



# Economic and Social Council

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## 2023 session

Agenda item 18 (I)

### Economic and environmental questions: transport of dangerous goods

## Resolution adopted by the Economic and Social Council on 7 June 2023

[*on the recommendation of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (E/2023/56)*]

### 2023/5. Work of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals

*The Economic and Social Council,*

*Recalling* its resolutions 1999/65 of 26 October 1999 and [2021/13](#) of 8 June 2021,

*Having considered* the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals during the biennium 2021–2022,<sup>1</sup>

#### A

#### Work of the Committee regarding the transport of dangerous goods

*Recognizing* the importance of the work of the Committee for the harmonization of codes and regulations relating to the transport of dangerous goods,

*Bearing in mind* the need to always maintain safety standards and to facilitate trade, as well as the importance of these issues to the various organizations responsible for modal regulations, while meeting the growing concern for the protection of life, property and the environment through the safe and secure transport of dangerous goods,

*Bearing in mind also* the commitment by Member States to work for the full implementation by 2030 of the Sustainable Development Goals and related targets as

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<sup>1</sup> [E/2023/56](#).



agreed by the General Assembly in its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in particular target 12.4 related to the achievement of the environmentally sound management of chemicals and wastes through their life cycle in accordance with agreed international frameworks,

*Noting* the ever-increasing volume of dangerous goods being introduced into worldwide commerce and the rapid expansion of technology and innovation,

*Recalling* that, while the major international instruments governing the transport of dangerous goods by the various modes of transport and many national regulations are now better harmonized with the Model Regulations annexed to the recommendations of the Committee on the transport of dangerous goods, further work on harmonizing these instruments is necessary to enhance safety and to facilitate trade, and recalling also that uneven progress in the updating of national inland transport legislation in some countries of the world continues to present serious challenges to international multimodal transport,

1. *Expresses its appreciation* for the work of the Committee of Experts on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals with respect to matters relating to the transport of dangerous goods, including their security in transport;

2. *Requests* the Secretary-General:

(a) To circulate the new and amended recommendations on the transport of dangerous goods<sup>2</sup> to the Governments of Member States, the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and other international organizations concerned;

(b) To publish the twenty-third revised edition of the *Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods: Model Regulations* and the eighth revised edition of the *Manual of Tests and Criteria* in all the official languages of the United Nations, in the most cost-effective manner, no later than the end of 2023;

(c) To make those publications available in book and electronic format and on the website of the Economic Commission for Europe, which provides secretariat services to the Committee;

3. *Invites* all Governments, the regional commissions, the specialized agencies, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the other international organizations concerned to transmit to the secretariat of the Committee their views on the work of the Committee, together with any comments that they may wish to make on the recommendations on the transport of dangerous goods;

4. *Invites* all interested Governments, the regional commissions, the specialized agencies and the international organizations concerned to take into account the recommendations of the Committee when developing or updating appropriate codes and regulations;

5. *Requests* the Committee to study, in consultation with the International Maritime Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization, the regional commissions and the intergovernmental organizations concerned, the possibilities of improving the implementation of the Model Regulations on the transport of dangerous goods in all countries for the purposes of ensuring a high level of safety and eliminating technical barriers to international trade, including through the further harmonization of international agreements or conventions governing the international transport of dangerous goods;

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<sup>2</sup> See [ST/SG/AC.10/50/Add.1](#) and [ST/SG/AC.10/50/Add.2](#).

6. *Invites* all Governments, as well as the regional commissions and organizations concerned, the International Maritime Organization and the International Civil Aviation Organization to provide feedback to the Committee regarding differences between the provisions of national, regional or international legal instruments and those of the Model Regulations, in order to enable the Committee to develop cooperative guidelines for enhancing consistency between these requirements and reducing unnecessary impediments; to identify existing substantive and international, regional and national differences, with the aim of reducing those differences in modal treatment to the greatest extent practical and ensuring that, where differences are necessary, they do not pose impediments to the safe and efficient transport of dangerous goods; and to undertake an editorial review of the Model Regulations and various modal instruments with the aim of improving clarity, user-friendliness and ease of translation;

## **B**

### **Work of the Committee regarding the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals**

*Bearing in mind* that in paragraph 23 (c) of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation),<sup>3</sup> countries were encouraged to implement the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals as soon as possible with a view to having the system fully operational by 2008,

*Bearing in mind also* that the General Assembly, in its resolution [57/253](#) of 20 December 2002, endorsed the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and requested the Economic and Social Council to implement the provisions of the Plan relevant to its mandate and, in particular, to promote the implementation of Agenda 21<sup>4</sup> by strengthening system-wide coordination,

*Bearing in mind further* the commitment by Member States to work for the full implementation by 2030 of the Sustainable Development Goals and related targets as agreed by the General Assembly in its resolution [70/1](#), entitled “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, in particular target 12.4 related to the achievement of the environmentally sound management of chemicals and wastes through their life cycle in accordance with agreed international frameworks,

*Noting with satisfaction:*

(a) That the Economic Commission for Europe and all United Nations programmes and specialized agencies concerned with chemical safety in the field of transport or of the environment, in particular the International Maritime Organization, the International Civil Aviation Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme, have already taken appropriate steps to amend or update their legal instruments in order to give effect to the Globally Harmonized System,

(b) That the International Labour Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization have also taken appropriate steps to adapt their chemical safety recommendations, codes and guidelines to the Globally Harmonized System, in particular in the areas of

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex II.

occupational health and safety, prevention of major industrial accidents, pesticide management and prevention and treatment of poisoning,

(c) That many Member States have already issued national legislation or standards implementing the Globally Harmonized System, or allowing its application, in one or several sectors other than transport,

(d) That work on the development or revision of national legislation, standards or guidelines to implement the Globally Harmonized System continues in other countries, while in some others activities related to the development of sectoral implementation plans or national implementation strategies are being conducted or are expected to be initiated,

(e) That a number of United Nations programmes and specialized agencies and regional organizations, in particular the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization, the Economic Commission for Europe, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the European Union, Governments and non-governmental organizations representing the chemical industry, have organized or contributed to multiple workshops, seminars and other capacity-building activities at the international, regional, subregional and national levels to raise awareness in the administration, health and industrial sectors and to prepare for or support the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System,

*Aware* that effective implementation will require further cooperation between the Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals and the international bodies concerned, continued efforts by the Governments of Member States, cooperation with the industry and other stakeholders and significant support for capacity-building activities in countries with economies in transition and developing countries,

*Recalling* the particular significance of the Global Partnership for Capacity-building to Implement the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, the International Labour Organization and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development for building capacities at all levels,

1. *Commends* the Secretary-General on the publication of the ninth revised edition of the *Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals*<sup>5</sup> in the six official languages of the United Nations, electronically and in book form, and its availability, together with related informational material, on the website of the Economic Commission for Europe, which provides secretariat services to the Committee;

2. *Expresses its deep appreciation* to the Committee, the Commission and the United Nations programmes, specialized agencies and other organizations concerned for their fruitful cooperation and their commitment to the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General:

(a) To circulate the amendments<sup>6</sup> to the ninth revised edition of the *Globally Harmonized System* to the Governments of Member States, the specialized agencies and other international organizations concerned;

(b) To publish the tenth revised edition of the *Globally Harmonized System* in all the official languages of the United Nations in the most cost-effective manner, no

<sup>5</sup> United Nations publication, 2021.

<sup>6</sup> ST/SG/AC.10/50/Add.3.

later than the end of 2023, and to make it available in book and electronic format and on the website of the Commission;

(c) To continue to make information on the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System available on the website of the Commission;<sup>7</sup>

4. *Invites* Governments that have not yet done so to take the steps necessary to implement the Globally Harmonized System as soon as possible through appropriate national procedures and/or legislation and to keep them updated to take account of the recommendations made by the Committee every two years;

5. *Reiterates its invitation* to the regional commissions, United Nations programmes, specialized agencies and other organizations concerned to promote the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System and, where relevant, to amend their respective international legal instruments addressing transport safety, workplace safety, consumer protection or the protection of the environment so as to give effect to the Globally Harmonized System through such instruments;

6. *Invites* Governments, the regional commissions, United Nations programmes, specialized agencies and other organizations concerned to provide feedback<sup>8</sup> to the Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals on the steps taken for the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System in all relevant sectors, through international, regional or national legal instruments, recommendations, codes and guidelines, including, when applicable, information about the transitional periods for its implementation;

7. *Encourages* Governments, the regional commissions, United Nations programmes, specialized agencies and other relevant international organizations and non-governmental organizations, in particular those representing industry, to strengthen their support for the implementation of the Globally Harmonized System by providing financial contributions and/or technical assistance for capacity-building activities in developing countries and countries with economies in transition;

## C Scope and programme of work of the Committee

*Taking note* of the programme of work of the Committee for the biennium 2023–2024 as contained in paragraphs 50 to 55 of the report of the Secretary-General,<sup>9</sup>

*Noting* the relatively poor level of participation of experts from developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the work of the Committee and the need to promote their wider participation in its work,

*Noting also* that, following the reconfiguration of the Committee and the establishment of the Subcommittee of Experts on the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals in accordance with resolution 1999/65, the scope of the work of the Committee was extended to cover not only transport of dangerous goods but also implementation and updating of the Globally Harmonized System,

1. *Decides* to approve the programme of work of the Committee;
2. *Stresses* the importance of the participation of experts from developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the work of the Committee,

<sup>7</sup> <https://unece.org/ghs-implementation-0>.

<sup>8</sup> See <https://unece.org/transportdangerous-goods/ghs-implementation-information-submission-form>.

<sup>9</sup> E/2023/56.

calls in that regard for voluntary contributions to facilitate their participation, including through support for travel and daily subsistence, and invites Member States and international organizations in a position to do so to contribute;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the Economic and Social Council, at its 2025 session, a report on the implementation of the present resolution, the recommendations on the transport of dangerous goods and the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals;

4. *Decides* to rename the existing agenda sub-item from “Transport of dangerous goods” to “Transport of dangerous goods and the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals”, and decides to include the sub-item in the agenda of its 2025 session.

*25th plenary meeting  
7 June 2023*

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