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ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

**AGREEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL RAILWAYS
IN THE ARAB MASHREQ***

* This is the text of the Agreement that was adopted by the ESCWA Committee on Transport at its third session, held in Beirut from 5 to 7 March 2002 and amended at its fourth session, held in Beirut from 14 to 16 January, 2003.

03-0025

The Parties to the Agreement, conscious of the salient characteristics of railways with respect to construction and running costs, speed, safety, regularity, personal comfort and environmental conservation, and affirming the importance and necessity of providing railway links between the countries of the region in accordance with a well-studied plan for the construction and development of an international railway network in order to meet future transport needs, protect the environment and facilitate the movement of goods and passengers and, as a result, increase the exchange of trade and tourism in the Arab Mashreq, which will greatly promote Arab regional integration, have agreed as follows:

Article 1

Adoption of the international railway network

The Parties hereto adopt the international railway network described in Annex I to this Agreement (the “Arab Mashreq International Railway Network”) in consideration of the fact that railways are of international importance in the Arab Mashreq and should therefore be accorded priority in the formulation of national plans for the construction, maintenance and development of the national railway networks of the Parties hereto, while ensuring that the alignment of routes and lines that do not currently exist are in conformity with feasibility studies to be carried out by the countries concerned.

Article 2

Orientation of the axes of the international railway network

The Arab Mashreq International Railway Network described in Annex I to this Agreement consists of the main axes having a north/south and east/west orientation and may include other axes and tracks to be added in the future, in conformity with the provisions of this Agreement.

Article 3

Technical specifications

Within a period of time as short as possible, all the railways currently in service described in Annex I shall be brought into conformity with the technical specifications for existing railways set forth in Annex II to this Agreement. New railways built after the entry into force of this Agreement shall be designed in accordance with the technical specifications defined in Annex II.

Article 4

Signature, ratification, acceptance, approval and accession

1. This Agreement shall be open for signature to members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) at United Nations House in Beirut from 8 to 11 April 2003, and thereafter at United Nations Headquarters in New York until 31 December 2004.
2. The members referred to in paragraph 1 of this article may become Parties to this Agreement by:
 - (a) Signature not subject to ratification, acceptance or approval (definitive signature);
 - (b) Signature subject to ratification, acceptance or approval, followed by ratification, acceptance or approval; or
 - (c) Accession.
3. Ratification, acceptance, approval or accession shall be effected by the deposit of the requisite instrument with the depository.
4. States other than ESCWA members may accede to the Agreement upon approval by all ESCWA members Parties thereto, by depositing an instrument of accession with the depository. The Secretariat of the ESCWA Committee on Transport (the “Secretariat”) shall distribute the applications for accession of non-ESCWA member States to the ESCWA members Parties to the Agreement for their approval. Once

notifications approving the said application are received from all ESCWA members Parties to the Agreement, the application for accession shall be deemed approved.

Article 5

Entry into force

1. The Agreement shall enter into force ninety (90) days after the date on which four (4) members of ESCWA have either signed it definitively or deposited an instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.
2. For each member of ESCWA referred to in article 4, paragraph 1, signing the Agreement definitively or depositing an instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval thereof or accession thereto after the date on which four (4) ESCWA members have either signed it definitively or deposited such an instrument, the Agreement shall enter into force ninety (90) days after the date of that member's definitive signature or deposit of the instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. For each State other than a member of ESCWA depositing an instrument of accession, the Agreement shall enter into force ninety (90) days after the date of that State's deposit of that instrument.

Article 6

Amendments

1. After the entry into force of the Agreement, any party thereto may propose amendments to the Agreement, including its annexes.
2. Proposed amendments to the Agreement shall be submitted to the ESCWA Committee on Transport.
3. Amendments to the Agreement shall be considered adopted if approved by a two-thirds majority of the Parties thereto, present at a meeting convened for that purpose. Amendments to Annex I of the Agreement shall be considered adopted if approved by a two-thirds majority of the Parties thereto present at the meeting, including those directly concerned by the proposed amendment.
4. The ESCWA Committee on Transport shall, within a period of forty-five (45) days, inform the depositary of any amendment adopted pursuant to paragraph 3 of this article.
5. The depositary shall notify all Parties hereto of amendments thus adopted, which shall enter into force for all Parties three (3) months after the date of such notification unless objections from more than one third of the Parties are received by the depositary within that period of three (3) months.
6. No amendments may be made to the Agreement during the period specified in Article 7 below if, upon the withdrawal of one Party, the number of Parties to the Agreement becomes less than four (4) at the end of that period.

Article 7

Withdrawal

Any Party may withdraw from this Agreement by written notification addressed to the depositary. Such withdrawal shall take effect twelve (12) months after the date of deposit of the notification unless revoked by the Party prior to the expiration of that period.

Article 8

Termination

This Agreement shall cease to be in force if the number of Parties thereto is less than four (4) during any period of twelve (12) consecutive months.

Article 9
Dispute settlement

1. Any dispute arising between two or more Parties to this Agreement which relates to its interpretation or application and which the Parties to the dispute have not been able to resolve by negotiation or other means of settlement shall be referred to arbitration if any Party so requests. In such a case, the dispute shall be submitted to an arbitral tribunal to which each of the Parties shall appoint one member and the members thus appointed shall agree on the appointment of a president of the arbitral tribunal from outside their number. If no agreement is reached concerning the appointment of the president of the arbitral tribunal within three (3) months from the request for arbitration, any Party may request the Secretary-General of the United Nations, or whomever he delegates, to appoint a president of the tribunal, to which the dispute shall be referred for decision.

2. The Parties to the dispute shall be bound by the decision to form the arbitral tribunal pursuant to paragraph 1 of this article and by any and all awards handed down by the tribunal. The parties further undertake to defray the costs of arbitration.

Article 10
Limits of application of the Agreement

Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed as preventing a Party hereto from taking any action that it considers necessary to its external or internal security or its interests, provided that such action is not contrary to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

Article 11
Depositary

The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall be the depositary of the Agreement.

Article 12
Annexes

The annexes to the Agreement and the list of technical terms used therein are integral parts of the Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, being duly authorized thereto, have signed this Agreement.

DONE at Beirut, this, in the Arabic, French and English languages, all of which are equally authentic.

Arabic, French and English technical terms
(Listed in the alphabetical order of the Arabic terms)

English	French	Arabic
Loading Gauge	Gabarit de chargement	أبعاد تحميل
Exit Signal	Signal de sortie	إشارة خروج
Tail Signal	Signal de queue	إشارة مؤخرة القطار
Distance between Centers of Tracks	Entraxe des voies	تباعد السكك
Level Crossing	Passage à niveau	تقاطع سطحي
Authorized Mass per Linear Metre	Masse autorisée par mètre linéaire	الحمل المحوري المسموح لكل متر طولي
Authorized Mass per Axle	Masse autorisée par essieu	الحمل المسموح لكل جرع محوري
Mountain Railway	Ligne de montagne	خط جبلي
Level Line	Ligne de plaine	خط سهلي
Platform	Trottoir	رصيف
Nominal Minimum Speed	Vitesse minimale de définition	السرعة النظرية الأدنى
Approach Track	Voie d'accès	سكة اقتراب
Passing Siding	Voie de dépassement	سكة تجاوز
Allocation Track	Voie d'affection	سكة تخصيص
Secondary Track	Voie secondaire	سكة ثانوية
Narrow Gauge Line	Voie étroite	سكة ضيقة
Curved Track	Voie en courbe	سكة في منحنى
Standard Gauge Line	Voie normale	سكة قياسية
Double Track	Voie double	سكة مزدوجة
Downgrade Track	Voie décline	سكة منحدر
Inbound Track	Voie d'arrivée	سكة وصول
Reversible Track	Voie banalisée	سكة مستعملة في الاتجاهين
Minimal Platform Length in Principal Stations	Longueur minimale des quais des grandes voies	الطول الأدنى للرصيف في المحطات الرئيسية
Track Mileage	Longueur de voie développée	طول السكك الممتدة
Minimal Useful Siding Length	Longueur utile minimale des voies d'évitement	الطول الفعال الأدنى لسكة الاجتتاب
Sleeper	Traverse	عارضة
Concrete Sleeper	Traverse en béton	عارضة خرسانية
Wooden Sleeper	Traverse en bois	عارضة خشبية

English	French	Arabic
Intermediate Sleeper	Traverse intermédiaire	عارضة وسطية
Wagon	Wagon	عربة بضائع
Silo Wagon	Wagon-Silo	عربة بضائع صومعية
Standard Wagon	Wagon Standard	عربة بضائع قياسية
Gantry Wagon	Wagon portique	عربة بضائع رافعة
Tank Wagon	Wagon reservoir	عربة صهريج
Carriage/Coach	Voiture à Voyageurs	عربة مسافرين
Locomotive	Locomotive	قاطرة
Test Train for Bridge Testing	Train-type pour le calcul des ponts	قطار نمذجي لاختبار الجسور
Speed Restriction Board	Tableau de délimitation de vitesse	لوحة تحديد السرعة
Station	Station	محطة
Trailer	Remorque	مقطورة
Maximum Gradient	Déclivité maximale	الميل الأقصى
Cant of Track	Variation de dévers	الميل الجانبي للسكة
Cant of Rail	Variation du rail	الميل الجانبي للقضيب

For the definitions of these terms and those contained in the body of the Agreement and its annexes, one may refer to the International Union of Railways (UIC).

Annex I

THE ARAB MASHREQ INTERNATIONAL RAILWAY NETWORK

A. NORTH-SOUTH AXES

1. R05: Iraq-East Arabian Peninsula

Yaaroubia border point (Syrian Arab Republic/Iraq)- Rabiyyah border point (Iraq/Syrian Arab Republic)- Mosul- Baghdad-Samawah- Nasiriyah- Basrah- Umm Qasr- Kuwait- Nuwayseeb border point (Kuwait/Saudi Arabia)-Khafji border point (Saudi Arabia/Kuwait)- Abu Hadriyah- Dammam- Salwa- Batha'a border point (Saudi Arabia/United Arab Emirates)- Al Ghweifat border point (United Arab Emirates/Saudi Arabia)-Abu Dhabi- Dubai- Sharja-Fujairah- Kalba border point (United Arab Emirates/Oman)- Khatmat Malahaw border point (Oman/United Arab Emirates)- Sohar- Muscat- Thumrayt-Salalah.

2. R15: Middle Arabian Peninsula

Zarqa'- Al Azraq- Omari border point (Jordan/Saudi Arabia)- Hadithah border point (Saudi Arabia/Jordan)- Quoryat- Dawmat al-Jandal- Ha'il- Buraydah- Riyadh- Al Kharj- Harad- Batha'a.

3. R25: Syrian Arab Republic-Jordan-Saudi Arabia-Yemen

Midan Ikbis- Aleppo- Homs- Maheen- Damascus- Dara'a border point (Syrian Arab Republic/Jordan)- Jaber border point (Jordan/Syrian Arab Republic)- Amman- Ma'an- Al Mudawara border point (Jordan/Saudi Arabia)- Halat Ammar border point (Saudi Arabia/Jordan)- Tabuk- Medina- Yanbu- Rabigh- Jeddah- Darb- Al Tuwal border point (Saudi Arabia/Yemen)- Harad border point (Yemen/Saudi Arabia)- Hodeidah- Al Mukha- Bab al-Mandab.

4. R27: Homs-Rayyaq

Homs- Al Qusayr-Rayyaq.

5. R35: East Mediterranean

Lattakia- Tartous- Akkary- Dabbousieh border point (Syrian Arab Republic/Lebanon)- Abboudieh border point (Lebanon/Syrian Arab Republic)- Tripoli- Beirut- Tyr.

6. R45: Nile Valley

Tanta- Cairo- Qena- Aswan- Wadi Halfa.

B. EAST-WEST AXES

1. R10: Iraq-East Mediterranean

Khanaqin- Baghdad- Haklania- Qua'im border point (Iraq/Syrian Arab Republic)- Bou Kamal border point (Syrian Arab Republic/Iraq)- Deir Ez-Zor- Aleppo- Lattakia.

2. R20: Middle Syrian Arab Republic

Yaaroubiah border point (Syrian Arab Republic/Iraq)- Kamishli- Hasaka- Deir Ez-Zor- Tadmur- Maheen- Homs- Akkary.

3. R30: Damascus-Beirut

Damascus-Beirut

4. R40: West Iraq-Jordan

Haklania- Tarabil border point (Iraq/Jordan)- Karamah border point (Jordan/Iraq)- Safawy- Zarqa'- Amman.

5. R50: Mediterranean Southern Coast-Nile Delta

Gaza- Rafah border point (Occupied Palestinian Territories/Egypt)- Arish- Verdun Bridge- Ismailia- Tanta- Alexandria- Salloum.

6. R60: Ma'an-Verdun

Ma'an- Aqaba- Nuweiba- Nakhl- Verdun Bridge.

7. R70: Safaga-Al Kharja

Safaga- Qena- Al Kharja.

8. R80: Jubail-Jeddah

Jubail- Dammam- Riyadh- Mecca- Jeddah

9. R82: Doha

Doha- Salwah

10. R90: South Arabian Peninsula

Thumrayt- Mazyounah border point (Oman/Yemen)- Shahan border point (Yemen/Oman)- Gheizah- Mukalla- Aden- Bab al-Mandab.

Annex II

SCHEDULE OF TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR RAIL NETWORK

Serial No.	Technical specifications	Existing lines	New lines	
			For passenger traffic only	For passenger and goods traffic
1	Track width	Standard (1 435 mm)	Standard (1 435 mm)	Standard (1 435 mm)
2	Vehicle loading gauge	UIC/B*	UIC/B*	UIC/B*
3	Minimum distance between track centres	4 m	4 m	4 m
4	Nominal minimum speed	120 km/h	120 km/h	120 km/h
5	Authorized mass per axle For locomotives (≤ 200 km/hr) For wagons (≤ 120 km/hr) (≤ 140 km/hr)	22.5 tonnes 20 tonnes 18 tonnes	- - - -	22.5 tonnes 20 tonnes 18 tonnes
6	Authorized mass per linear metre	8 tonnes	-	8 tonnes
7	Test train (bridge design)	UIC 71	-	UIC 71
8	Minimum platform length in principal stations	250 m	250 m	250 m
9	Minimum useful siding length	500 m	-	500 m
10	Electrical voltage	-	In accordance with UIC and Trans-European Railway Network specifications	

* UIC specifications for loading gauges (set forth in figure I below).

Notes on the specifications given in the table, arranged in accordance with the table serial No.:

1. Track width

The standard track width chosen, namely, 1,435 mm, is used in most parts of the existing network in the region.

2. Vehicle loading gauges

This is the minimum loading gauge for international lines (see figure I for the UIC/B specifications). A great deal of investment will therefore be required in order to upgrade existing routes from UIC/B specifications to UIC/C1 specifications. However, with the specifications adopted in the Agreement, it will be possible to transport ISO containers 2.9 m high and 2.44 m wide on flat-container wagons with a loading height 1.18 m above rail level; loads 2.5 m wide and 2.6 m high on ordinary flat wagons (loading height of 1.246 m); and to transport semi-trailers on recess wagons.

3. Minimum Distance between track centres

This is the minimum distance between track centres for double-track main lines outside stations. An increase in that distance has a number of advantages, including decrease in the aerodynamic pressure when two trains pass each other, an advantage which increases in proportion to their speed, and some relief from the constraints imposed in the transport of out-of-gauge loads. It also increases the possibilities of using high-powered mechanized equipment for track maintenance.

4. Nominal minimum speed

This speed determines the geometrical characteristics of the section (radius of curves and cant), the safety installations (braking distances) and the braking coefficient of the rolling stock.

5. Authorized mass per axle

This is the authorized mass per axle that can be permitted on international main lines. It may be noted that the maximum mass per axle for locomotives, namely, 22.5 tonnes, is slightly higher than that for wagons, which is 20 tonnes. This is because the ratio of the number of locomotive axles to the total number of axles is usually very low, and the suspension of a locomotive causes less wear than that of a wagon.

6. Authorized mass per linear metre

This has been set at 8 tonnes per linear metre, in accordance with UIC specifications.¹

7. Test train (bridge design)

This is the minimum “test train” on which bridge design for international main lines should be based, in accordance with UIC specifications.²

8. Minimum platform length in principal stations

The length of 250 m has been adopted, which is less than the 400 m chosen by UIC in order to accommodate a train consisting of a locomotive and 13 coaches 27.5 m long or a locomotive and 14 coaches 26.4 m long.

9. Minimum useful siding length

The length of 500 m has been adopted, which is less than the 750 m chosen by UIC to permit the movement of a train of a total weight of 5,000 tons.

10. Electrical voltage

The technical specifications to be used for electric locomotives in the future should conform to UIC and Trans-European Railway Network specifications.

¹ Specification No. UIC Code 700 (0), 9th edition, of 1 July 1987, entitled “Classification of lines and resulting load limits for wagons”.

² Specification No. UIC Code 702 (0), 2nd edition, of 1 January 1974, entitled “Loading diagram to be taken into consideration for the calculation of rail carrying structures on lines used by international services”.

Figure I. UIC Loading gauge specifications UIC/B

