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ANNEX 3

Consequences of overloading of CTUs

1 Occupational safety hazards caused by overweight CTUs in a multimodal transport chain include hazards:

- .1 to ship- and shore-side handlers in the event of structural failure of the unit;
- .2 to unit handlers and plant operators, particularly lift truck drivers whose vehicles may be damaged or may become unstable;
- .3 of accidents to road and rail vehicles when the overloaded container exceeds the maximum permissible weight of the vehicles. The hazards are aggravated by the fact that the road vehicle driver is often not aware that his vehicle is overloaded and does not adjust his driving habits accordingly. A further hazard can arise from the special conditions in intermodal road/rail transport in Europe, as rail-car design does not provide for a large overweight safety margin.

2 The principal hazard is of accidents involving loading or unloading a CTU on or off a ship or vehicle and container-handling equipment in the terminal area, especially when units are to be stacked pending shipment or dispatch to consignees. Note: When high-density goods, such as heavy machinery or metal ingots, are packed into a CTU, the selection of the type and capacity of the unit should be taken into account to prevent overloading.

3 Most cranes can be expected to have weight limit controls but, as these are designed to prevent overstressing of the crane, they will not necessarily assist in the detection of overweight CTUs.

4 When an overweight CTU is offloaded from a ship or vehicle, its condition may only be discovered upon being removed for stacking in the terminal area and the handling equipment being found to have inadequate lifting capacity. Handling equipment, in some ports, may not be available for handling heavy units.

5 The problem of overweight CTUs should be properly addressed at the initial phase of packing the unit. Packing of units, either at the manufacturing or producing premises, consolidation depots, or consignor's warehouse, should be under the supervision of trained operatives who are provided with adequate information on the cargo to be packed and who possess sufficient authority to control the operation to prevent overloading.

6 In view of the above, all measures should be taken to prevent overloading of CTUs. However, if a container is found to be overloaded, it should be removed from service until it can be repacked within its maximum gross weight.