



**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
COUNCIL**

E istr.  
LIMITED  
E/ESCWA/GRID/2008/IG.1/4(Part I)  
25 December 2007  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

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

Committee on Transport  
Ninth session  
Beirut, 26-28 February 2008

Item 6 (a) of the provisional agenda

**REVIEW OF ACTION TAKEN IN THE FIELD OF TRANSPORT SINCE THE  
EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT**

**FOLLOW-UP OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE  
DURING THE EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT**

**Summary**

At its eighth session, which was held in Beirut from 27 to 29 March 2007, the Committee on Transport issued a set of recommendations regarding the components of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq (ITSAM) and other general recommendations. This document is composed of tables that present the recommendations regarding the components of ITSAM and other general recommendations, as well as a review of the text of each recommendation that presents the steps taken and the progress achieved in its implementation.

A. RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING THE COMPONENTS OF THE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT SYSTEM IN THE ARAB MASHREQ (ITSAM)

Text of recommendation	Implementation stages
<p><b>1. Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq</b></p> <p>(a) Each country should review the data that concerns it, as set forth in the report on follow-up of implementation of the recommendations of the seventh session of the Committee on Transport (E/ESCWA/GRID/2007/IG.1/4 (Part I)), and convey updated information to ESCWA by 30 June 2007 at the latest. Should no remarks be received from any country, the data will be considered to have been adopted;</p> <p>(b) Oman is urged to sign the Agreement as soon as possible;</p> <p>(c) Iraq and the United Arab Emirates are urged to ratify the Agreement as soon as possible;</p> <p>(d) Those countries, namely, Kuwait, Lebanon and Qatar, which have not yet completed tables 1 and 2 of the plan of action for implementation of the Agreement (E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/1/Rev.1), are urged to do so and convey that information to ESCWA by 30 June 2007;</p> <p>(e) Countries which have not yet completed the special questionnaire on follow-up to the Agreement that was sent to countries which have ratified it, namely, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon and Qatar, are requested to convey that information to ESCWA by 30 June 2007.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Because no remarks were received by the deadline, the data in the report was adopted.</li> <li>• Oman is requested to inform ESCWA of the relevant action it has taken.</li> <li>• <u>United Arab Emirates</u>: is requested to inform ESCWA of the action it has taken.</li> <li>• <u>Iraq</u>: passed law number 53 of 2007, approved by the Cabinet in resolution 52 of 2007, regarding the ratification of the Agreement, and informed ESCWA to that effect through the Embassy of Iraq in Beirut. Procedures for preparing the ratification document and depositing it with the United Nations are ongoing.</li> <li>• <u>Bahrain</u>: sent tables 1 and 2 by e-mail on 13 September 2007.</li> <li>• <u>Qatar</u>: is requested to send the tables as soon as possible.</li> <li>• <u>Kuwait</u>: is requested to send the tables as soon as possible.</li> <li>• <u>Lebanon</u>: is requested to send the tables as soon as possible.</li> <li>• <u>Iraq</u>: is requested to complete the questionnaire as soon as possible.</li> <li>• <u>Qatar</u>: is requested to complete the questionnaire as soon as possible.</li> <li>• <u>Lebanon</u>: is requested to complete the questionnaire as soon as possible.</li> <li>• <u>Egypt</u>: on 27 June 2007, sent to ESCWA the completed questionnaire and the report on follow-up of implementation of the recommendations made by the eighth session of the Committee on Transport.</li> </ul>

Text of recommendation	Implementation stages
<p><b>2. Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq</b></p> <p>(a) Those countries, namely Iraq, Oman and Qatar, which have not yet signed the Agreement, are urged to do so forthwith, while those who have signed but not yet ratified the Agreement, namely, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen, should do so promptly, with a view to implementation;</p> <p>(b) Those countries, namely, Kuwait and Lebanon, which have not yet completed tables 2 and 4 of the plan of action for implementing the Agreement are requested to do so and convey that information to ESCWA by 30 June 2007;</p> <p>(c) Those countries, namely, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon, which have not yet completed the special questionnaire on follow-up to the Agreement that was sent to countries which have ratified the Agreement, are requested to do so and to convey that information to ESCWA by 30 June 2007.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Bahrain</u>: ratified the agreement on 18 May 2007.</li> <li>• <u>Iraq</u>: signature of the agreement has been approved; procedures for passing the relevant law are ongoing.</li> <li>• <u>Oman</u>: has not yet acceded.</li> <li>• <u>Qatar</u>: had not yet acceded.</li> <li>• <u>United Arab Emirates</u>: has not yet ratified.</li> <li>• <u>Kuwait</u>: has not yet ratified.</li> <li>• <u>Yemen</u>: ratified the agreement by law number 8 of 2007, sent the ratification document to ESCWA on 16 April 2007 and is following up the deposit of the document with the United Nations Secretary-General.</li> <li>• <u>Kuwait</u>: has not yet sent the requested tables.</li> <li>• <u>Lebanon</u>: on 26 November 2007, the Railway and Transportation Authority of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport sent a report on the status of railways in Lebanon that contained table 2 and a continuation of table 4, as set out in the plan of action.</li> <li>• <u>Jordan</u>: on 31 October 2007, the Jordanian Ministry of Transport sent a letter to ESCWA concerning implementation of the recommendations of the eighth session of the Committee on Transport, in which it explained that it was currently undertaking a study on the economic and financial benefits of the draft strategic study of railways in Jordan, and that once that has been adopted and agreed, the Ministry will provide ESCWA with all the information requested in the questionnaire.</li> <li>• <u>Lebanon</u>: has not yet sent the questionnaire.</li> <li>• <u>Egypt</u>: completed the questionnaire and on 27 June 2007, sent it with a report on follow-up to implementation of the recommendations of the eighth session of the Committee on Transport.</li> </ul>

Text of recommendation	Implementation stages
<p><b>3. National Committees for the Facilitation of Transport and Trade in the Countries of the ESCWA Region</b></p> <p>(a) The ESCWA Transport Team continues to provide technical support to the relevant parties in various countries. It held a workshop that played an effective role in facilitating transport and trade between member countries by hastening the establishment of the national committees, defining their duties and method of work and activating their functioning;</p> <p>(b) Each country is called upon to review the data that concerns it in the report on follow-up to implementation of the recommendations made by the seventh session of the Committee on Transport, E/ESCWA/GRID/2007/IG.1/4(Part I)/ADD.1, especially concerning the progress achieved in establishing and activating the national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade in the countries of the ESCWA region. They should then update the data in the report and send their remarks to ESCWA by 30 June 2007. Should no remarks be received from any country, the data will be considered to have been adopted;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• From 26 to 28 June 2007, ESCWA held a regional seminar concerning the economic assessment of interregional linkages and the facilitation of international transport in Cairo.</li> <li>• In response to a request submitted by Yemen on 27 May 2007, ESCWA is currently undertaking preparations for a study on the facilitation of international transport in Yemen.</li> <li>• Pursuant to a request submitted by Egypt on 29 August 2007, ESCWA is currently undertaking preparations for a study on facilitating international transport in Egypt.</li> <li>• At the request of Iraq, ESCWA organized a training workshop on establishing and activating national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade in Iraq, which was held in Abu Dhabi on 27 and 28 October 2007.</li> <li>• In response to a request submitted by the United Arab Emirates in 2007, ESCWA organized a training workshop on establishing and activating national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade in the United Arab Emirates, which was held in Abu Dhabi on 27 and 28 October 2007.</li> <li>• ESCWA organized the Inter-regional Forum: Trade Facilitation and Regional Trade Agreements, which was held in Amman on 14 and 15 November 2007.</li> <li>• Because no remarks were received by the deadline, the data in the report was adopted.</li> </ul>

Text of recommendation	Implementation stages
<p>(c) Those countries, namely, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, which have not yet established a national committee, are requested to ask ESCWA for guidance on how to do so and to make use of the technical support provided by ESCWA for that purpose;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>United Arab Emirates</u>: is currently engaged in work to establish a national committee for the facilitation of transport and trade, pursuant to the recommendations of the training workshop that was held in Abu Dhabi on 27 and 28 October 2007, and benefiting from the technical support that ESCWA provided to the National Transport Authority, from 28 October to 4 November 2007, in preparing a draft Ministerial Council resolution on establishing the committee.</li> <li>• <u>Bahrain</u>: is in the process of establishing a national committee and will inform ESCWA once it has done so.</li> <li>• <u>Iraq</u>: the Cabinet agreed to establish a national committee for the facilitation of transport and trade. A preparatory committee was therefore formed, comprising representatives from the Ministries of Transport, Trade and Finance to put the necessary arrangements in place for establishing the national committee, following the relevant ESCWA guidelines. ESCWA was requested to provide technical support to Iraq by organizing a workshop on the preparatory committee. The workshop was held in the United Arab Emirates on 27 and 28 October 2007; during it, ESCWA provided technical support in preparing the final form of a draft resolution on the establishment of the aforementioned committee. The draft resolution was presented to the Iraqi authorities for approval. Upon approval, ESCWA will be notified.</li> <li>• <u>Qatar</u>: has not yet established the national committee.</li> <li>• <u>Kuwait</u>: has not yet established the national committee.</li> </ul>
<p>(d) Those countries that have established national committees are urged to activate them as soon as possible by devising and adopting a plan of action and using the technical support provided by ESCWA for that purpose.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Jordan</u>: according to a letter which was sent to ESCWA on 31 October 2007 by the Jordanian Ministry of Transport, the Jordanian National Committee for the Facilitation of Trade and Transport met in a roundtable session in order to begin its work. It also participated in the ESCWA meetings concerning national capacity-building for developing land, air and sea means of transport in the region, with the aim of facilitating international trade and transport.</li> </ul>

Text of recommendation	Implementation stages
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Syrian Arab Republic</u>: according to the report issued by the Syrian Ministry of Transport on 3 October 2007, a number of meetings between the secretariat of the National Committee and subsidiary committees were held in 2007, during which the parties discussed problems encountered in facilitating the flow of transport and trade, and attempted to find adequate solutions to those problems.</li> <li>• <u>Saudi Arabia</u>: the General Investment Authority commissioned a consultant to conduct a study on the National Committee. The Authority will seek the views of the relevant parties in the public and private sectors and a workshop will then be held, in which all relevant parties will participate, in order to discuss the outcomes of the study.</li> <li>• <u>Yemen</u>: the measures for forming the committee were completed, and it is expected that the Minister of Finance will invite the chairman of the committee to convene the committee. It was agreed with ESCWA that a delegation from ESCWA should visit Yemen in order to assist in activating the work of the committee and preparing its plan of implementation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Cooperation in the Field of Maritime Transport in the Arab Mashreq</b></p> <p>(a) Those countries, namely, Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, which have not yet signed the Memorandum, are urged to do so as soon as possible; and those countries, namely, Egypt, Oman, Qatar and Yemen, which have signed but not yet ratified the Memorandum, are urged to do so promptly;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>United Arab Emirates</u>: is requested to accede to the Memorandum of Understanding as soon as possible.</li> <li>• <u>Bahrain</u>: is requested to accede to the Memorandum of Understanding as soon as possible.</li> <li>• <u>Iraq</u>: has almost completed measures for acceding to the Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Cooperation in the Field of Maritime Transport in the Arab Mashreq, which is pending approval by Iraqi higher authorities and the passing of a law authorizing accession. Upon accession, ESCWA will be notified.</li> <li>• <u>Oman</u>: is requested to ratify the Memorandum of Understanding as soon as possible.</li> <li>• <u>Qatar</u>: is requested to ratify the Memorandum of Understanding as soon as possible.</li> </ul>

Text of recommendation	Implementation stages
<p>(b) The programme of action for implementing the Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Cooperation in the Field of Maritime Transport in the Arab Mashreq, which is presented in E/ESCWA/GRID/2007/IG.1/4(Part 1)/Add.2/Rev.1, that includes the recommendations made by the Committee at its eighth session, should be adopted; and countries party to the Memorandum are requested to work towards its application at the national and regional levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Kuwait</u>: is requested to accede to the Memorandum of Understanding as soon as possible.</li> <li>• <u>Egypt</u>: ratification procedures are currently underway.</li> <li>• <u>Yemen</u>: work is underway for completing ratification and deposit procedures.</li> <li>• <u>Jordan</u>: the Jordanian Ministry of Transport is taking many measures, including, inter alia, updating legislation, encouraging maritime education and training, completing a project for the registration of ships under the Jordanian flag, completing the computerization of activities in the maritime transport sector and establishing a national maritime data bank in preparation for implementation of the plan of action of the Memorandum.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Regional Road Transport Information System</b></p> <p>(a) Those member countries, namely, Lebanon, Palestine, Qatar, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Arab Emirates, which have not yet sent the CD containing the requested information on road transport to ESCWA should do so as soon as possible and by 30 June 2007 at the latest.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>United Arab Emirates</u>: sent the CD with all the requested information.</li> <li>• <u>Syrian Arab Republic</u>: on 19 February 2007, ESCWA sent the CD to the Syrian Ministry of Transport in order for the requested data to be completed.</li> <li>• <u>Palestine</u>: sent the CD with all the requested information.</li> <li>• <u>Qatar</u>: sent the CD with all the requested information.</li> <li>• <u>Lebanon</u>: sent the CD containing information related to the regional road transport information system on 11 October 2007.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Road Safety</b></p> <p>(a) All ESCWA member countries are urged to participate in the First United Nations Global Road Safety Week in Geneva from 23 to 29 April 2007, and invited to inform ESCWA of their proposed activities as soon as possible, in order for ESCWA to put such information on a special website established for that purpose. Furthermore, all countries are requested to prepare a report on the most important activities that they organized during the Week;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Arab Emirates all marked the occasion.</li> <li>• <u>Iraq</u>: the Ministry of Transport requested the General Directorate of Roads and Bridges to provide it with the relevant measures taken. The Ministry will convey that information to ESCWA once it has been provided.</li> <li>• <u>Yemen</u>: will provide ESCWA with information on the matter in due course.</li> </ul>

Text of recommendation	Implementation stages
<p>(b) ESCWA is requested to follow up on the implementation of recommendations specifically related to road safety, especially in terms of establishing national committees for road safety and organizing training workshops in the field;</p> <p>(c) ESCWA is urged to carry out a study on the social and economic costs of road accidents in the ESCWA region, provided the necessary financial resources are available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback on the national committees and focal points was received from Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia informed the Committee that it had established such a national committee some 20 years ago. The remaining countries are requested to provide ESCWA with information on the matter.</li> <li>• The ESCWA Programme Planning and Technical Cooperation Division was requested to set aside regular budget funds for the preparation of the study.</li> </ul>
<p><b>7. International Multimodal Transport of Goods in the Arab Mashreq</b></p> <p>(a) Agreement should be reached on a mechanism for formulating the final version of the draft agreement on international multimodal transport of goods in the Arab Mashreq, as in the three subsequent recommendations;</p> <p>(b) The ESCWA secretariat is requested to send the first version of the draft agreement to member countries at the earliest possible opportunity before mid-April 2007; any written observations should be communicated to ESCWA by 30 June 2007;</p> <p>(c) ESCWA announced that it would take the observations that member countries had submitted into consideration and would prepare a second version of the draft agreement for discussion at the technical level during an expert group meeting to be held from 4 to 6 September 2007, which would be attended by experts from member countries, relevant regional and international organizations and the private sector;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The mechanisms have been put in place and implemented in accordance with the three subsequent recommendations.</li> <li>• On 29 March 2007, ESCWA sent the first version to member countries and received observations from the following: Bahrain, 25 March 2007; Egypt, 28 June 2007; Iraq, 23 July 2007; Jordan, 15 May 2007; Lebanon, 23 August 2007; the Syrian Arab Republic, 8 July 2007; the United Arab Emirates, 6 September 2007; and Yemen, 6 September 2007.</li> <li>• On 1 August 2007, ESCWA prepared the second version of the draft agreement, in light of the observations that had been submitted to it to that date.</li> <li>• The Expert Group Meeting on International Multimodal Transport in the ESCWA Region was held in Cairo from 4 to 6 September 2007, during which the second version of the draft agreement was discussed in detail.</li> <li>• The recommendations made at the Expert Group Meeting include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Participants commended the efforts of the Transport Team and the ESCWA experts in preparing both the first and second versions of the draft agreement on international multimodal transport of goods in the Arab Mashreq, as well as their effective and positive</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



Text of recommendation	Implementation stages
	<p>management of the meeting, including conducting a complete review and detailed discussion of the articles of the agreement, noting the observations of member countries, Arab unions, experts and advisors, and answering related questions. Participants emphasized the need to complete implementation of the recommendations made at the eighth session of the Committee on Transport regarding the draft agreement and, in particular, the request to the Transport Team to prepare the final draft of the agreement and send it to member countries for review during the forthcoming ninth session of the Committee on Transport, which will be held in February 2008, and ensure that it is agreed upon, in preparation for its adoption and signature at the ministerial level during the twenty-fifth ESCWA session.</p> <p>(ii) ESCWA should send a letter to the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States at the earliest possible opportunity, in order to inform the League of the efforts exerted and the progress achieved in studying, preparing and discussing the draft agreement, including the recommendation mentioned in paragraph (i) above and what may be expected with regard to the adoption of the final draft of the agreement. Participants underlined the importance of harmonizing efforts, in order to avoid any possible duplication. A technical team is currently being formed, with a view to the preparation of a similar draft agreement under the aegis of the League of Arab States. The General Secretary of the League should be requested to make use of member country efforts, and those which are expected to be finalized in the near future under ESCWA auspices, in the hope that the Council of Arab Transport Ministers will adopt a resolution that supports such efforts and calls for their completion, and adoption of the ESCWA agreement. Action should be taken to widen its scope to include all member countries. Council resolutions in previous years have welcomed ESCWA achievements related to the ITSAM methodological framework, the agreements on road, rail and maritime transport, the issue of forming national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade, and the inclusion in agreement-related work of the remaining Arab countries who are not ESCWA members.</p>

Text of recommendation	Implementation stages
<p>(d) Having been discussed from 4 to 6 September 2007 and all appropriate observations included, the final version of the draft agreement is to be sent to member countries for final approval at the ninth session of the Committee on Transport, which will be held in the first quarter of 2008, in preparation for its adoption and signature at the ministerial level during the twenty-fifth ESCWA session, in accordance with the procedures of the United Nations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• After all the observations of member countries, submitted by the time this document was issued, were taken into consideration, the final version of the draft agreement was prepared. It has been sent to member countries in the set of documents for the ninth session of the Committee on Transport, in the hope that it will be conclusively approved at the ninth session of the Committee, scheduled to be held from 26 to 28 February 2008.</li> </ul>

## B. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Text of recommendation	Implementation stages
<p>(a) The ESCWA secretariat should be congratulated for the activities that they have implemented from the programme of work of the 2006-2007 biennium in the field of transport;</p> <p>(b) The draft programme of work for the 2008-2009 biennium in the field of transport, as set forth in the document that was presented to the Committee, should be adopted in principle and, if no observations or proposals are submitted by 30 June 2007, it should be considered as conclusively adopted;</p> <p>(c) By 31 October 2007, member countries should provide ESCWA with two reports, the first on follow-up to implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on Transport at its eighth session, and the second on follow-up to the most important transport-related developments in each country during the period from 1 October 2006 to 30 September 2007.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The thanks were duly noted and the secretariat is currently completing implementation of the programme of work for the 2006-2007 biennium in the field of transport.</li> <li>• No member countries submitted observations by the deadline; the programme of work for the 2008-2009 biennium in the field of transport was therefore adopted as set forth in the aforementioned document.</li> <li>• <u>Jordan</u>: sent only the second report, concerning follow-up to the most important transport-related developments in Jordan from 1 October 2006 to 31 October 2007.</li> <li>• <u>United Arab Emirates</u>: is requested to send the reports as soon as possible.</li> <li>• <u>Bahrain</u>: an e-mail sent on 13 September 2007 contained neither of the two reports.</li> <li>• <u>Syrian Arab Republic</u>: on 3 October 2007 sent only the second report concerning follow-up to the most important transport-related developments in that country in 2007.</li> <li>• <u>Palestine</u>: is requested to send the reports as soon as possible.</li> <li>• <u>Qatar</u>: is requested to send the reports as soon as possible.</li> <li>• <u>Kuwait</u>: is requested to send the reports as soon as possible.</li> <li>• <u>Lebanon</u>: on 26 November 2007 the Railway and Transportation Authority of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport sent a report on the status of railways in Lebanon. It is requested to send the remaining information as soon as possible.</li> </ul>

Text of recommendation	Implementation stages
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>Egypt</u>: on 21 October 2007 sent the requested reports via e-mail.</li> <li>• <u>Saudi Arabia</u>: sent the reports on 14 January 2007.</li> <li>• <u>Yemen</u>: sent the reports on 25 November 2007.</li> </ul>