



Western Hemisphere Transport Initiative
Iniciativa de Transporte del Hemisferio Occidental
Initiative de Transport de l'Hémisphère Occidental
Iniciativa de Transportes do Hemisfério Ocidental

Minutes of the X Executive Committee Meeting
April 27, 2007, Jamaica Conference Centre, Kingston, Jamaica

The 10th Executive Committee meeting of the Western Hemisphere Transport Initiative (WHTI) was held in Kingston, Jamaica on April 27, 2007 under the Chairmanship of Jamaica with the USA and Brazil as Co-chairs. Brazil was represented by the resident Ambassador of Brazil to Jamaica.

Delegates from the following countries and organizations participated in the meeting: Ecuador, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Canada, Colombia, Haiti, Panama, Argentina, Brazil, Jamaica, United States, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), and the Caribbean Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control (CMOU).

The main objective of the meeting was to discuss the progress of the work being done by the Technical Working Groups and to discuss the upcoming Ministerial Meeting scheduled to take place August 23-24, 2007 in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

Chairman's Welcome and Opening Remarks:

Dr. Alwin Hales, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Housing, Transport, Water & Works welcomed the participants to Jamaica and to the 10th Executive Committee Meeting. He stated that the issue of transportation was indeed a most important one in the world today and that various methods of transportation, whether land, air or sea, had for centuries marked the development or lack thereof as they relate to nations around the world. He noted that air transport for instance had been forever transformed by the events of 9/11 and more recently the uncovering of a plot in the United Kingdom to wreak potential harm on the industry. Maritime Transport, he added, was always going to be an issue as there was a fine balance between the sea, its products, and the environment and how we execute the resources while at the same time paying attention to sustainable development. Turning his attention to land transport, Dr. Hales, stated that he need not look any further than his own country Jamaica where there is a high rate of road accidents.

He cited the situation where several lives were lost on the roads in Jamaica just over two (2) days ago due to road accidents. The Permanent Secretary went on to state that the time was now for the intervention of States in this Hemisphere to access and make recommendations concerning transportation issues. It was not only timely, but very necessary and it was against this background that he characterized this time period as a time of challenge yet exciting opportunities.

Dr. Hales also acknowledged the link between adequate physical infrastructure and the achievement of the United Nations Millennium Development goals to which member states had committed. Success will require sustained action across the entire decade between now and the deadline set for achieving the Millennium Development goals. Time was of the essence so only a collaborative effort would see success in the achievement of the Millennium Goals.

The Permanent Secretary also highlighted Millennium Development Goal 8 which highlights the need for global partnership for development. The reduction of transportation cost for land locked countries by half and their access to global markets by 2015 is the main objective of MDG8. Therefore, it is hoped that all non-physical transport barriers that increase journey time, customs clearance, border delays and impede the flow of goods and services will be dismantled by 2015. Dr. Hales pledged Jamaica's support in ensuring that the thrust to make transportation systems efficient and safe becomes a reality. He noted that the adage "United we stand, divided we fall" is still applicable, and of course, we would not fail.

Dr. Hales wished the delegates success in their deliberations and added that he was looking forward to a positive outcome and ultimately to a better region as far as the transportation systems are concerned in all the member states.

Approval of Agenda and Procedural Matters

Agenda Items:

1. Approval of the Agenda

The agenda was approved.

2. Update on Working Groups:

a) The Group of Experts on Aviation Safety, Security and Assistance (GEASSA)

The presentation was made by Mr. Pierre Goulet representing the Co-Chair, Canada. He advised that meeting that there was a growing regional interest in GEASSA as more countries are interested in participating and working on safety and security relating to aviation issues in the hemisphere. The momentum and the interest of member states had increased to the point where at the last meeting it was agreed that rather than meeting on an annual basis GEASSA would now meet twice a year. The next meeting is scheduled to be held in Panama.

He reported that at the last meeting substantive progress was made on a number of issues. One was a calendar of training events on training related to aviation safety and security. It was agreed at the meeting that a proposal to create a network for security points of contact would be enhanced through another proposal to develop an exchange of information on aviation security and safety within the Hemisphere.

He also stated that there was an ICAO issue of language proficiency pending where all air traffic controllers must meet certain requirements as stipulated by the ICAO by 2008. It was agreed that that all member states work together towards this goal. He also reported that GEASSA member states agreed to the establishment of an Accident Investigation Centre in the Region.

He reiterated the objectives of GEASSA as sharing information, enhancing knowledge, enhancing safety and security, capacity building projects within the member states and sustainability in training. He also highlighted the 'train the trainer' element attached to any training provided by GEASSA so that the training can be shared among persons within their own country. To this end GEASSA has hosted information sessions and seminars on Safety management Systems and their implementation on Wildlife Management, and on a variety of issues affecting aviation security, such as prohibited item lists, passenger, cargo and stowed baggage screening as well as security management systems.

He stated that at the last meeting a proposal was tabled for a hemispheric network where member states would be able to access real time information within a secure network. This network which would include information on would include information on legislation, regulations, rules, training packages, results of meetings and would facilitate the work of each state as it relates to aviation security and safety. He also described Canada's "Counter Terrorism Capacity Building Programme" and mentioned that projects such as this could be partially funded by the programme.

Mr. Goulet also advised that GEASSA is seeking funding from the IADB to fund their capacity building projects, however, the IADB had ceased the issuing of funds until projects can be validated. He was scheduled to meet with IADB during the first week in May, 2007 to seek further information and clarification regarding funding. The IADB advised that once the validation of the projects had been completed and it could be demonstrated that the projects had been successful, they may be in a position to start funding new projects.

He noted that Transport Canada had carried out a number of aviation security assessments or diagnostics in various Latin American countries this year. Once the specific aviation and security needs were identified, a follow up will be done relating to security awareness and screening training. Training would be tailored to the specific needs of the country.

He also mentioned that GEASSA intended to develop a Western Hemisphere training database in coordination with other regional organizations such as LACLAC, GREPACAS, and CICTE to avoid duplication of efforts.

The GEASSA Co-Chair urged member states to promote the concept of GEASSA to their senior Ministers as without their input, funding will never become accessible for the projects involving aviation safety and security. Funding he noted was the biggest challenge for GEASSA. In conclusion, he encouraged member states to participate in the GEASSA activities and meetings so that they could share their experiences, skills, techniques and best practices.

b) Land Experts Working Group (LEWG) :

The representative from the USA Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Michael Avery introduced himself by giving a brief background history. He noted that the objective of the Land Experts Working Group is to identify topics and areas of interest to member countries, develop them and then conduct activities which would be of mutual benefit to the countries who are members of the WHTI. The ultimate goal is therefore to improve land transportation in the member states.

He cited that the areas of interest to most if not all member states would be: road safety, infrastructure financing, rural roads, roads to markets, farm areas, training of people, and how to develop capacity in staff in the growth sector. He also stated that the first thing that has to be done is to identify partners as the Chair, Peru and Co-Chair, USA, could not accomplish without assistance the quantum of work which needed to be done. The Working Group would attempt to identify organizations that are already involved in land transportation projects and work with them. Secondly, funding had to be identified and he intimated that the Working Group should start considering approaching private sector companies such as insurance companies as they would have a vested interest in road safety. Thirdly, the over arching sharing of information, technology and best practices could not be overemphasized. He advised that the United States spends over US100 million dollars each year on development and research and the information was made available to all member states.

Mr. Avery advised that the LEWG would begin to identify and conduct activities. The Group preliminary work would commence by the development of a road safety database with information and best practices. A series of webinars, web and video conferences would be held to discuss interesting topics such as road safety, infrastructure financing, what is called BRT Projects, bus ramp and transit projects, and best practices in a variety of areas. He also emphasized the importance of member states participating in meetings that are held. He advised of the Transportation Research Board Conference which is held in Washington, DC in January of each year where at least 11,000 transportation officials are expected to be in attendance. Lastly as part of the LEWG's two (2) year action plan, workshops will be held on business traffic transit, pavement management, construction techniques and various other topics of interest.

Mr. Avery advised that the overall goal of the activities of the LEWG is to provide knowledge, technology, and information so that all member countries can be better able to reduce fatalities and facilitate the improvement of land transportation in their respective countries. In closing he asked the delegates present to ensure that the information is communicated to the appropriate persons in their countries so that they could become involved in the process through conference calls.

After the presentation, the Exterior Minister of Transportation, Colombia, advised that public transportation vehicles in Colombia were being converted to use natural gas. This had proved to be a major saving for the Government of Colombia and they were willing to share their expertise with the other member states. He also advised that private car owners are continuing to convert their vehicles for bio-fuel usage.

After the presentation, the Co-Chair, Joseph Traini, thanked Michael Avery for his presentation, however, he reiterated the fact that even though the local representatives of the member states had attended and contributed immensely to the meetings, he would like to have the technocrats from the member states who are directly responsible for the WHTI to attend the meetings. He urged the participants to advise their Ministers of Transport of the importance of having proper representation at the WHTI Meetings. The Chair, Mrs. Elsa-May Binns, from Jamaica agreed with the Co-chair and also reiterated the fact that it was extremely important to have the technocrats from the respective member states attend the meetings.

**c) Technical Working Group on Maritime Safety, Security & the Environment:
(TWGMSSE)**

The Chairman of Technical Working Group Marine Safety, Security and the Marine Environment (TWGSSME) Rear Admiral Peter Brady opened his presentation lamenting the fact that the turn out of participants was much less than he expected. He noted that not much work had been done since the last meeting held in August 2006, however links were established with the Inter-American Committee on Ports, which benefited the region through their information sharing.

The Committee also examined a new concept called, ‘Regional Action Plan for Port Security’ (RAPPs) however this matter was never pursued. Admiral Brady also stated that the country reports delivered by the representative of the member states highlighted the state of their respective maritime security, safety and the marine environment. The meeting was also briefed on the status of the adoption of International Maritime Conventions and some member states highlighted areas of difficulties being experienced with enshrining these particular conventions in their domestic legislation. He also noted that with respect to the implementation of the new maritime security measures, the International Ship and Port Security Code, Jamaica and Guyana had made considerable progress, not only in implementation but also in maintaining compliance, albeit at great financial cost. The TGSSME Chairman then outlined the main points from the country reports:

Regarding their maritime security programme, the USA indicated that their overseas port security visits initiative proved beneficial to the member states. The United States Coast Guard team which visited port facilities globally was able to observe many best practices which they have since adopted and shared with the international community by posting the information on their various websites.

The USA noted that in their various visits overseas, the initial implementation of the ISPS Code was not difficult for many states. However maintaining compliance, particularly the physical security arrangements such as fences and detection equipment posed a major challenge to many States. The representative from the United States Coast

Guard also pointed out that they had collaborated with a number of the organizations in the region, such as the OAS and APEC States on the Pacific side and with whom they are now involved with a number of capacity building projects and exercise training.

The IMO's Regional Maritime Adviser (RMA), Lieutenant Commander Curtis Roach emphasized that it was crucial that member states recognized the importance of the IMO's "Voluntary IMO Member State Audit Scheme", particularly as it would help member states which had institutional difficulties and would help them to implement the conventions. This audit he added will reveal deficiencies and gaps and the IMO could be better able to respond with the help through its integrated technical cooperation programme. The Regional Maritime Adviser also briefed the meeting on the developments on pollution prevention, including the topical air emissions from ship and ballast water management, two areas that are really receiving a lot of vigorous attention in the international marina. The subject of port reception facilities was also discussed.

The Chairman, Rear Admiral Brady, then advised the meeting of the report on the Inter-American Committee on Ports, CIP, regarding the proposed October 2007 meeting in Venezuela. The meeting also considered the possibility of future direction coming from the Ministers of Transport and briefly discussed the Millennium Goals from a transportation perspective.

In summarizing, Admiral Brady reiterated that the TWGMSSE will continue to seek opportunities for cooperation and joint activities with like organizations such as the Inter-American Committee on Ports. He also stated that the concept of the Regional Action Plans for Port Security, RAPPS questionnaire, should be developed and dispatched to member states by the Executive Committee. He also recommended that the Ballast Water Management Convention be adopted by member States and he was seeking the support from them for the Global Ballast Programme initiative which is now jointly being developed by the International Maritime Organization in conjunction with the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the UNDP. He also raised the point regarding air emission from ships which besides being quite topical, proactive work has to be done in this area by member States. Admiral Brady encouraged member states to make every effort to give effect to the various International Maritime Conventions by enshrining them into their national laws.

After this presentation, the EC representative from Colombia advised the meeting that Colombia had developed and had been part of a very successful process, particularly in the sector of ports.

The representative from the ACS then advised the meeting that they had a project called Maritime Database where an attempt was being made to compile and collate information on all the ports in the Caribbean. He also advised the meeting that one of the problems now being experienced in the greater Caribbean was that many persons believe that the Caribbean did not have sufficient ships, but this he said is a myth. In many cases small vessels operate illegally within the islands and therefore they did not appear on the map. He also advised the meeting that in 1997 there was an initiative by the United Nations that declared the Caribbean Sea a special area. He urged the members to constantly liaise with each other so that instead of duplicating processes, they could instead work together.

3. Presentation by the Association of Caribbean States

The representative from the ACS, Mr. Luis Carpio, thanked the Chair for inviting him to the meeting. He emphasized the need for cooperation with other organizations in the region on the work being done with respect to transportation. He continued by stating that one of the challenges encountered in the ACS, in the sub-region, which is comprised of twenty eight (28) countries in the greater Caribbean is the great danger of duplicating issues. He suggested that one reason for the poor attendance at the WHTI meetings could be that there are a multitude of initiatives which overlap and especially if the staff is small in the Ministry, then it becomes physically impossible to be everywhere at once. He reiterated that the ACS countries stood ready to assist in the area of transportation and natural disasters and he would continue to seek ways to cooperate with the WHTI in its' work on transportation. He also stated that there is a connection between natural disasters and transportation and this issue would be on the fore for discussion in years to come.

4. Presentation by the Ambassador of Trinidad & Tobago re Summits of the Americas, Trinidad & Tobago 2009

The Ambassador of Trinidad & Tobago to Jamaica HE Yvonne Gittens-Joseph gave a brief report of her country's preparations for the Summits of the Americas Meeting to be held in Trinidad & Tobago in 2009. She advised the meeting that Dr. Luis Rodriguez had been appointed Head of the Secretariat to arrange the Summit, and a Committee had been appointed to work along with Dr. Rodriguez. Dr. Rodriguez also chaired the last Meeting of the Search Implementation Review Group which met on March 29, 2007 in Washington, and he was scheduled to meet again at the Ministerial level during the OAS General Assembly, which will be held in Panama from June 30, 2007. Details on the preparation of the Summit will be available to the Ministers at that meeting. HE Gittens Josephs also advised that the Ambassador to Washington from Trinidad & Tobago, HE Valeer, chairs the Committee on Inter-American Summit Management and Civil Society. Participation and information regarding this meeting will be posted on the OAS website.

5. WHTI Administrative Issues:

After the presentation Co-chair, USA represented by Joe Traini, advised the delegates that a document entitled "Enhanced Structure" was circulated. He requested that the delegates spend time to examine the document in detail and offer their comments.

The representative for GEASSA, Mr. Pierre Goulet advised that their Working Group had examined the document and decided that the Group would remain as one, i.e. safety and security, as it is the opinion that both safety and security work well together in establishing good working relationships and a good working process. He also stated that a lot of work had already been done and they would continue in the same vein as before. Dr. Fernando Sanclemente of Colombia supported Mr. Goulet's comments. This position was endorsed by the Chair and Co-Chair.

The Co-Chair also discussed another document which was circulated, entitled, “Terms of Reference of the WHTI”. He noted that there was a section in another document which was drafted in 2002 that states that the Executive Committee was allowed to invite other forms of international organizations to take part in its meetings. He noted that both ECLAC and IDB are already members, but he stated that greater participation would be welcomed. The Chair commented that there was definitely a desire to have other organizations participate in the activities of the WHTI.

The Co-Chair also commented that the WHTI could consider seeking sponsorship for the meetings from private companies in order to relieve some of the burden from the host countries. He suggested that this idea be adopted by the Ministers at the next Ministerial Meeting for ratification.

The Co-Chair then introduced the document “WHTI Management Guide, Roles and Responsibilities” to the delegates. He advised them that the document outlined in great detail the responsibilities of the Executive Committee which is asked to provide guidance and act as a steering committee for the Working Groups. He reiterated the fact that this document was a ‘draft’ so delegates should not hesitate to make suggestions or any comments relating to the document. The Chair interjected and advised the Meeting that a single document entitled “WHTI Handbook” was done which encompasses all the separate booklets of which the Co-Chair spoke. The draft document would be translated and circulated to all member states for their comments.

6. WHTI Website

The Co-Chair also spoke of the official WHTI website which was still not being funded, however, the hyperlink created via the website of the Ministry of Housing, Transport, Water & Works, Jamaica was a good alternative. Information will be posted on this website for the benefit of the member states.

7. Funding of the Permanent Secretariat, WHTI

The Co-Chair then addressed the matter of the Permanent Technical Secretariat for the WHTI. He stated that once funding was identified, the OAS would provide the transparency as well as the management of the funds and would also house documentation on behalf of the WHTI.

He added that if anyone had any suggestions as to how to obtain funding the Chair should be immediately advised as there may very well be some unused funds for such a project somewhere in the system. He also advised that the OAS had stated that they had no funds available to assist the WHTI.

The Chair suggested that all the representatives present at the meeting speak with their Foreign Affairs Ministers in an effort to have them confer with the OAS regarding funding for the WHTI Secretariat. She encouraged the members to do some research regarding funding so that the matter can be tabled for discussion at the next Ministerial Meeting.

8. Ministerial Meeting

The Chair advised that the Ministerial Meeting is scheduled to be held at the Ritz Carlton Hotel, Montego Bay, Jamaica, August 23-24, 2007. The Executive Committee Meeting is scheduled to be held on August 22, 2007. She also advised that Jamaica is in an election year, whereby elections are constitutionally scheduled to be held by October 2007. If there is a change of date for the Ministerial, all member states will be advised. She asked that member states start thinking of the chairmanship for the next two (2) years as the Executive should be in a position to advise which countries have volunteered for the positions of Chair and Co-Chairs.

9. Other Business

Transportation Research Board: Co-Chair, Joe Traini advised that the TRB will be hosting its annual meeting in Washington in January 2008. He spoke with the Chair of the International Activities Committee, Alejandra Medina who is desirous of having a Caribbean and North American voice at these meetings so she is interested in working with the WHTI as a platform for this process. The Co-chair advised that he would continue to maintain contact with her so they could develop a plan as to how the WHTI could compliment the activities of her committee. The Chair advised that Jamaica was represented by five persons at the Meeting held in January 2007.

The Deputy Director General of the Jamaica Civil Aviation Authority, Lt. Col Oscar Derby advised the meeting that there was a vibrant debate surrounding the matter of emission trading to the extent that the Europeans are seeking to impose an emission charge on airlines flying into Europe. This he stated could put a serious burden on many of the states whose airlines travel to Europe. He encouraged member states to research and seek expert advise on this matter (emissions trading) in order to have a position when they attend the meetings. The Chair advised that at the last APEC Transportation Working Group Meeting, the group came up with a declaration from the Ministers which basically asked for the EU to put this charge on hold.

The Co-Chair then advised the delegates that the synopsis of the two (2) year Action Plan would be circulated to all member states and that all comments and or suggestions would be welcomed.

The Chair advised that the Action Plan would be the blue print for the development of the work of the WHTI. She also advised that steps would be taken to strengthen the Land Experts Working Group (LEWG) so that they can formulate concrete plans for the future. Regarding the Technical Working Group on Maritime Safety, Security and the Environment a concerted effort would be made to have member states become more involved at the technical level. She felt that if the Technical Working Groups came together with all the expertise and technical knowledge, then capacity building, information sharing, sustainable training, developing data collection and improving the website would be a given. However, this had not been the case thus far as we were unable to obtain the names of the contact person in the technical areas throughout the Ministries in the member states.

The Chair also advised that speaking on behalf of Jamaica, the Ministerial Statement emanating from the scheduled Ministerial Meeting in August would definitely speak to a recommitment to the WHTI by the member states bearing in mind the over-arching philosophies on which the initial WHTI Ministerial statement was based.

There being no further business the Chair and Co-Chair thanked the delegates for attending and advised them that they would be kept informed of the details of the Ministerial Meeting, scheduled for August 23-24, 2007.

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