



**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
COUNCIL**

Distr.  
LIMITED  
E/ESCWA/EDID/2015/IG.3/4(Part II)  
3 September 2015  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

Committee on Transport  
Sixteenth session  
Cairo, 23-24 November 2015

Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda

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**Progress achieved in the field of transport since the fifteenth session  
of the Committee on Transport**

**Implementation of transport-related activities  
under the ESCWA programme of work**

**Summary**

Since the fifteenth session of the Committee on Transport, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has implemented several activities under subprogramme 3 on economic development and integration of the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015. These activities focused on strengthening the role of transport in development and Arab regional integration, and included advisory services and technical cooperation in the field of transport.

The present document sets out the transport-related activities undertaken by ESCWA from January to August 2015, for review and comment by the Committee on Transport at its sixteenth session.

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### Introduction

1. The programme of work of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for the biennium 2014-2015 in the field of transport includes issues complementary to ESCWA efforts aimed at developing an integrated transport system in the Arab Mashreq (ITSAM), and expanding it to cover all Arab countries so as to facilitate transport and trade between them in support of regional integration. ESCWA member States are following up on implementing the components of ITSAM, pursuant to ESCWA resolution 279 (XXIV) on follow-up to implementation of components of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq.
2. Transport-related activities come under subprogramme 3 on economic development and integration of the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015, aimed at securing economic development and expediting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by formulating appropriate macroeconomic policies, providing sufficient funding for development and strengthening regional integration in several areas, including transport and trade facilitation.
3. The present document sets out the activities undertaken by ESCWA in the field of transport and trade facilitation from January to August 2015, since the fifteenth session of the Committee on Transport held in Rabat in January 2015.

### PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING TRANSPORT-RELATED ACTIVITIES UNDER THE ESCWA PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2014-2015

#### A. FOLLOW-UP REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTING THE COMPONENTS OF THE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT SYSTEM IN THE ARAB MASHREQ

##### 1. *Road safety in the Arab region* E/ESCWA/EDID/2015/IG.1/5(Part I)

4. The document reviews road safety in the Arab region based on reports from ESCWA member States and their responses to a survey sent by the secretariat that follows up on the implementation of recommendations issued at the fifteenth session of the Committee on Transport and of the components of ITSAM, and on transport developments over the period 2014-2015.

##### 2. *National committees for the facilitation of transport and trade* E/ESCWA/EDID/2015/IG.1/6(Part I)

5. The document gives a general view of the establishment and operationalization levels of national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade in member States, of major developments in their work and of the results of activities undertaken by them. It requests States that have yet to establish these national committees to expedite the process with reference to the ESCWA manual on the subject.<sup>1</sup> It also requests countries that have established these committees to operationalize their work so as to simplify and facilitate trade-related procedures, and to develop a coordination mechanism between all parties involved in international transport and trade operations.

##### 3. *Proposed ESCWA manual on road safety management* E/ESCWA/EDID/2015/IG.1/5(Part II)

6. The document contains a proposed manual on establishing and operationalizing systems to manage road safety in member States, prepared in accordance with recommendations issued at the fifteenth session

<sup>1</sup> E/ESCWA/TRANS/2002/3/Rev.1 (in Arabic).

of the Committee on Transport, and with the support offered by the secretariat to member States in implementing the provisions of the global plan of the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020, which includes road safety management.

4. *Follow-up on implementing the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Maritime Transport in the Arab Mashreq*  
E/ESCWA/EDID/2015/IG.1/6(Part IV)

7. The document sets out key developments and achievements, since the fifteenth session of the Committee on Transport, in implementing the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Maritime Transport in the Arab Mashreq, which was adopted at the twenty-third ESCWA session (Damascus, 9-12 May 2005) and came into effect on 4 September 2006. The document focuses on key developments in the work plan on implementing item 5 of the Memorandum of Understanding regarding coastal transport, endorsed at the twelfth session of the Committee on Transport (Beirut, 17-19 May 2011).

B. TECHNICAL COOPERATION

1. *Transport and trade facilitation*

8. The ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015 includes issues related to the facilitation of transport and trade as drivers of efficiency and competitiveness in Arab countries, and of regional and global integration. In this context, ESCWA organized an expert group meeting,<sup>2</sup> held in Tunis on 2 and 3 June 2015, which tackled several issues related to transport and trade facilitation in the Arab region and other regions, and reviewed a number of relevant experiences. Transport and trade have been facilitated in Jordan by strengthening the capacity of the Aqaba port through the private sector that manages the port's logistical services. Malaysia has adopted the single-window system to standardize procedures, facilitate customs transactions and reduce waiting times. Countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) are also in the process of adopting a single-window system. Greece has also been successful in facilitating transport and trade, thus improving its performance under the 'doing business' indicator of the World Bank. The expert group meeting also reviewed a set of working papers on facilitating transport and trade in the Arab region, notably a working paper on trade costs in the Arab region, a draft ESCWA study on the implementation levels of measures to facilitate trade in the Arab region, and an ESCWA report on evaluating Arab economic integration, which sets out new indicators for the evaluation of integration levels in various economic areas in the region.

2. *Activities of the third United Nations Global Road Safety Week:  
regional workshop on road safety*

9. ESCWA, in collaboration with Saint-Joseph University in Beirut and the Global Road Safety Partnership, organized a regional workshop on road safety under the framework of ESCWA activities for the third United Nations Global Road Safety Week (Beirut, 27-29 May 2015). The workshop coincided with an exhibition that ESCWA, several civil society organizations involved in road safety, and scientific and academic bodies participated in. The workshop concluded with a ceremony to mark the graduation of students from the Masters programme on road safety, offered exclusively by Saint-Joseph University in Beirut. Discussions at the workshop focused on road safety issues, developments in road safety management in member States, developments in implementing the global plan of the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020, and the importance of building national capacities to develop programmes and strategies to implement that plan. ESCWA presented a proposal on establishing/operationalizing national committees, institutions or councils comprising all stakeholders so as to improve road safety. It also

<sup>2</sup> [www.escwa.un.org/information/meetingdetails.asp?referenceNum=3662E](http://www.escwa.un.org/information/meetingdetails.asp?referenceNum=3662E).

reviewed the Brasilia Declaration, to be issued at the second Global High-level Conference on Road Safety to be held in Brazil in November 2015.

*3. Building an electronic platform to update and follow up on ITSAM components using geographic information systems*

10. In accordance with recommendations issued at the fifteenth session of the Committee on Transport, ESCWA is developing an electronic platform to update and follow up on ITSAM components using geographic information systems. The first draft proposal for the project has been prepared. At the sixteenth session of the Committee on Transport, the secretariat will give a presentation with practical examples to clarify the idea behind the platform and its aims.

*4. Expert group meeting on the effects of conflict on transport and trade in the Arab region, on the basis of information from the Syrian Arab Republic*

11. ESCWA, in collaboration with the National Agenda for the Future of Syria, organized an expert group meeting (Beirut, 4-6 March 2015) on the effects of conflict on transport and trade in the region, on the basis of information from the Syrian Arab Republic. Participants reviewed the effects of the Syrian conflict on transport, trade and regional integration. They also discussed an updated version of an ESCWA study on the effects of conflict on transport and trade in the Arab region.

*5. Workshop for Arab Maghreb countries on financing transport projects for trade through partnerships between the public and private sectors (Hammamet, Tunisia, 21-23 April 2015)*

12. ESCWA organized a workshop for Arab Maghreb countries on financing transport projects for trade through partnerships between the public and private sectors, attended by officials from Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. The workshop focused on the life cycle of partnership projects, evaluation and follow-up processes, the legal aspects of contracts and conflict-resolution methods. Several regional and global experiences were reviewed related to transport projects undertaken in partnership between the public and private sectors.

*6. Workshop on the Jordan Scenarios Project 2030 (Amman, 16-17 April 2015)*

13. ESCWA participated in a workshop on the Jordan Scenarios Project 2030 that is being implemented in collaboration between ESCWA and the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan. The workshop included a review of a draft transport report, prepared by a local expert. ESCWA also participated in a session of the Project's economic committee, so as to shed light on the relationships between the transport sector and other sectors and highlight the need to take these relationships into consideration when formulating transport policies and long-term strategies for the sector.

*7. Survey on energy consumption in the transport sector in selected Arab countries*

14. ESCWA, in collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank and the British Department for International Development, has conducted surveys on energy consumption in the transport sector in selected Arab countries. A short analytical study on the consumption levels of fuel for various transport means was prepared. Survey results showed high levels of fuel consumption in the Arab region compared with other regions. The transport sector alone is responsible for around 40 per cent of total fuel consumed in the region, compared with global levels below 19 per cent. These numbers reflect a lack of efficiency in fuel use, affecting trade efficiency and increasing energy costs and air pollution. The results of the study and survey

were reviewed at an experts group meeting, held at the United Nations House in Beirut on 23 and 24 July 2015.<sup>3</sup>

### C. TECHNICAL MATERIAL

#### 1. *Report on trade facilitation in the Arab region*

15. To evaluate progress made in implementing trade facilitation measures agreed under the auspices of the World Trade Organization, ESCWA has conducted a survey to determine implementation levels in Arab countries, in collaboration with the other regional commissions and certain international organizations. The aim was to determine implementation levels from the perspective of experts, customs administrations and private sectors in Arab countries. A report is being prepared on the survey results as a first step towards identifying gaps in implementing trade facilitation measures, so as to bridge them through appropriate recommendations for each country.

#### 2. *Trade logistics in the Arab region: challenges and policy options* E/ESCWA/EDID/2015/1

16. In June 2015, ESCWA published a study<sup>4</sup> on methods for the private sector to secure its logistical needs, and their effects on trade and economic growth in the region. The study examined responses from a group of enterprises in Arab countries operating in three key sectors, namely food, textiles and electronics. The study found flaws in the mechanisms used by Arab countries to secure logistical services. Most enterprises provide their own services through in-house logistical departments, in contrast to global practices whereby specialized companies offer such services to enterprises. The benefits of these companies include giving rise to economies of scale and ensuring high levels of efficiency in the provision of logistical services. The study focused on Tunisia and proposed a strategy to develop logistical services in the country.

### D. TECHNICAL COOPERATION WITH REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE FIELD OF TRANSPORT

17. ESCWA participated in the thirteenth Mediterranean Logistics and Transport Forum, held under the auspices of the Union for the Mediterranean in Brussels in June 2015. ESCWA reviewed its work towards developing road and railway transport networks and related agreements, highlighting the role of these networks in Euro-Mediterranean integration. It also participated in formulating the Forum's final recommendations.

18. ESCWA also participated in a regional training workshop on sustainable urban transport planning, organized by the International Road Transport Union and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), held in Dubai from 31 May to 2 June 2015 and hosted by the United Arab Emirates Automobile and Touring Club. Participants discussed the role of public urban transport in the sustainability of cities; the relationship between urban planning and urban transport planning; and the importance of planning public transport in accordance with bus rapid transit systems and their role in reducing traffic and increasing transport efficiency.

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<sup>3</sup> [www.escwa.un.org/information/meetingdetails.asp?referenceNum=3672E](http://www.escwa.un.org/information/meetingdetails.asp?referenceNum=3672E).

<sup>4</sup> Available from [www.escwa.un.org/information/pubaction.asp?PubID=1749](http://www.escwa.un.org/information/pubaction.asp?PubID=1749).



