNECE secretariat (Int. 72453).

GE.03-22708

Tuesday 23 September 2003

1. Adoption of the agenda
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3. Activities of other organizations of interest to the Working Party
4. Customs Conventions on the Temporary Importation of Private Road Vehicles (1954) and Commercial Road Vehicles (1956)
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 - (a) Status of the Convention
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6. Draft UNECE Conventions on International Customs Transit Procedures for the Carriage of Goods by Rail
 - (a) Resolution on the Use of the SMGS Consignment Note as a Customs Transit Declaration
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7. Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods Under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention, 1975)
 - (a) Status of the Convention
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 - (i) Implementation of Phases I and II of the TIR revision process and examples of best practices
 - (ii) Preparation of Phase III of the TIR revision process

- (iii) Draft amendments on the inclusion and attribution of voting rights to Regional Economic Integration Organizations (REIO)
- (c) Application of the Convention
 - (i) Functions and roles of the TIRExB, the TIR secretariat and the IRU
 - (ii) Control system for TIR Carnets - IRU SafeTIR
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 - (iv) Issues relating to technical provisions
 - (v) Inclusion of place and number of seals in the certificate of approval
 - (vi) The concept of authorized consignee in the TIR Convention
 - (vii) Practical application for the TIR procedure of the Customs Union between the Russian Federation and Belarus
 - (viii) TIR Handbook
 - (ix) Other matters
- 8. Prevention of the abuse of Customs transit systems by smugglers
- 9. Other business
 - (a) Dates of the next sessions
 - (b) Restriction on the distribution of documents

Friday 26 September 2003

- 10. Adoption of the report

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1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/209.

In accordance with the Commission's rules of procedure, the first item to be considered is the adoption of the agenda (TRANS/WP.30/209).

2. ACTIVITIES OF UNECE BODIES AND OTHER UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS OF INTEREST TO THE WORKING PARTY

The Working Party will be informed about the results of relevant sessions of the Inland Transport Committee and its subsidiary bodies as they relate to matters of interest to the Working Party.

At its one-hundred-and-second session, the Working Party decided to monitor the progress made in the field of transport and security by the World Customs Organization (WCO) (TRANS/WP.30/204, para. 7). The Working Party may wish to be informed of any new developments in this filed.

3. ACTIVITIES OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS OF INTEREST TO THE WORKING PARTY

The Working Party may wish to be informed about recent activities by the World Customs Organization (WCO), the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT), the European Commission (DG TAXUD) as well as by other governmental and non-governmental organizations as they relate to matters of interest to the Working Party.

4. CUSTOMS CONVENTIONS ON THE TEMPORARY IMPORTATION OF PRIVATE ROAD VEHICLES (1954) AND COMMERCIAL ROAD VEHICLES (1956)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/107/Rev.1; ECE/TRANS/108; (<http://border.unece.org> - Legal Instruments); TRANS/WP.30/2003/2.

(a) Status of the Conventions

The Working Party will be informed of the situation concerning the scope and the number of Contracting Parties to the Customs Conventions on the Temporary Importation of Private (1954) and

Commercial (1956) Road Vehicles. Information about the status of the two Conventions can be obtained from the following web sites:

<http://untreaty.un.org/ENGLISH/bible/englishinternetbible/partI/chapterXI/subchapA/treaty8.asp>,

and

<http://untreaty.un.org/ENGLISH/bible/englishinternetbible/partI/chapterXI/subchapA/treaty10.asp>.

(b) Application of the Conventions

The Working Party may wish to recall that, at its one-hundred-and-third session, it was informed by the AIT/FIA about specific problems in the application of the Conventions, in particular, about the system of “Carnet de Passage en Douane” (CPD).

The Working Party may wish to be informed about any new developments in this respect.

5. INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE HARMONIZATION OF FRONTIER CONTROLS OF GOODS, 1982 (“Harmonization Convention”)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/55; (<http://border.unece.org> - Legal Instruments); TRANS/WP.30/196; TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/10; TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/8; TRANS/WP.30/2003/20; TRANS/WP.30/2002/19; TRANS/WP.30/2001/16; TRANS/WP.30/2000/16; TRANS/WP.30/2000/11, Informal documents No. 19 and 21 (2002).

(a) Status of the Convention

The Working Party will be informed of the situation concerning the scope and the number of Contracting Parties to the Convention. A complete list of Contracting Parties to the Convention is available from the following website:

<http://untreaty.un.org/ENGLISH/bible/englishinternetbible/partI/chapterXI/subchapA/treaty17.asp>.

(b) Preparation of a new Annex on efficient border crossing procedures

The Working Party may wish to recall that the Administrative Committee for the "Harmonization Convention", at its fifth session, had agreed to postpone the substantive discussion concerning a new Annex 8 to the Convention, which has the objective of addressing all elements important for efficient border crossing procedures in international road transport of goods since several Contracting Parties indicated that they were not yet in a position to decide on the proposal (TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/10, para. 5). The Working Party, at its one-hundred-and-fourth session, had been informed that several Contracting Parties were still not in a position to decide on the outstanding issues contained in the new draft Annex 8 and that that they would not be able to do so

before September 2003. With this in mind, the Working Party requested the secretariat to organize an ad hoc expert group meeting, in conjunction with its present session, to discuss the outstanding obstacles, highlighted in bold in document TRANS/WP.30/AC.3/2003/1, in order to adopt the new draft Annex 8 to the Convention (TRANS/WP.30/208, para. 15). The agenda for the ad hoc expert group meeting, which will take place on 22 September 2003 in conjunction with the present session of the Working Party, is contained in document TRANS/WP.30/2003/20.

The Working Party may wish to be informed about the outcome of the ad hoc expert group meeting and to consider the conclusions of that meeting with a view to provide guidance on the final text of the new draft Annex 8 to be submitted for the sixth session of the Administrative Committee for the Harmonization Convention, which, preliminarily, is scheduled to take place in conjunction with its one-hundred-and-sixth session in February 2004.

(c) **Preparation of a new Annex on security related issues**

The Working Party may wish to recall that, at its one-hundred-and-fourth session, it had a preliminary discussion of a possible new Annex to the Convention describing how to harmonize and facilitate security controls in relation to border crossing procedures (TRANS/WP.30/2008, paras. 17 and 18).

The Working Party may wish to be informed about any new developments concerning this issue.

6. DRAFT UNECE CONVENTIONS ON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMS TRANSIT PROCEDURES FOR THE CARRIAGE OF GOODS BY RAIL

Documentation: TRANS/2001/10; TRANS/WP.30/194; TRANS/WP.30/164; TRANS/WP.30/2003/21; TRANS/WP.30/2002/25; TRANS/WP.30/2002/16; TRANS/WP.30/2002/12; TRANS/WP.30/2002/10; TRANS/WP.30/2002/9; TRANS/WP.30/2000/17; TRANS/WP.30/R.141; Informal documents No. 4-5 (2002).

(a) **Resolution on the Use of the SMGS Consignment Note as a Customs Transit Declaration**

The Working Party may wish to recall that, at its one-hundred-and second session, it adopted resolution No. 50 on the use of the SMGS consignment note as a customs transit declaration (TRANS/WP.30/204, annex 1). The Working Party may wish to be informed about the status of acceptance of the resolution.

(b) **Draft UNECE Conventions on International Customs Transit Procedures for the Carriage of Goods by Rail**

The Working Party may wish to recall that the Inland Transport Committee, at its sixty-third session, had requested the Working Party to continue to consider the draft Convention for the SMGS Consignment note, that it prepared (ECE/TRANS/136, para. 88).

On 11 February 2002, an informal ad hoc Expert Group meeting on Customs Rail Transit based on the SMGS Consignment Note had concluded that there was a demand by Governments and industry for a harmonization of Customs transit procedures governing rail transport in the SMGS area (TRANS/WP.30/2002/12). However, it seemed that the amendments proposed by some Contracting Parties to the SMGS Agreement would result in considerably reduced facilitation measures compared to the provisions of the original draft prepared by the Working Party and the provisions in place for the COTIF Convention in the Common and Community transit system.

The Working Party, at its one-hundred-and-second session, adopted resolution No. 50 recommending the use of the SMGS Consignment Note as a Customs rail transit declaration by the Contracting Parties to the SMGS Agreement, stressing however that the adopted resolution was a preliminary facilitation measure, requested the secretariat to pursue, as soon as possible, the finalization of the draft Convention on international Customs transit procedures for the carriage of goods by rail covering the SMGS area, also taking into consideration the facilitation of transfer of goods in transit between Contracting Parties to the SMGS Agreement and the COTIF Convention (TRANS/WP.30/204, para. 23).

The Inland Transport Committee, at its sixty-fifth session, requested the Working Party to pursue its work towards finalizing a Convention facilitating international Customs transit rail transport on a Pan-European level in this area as soon as possible (TRANS/WP.30/152, para. 104).

The Working Party, at its one-hundred-and-fourth session, requested the secretariat to organize an ad hoc expert group meeting in conjunction with the one-hundred-and-fifth session of the Working Party in September 2003 with the aim of finalizing the draft Convention on international Customs transit procedures for the carriage of goods by rail covering the SMGS area. The agenda for the ad hoc expert group meeting, which will take place on 23 September 2003 in conjunction with the present session of the Working Party, is contained in document TRANS/WP.30/2003/21.

The Working Party may wish to be informed about the outcome of the ad hoc expert group meeting and to consider the conclusions of that meeting with a view to providing guidance on the finalization of Convention on international Customs transit procedures for the carriage of goods by rail covering the SMGS area.

7. CUSTOMS CONVENTION ON THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT OF GOODS UNDER COVER OF TIR CARNETS (TIR CONVENTION, 1975)

Documentation: ECE/TRANS/17 and Amends.1-22; 2002 TIR Handbook; (<http://tir.unece.org>); TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/69 annex 1; TRANS/WP.30/204; TRANS/WP.30/202; TRANS/WP.30/200; TRANS/WP.30/198.

(a) Status of the Convention

The Working Party will be informed of the situation concerning the scope and the number of Contracting Parties to the TIR Convention, 1975.

A complete list of Contracting Parties to the Convention as well as a list of countries in which TIR operations can be undertaken is annexed to the report of the thirty-fourth session of the TIR Administrative Committee (TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/69, annex 1). Permanently updated information on the scope of the TIR Convention is available on the UNECE TIR web site: (<http://tir.unece.org>).

(b) Revision of the Convention

(i) Implementation of Phases I and II of the TIR revision process and examples of best practices

The Working Party may wish to be informed by the secretariat about the status of implementation at national level of Phases I and II of the revision process.

(ii) Preparation of Phase III of the TIR revision process

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/2003/18; TRANS/WP.30/2003/15; TRANS/WP.30/2003/14; TRANS/WP.30/2003/9; TRANS/WP.30/2003/8; TRANS/WP.30/2003/7; TRANS/WP.30/2003/5; TRANS/WP.30/2003/3; TRANS/WP.30/2002/23; TRANS/WP.30/2002/20; TRANS/WP.30/2002/17; TRANS/WP.30/2002/15; TRANS/WP.30/2002/11; TRANS/WP.30/2002/7; TRANS/WP.30/2001/19 and Rev. 1; TRANS/WP.30/2001/18; TRANS/WP.30/2001/15; TRANS/WP.30/2001/13; TRANS/WP.30/2001/12; TRANS/WP.30/2001/11; TRANS/WP.30/2001/6;

TRANS/WP.30/2001/5; Informal document No.20 (2002); Informal document No.2 (2002); Informal document No.15 (2001); Informal document No.14 (2001); Informal document No.13 (2001); Informal document No.12 (2001); Informal document No.8 (2000); Informal document No.7 (2000); Informal document No.1 (2000); Informal document No.5 (1997).

The Working Party may wish to recall that, at its ninety-sixth session, it had decided to start work on Phase III of the TIR revision process, which would include a study of the following elements (TRANS/WP.30/192, para. 33):

- Revision of the TIR Carnet, including the insertion of additional data elements (ID number, HS code, value of goods, etc.);
- Increase in the number of places for loading and unloading under Customs seal;
- Use of new technologies in TIR operations also with a view to reducing the delay in notification of non-discharge.

- Revision of the TIR Carnet

The Working Party may wish to recall that, at its ninety-eighth session, it had considered the usefulness of including additional data elements into the TIR Carnet. It had concluded that additional data elements could be useful in relation to the procedures for recovery of debt and facilitating subsequent Customs procedures (TRANS/WP.30/196, paras. 35-40). At its one-hundredth and one-hundred-and-first sessions, it had taken note of the work of the European Commission's sub-group on data requirements (Informal document No. 2 (2002)) that, at the time, in general seemed not to favour requirements for additional data in the Community and Common transit systems (TRANS/WP.30/200, para. 37).

The Working Party has also considered a survey conducted by the secretariat on documentary requirements for TIR operations showing that a majority of the Customs authorities having replied required information in addition to that contained in the TIR Carnet (TRANS/WP.30/2002/15). As a result, the Working Party requested the secretariat to prepare proposals for best practices concerning documentary requirements for the TIR procedure (TRANS/WP.30/2002, para. 36). At its one-hundred-and-third session, the Working Party had considered this issue on the basis of document TRANS/WP.30/2003/3, prepared by the secretariat. The Working Party requested the IRU to prepare a document for its one-hundred-and-fourth session containing a proposal to amend the proposal with a view to limiting the responsibility of the holder for information contained in documents submitted to Customs authorities. It decided to postpone the discussion of this point of the agenda to the present session as several delegations were not in a position to decide on this issue.

The Working Party may wish to consider the proposal of the IRU, contained in document TRANS/WP.30/2003/18, and be informed by the secretariat about its consultations with the IRU to address the issues raised the document.

- Increase in the number of loading and unloading places

The Working Party, at its one-hundredth session, continued its consideration of document TRANS/WP.30/2001/19 prepared by the secretariat containing proposals for three alternative long-term solutions to increase the number of loading and unloading places (TRANS/WP.30/200, paras. 41-42). At its one-hundred-and-first session, it considered document TRANS/WP.30/2002/17, prepared by the secretariat, describing a scenario of up to six places of loading and unloading. The Working Party agreed that there exists a demand from the transport industry to increase the number of loading and unloading places permitted in the Convention. The Working Party requested the secretariat to prepare a document describing, in detail, the implications at both national and international level of a scenario of six Customs offices of loading and unloading, including an analysis of the legal consequences (TRANS/WP.30/202, para. 39).

The Working Party, at its one-hundred-and-fourth session, adopted a comment to Article 18 of the Convention providing for a short-term solution to increase the number of loading/unloading places.

The Working Party may wish to continue its consideration of document TRANS/WP.30/2002/20, prepared by the secretariat for its one-hundred-and-second session, containing a proposal for amendment of the Convention with the aim of increasing the possible places of loading and unloading from four to six.

- Use of new technologies

The Working Party may wish to be informed by the secretariat of the conclusions of the Informal ad hoc Expert Group on Conceptual and Technical Aspects of Computerization of the TIR Convention, which took place on 1 and 2 September 2003 in Budapest. The agenda for this meeting is contained in document ExG/COMP./2003/3.

(iii) **Draft amendments on the inclusion and attribution of voting rights to Regional Economic Integration Organizations (REIO)**

The Working Party, at its one-hundred-and-fourth session, took note of the proposals transmitted by the European Community and the United States of America respectively (TRANS/WP.30/2003/14, TRANS/WP.30/2003/15 as well as Informal document No. 7 (2003)) and

took note that negotiations at bilateral level were taking place, on the one hand, between the European Community and the United States of America with the aim of finding solutions to the issues of contention, which in particular are the questions concerning allocation of competencies and voting rights as well as the number of votes and, on the other hand, between the European Community and Turkey.

The Working Party may wish to consider the proposals transmitted by the European Community and the United States of America respectively and be informed by the parties of any new developments.

(c) **Application of the Convention**

(i) **Functions and roles of the TIRExB, the TIR secretariat and the IRU**

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/2003/22; TRANS/WP.30/2003/11; TRANS/WP.30/2003/10; TRANS/WP.30/2002/30; TRANS/WP.30/R.179.

The Working Party, at its one-hundred-and-first session, considered a proposal by the IRU on guidance on the functions and roles of the TIRExB, the TIR secretariat and the IRU (TRANS/WP.30/2002/30). In this context, the IRU stressed the importance of further developing the agreement between the IRU and the UNECE to encompass not only the transfer of funds to the UNECE Trust Fund for the funding of the TIRExB, but also the responsibilities of the IRU in managing the TIR system, including the printing, distributing and guarantee for the TIR system, as well as determining carefully the budget for the TIRExB. The Working Party supported a proposal by its Chairman, that he would convene a small group of “Friends of the Chairman” to preliminarily explore if and how the issues raised by the IRU could be addressed (TRANS/WP.30/204, paras. 10-12). The TIR Administrative Committee, at its thirty-third session, took note of the proposal by the IRU and welcomed the initiative taken by the Chairman of the Working Party (TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/67, para. 47).

The Working Party, at its one-hundred-and-third session, supported the conclusions of the meeting of the “Friends of the Chairman”, that took place in January 2003, as contained in Informal document No. 1, which for the present session are contained in document TRANS/WP.30/2003/10. The Working Party also took note of a number of amendment proposals proposed by the Russian Federation as contained in document TRANS/WP.30/2003/11 (TRANS/WP.30/206, para. 39-42).

The Working Party, at its one-hundred-and-fourth session, had an in-depth discussion of document TRANS/WP.30/2003/10, and decided to separate the issues contained in the document into medium term priorities (roles and responsibilities of the TIRExB, the TIR secretariat and the

IRU) to be transmitted for the consideration of the TIR Administrative Committee at its thirty-fifth session and long term priorities (amendments of the Convention) to be discussed by the Working Party at its present session. In this context, the Working Party may wish to consider document TRANS/WP.30/2003/22.

The Working Party may also wish to consider document TRANS/WP.30/2003/11 transmitted by the Russian Federation containing proposals for amendments to the Convention.

The Working Party may wish to be informed about the status of the agreement between the UNECE and the IRU.

(ii) Control system for TIR Carnets - IRU SafeTIR

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/2003/9.

The Working Party, at its one-hundred-and-fourth session, considered document TRANS/WP.30/2003/9 transmitted by the IRU concerning information available in the IRU TIR Carnet databases, which could be relevant for Customs authorities and requested the IRU to include, as soon as possible, all the information, which is contained in the IRU databases, in particular information concerning the date of validity of the TIR Carnet and information on the unique ID number of the TIR Carnet holder in accordance with the Recommendation adopted by the TIR Administrative Committee on 20 October 2000. The IRU confirmed its willingness to provide the requested data as soon as it is technically possible, and not later than in 18 months' time.

The Working Party may wish to be informed about any new developments in this field.

(iii) Settlement of claims for payments

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/2008.

The Working Party may wish to be informed by the IRU on further progress made in the current arbitration procedure, initiated by the IRU, to obtain payment for Customs claims presented to the previous insurers of the international guaranteeing chain which had denounced their contract with the IRU at the end of 1994 (TRANS/WP.30/202, para. 48).

The Working Party may also wish to be informed by Customs authorities and the IRU of the present situation with regard to the settlement of claims for payments made by Customs authorities against national guaranteeing associations.

(iv) **Amendment proposals relating to technical provisions**

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/2003/13; TRANS/WP.30/2002/27.

The Working Party may wish to recall that, at its one-hundred-and-second session, it considered information transmitted by a private company on the development of a TIR cable with integrated fibre optic offering increased security against tampering with the TIR cable and unauthorized access to the load compartment (TRANS/WP.30/2002/27) (TRANS/WP.30/204, para. 54). At its one-hundred-and-third session, the Working Party took note of a presentation of the cable. At its one-hundred-and-fourth session, the Working Party was informed by the German delegation, that it, based on a test of the fastening cable with integrated fibre optic, which had been presented to the Working Party at its one-hundred-and-third session by a private company (TRANS/WP.30/204, para. 54), was of the view that the cable is tamper-proof for Customs purposes (Informal doc. No. 4 (2003)). It requested the secretariat to prepare an official document for its present session with the conclusions of the German testing and with a proposal for introduction of provisions in the Convention for the use of the cable.

(v) **Inclusion of place and number of seals in the certificate of approval**

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/69 and Corr. 1; TRANS/WP.30/2003/4; TRANS/WP.30/2002/24; Depositary Notification C.N.645.2003.TREATIES-3.

The TIR Administrative Committee, at its thirty-fourth session, adopted an amendment to Explanatory Note 2.2.1 (b) to Article 2, paragraph 1 (b) of Annex 2 of the Convention (TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/69, para. 56). The secretariat, with the consent of the Chairman of the TIR Administrative Committee, had issued a corrigendum (TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/69/Corr.1) to the report of the thirty-fourth session of the TIR Administrative Committee, concerning the adoption of Explanatory Note 2.2.1 (b) to Article 2, paragraph 1 (b) of Annex 2 of the Convention (TRANS/WP.30/AC.2/69, paras. 55 and 56) with a view to specifying the deadlines for objections to the Explanatory Note and to clarifying issues concerning the applicability for containers.

The United Nations Legal Office in New York has issued a Depositary Notification C.N.645.2003.TREATIES-3 containing the amendments.

(vi) **The concept of authorized consignee in the TIR Convention**

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/2003/19; TRANS/WP.30/2003/12; TRANS/WP.30/2003/1.

At its one-hundred-and-third session, the Working Party had a first exchange of views on the issue of authorized consignee, based on document TRANS/WP.30/2003/1, prepared by the TIRExB at its fifteenth meeting, containing a summary of the discussions by the TIRExB on the validity of the concept of authorized consignee within the framework of the Convention. Some delegates were of the view, that the conclusion of the TIRExB that the TIR Convention already, at present, provides for the use of the concept authorized consignee, should be the guideline for any further consideration. Other delegates, however, raised a number of impediments of a legal and/or practical level contrary to the TIRExB's conclusions. The Working Party decided to continue its considerations at its present session. In this context, the Working Party welcomed a proposal by France to give a presentation outlining the French experiences gained in a pilot study providing consignees with the right to receive goods under the TIR procedure directly at their premises. At its one-hundred-and-fourth session, the Working Party took note of the French experiences gained in a pilot study providing consignees with the right to receive goods under the TIR procedure directly at their premises, the outlines of which were contained in working document TRANS/WP.30/2003/12, based on the opinion of the TIRExB that the TIR Convention at present, already, provides for the use of concept of authorized consignee and that it was the competence of individual Contracting Parties to decide whether or not the facilitation could be applied and for which operators (TRANS/WP.30/2003/1, para. 34). The Working Party requested the secretariat to prepare a new document, aimed at merging the theoretical analysis, made by the TIRExB and contained in document TRANS/WP.30/2003/1, with the practical experience gained by France, contained in document TRANS/WP.30/2003/12.

The Working Party may wish to consider document TRANS/WP.30/2003/19, prepared by the secretariat.

(vii) **Practical application for the TIR procedure of the Customs Union between the Russian Federation and Belarus**

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/2003/17.

The Working Party, at its one-hundred-and-third session, was informed by the IRU about difficulties for operators in understanding the practical application of the Customs Union between the Russian Federation and Belarus. The Working Party, at its one-hundred-and-fourth session, noted document TRANS/WP.30/2003/17 containing information provided by the Russian Federation on the issue.

The Working Party requested the IRU to provide detailed questions concerning the problems encountered and invited Belarus and the Russian Federation, if possible in a joint effort, to provide additional information concerning the Customs Union, in particular the reasons for the differences in Customs controls in the East/West versus the West/East TIR transport procedure and to provide information concerning the claims handling procedure.

The Working Party may wish to be informed about new information in this context.

(viii) TIR Handbook

Documentation: UNECE document; (<http://tir.unece.org>).

The TIR Handbook contains the latest amendments to the Convention as well as all relevant comments adopted by the UNECE Working Party (WP.30) and the Administrative Committee. The TIR Handbook can be viewed and downloaded from the UNECE TIR web site in various languages (<http://tir.unece.org>). Updated hard-copy versions of the TIR Handbook are available in Chinese, English, French, German and Russian. A limited number of such copies may be obtained free of charge from the secretariat.

(ix) Other matters

The Working Party may wish to consider any other issues and difficulties in the application of the Convention faced by Customs authorities, national associations, the international insurers or the IRU.

8. PREVENTION OF THE ABUSE OF CUSTOMS TRANSIT SYSTEMS BY SMUGGLERS

Documentation: TRANS/WP.30/127.

Having discussed at earlier sessions a number of drug seizures involving TIR vehicles, the Working Party felt that it should be informed of any special devices and facilities used by smugglers abusing the TIR transit system. The Working Party invited all Contracting Parties to the TIR Convention, 1975, and the World Customs Organization (WCO) to transmit all relevant information on such cases so that it could take the necessary steps, falling within its competence and mandate, to prevent such occurrences (TRANS/WP.30/127, paras. 55-57).

The Working Party may wish to exchange views and report on experiences on this subject, if any, on a confidential basis.

9. OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Dates of the next sessions

The Working Party may wish to decide on the dates for its next sessions.

The secretariat has already scheduled the one-hundred-and-sixth session of the Working Party to be held in the week from 2 to 6 February 2004 in conjunction with the thirty-fourth session of the TIR Administrative Committee and the sixth session of the Administrative Committee for the "Harmonization" Convention.

The one-hundred-and-seventh session of the Working Party is tentatively scheduled to be held during the week of 14 to 18 June 2004.

(b) Restriction on the distribution of documents

The Working Party should decide whether there shall be any restrictions with respect to the distribution of documents issued in connection with its current session.

10. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT

In accordance with established practice, the Working Party will adopt the report on its one-hundred-and-fifth session on the basis of a draft prepared by the secretariat. Given the present resource restrictions with regard to translation facilities, parts of the final report may not be available at the session for adoption in all working languages.

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