



**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COUNCIL**

Distr.
LIMITED
E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/7/Report
13 February 2017
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Report
of the seventeenth session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics
Cairo, 23-24 January 2017

Summary

The seventeenth session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) was held in Cairo, on 23 and 24 January 2017. Discussions focused on several topics, notably progress in the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee at its previous session, transport and logistics in the Arab region, and transport under the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Committee issued a number of recommendations, some of a general nature and some relating specifically to items on the session agenda.

The present report contains a brief summary of discussions on each agenda item, and the outcomes and recommendations emerging from the session. The Committee adopted the present report at its final meeting, held on 24 January 2017.

CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	1-2	3
I. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS AT ITS SEVENTEENTH SESSION	3-25	3
A. Implementation of recommendations made by the Committee on Transport at its sixteenth session.....	3	3
B. Implementation of transport-related activities under the ESCWA programme of work	4	3
C. Components of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab States	5-7	3
D. Transport and logistics in the Arab region	8-16	3
E. Transport under the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.....	17-19	4
F. General recommendations	20-25	4
II. TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	26-63	5
A. Progress achieved in the field of transport since the sixteenth session of the Committee on Transport.....	26-37	5
B. Transport and logistics in the Arab region	38-54	7
C. Transport under the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.....	55-59	11
D. Strategic framework and proposed activities in the area of transport and logistics for the biennium 2018-2019	60-61	12
E. Date and venue of the eighteenth session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics	62	12
F. Other matters	63	12
III. ADOPTION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS AT ITS SEVENTEENTH SESSION.....	64	12
IV. ORGANIZATION OF WORK.....	65-75	12
A. Date and venue	65	12
B. Opening	66-69	12
C. Attendance	70	13
D. Election of officers	71-73	13
E. Agenda.....	74	14
F. Documents	75	14
ANNEXES		
I. List of participants.....		15
II. List of documents		18

Introduction

1. The Committee on Transport and Logistics of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its seventeenth session pursuant to ESCWA resolution 213 (XIX) of 7 May 1997 concerning the establishment of a Committee on Transport within the Commission, which was endorsed by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1997/11 of 18 July 1997; and in accordance with ESCWA resolution 229 (XXI) of 11 May 2001 concerning the frequency of the sessions of the Committee.

2. The present report contains the recommendations issued by the Committee on Transport and Logistics at its final meeting, some related to specific agenda items and others of a general nature. It also summarizes the discussions conducted under each agenda item, the statements made at the opening meeting and details of the session organization and attendance.

I. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS AT ITS SEVENTEENTH SESSION

A. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT AT ITS SIXTEENTH SESSION

3. The Committee requests the ESCWA secretariat to continue following up with member States on recommendations that have not yet been implemented.

B. IMPLEMENTATION OF TRANSPORT-RELATED ACTIVITIES UNDER THE ESCWA PROGRAMME OF WORK

4. The Committee takes note of activities undertaken by the secretariat in the area of transport and logistics, and of its efforts to link normative activities (studies and research papers), advisory services and consensus-building among member States. The Committee also requests the secretariat to continue building partnerships with international and regional organisations working in the field of transport in the Arab region to promote integration and achieve better outcomes.

C. COMPONENTS OF THE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT SYSTEM IN THE ARAB STATES

5. The Committee takes note of the information contained in the secretariat report on the implementation of recommendations issued by the Committee on Transport at its sixteenth session. It also requests member States that have not submitted updated reports on the implementation of recommendations to send them to the secretariat by 30 April 2017. Should no updates be received from member States, the report will be adopted as is. Furthermore, the Committee requests the secretariat to review progress every two years to allow further time for significant implementation developments.

6. The secretariat is requested to urge member States that have not yet acceded to or ratified any transport-related agreement or memorandum of understanding to accelerate the accession process.

7. The secretariat is requested to form a small working group to support the accession of Maghreb countries to the agreements on the Integrated Transport System in the Arab States (ITSAS).

D. TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS IN THE ARAB REGION

8. The secretariat is invited to continue conducting studies and research on transport and its links to global value chains; to follow up on the most recent regional and global developments; and to offer practical suggestions to member States in this respect by preparing a practical policy guide to facilitate their integration into global value chains and maximize related benefits.

9. The Committee reaffirms the importance of the geographic information system (GIS) as a platform monitoring and developing the ITSAS components, of assisting member States and the League of Arab States secretariat in conducting analyses and surveys for transport planning, and of securing funding to develop system usages while taking into account its cross-cutting economic and social aspects.

10. Member States are requested to finalize the appointment of coordinators and provide the secretariat with their names in the shortest delay to provide them with training; to support national coordinators working on the platform in collecting data to operationalize it (general country-level statistics and data on roads, railways, airports, and seaports); and to add two new data layers to inland logistics terminals and bordercrossings and incorporate them into the ePlatform GIS.

11. The Committee takes note of the secretariat's follow-up efforts on maritime transport in the Arab region; and requests member States to focus in the upcoming period on developing the seaport infrastructure and its land connections, on updating regulatory structures, on simplifying and accelerating work procedures, on building worker capacity through training; and on promoting the use of information and communications technology.

12. The Committee takes note of the secretariat's research on the importance of land transport and its role in multiple logistics chains, and invites the secretariat to incorporate this research into its studies on Arab economic integration.

13. The secretariat is invited to pursue its efforts with member States to harmonize the legislative and regulatory frameworks and institutional structures of road transport in line with international developments in this area.

14. The Committee takes note of the secretariat's efforts in conducting research and studies on transport and logistics, notably the economic dimensions, and invites the secretariat to pursue these efforts, particularly with regard to linking the outcomes of ITSAS components to economic development at the national and regional levels, and analysing the methodologies used in international logistics indicators.

15. The secretariat is invited to expand constructive partnerships with regional and international organizations in the field of transport and logistics, in order to enhance and optimize integration efforts.

16. Member States are invited to accelerate their accession to the United Nations international transport agreements to facilitate transport and trade at the intraregional and interregional levels.

E. TRANSPORT UNDER THE UNITED NATIONS 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

17. Member States are requested to incorporate transport development projects into inclusive economic development strategies and policies, notably national plans for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

18. The Committee takes note of transport activities covering a number of Goals under the 2030 Agenda, and emphasizes the need to address them in ESCWA studies and research to develop indicators measuring progress in the implementation of these activities at the national and regional levels.

19. Member States are invited to follow up on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals related to transport and logistics at the national level.

F. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

20. Member States are requested to effectively participate in international conferences and events related to transport and logistics and to coordinate with the secretariat in this regard.

21. The secretariat is encouraged to follow up on international conferences and resolutions on transport, maintain coordination among Arab countries to consolidate their positions with regard to recommendations and outcomes, and provide technical advice on the obligations that may emanate from these conferences.
22. The secretariat is requested to update the outcome document of the Global Sustainable Transport Conference (Ashgabat, 27 November 2016) and send its final version to member States.
23. The Committee takes note of the proposed activities related to transport and logistics for the biennium 2018-2019, which focus on linking transport issues to trade logistics.
24. The secretariat is requested to continue implementing the methodological framework for ITSAS development and implementation, notably following the accession of Maghreb countries, and prepare a presentation on this topic. The framework aims to develop the mechanism needed to benefit from available expertise through cooperation and coordination with all international and regional organisations, commissions, unions, companies, centres of expertise, experts and consultants.
25. Member States are called upon to provide the secretariat with national transport development reports for the period spanning from 1 January 2016 to 15 June 2017 by 30 June 2017, to enable the secretariat to prepare and post its full report on the Committee website for access by member States.

II. TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

A. PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN THE FIELD OF TRANSPORT SINCE THE SIXTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT (Agenda item 4)

26. Under this item, the Committee considered the following three documents: E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/3(Part I) on transport-related actions for the implementation of the recommendations issued by the Committee on Transport at its sixteenth session, E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/3(Part II) on the implementation of transport-related activities under the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017 since its sixteenth session, and E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/3(Part III) on the implementation of ITSAS components,¹ namely the Agreement on International Roads; the Agreement on International Railways; the Memorandum of Understanding on Maritime Transport Cooperation between Arab countries; national committees for transport and trade facilitation; and road traffic safety.

1. Transport-related actions to implement the recommendations issued by the Committee on Transport at its sixteenth session

27. The representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on actions undertaken by the secretariat to implement the recommendations issued by the Committee on Transport at its sixteenth session, including on the harmonization of institutional frameworks and legislation of the transport sector in the Arab region, the components of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq (ITSAM), road safety, and other topics under the ESCWA programme of work in the field of transport. She noted that the secretariat addressed member States about acceding to and ratifying the two agreements and memorandum of understanding of ITSAM in November 2016, following the approval and official adoption of the amended name agreed in the previous session, as declared by the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs. ESCWA requested member States to update their data on the implementation of international and regional agreements, such as the Agreement on International Roads between Arab countries. The secretariat also prepared a technical working paper on identifying shipping lines for maritime and fluvial connections between Arab countries, and

¹ The Integrated Transport System in the Arab States (ITSAS) is the new designation of the Integrated Traffnsport System in the Arab Mashreq (ITSAM), following the recent accession of the Maghreb States to ESCWA.

pursued its technical support for member States in transport and trade facilitation, notably with regard to monitoring and evaluating impediments delaying and complicating trade operations.

28. The representative of the secretariat discussed current efforts to issue an instruction manual on establishing national integrated systems for road safety management, as recommended by member States. She said that a memorandum of understanding had been signed by ESCWA and the International Road Transport Union to support Arab countries in facilitating and developing road transport. Furthermore, she mentioned key developments in the ITSAS electronic platform, notably the completion of the data structure and 90 per cent of maps. She also mentioned the training session on inputting transport network data, held in Cairo on 22 January 2017, and attended by a number of national focal points from member States.

29. Participants welcomed the achievements made in this regard, and requested the secretariat to follow up with the member States on recommendations that have yet to be implemented.

2. Implementation of transport-related activities under the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017

30. The representative of the secretariat discussed activities implemented under subprogramme 3 on economic development and integration of the ESCWA strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017 in the area of transport and logistics. He first clarified the ESCWA areas of work under that framework, namely providing technical cooperation services, cooperating with organizations, conducting studies, providing technical materials, and monitoring the implementation of regional and international agreements. He also mentioned several activities implemented by ESCWA in the field of transport and logistics, including (a) a joint meeting with the Islamic Development Bank in February 2016, a technical workshop on the outcomes of the tenth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) highlighting developments related to the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, and the ratification status of Arab countries and the implementation of the agreement at the regional level; (b) an integrated report on the implementation by member States of ITSAS components; (c) a report on the role of transport in strengthening linkages to global value chains; (d) a technical report on the nexus between transport activities and the SDGs; (e) a memorandum of understanding between ESCWA and the International Road Transport Union to support Arab countries in land transport facilitation and development; (f) a research project to incorporate Arab countries into the global trade in value-added database, one of the most important modern databases on the efficiency of services in advancing development and structural transformation; (g) and a training workshop for national coordinators on inputting data on the geographic information system of the ITSAS electronic platform.

31. The representative of the secretariat also reviewed several transport-related meetings and conferences held by ESCWA, such as the expert group meeting on the role of transport in connecting to global value chains (Beirut, November 2016), the progress meeting on the preparation of a road design manual to enhance safety in Lebanon (Beirut, April 2016), and the expert group meeting on protectionism in the services, transport and social security sectors in Tunisia (Tunis, June 2016); in addition to conferences in which ESCWA participated, such as the International Single Window Conference (Morocco, September 2016), the Global Sustainable Transport Conference (Ashgabat, November 2016), the Euro-Mediterranean transport meetings (Brussels, February 2016), and the International Trade Center Forum (Tunisia, April 2016). Moreover, he considered ESCWA efforts in providing technical support to member States, such as contributing to the drafting of a chapter on transport in the National Sustainable Development Strategy of Lebanon (January 2016), and examining requests for technical assistance in the field of transport from Palestine (May 2016) and from Saudi Arabia to operationalize the work of its committee on transport and trade facilitation (August 2016).

32. Commenting on this agenda item, representatives requested the secretariat to pursue its efforts in building partnerships with international and regional organisations active in the field of transport in the Arab region, so as to promote complementary work to optimize benefits for member States.

3. *Progress achieved in implementing the ITSAS components*

33. The representative of the secretariat discussed progress in implementing the components of ITSAS, namely the Agreement on International Roads, the Agreement on International Railways, the Memorandum of Understanding on Maritime Transport Cooperation between Arab countries, the national committees for transport and trade facilitation, and road traffic safety. She reviewed the formation and expansion of ITSAS to include Maghreb countries, its redesignation from ITSAM to ITSAS, the accession of member States to various agreements and the memorandum of understanding, the creation of national committees for transport and trade facilitation and road safety levels, all on the basis of the national reports submitted to the secretariat.

34. Commenting on this item, Morocco and Tunisia commended ESCWA efforts and requested the continued implementation of the agreements, the accession of all Arab countries thereto, and the establishment of a small working group to assist stakeholders in both countries to complete the accession process. The representative of Morocco said that his country was updating road safety data and had participated in the Single Window Conference to facilitate trade, and in the census conducted with the participation of 190 countries. He also called upon ESCWA to cooperate with the committee in charge of this project. The representative of Egypt stressed that his country was committed to honouring its obligations under these agreements by undertaking the required infrastructure changes, which were time consuming and would therefore delay the implementation of agreements. He expected agreement components to be finalized by the end of 2020.

35. The representative of Tunisia noted the creation of national committees on some components of transport and trade facilitation agreements, such as the national committee for trade facilitation comprising public and private stakeholders, the national committee for road safety consisting of representatives from the Ministry of Transport, the Ministry of Equipment with regard to infrastructure, and the Ministry of Interior in charge of oversight. He added that these committees would soon be presented to the Council of Ministers. The representative of Oman said that all agreement components had been finalized, including the signing of a memorandum of understanding with neighboring countries. He added that his country had formed a national committee for road safety with a corresponding national strategy and centre.

36. The representatives of Egypt, the Sudan and the United Arab Emirates mentioned the need to update data of focal points to avoid any miscommunication that may arise when changing subsidiary focal points. The representative of the Sudan suggested developing a matrix of missing data in reports, according to specific timelines, and sending it to countries that had not provided the required data. Saudi Arabia requested updating the website and specifying the timelines set out in national reports.

37. The secretariat clarified the difference between ESCWA central focal points and subsidiary focal points related to different areas of work, noting that focal points were appointed by member States and that ESCWA was addressing central and subsidiary focal points as well as embassies when communicating with member States.

B. TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS IN THE ARAB REGION (Agenda item 5)

38. Under this item, the Committee considered the following four documents submitted by the secretariat and a presentation on the electronic platform to follow up on the implementation of ITSAS components. Document E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/4(Part I) addressed the role of transport in connecting to global value chains; document E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/4(Part II) tackled the reality of maritime transport in the Arab

region; document E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/4(Part III) addressed the role of land transport in multiple logistics chains; and document E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/4(Part IV) covered the United Nations international transport agreements and the benefits of accession thereto.

1. Role of transport in connecting to global value chains

39. The representative of the secretariat gave a detailed presentation on the basic concepts of global value chains and their relevance to the global economy, particularly developing and Arab economies, and highlighted the role of transport in strengthening the linkages of these economies to global value chains. He clarified the role of global value chains in distributing added value to commodities and emphasised the importance of participation in those chains that reveal ways to increase profits, provide countries with production flexibility by specializing in specific parts and components, and enable countries to benefit from information and technology transfer and from linkages with global companies that further open markets to Arab products. The presentation showed an improvement in the participation of developing countries in global value chains, and an increase in the contribution of value-added services to global output from 61 per cent in 1995 to 68 per cent in 2015.

40. He also addressed in detail the role of transport and the costs and timings of its various land, maritime and air modalities. He highlighted the link between transport and trade facilitation, particularly for Arab countries where progress remains slow in this area. He added that the Arab region was capable of benefiting from increased participation in global value chains, but the development level of transport and connectivity to global navigation networks remained barriers to Arab global integration. He attributed these hurdles to significant restrictions in the transport sector and low commitment to trade facilitation. He concluded with suggestions, such as revisiting transport policies in the region, investing in transport infrastructure, liberating some transport patterns – at least regionally – and dedicating greater attention to trade facilitation.

41. The representative of Morocco requested ESCWA to incorporate into its reports the strategies and perspectives of other member States to allow for an exchange of experiences. The representative of the United Arab Emirates commended the detailed presentation and reaffirmed the request of Morocco. The representative of Saudi Arabia noted that administrative procedures had been updated at Saudi seaports and that containers now remained only two days at seaports instead of seven to ten days. The representative of Egypt called for assisting member States to move from observers to participants in global value chains and to maximize benefits therefrom. The representative of the Sudan suggested adding border crossings owing to their significant role in facilitating the movement of goods and persons and promoting security and stability. In his opinion, border crossings were not adequately covered in ESCWA report.

42. The representative of the secretariat welcomed comments and suggestions by member States, noting that some reports covered issues contained in the presentation in more detail, but they were still under preparation.

43. Following the discussion, a presentation was made by the ESCWA consultant for transport and logistics summarizing the implementation progress of the electronic platform created by ESCWA to facilitate cooperation with focal points in member States, so as to update maps and fill out transport network data on ITSAS. Furthermore, the suggested data for the geographic information system were highlighted in the presentation, namely the general data at the country level and data on roads, railways, airports and seaports. The ESCWA consultant also mentioned in his presentation the training workshop organised by the secretariat for focal points, held on 22 January 2017, which reaffirmed the importance of the geographic information system to monitor and develop the ITSAS components and to conduct analyses and surveys for transport mapping; and the need for member States to appoint and support national coordinators. In conclusion, the ESCWA consultant requested adding two new data layers to the inland logistics terminals and border crossings.

44. Participants requested other training workshops for national coordinators who did not attend the training, and inquired about the ownership of data populating the electronic platform, access thereto and confidentiality thereof. The representative of the secretariat noted that data ownership, entry and amendment were handled by the country and its national coordinator, and that the required data was general and used in United Nations reports. Therefore, no reservations were expected to arise with regard to data dissemination. Furthermore, he requested participants to consider the required data profile and inform ESCWA of any reservations thereon, noting that data optimisation was currently limited but could be enhanced. The electronic platform was prepared to host existing data and future transport network data. That difference between both types of data could be clearly noted in the data substantive profile. The representative of the United Arab Emirates stressed the importance of updating data in the electronic platform to ensure sustainability.

45. The representative of the League of Arab States requested cooperation with ESCWA on the platform and said that similar attempts were made by the League in this area but did not see the light. The representative of the secretariat welcomed cooperation with the League, noting that the current platform design was suggested by ESCWA and was being developed in collaboration with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). He added that the platform was available for use by member States and all stakeholders wishing to benefit therefrom. Participants noted with appreciation the platform statistics and data spatial representation supporting the economic and social strategic planning of countries and helping to retrieve timely and updated indicators to analyse the economic dimensions of transport policies.

2. Maritime transport in the Arab region

46. The representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on maritime transport and related developments in the Arab region and stressed its important role for Arab countries in promoting intraregional trade exchange, facilitating the transfer of goods and people, and enhancing international trade. He said that maritime transport accounted for around 80 per cent of global trade volume, 70 per cent of global trade value and 85 per cent of global container movement on east-west shipping lines. Moreover, several Arab seaports ranked high among global container ports (nine seaports in six Arab countries were among the top 100 ports and more than 1 million standard containers were shipped in 2013). He added that Arab countries had strong potential to benefit from that sector by investing in seaport infrastructure and connectivity to road networks and railways, in partnership with the private sector, consolidating standards, simplifying and facilitating procedures, enhancing services, upgrading the skills of seaport workers, and expanding the use of information and communication technologies.

47. Commenting on this item, the representative of the United Arab Emirates said that seaport investments were facing huge challenges, notably in the presence of less costly and less time-consuming alternatives in the Arab region. The representative of Saudi Arabia applauded the presentation and announced the creation of a new barrier-free port in his country, namely King Abdullah Port, and a logistic and industrial zone annexed thereto. He noted that the new seaport currently accommodated around two million containers.

3. Land transport in multiple logistics chains

48. The representative of the secretariat discussed the role of land transport in multiple logistics chains, noting its predominant use for cargo transport over distances less than 500 kilometres and the importance of international agreements to promote this transport pattern and reduce its costs, so as to stimulate Arab intraregional trade. He also discussed the added value of logistics chains; the impact of logistics on the competitiveness of goods; the importance, characteristics and challenges of road transport; and the available measures and options to face these challenges. He said that road transport involved low investment costs, speed and flexibility, yet it was the second energy consumer following the industrial sector and, unlike the other modes of transport, it was not secure and its regulatory frameworks were fragmented across borders. Member States could benefit from road transport characteristics by cooperating to consolidate standards and

specifications; coordinating policymaking; and launching deeper intraregional dialogue to adopt common positions with regard to international road transport agreements.

49. Discussions under this item covered transport lines between Egypt, Jordan and Palestine. The representative of Palestine said that his country was giving priority in the current year to transport and energy, with a focus on enhancing road traffic and safety and meeting global commitments through the creation of a new department for environmental pollution and emissions. Furthermore, efforts were being made to identify new road links with the European Union's assistance but, as usual, Israel was impeding such endeavours. He requested ESCWA and participants from member States to focus on transport facilitation with Palestine and to highlight the matter at international meetings. The representative of Morocco submitted a report on transport and logistics, noting that his country had developed a national logistics strategy with clear objectives, such as creating a logistics network covering 8000 hectares with logistics training centres that clearly contributed, following 6 years of implementation, to reducing the transit and storage costs of goods. He invited participants to visit the website of the Moroccan Agency for the Development of Logistics Competitiveness to read the strategy. The representative of the Sudan stressed the importance of land transport in logistics services, notably road transport because it was the fastest transport modality. He added that land transport was particularly important in the Sudan as it carried 85 per cent of goods and 90 per cent of the population. The key challenges of land transport were low infrastructure investments, manual operations at many border crossings, cargo weight excess, and non-compliance with weight-related instructions. The representative of Egypt suggested focusing investments on land transport.

4. United Nations international transport agreements and their accession benefits

50. The representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the economic and social benefits of the United Nations international transport agreements, including agreements signed under ITSAS, which was developed by the secretariat. In the light of economic and social challenges facing the Arab region in various areas, such as the international transport sector with its weak infrastructure and non-integrated systems and impediments related to logistics and institutional and legal systems for trade and transport, Arab countries should benefit from international transport agreements adopted by international and regional organizations, such as ESCWA and the League of Arab States. Accession to and accelerated implementation of these agreements would serve Arab economic integration and promote the competitiveness of Arab countries on the global economic market.

51. The representative of the International Road Transport Union gave a presentation on international conventions and key instruments for transport and trade facilitation, addressing opportunities and challenges in this sector. He also tackled in detail the components and benefits of accession to the Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention).

52. The representative of Palestine enquired about the membership of Arab countries to the TIR Convention, the implementation thereof, and the possibility of training countries to adhere thereto. The representative of the International Road Transport Union said that eight Arab countries were parties to the TIR Convention and that the Union provided training for accession.

53. The representative of Morocco said that Maghreb countries were preparing a study on the economic feasibility of constructing a railway between Casablanca and Tunis. He discussed Moroccan plans to construct 2700 kilometres of railways by 2030. He noted that Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia would initiate a technical study on the Arab Maghreb Union in 2017 under the regional agreement between cities and States. The representative of Egypt said that his country was cooperating with the International Road Transport Union to comply with the TIR Convention. He stressed the importance of implementing international agreements consistent with Arab priorities, totalling no more than five agreements. He also highlighted the importance of substantively incorporating agreements into national plans. The representative of the Sudan discussed the importance of legislative readiness prior to accession to those agreements and inquired about sanctions imposed on withdrawing countries.

54. The Union representative clarified that the TIR Convention did not conflict with domestic legislation and that its procedures were not complicated. He said that the TIR Convention was enforced six months after accession. It was an optional convention and State parties thereto could suspend implementation thereof or withdraw therefrom at any time.

C. TRANSPORT UNDER THE UNITED NATIONS 2030 AGENDA
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
(Agenda item 6)

55. Under this item, the Committee considered the following two documents submitted by the secretariat and held a panel discussion on incorporating transport into national plans for sustainable development: E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/5(Part I) on transport and the Sustainable Development Goals and E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/5(Part II) on the outcomes of the Global Sustainable Transport Conference.

1. *Transport and the Sustainable Development Goals*

56. Under this sub-item, the representative of the secretariat considered the nexus between developing the transport sector and achieving sustainable development. He highlighted transport-related indicators of sustainable development under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and their objectives. He said that the SDGs did not include a specific goal on transport and logistics, yet several transport-related indicators were addressed either directly (under 4 goals) or indirectly (under 5 goals). That did not limit the importance of the transport sector, which directly affected other economic and social sectors. Therefore, a system-based approach needed to be adopted to understand the mutually reinforcing impact of transport activities and sustainable development aspects and to extract appropriate transport indicators to achieve The SDGs. The representative of the secretariat concluded by requesting Arab transport officials to highlight the role of transport in sustainable development plans at the local and national levels, and to coordinate among themselves in collaboration with ESCWA. He stressed the need to promote cooperation to overcome the challenges facing the sustainable development agenda and, particularly, the contribution by the transport sector to sustainable development. Those challenges were related to data availability, readiness of statistical systems, funding and cross-sectoral networking and multi-standard analysis.

2. *Incorporating transport into national plans for sustainable development
(panel discussion)*

57. Under this sub-item, the secretariat held a panel discussion on national sustainable development plans in Arab countries, and explored the possibility of incorporating into them transport development plans. In this context, the representative of Egypt mentioned the confusion resulting from some suggested transport indicators, notably in terms of their meaning, such as the staff indicator, which could be both positive and negative.

3. *Outcomes of the Global Sustainable Transport Conference*

58. With reference to document E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/5(Part II), the representative of the secretariat presented, under this sub-item, the secretariat's observations on the outcome document of the Global Sustainable Transport Conference, held in Ashgabat on 26 and 27 November 2016. She said that she would update the outcome document once the final version was drafted by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and forward it to member States. The document aimed to highlight the issues and recommendations discussed at the Conference.

59. Participants noted with appreciation the secretariat's efforts to follow up on international transport conferences and resolutions and its coordination role between member States to consolidate their positions with regard to outputs and recommendations. They also invited the secretariat to provide continuous technical advice. A short discussion was held on how to promote participation by member States in international conferences and events, and coordination with the secretariat in that area.

D. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND PROPOSED ACTIVITIES IN THE AREA
OF TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS FOR THE BIENNIUM 2018-2019
(Agenda item 7)

60. The Committee reviewed the activities proposed by the secretariat in the area of transport and logistics within the framework of subprogramme 3 on economic integration and development, in line with the strategic framework for the biennium 2018-2019 adopted by ESCWA at its twenty-ninth ministerial session (Doha, 13-15 December 2016). The representative of the secretariat presented the expected achievements, performance indicators, and the proposed activities for the biennium 2018-2019, including a report on logistics performance in the Arab region (2018), an expert group meeting on the implementation of the trade facilitation agreement in Arab countries (2018), and a report assessing the implementation of transport agreements that Arab States were party to (2018).

61. The representative of Tunisia suggested future mapping of transport and logistics networks in the Arab region, and stressed the importance of funding and developing the transport sector by enacting appropriate legislation and enhancing infrastructure and mechanisms.

E. DATE AND VENUE OF THE EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE
ON TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS

62. The representative of the secretariat proposed that the eighteenth session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics be held in December 2017 in Beirut. Participants did not object to the proposal.

F. OTHER MATTERS
(Agenda item 9)

63. No issues were raised under this item.

**III. ADOPTION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS AT ITS SEVENTEENTH SESSION**
(Agenda item 10)

64. At its final meeting, convened on 24 January 2017, the Committee on Transport and Logistics adopted its recommendations as amended.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. DATE AND VENUE

65. The Committee on Transport and Logistics held its seventeenth session at the headquarters of the General Authority for Roads, Bridges and Land Transport of the Ministry of Transport of Egypt in Cairo, on 23 and 24 January 2017. Its work was divided over four meetings.

B. OPENING

66. Mr. Mohamad Mokhtar el-Hacene, Director of the Economic Development and Integration Division, delivered a statement on behalf of ESCWA, in which he welcomed participants at the seventeenth session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics, and thanked the Ministry of Transport of Egypt for organizing the session. He reaffirmed the role of ESCWA in promoting transport-related cooperation in the Arab region by following up on the implementation of ITSAS components. Mr. El-Hacene presented the key agenda items and the training workshop on the electronic platform and the geographic information system, organized by ESCWA for national coordinators in Cairo on 22 January 2017. He called upon member States that had recently joined ESCWA to accede to the United Nations international transport agreements. Mr. El-Hacene

concluded his statement by emphasizing that ESCWA remained ready to support member States in fulfilling their obligations in the transport sector, irrespective of transport modalities and logistics services, in accordance with regional and international plans, recommendations and commitments. He also stressed the importance of incorporating the SDGs, particularly those related to sustainable transport and road safety, into national development plans.

67. Mr. Hamid Mahmoud Wakeel, State Minister of Transport, Roads and Bridges of the Sudan, said that the meeting of the ESCWA Committee on Transport and Logistics was a “golden opportunity” to gather stakeholders in transport and related economic sectors. He stressed the importance of studying transport economies aimed at reducing transport costs and, therefore, the final product cost. He also tackled the key role of the transport sector in achieving economic growth and prosperity; decreasing unemployment; promoting cultural integration by establishing links between production and consumption areas; expanding agricultural lands; maximising the use of natural resources, notably minerals; and achieving balance in the supply and demand of goods. Moreover, he noted the impact of this sector on achieving economic integration among countries and promoting social and cultural inclusion.

68. Mr. Galal Mohamed Saeed, Minister of Transport of Egypt and Chair of the sixteenth session of the ESCWA Committee on Transport delivered a statement in which he welcomed participants. He said that Egypt was keen on maintaining contact with member States to address vital issues under the ESCWA mandate, such as expanding ESCWA membership to include all Maghreb countries, and on supporting the secretariat in any initiative promoting joint Arab action. He also stressed the importance of the transport sector for regional and international trade and the need to establish interlinkages between transport and logistics. In this context, he presented key developments in Egypt, such as the signing of agreements and memorandums of understanding, and introduced projects, such as the national road project, a joint venture with the National Authority for Armed Forces for the construction of 3,200 kilometres of new roads by 2018; a project on refurbishing the railway network; and another project on establishing and connecting large logistics areas to all transport networks, including maritime transport.

69. He emphasized the importance of transport and logistics in supporting the Egyptian economy and stressed the commitment of Egypt to the agreements. In addition to combating poverty. He said that Egypt was focusing its efforts on regulating transport services by establishing regulatory authorities for the transport of persons and goods on international roads and promulgating new laws in that regard. He announced the establishment of a new land port between Egypt and the Sudan in addition to the old seaports, to promote the traditional role of Egypt as a hub serving east-west trade.

C. ATTENDANCE

70. The meeting was attended by representatives of 11 ESCWA member States namely Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates. Attending as observers were representatives of the League of Arab States, the Gulf Cooperation Council, some Arab unions active in the field of transport and the International Road Transport Union.

D. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

71. In accordance with Rule 18 of the Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), member States shall chair the sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on a rotating basis, in the Arabic alphabetical order employed by the United Nations. In conformity with the practice in this regard, Saudi Arabia chaired the seventeenth session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics after Egypt chaired the sixteenth session from 23 November 2015 to 23 January 2017. The Committee elects two vice-chairs and a rapporteur from among the representatives of member States.

72. In line with procedures adopted at previous sessions, the Committee on Transport and Logistics elected Mr. Monther Al-Rashed, representative of Saudi Arabia; Mr. Adel Turk, representative of Egypt; and

Mr. Ahmed Banan Shaykhna, representative of Mauritania as President and Vice-Presidents, respectively. Mr. Abdullah Al-Kathiri, representative of the United Arab Emirates, was elected as Rapporteur.

73. A drafting committee was formed and presided over by the rapporteur, Mr. Abdullah Al-Kathiri, representative of the United Arab Emirates, and was composed of the ESCWA secretariat and representatives of Oman and Palestine.

E. AGENDA

74. At its first meeting, the Committee on Transport and Logistics adopted the agenda of the seventeenth session, set forth in document E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/L.1 as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
4. Progress achieved in the field of transport since the sixteenth session of the Committee on Transport:
 - (a) Implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee at its sixteenth session;
 - (b) Implementation of transport-related activities under the ESCWA programme of work;
 - (c) Components of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab States (ITSAS).
5. Transport and logistics in the Arab region:
 - (a) Role of transport in connecting to global value chains;
 - (b) The ePlatform for the follow-up on the implementation of the ITSAS Components;
 - (c) Maritime transport in the Arab region;
 - (d) Land transport in multiple logistics chains;
 - (e) International transport agreements: Accession benefits.
6. Transport under the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:
 - (a) Transport and the sustainable development goals;
 - (b) Incorporating transport into national plans for sustainable development (panel discussion);
 - (c) Outcomes of the Global Sustainable Transport Conference.
7. Strategic framework and proposed activities in the area of transport and logistics for the biennium 2018-2019.
8. Date and venue of the eighteenth session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics.
9. Other matters.
10. Adoption of the Recommendations made by the Committee on Transport and Logistics at its seventeenth session.

F. DOCUMENTS

75. Annex II to the present report contains the list of documents submitted at the seventeenth session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics.

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

A. ESCWA MEMBER STATES

Egypt

Mr. Adel Turk
Chairman of the Board of directors of the General
authority for Roads, Bridges and Land Transport
Ministry of Transport

Ms. Mona Hassan Kotob Mohammed
Director General of the Technical Office
Ministry of Transport

Ms. Ibtissam Abdel-Fattah Mustafa
Director, Directorate of International Relations
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Amjad Abdel Alim Mohamed
General Director of Funding and Expenditure
Planning Authority for Transportation Projects
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Imad al-Din Mahmoud Mohammed Abdel
Mutaal
Head of the Central Land Transport Administration
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Mohammed Metwally
Executive Chairman
Transport Regulatory Authority in Greater Cairo

Mr. Abdel Aziz Mohamed Abdel Aziz Mohamed
Al-Khamis
General Director of Land Transport
Ministry of Transport

Ms. Izza Ahmad Ghanem
Planning Authority for Transportation Projects
Ministry of Transport

Ms. Hanan Abdul Wahid Abdel Fattah
General Director
Transport Services Regulatory Agency
Ministry of Transport

Mauritania

Mr. Ahmed Banan Shaykhna
Director General of Land Transport
Ministry of Equipment and Transportation
Mauritania

Morocco

Mr. Mawmani Hisham Abdelaziz
Assistant director
Ministry of Equipment, Transport and Logistics

Oman

Mr. Salem Bin Saeed Al-Amry
Assistant Director General for Maintenance and
Land Transport
Ministry of Transport and Communications

State of Palestine

Mr. Ammar Nayef Yasin
Undersecretary
Ministry of Transportation

Qatar

Mr. Hamad Ali Al-Marri
Ministry of Transport and Communications

Mr. Hassan Ali Al-Obaidli
Ministry of Transport and Communications

Saudi Arabia

Mr. Monther Nasser Al-Rashed
Land Transport Supervisor
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Suhail Bin Abdulaziz Tashkandy
Director of Maritime Safety
Maritime Transport Supervisor
Public Transport Authority
Ministry of Transport

Saudi Arabia (continued)

Mr. Ghassan Fayez Abdel Jawad
General Director of International Cooperation
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Ahmad Othman Al-Otaibi
Director of Planning
Ministry of Transport

Mrs. Maha Nasser Abu Hamid
Third Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Sudan

Mr. Hamid Mahmoud Wakeel
Minister of State
Ministry of Transport, Roads and Bridges

Mr. Hamad Mohamad Al-Sharif
General Director of the General Administration for
Planning, Policies and Research
Ministry of Transport, Roads and Bridges

Ms. Najwa Hage Ali Ahmad
Director of the General Administration of
Information Systems
Sea Ports Corporation

Ms. Najla Mahmoud Mohamed
External Relations Section
Ministry of Transport, Roads and Bridges

Ms. Asma Ajabna Ezz Al-Arab
Adviser
Embassy of the Sudan in Egypt

Mr. Mousa Mahmoud Abdelrahman Daoud
Director of Planning, Research and Studies
Land Transport Unit
Ministry of Transport, Roads and Bridges

Tunisia

Mr. Abdulkadir Al-Kamali
Director of Studies and Forecasts
Ministry of Transport

United Arab Emirates

Mr. Abdullah Salem Al-Kathiri
General Director of the Federal Transport
Authority – Land and Maritime

B. REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

League of Arab States

Ms. Dina Hussein Al-Zaher
Director of the Transportation and Tourism
Department

Mr. Abdul-Aziz Salah al-Din Basyouni
Transportation and Tourism Department

Gulf Cooperation Council

Mr. Khalifa Said Al-Abri
Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and
Development Affairs
Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council

Council of Arab Economic Unity

Mr. Mohammed Mohammed Al-Rabee
Secretary-General

Mr. Al-Sayed Abdel Fattah Mohamed
Director of the Technical Office of the
Secretary-General

Ms. Dalia Hamdali
Economic Researcher

Arab Sea Ports Federation

Mr. Isam Al-Din Badawi
Secretary-General
Alexandria, Egypt

Mr. Youssef Abdel Moneim Badr
Specialists

International Road Transport Union

Mr. Rani Fayez Wehbe
Senior Adviser for the Middle East and North
Africa

International Road Transport Union (continued)

Mr. Amr Abdelsabor Kabil
Chairman of the Board of directors, Travco
Company
Adviser of the General Association for
Transportation

Arab Union of Land Transport

Mr. Mahmoud Hamad Al-Abdullat
Secretary-General

Mr. Malik Haddad
Director General

Arab Academy for Science, Technology and
Maritime Transport

Mr. Moustafa Abdelkader Rashid
Deputy Chairman of the Arab Academy for
Science and Technology

Mr. Islam El-Nakib
Dean of the International Transport and Logistics
Institute

Federation of Egyptian Chambers of Commerce

Mr. Mohamed Saleh Nawara
Director of Office of the President of the
Federation of Egyptian Chambers of Commerce

C. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA (ESCWA)

Mr. Mohamed Mokhtar El-Hacene
Director of Economic Development and
Integration

Mr. Mohamed Chemingui
Chief of the Regional Integration Section

Mr. Adel Al-Ghaberi
Economic Affairs Officer
Regional Integration Section

Ms. Mona Fattah
National Programme Coordinator
Economic Development and Integration Division

Mr. Yarob Badr
Regional Adviser on Transport and Logistics
Regional Integration Section

Mr. Karim Khalil
Secretary of the Commission

Ms. Rasha Salman
Office of the Executive Secretary

Annex II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Title	Item	Symbol
Information note		E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/INF.1
Provisional agenda and annotations	3	E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/L.1
Organization of work	3	E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/L.2
Progress achieved in the field of transport since the sixteenth session of the Committee on Transport	4	E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/3
Implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee on Transport at its sixteenth session	4 (a)	E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/3(Part I)
Implementation of transport-related activities under the ESCWA programme of work	4 (b)	E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/3(Part II)
Components of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab States (ITSAS)	4 (c)	E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/3(Part III)
Transport and logistics in the Arab region	5	E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/4
The role of transport in connecting to global value chains	5 (a)	E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/4(Part I)
Maritime transport in the Arab region	5 (c)	E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/4(Part II)
The role of land transport in multiple logistics chains	5 (d)	E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/4(Part III)
International transport agreements: Accession benefits	5 (e)	E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/4(Part IV)
Transport under the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development	6	E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/5
Transport and the sustainable development goals	6 (a)	E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/5(Part I)
The outcomes of the Global Sustainable Transport Conference	6 (c)	E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/5(Part II)
Strategic framework and proposed activities in the area of transport and logistics for the biennium 2018-2019	7	E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/6