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Committee on Transport
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Item 6 (a) (iii) of the provisional agenda

**FOLLOW-UP OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT
ON INTERNATIONAL ROADS IN THE ARAB MASHREQ**

A. SIGNATURE AND RATIFICATION OF THE AGREEMENT

1. By Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) resolution 235 (XXI) of 10 May 2001, ESCWA member countries adopted by consensus the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq.¹

2. By 20 December 2002, 11 member countries had signed and three had ratified the Agreement.

Country	Name and position of signatory	Date of signature	Ratification
Bahrain	H.E. Sheikh Muhammad bin Aly Al Khalifa Deputy Minister of Transportation	8 March 2002	
Egypt	H.E. Mr. Ibrahim El-Dimeery Minister of Transport	10 May 2001	
Iraq	Mr. Sabri Kati'Abad Under-Secretary, Ministry of Transport and Communications	19 December 2002	
Jordan	H.E. Mr. Jawad Hadeed Minister of Planning	10 May 2001	18 January 2001
Lebanon	H.E. Mr. Najeeb Mikati Minister of Public Works and Transport	10 May 2001	The Agreement was ratified by the Council of Ministers; measures are currently being taken for deposit of the instrument of ratification.
Palestine	H.E. Mr. Ali al-Qawasmi Minister of Transport	10 May 2001	
Qatar	H.E. Mr. Abdulla bin Muhammad al-Khatir Ambassador of Qatar to Lebanon	4 April 2002	
Saudi Arabia	H.E. Mr. Nasir bin Muhammad Al-Salloum Minister of Communications	7 March 2002	
Syrian Arab Republic	H.E. Mr. Essam al-Za'eem Minister of State, Planning Affairs	10 May 2001	

¹ The text of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq is contained in E/ESCWA/TRANS/2001/3. The Agreement was adopted by ESCWA on 10 May 2001 and opened for signature on the same day.

Country	Name and position of signatory	Date of signature	Ratification
United Arab Emirates	H.E. Sheikh Humaid bin Ahmad al-Mualla Minister of Planning	10 May 2001	
Yemen	H.E. Mr. Abdullah Hussein Al-Dafae Minister of Public Works and Urban Development	4 July 2001	The instrument of ratification was deposited in November 2002.

3. On 13 September 2002, ESCWA sent letters to ministers in member countries, urging those countries which had not yet signed the Agreement to do so as soon as possible, before the expiration of the period during which that Agreement is open for signature, namely, 31 December 2002, and urging countries which had signed to complete their ratification thereof, in order that the Agreement may enter into force.

4. This issue is submitted to the Committee for information and for consideration of the following points:

(a) Countries which have signed the Agreement should each consider their current position with regard to the relevant ratification procedures and deposit the instrument of ratification with the Secretary-General of the United Nations;

(b) Countries which have not yet signed the Agreement should each consider their current position with regard to the completion of accession procedures.

B. THE DESIGN OF ROAD NUMBER SIGNS

5. The following provisions are made at the end of annex III (page 24 of the English text) of the Agreement:

“The routes of the Arab Mashreq international road network are designated by the letter M followed by the road number. For this reason, one must make certain that this symbol is not used to identify roads in accordance with the national numbering system.

Road number signs must be repeated at intervals of approximately 10 km on first-class freeways and expressways and every 20 km on second-class roads. The road number should be indicated before and after every point of entry or exit to or from the international road, whether at interchanges or at-level intersections.

The shape, design and colours of the sign shall be determined subsequently, prior to the entry into force of the Agreement.”

6. In view of those provisions, ESCWA prepared five proposals for the design of signs, which were submitted to the Expert Group Meeting on Harmonization of Transport Norms, Regulations and Legal Instruments for Regional Cooperation, that was held in Beirut on 15 and 16 October 2001.

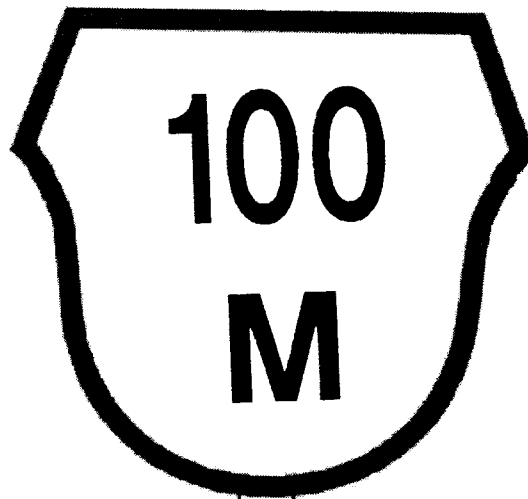
7. The requested amendments were made in accordance with the recommendations made by the aforementioned Meeting, the outcome being three proposals for the design of signs.

8. Those proposals were then submitted to the third session of the Committee on Transport, which was held in Beirut from 5 to 7 March 2002. The preferred design and colour was decided upon (see annex I) and the Committee requested ESCWA to prepare the technical details for the signs.

9. The Ministry of Communications in Saudi Arabia prepared the technical specifications for the selected signs (see annex II), which are submitted to the Committee on Transport for information and in order to convey thanks to that Ministry.

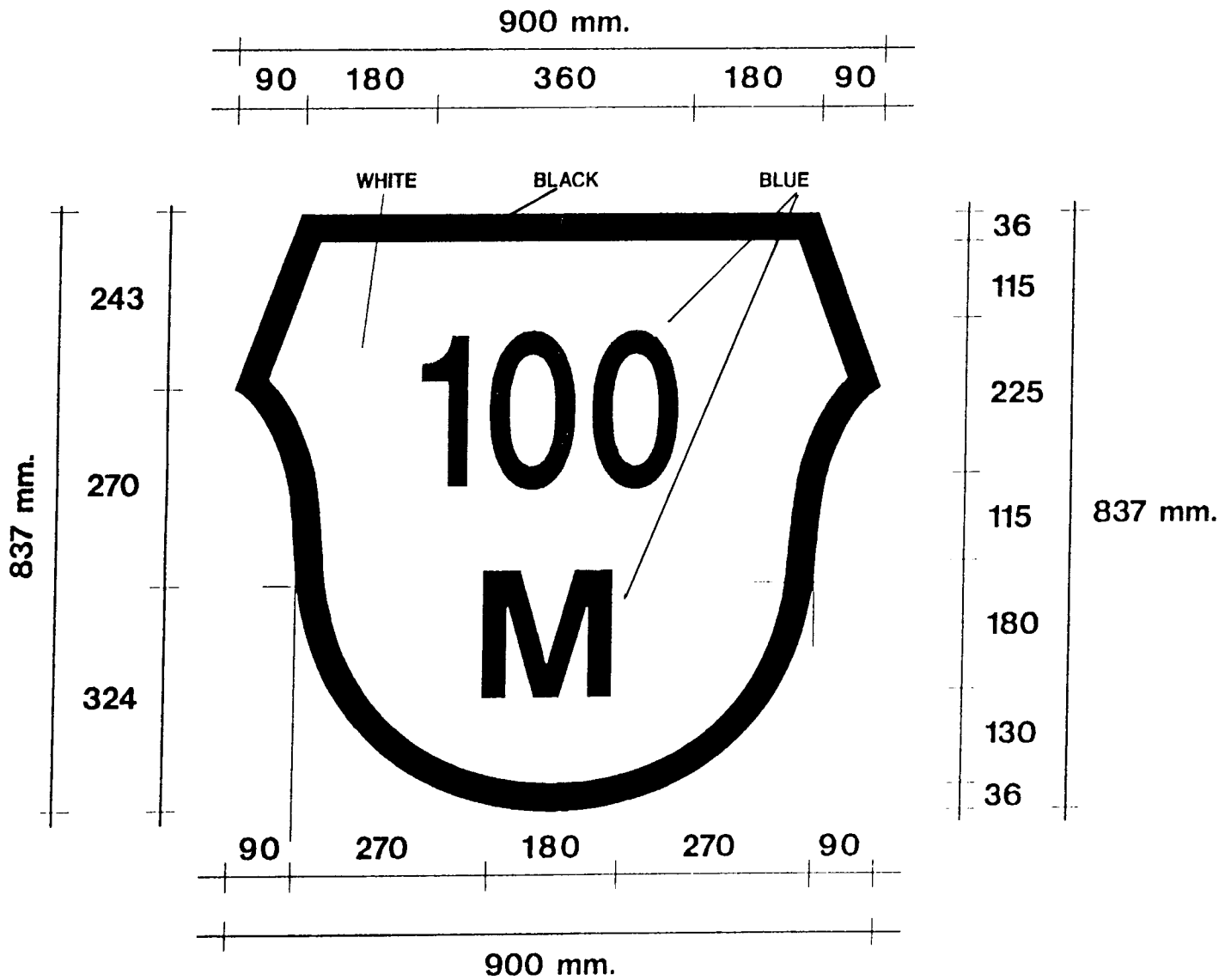
Annex I

THE DESIGN OF ROAD NUMBER SIGNS



Annex II

THE TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR THE SIGNS



900 X 837

