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CONVENTION ON ROAD TRAFFIC ADOPTED AT THE UNITED NATIONS
CONFERENCE ON ROAD AND MOTOR TRANSPORT (GENEVA,
19 SEPTEMBER 1949)

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The Economic and Social Council, by resolution 147 B (VII), instructed the Secretary-General to convene the United Nations Conference on Road and Motor Transport to conclude a new world-wide convention on road and motor transport which would supersede the 1926 international conventions relating respectively to road traffic and to motor traffic and the 1943 Convention on the Regulation of Inter-American Automotive Traffic. This Conference was held in Geneva in August/September 1949, and prepared and opened for signature the Convention on Road Traffic. In its resolution 298 I (XI), the Council invited Governments to ratify this Convention.
2. The Convention entered into force on 26 March 1952 upon ratification by five States, in accordance with article 29. Up to now, the following nineteen Governments have become parties to it: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Philippines, Sweden, Syria, Union of South Africa, United States of America, Vatican City State, Viet Nam.
3. The Secretary-General wishes to draw the attention of the Council, in the present Note, to article 24, paragraph 6, of the Convention, which reads as follows:

"During a period of five years beginning with the entry into force of this Convention, any driver admitted to international traffic under the provisions of the International Convention relative to Motor Traffic signed at Paris on 24 April 1926, or of the Convention on the Regulation of Inter-American Automotive Traffic opened for signature at Washington on 15 December 1943, and holding the documents required thereunder, shall be considered as fulfilling the requirements of this article."

This clause will therefore no longer be operative as from 26 March 1957, i.e., five years after the entry into force of the Convention.

4. This matter was raised at the seventh session of the Transport and Communications Commission in February 1955 and is recorded as follows in its report:

"The Commission noted with approval a statement by the Representative of the United States concerning (i) the desirability of expediting ratification of the Convention by Governments which had not so far done so; (ii) the situation with respect to the validity of driving permits issued under the 1926 International Convention relative to Motor Traffic and also under the 1943 Convention on the Regulation of Inter-American Automotive Traffic, upon expiry of the five-year period (in March 1957) provided for in article 24, paragraph 6, of the 1949 Convention. In this respect, the United States representative stressed that the latter problem would be simplified if a considerable number of further ratifications of the 1949 Convention were obtained by March 1957." 1/

5. Notwithstanding some progress in ratification of the Convention, there are still many countries, parties to the 1926 or 1943 Conventions which have not yet ratified the 1949 Convention. Therefore, as from 26 March 1957, drivers from certain States parties to the former Conventions might no longer have the right, on the basis of paragraph 6 of article 24 of the 1949 Convention, to be admitted to States parties to that Convention which require that drivers admitted to their territory shall carry an international driving permit in conformity with paragraph 2 of article 24.

6. At its thirteenth session held in December 1955, the Inland Transport Committee of the Economic Commission for Europe, whose particular interest reflects the fact that so far the majority of Governments which have become

1/ See Official Records of the Nineteenth Session of the Economic and Social Council, supplement No. 4, paragraph 34.

parties to the 1949 Convention are European also considered the matter. In its resolution No. 185, the Inland Transport Committee recommended to Governments participating in the work of ECE, which are or may become parties to the 1949 Convention, to continue until 26 March 1960 to consider as satisfying the conditions laid down in article 24 of that Convention any driver admitted to international traffic under the provisions of the 1926 International Convention relative to Motor Traffic or of the 1943 Convention on the Regulation of Inter-American Automotive Traffic, and holding the documents required under these Conventions.

7. The Secretary-General agrees that it would be desirable if Governments which are or may become parties to the 1949 Convention were to continue, for an additional period, to admit drivers in international traffic under the provisions of the 1926 and 1943 Conventions. As the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic was concluded under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council and has a world-wide character, he considers it appropriate to submit the matter to the Council.

8. The Secretary-General feels that it would not be advisable to attempt to amend formally the 1949 Convention for this purpose, since the amendment procedure foreseen by it is complicated and long, as has been proved in practice. He believes, however, that this aim may be achieved without formal amendment, should the above-mentioned Governments agree, as an ad hoc administrative measure, to continue to apply the provision contained in paragraph 6 of article 24 for a further three years, i.e., up to 26 March 1960.

9. Should the Council agree to the above, the Secretary-General would suggest the following draft resolution for consideration by the Council:

"The Economic and Social Council,

Having examined the Secretary-General's Note on the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic (E/2818) drawing its attention to the expiry on 26 March 1957 of the provision contained in paragraph 6 of article 24 of that Convention reading as follows:

'During a period of five years beginning with the entry into force of this Convention, any driver admitted to international traffic under the provisions of the International Convention relative to Motor Traffic signed at Paris on 24 April 1926, or of the Convention on the Regulation of Inter-American Automotive Traffic opened for signature at Washington on 15 December 1943, and holding the documents required thereunder, shall be considered as fulfilling the requirements of this article.'

Taking into account the opinion expressed by the Transport and Communications Commission in paragraph 34, of the report on its seventh session;^{2/} and also resolution No. 185 adopted by the Inland Transport Committee of the Economic Commission for Europe at its thirteenth session;

Recognizing the difficulties and delay involved in formally amending the Convention;

1. Recommends to Governments which are or may become parties to the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic to examine the possibility of continuing, as an administrative measure, to apply the provisions of paragraph 6 of article 24 of that Convention for an additional period of three years, up to 26 March 1960;
2. Instructs the Secretary-General to communicate the above recommendation to the Governments mentioned in paragraph 1 above and to request them to inform him of their position with respect to this recommendation;
3. Instructs further the Secretary-General to inform Governments which are parties or are eligible to become parties to the 1949 Convention on Road Traffic of the replies received under paragraph 2."

2/ See Official Records of the Nineteenth Session of the Economic and Social Council, supplement No. 4.