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REPORT

FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT
BEIRUT, 2-4 MARCH 2004

Summary

The fifth session of the Committee on Transport was held in Beirut from 2 to 4 March 2004. Consideration was given to the items included on the session agenda. This report contains a brief account of the discussions that were held on each item and the recommendations that were made by the session. The report was adopted by the Committee at its final meeting, which took place on 4 March 2004.

The focus in the course of the discussions was on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the fourth session of the Committee and the activities covered by the regular programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003; consultancy services and technical cooperation; activities funded by extra-budgetary resources; the review of the programme of work for the biennium 2004-2005; and the strategic framework for the programme of work for the biennium 2006-2007.

The Committee made a number of recommendations, some of which were general, while others made specific reference to various issues covered by the agenda items.

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Introduction

1. The fifth session of the Committee on Transport was held pursuant to Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) resolution 213 (XIX) of 7 May 1997 concerning the establishment of a committee on transport in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, which was adopted by the Economic and Social Council by 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 ESCWA Committee on Transport.

I. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT

2. The recommendations made by the Committee focused on the following issues:

A. THE AGREEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL ROADS IN THE ARAB MASHREQ

3. The Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) Prompt action should be taken to manufacture and erect signs on the international roads, beginning with the network of inter-city connections to which no alterations would be made in the near future. Such work should be completed by the end of 2004;

(b) E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/1 containing the draft action plan for implementation of the Agreement should be adopted once all the amendments agreed by the Committee have been made thereto, for work to begin on implementation in accordance with the timetable set forth in the document;

(c) Countries which have signed but not yet ratified the Agreement should promptly complete ratification procedures and lodge instruments of ratification with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Countries which have not signed are urged to complete the relevant procedures forthwith;

(d) In view of the importance of keeping pace with developments and technological advances in the world and in order to implement the Agreement in the briefest possible period, member countries should accelerate implementation of the proposed action plan before the expiry of the maximum period allowed for under the Agreement.

B. THE AGREEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL RAILWAYS IN THE ARAB MASHREQ

4. On this issue, the Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) The eight member countries that have signed the Agreement should accelerate completion of their ratification procedures and lodge the instruments of ratification with the Secretary-General of the United Nations;

(b) The five member countries that have yet to sign the Agreement are urged to sign it promptly at United Nations Headquarters in New York, where it will be open for signature until 31 December 2004, and thereafter to complete ratification procedures. The countries concerned are Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

C. NATIONAL COMMITTEES FOR THE FACILITATION OF TRANSPORT AND TRADE IN THE COUNTRIES OF THE ESCWA REGION

5. In this regard, the following recommendations were made by the Committee:

(a) The Committee expressed its appreciation of the endeavours exerted by a number of ESCWA member countries with a view to establishing and activating national committees for the facilitation of

transport and trade and urged the secretariat of ESCWA to address member countries regarding the acceleration of the measures necessary for the establishment and activation of such committees;

(b) The ESCWA secretariat should, while respecting the particularities of each member country, provide them with technical assistance as needed in establishing and activating national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade, including by holding national workshops and attending preparatory meetings on the establishment of such committees and the meetings of committees that have been established.

D. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING CONCERNING COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF MARITIME TRANSPORT IN THE ARAB MASHREQ

6. The Committee made the following recommendations on this issue:

(a) The memorandum of understanding concerning cooperation in the field of maritime transport in the Arab Mashreq should be approved in the amended form in which it appears in E/ESCWA/TRANS/2002/4/Rev.5 and sent to member countries for their consideration and approval by 30 June 2004 at the latest, with a view to submission of the memorandum to the twenty-third ESCWA session, to be held in April 2005, and its subsequent adoption and signature;

(b) ESCWA should be informed of the geographical locations of and given revised data on the maritime ports included in the annex to the memorandum by no later than 30 June 2004.

E. REGIONAL ROAD TRANSPORT INFORMATION SYSTEM

7. On this issue, the Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) Member countries should, by 30 June 2004 at the latest, complete and update data relating to the system, using the model for data entry on the CD with which they were provided by ESCWA;

(b) Member countries should, by 31 December 2004 at the latest, complete the data on routes and international road network connections that is requested in table 1 of E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/1, which contains the draft action plan for implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq;

(c) ESCWA should submit to the sixth session of the Committee on Transport a report on progress made in finalizing the data relating to the international road network in the Arab Mashreq that has been requested from member countries in connection with the two recommendations referred to above.

F. PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2004-2005 IN THE FIELD OF THE FACILITATION OF TRADE AND TRANSPORT

8. In this regard, the Committee made the following recommendation:

The proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2004-2005, as set forth in E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/IG.1/4/Rev.1, should be adopted.

G. THE PROPOSED STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2006-2007

9. With respect to this issue, the Committee made the two following recommendations:

(a) The proposed strategic framework should include the field of air transport;

(b) Member countries are encouraged to provide ESCWA, by no later than 15 April 2004, with any other suggestions relating to the proposed strategic framework for the programme of work for the biennium

2006-2007. Should no such suggestions be received, it will be taken that member countries approve the strategic framework in the form in which it appears in E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/IG.1/6, amended in order to include the issue of air transport.

H. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

10. The Committee made the following general recommendation:

Member countries are urged to provide ESCWA, by no later than 30 September each year, with an annual report on the progress made in implementing Committee on Transport recommendations and developments relating to the transport sector in each country. For its part, ESCWA should provide member countries with a periodic report on the progress made by the countries of the region in general in implementing those recommendations and such developments.

II. ISSUES CONSIDERED

A. GENERAL DEBATE ON TRANSPORT ISSUES IN THE ARAB MASHREQ (Agenda item 5)

11. In accordance with what was agreed at the fourth session of the Committee on Transport, the above debate was included on the agenda, with a view to giving member countries an opportunity to express their opinions on various issues related to the items on the session agenda and refer to any relevant recent developments in their countries that could be of interest to the participants. Statements were made on this item by the representatives of Egypt, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

12. The representative of Egypt made an intervention on the development of the transport system and its role in regional integration. He noted the importance of providing an environment conducive to achieving Arab integration, detailing the principal measures and conditions necessary for operating the system with the efficiency desired. The elements of which an environment favourable to an effective transport system was comprised included the establishment of an appropriate infrastructure, institutional development, an efficient system of procedures and sophisticated data systems. Also required was support from the legislative and legal apparatus, the development of local and regional procedures for manufacturing means of transport and the application of flexible Government policies. The speaker discussed the concept and definition of multi-modal transport as one of the means of implementing an effective transport system. With respect to the development of transport in ESCWA member countries in order to support regional integration, he reviewed a number of fields in which joint work could be undertaken and coordinated by regional and international organizations and, in particular, the idea of establishing an Arab transport union. The ESCWA secretariat representative said that many of the proposals were currently being implemented through the ESCWA programme of work or were included in future programmes.

13. The representative of Yemen requested ESCWA to serve as a link between countries and a centre for information on the latest developments in the region related to the various forms of transport. The secretariat expressed its willingness to perform those roles, provided countries undertook to provide it with the information on an annual basis. ESCWA issued an annual report on endeavours aimed at regional integration, which included the transport sector.

14. The representative of Lebanon made an intervention in which he referred to two models for regional cooperation in the field of transport which could perhaps be expanded to include all the ESCWA member countries. The first such model was the temporary admission carnet used in Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, while the second was the economic feasibility study on the facilitation of the interchange of goods through the ports and territories of those same three countries. The speaker then discussed the measures that had been taken by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport with a view to applying the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq once it entered into force and, in particular, annex II thereto, relating to the technical specifications to be met on routes in the network, pointing out that Agreement specifications were not compatible with the French specifications used in Lebanon. Nevertheless, when new international roads were developed in that country, all technical specifications of the Agreement would be adopted. The ESCWA secretariat representative supported the idea of expanding the application of

the two aforementioned models and explained that the specifications adopted in the Agreement on International Roads conformed to the international specifications that were currently adopted by most countries in the region.

15. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic made a statement in which he detailed the measures that had been taken to upgrade the General Institute for Road Transport and bring it under the Ministry of Transport, thereby making all transport sectors a part of that Ministry and facilitating coordination and planning in those sectors. He noted that the international road signs would be put in position by the end of 2004 and proposed that ESCWA should carry out an economic feasibility study on the establishment of a further international road, which he suggested should be known as M35, between Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic, passing east of the Syrian city of Sweida, in order to facilitate transport between those two countries and Saudi Arabia. He described the measures that had been taken by the three countries with a view to facilitating communications between them and urged all countries to study the feasibility of using a triptyque.

16. Delegates expressed interest in the economic feasibility study on the facilitation of the interchange of goods through the ports and territories of Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic as a model that could be expanded to include other ESCWA member countries. The ESCWA representative said the Commission was prepared to undertake that work, as member countries wished.

17. In conclusion, the ESCWA secretariat welcomed the useful proposals for the facilitation of transport and trade and, consequently, regional integration, that had been put forward in the course of the general discussion.

B. REVIEW OF TRANSPORT-RELATED ACTION TAKEN SINCE THE
FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT
(Agenda item 6)

18. The ESCWA secretariat presented this item on the basis of document E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/IG.1/3, which is in two parts.

1. *Follow-up of implementation of the recommendations of the fourth session
of the Committee on Transport*

19. The representative of the ESCWA secretariat presented this item on the basis of document E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/IG.1/3(Part I), summarizing the progress that had been made in implementing the recommendations and related activities of the fourth session of the Committee on Transport and putting forward proposals on each issue.

(a) *The Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq*

20. For the purposes of information and follow-up, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat reviewed the progress that had been made in the ratification and entry into force of the Agreement and the action taken to begin its implementation. He also presented document E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/1 entitled "Draft action plan for implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq" (Arabic only), which includes the amendments to the first draft action plan which were recommended by the Seminar on Capacity-Building in Transport and Trade Facilitation that was held in Beirut from 2 to 4 December 2003. The action plan proposed contains a number of measures that relate to informational aspects, the international road sign, identification of routes and their specifications, signs and directives and the technical specifications for routes. Participants discussed and approved the draft. The discussion touched on the following issues:

(a) The specifications relating to signs and signals and the extent to which they conform to the Convention on Road Signs and Signals (Vienna, 1968) and its amendments. The ESCWA secretariat said that there were no conflicts with that Convention. Other specifications that had not been included in the Agreement had been based on the specifications employed in the countries of the region;

(b) Progress made by countries in ratifying or acceding to the Agreement was reviewed. The representatives of Bahrain, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates said that their countries were in the final stages of preparation for ratification and that no obstacles thereto remained. The representative of Palestine explained the problems faced because the Palestinian Legislative Council had not been convened given the difficult situation. The representatives of Kuwait and Oman expressed the determination to complete ratification procedures;

(c) The Syrian Arab Republic requested ESCWA to prepare an economic feasibility study on a new, more direct route via Jordan between the Syrian Arab Republic and Saudi Arabia and on the feasibility of including such a route in the Agreement. The ESCWA secretariat said that any party to the Agreement could request amendments thereto and that it would be prepared to carry out the aforementioned feasibility study provided the Syrian Arab Republic submitted a request to that effect;

(d) The delegation of Jordan said that the Ministry of Public Works and Housing factory that manufactures road signs to Agreement specifications would be prepared to produce such signs, at cost price, for any countries that so desired.

(b) *The Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq*

21. The representative of the ESCWA secretariat reviewed the latest developments in respect of this Agreement, which had been issued in the final form in which it appears in E/ESCWA/TRANS/2002/1/Rev.2, adopted at the twenty-second session of ESCWA that was held in Beirut on 14 April 2003 and signed to date by eight countries. Set forth below are the points that were raised on this issue:

(a) The ESCWA secretariat requested the delegations of member countries to reconsider their approval of the Agreement. Countries that had not yet signed the Agreement could delegate an official to travel to United Nations headquarters in New York or authorize the permanent representative of their country to the United Nations to sign the Agreement, provided that the authorization was issued by the minister for foreign affairs of the relevant country and was in accordance with the model adopted. The Agreement should be signed by no later than 31 December 2004;

(b) The ESCWA secretariat noted that instruments of ratification to be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations could either be sent to United Nations headquarters directly or through ESCWA;

(c) The delegate of Jordan said that Jordan had authorized its permanent representative in New York to deposit the instrument of ratification with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The delegations of Bahrain, Egypt, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen said that ratification procedures had been begun. The delegation of Oman said that procedures for signing the Agreement were currently being taken;

(d) The Secretary-General of the Arab Railway Union made a statement in which he said that the Agreement was important because of the urgent need to reduce the cost of transport within the region. That cost represents between 50 and 60 per cent of the final cost of goods, compared with 5 and 10 per cent in Europe. He focussed on the need in coming years for ESCWA to pay special attention to the issue of completing the network, standardizing technical specifications, particularly with respect to railways and multi-modal transport, in accordance with the principle of making all means of transport complementary, which was the aim of the Union. The representative of the ESCWA secretariat said that there was complete agreement between the Commission and the Union with respect to those goals and that ESCWA was contributing to economic feasibility studies on missing transport links, pursuant to the resolution adopted by the Council of Arab Transportation Ministers. It was also taking action through the Agreement to harmonize technical specifications, having been the first, in 1977, to call for the establishment of an integrated transport system in the region. In 1999 it had further embraced that goal in the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq (ITSAM).

(c) *National Committees for the Facilitation of Transport and Trade in the countries of the ESCWA region*

22. The ESCWA secretariat reviewed progress in this field and explained the measures related to the guidelines issued by ESCWA for the establishment of national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade in ESCWA member countries and the activation of such committees as already existed. To date, committees had been established in Jordan (2003), the Syrian Arab Republic (2003), Oman (2003), Palestine (2003) and Yemen (1999). The following points were raised concerning this issue:

(a) The delegation of Jordan presented a working paper on the establishment of the national committee for the facilitation of transport and trade in that country. The paper covered all stages of the process, from the ESCWA letter to the establishment of the committee under the presidency of the Minister of Transport. A workshop on the facilitation of transport and trade and the establishment of national committees in Jordan and ESCWA member countries was organized in coordination with ESCWA and attended by representatives of some 130 public and private Jordanian institutions. Subcommittees would be formed once the Council of Ministers had approved the internal statute of the national committee;

(b) The delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic presented a working paper on the establishment of the national committee for the facilitation of transport and trade in that country. A cabinet decision had been taken to establish the committee under the presidency of the Minister of Economy and Trade. Six subcommittees had been formed from the public and private sector and an internal statute had been formulated for the committee. In December 2003, a workshop had been organized in coordination with ESCWA in order to clarify all the issues relating to the establishment of the committee. In April 2004, ESCWA would be requested to provide technical consultancy on matters and developments faced by the subcommittees of the committee;

(c) Delegations stressed the importance of the national committees and of the effective role of the transport sector therein. That was supported by the secretariat, which underlined the need for complementarity and coordination between all sectors involved in the facilitation of transport and trade, including the transport, customs, trade, communications, banking and insurance sectors and between commercial practices and data;

(d) The discussion considered the difficulties faced in establishing national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade, many of which were peculiar to a specific country. A number of participants expressed a desire for ESCWA to provide assistance in that respect. Participants considered it essential for ESCWA to attend meetings held in preparation for the establishment of national committees and to hold workshops in every country with a view to introducing the concept of such committees, their aims, benefits, working practices and composition and regional coordination between them all. The representative of the secretariat said that the Commission was ready to provide technical expertise as part of its technical cooperation programme, in response to the demand of member countries and as permitted by available resources. The delegation of the United Arab Emirates expressed its willingness to host ESCWA for that purpose;

(e) Participants thought it vital to make use of the experience gained by Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic when setting up their national committees and for all countries to exchange expertise in that regard. It was also considered useful to involve the private sector in the work and funding of the committees. It was essential that a representative of the monetary authorities in each country, normally from the central bank, should be a committee member;

(f) The representative of the secretariat said that the European Union had allocated some 0.5 billion Euros for the purpose of raising commercial standards in developing countries. The countries involved were required to contact the European Union directly and identify their needs and priorities, in the light of which assistance from that budget would be made available to them. ESCWA could perhaps provide technical assistance in that identification process.

(d) *Memorandum of understanding concerning cooperation in the field of maritime transport in the Arab Mashreq*

23. The representative of the secretariat summarized the situation of maritime transport and the memorandum of understanding concerning cooperation in the field of maritime transport in the Arab Mashreq, and said that ESCWA had formed a team to deal with maritime transport and ports and prepared a memorandum of understanding concerning cooperation in the field of maritime transport. With regard to this issue, the following points were raised:

(a) The region faces significant concerns in the maritime transport and ports sector that should be incorporated into the memorandum with a view to furthering cooperation and coordination of the relevant policies;

(b) The aims of the memorandum of understanding were reviewed, together with the stages of its preparation from the beginning up until the convening of the fifth session of the Committee on Transport and including the steps that ESCWA intends to take as part of its future programmes of work in order to complete the memorandum. It was stressed that the executive mechanism would be instrumental in ensuring implementation of the memorandum and the expected role of the Committee on Transport in activating the same was discussed;

(c) The draft memorandum was reviewed in the form in which it appears in E/ESCWA/TRANS/2002/4/Rev.4 and all its articles were considered. The necessary amendments were made thereto in accordance with participants' observations.

(e) *Regional road transport information system*

24. The representative of the secretariat reviewed the progress that had been made with respect to the regional road transport information system. ESCWA had entered the data that it had received from countries, using the amended table. In response to the request made by member countries at the fourth session of the Committee on Transport, it had also prepared a compact disc which contained a model for electronic data entry in the Arabic language.

25. The representative of the secretariat also gave a brief explanation of the way in which electronic data entry is performed and said that ESCWA, in response to the request of certain countries, was ready to provide assistance in the event of any technical problem in that field. The data entry programme would be upgraded in accordance with the suggestions that had been made by member countries. It was agreed that countries would supply the data required by no later than 30 June 2004.

2. *Progress made in implementing the activities covered by the regular programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003; consultancy services and technical cooperation; activities funded by extra-budgetary resources*

26. The representative of the ESCWA secretariat presented this item on the basis of document E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/IG.1/3(Part II), referring to the activities that have been completed or are still in the process of implementation, as detailed in the document.

27. The delegation of Yemen expressed the wish that ESCWA would provide technical assistance in conducting a study of the facilitation of transport and trade and another to evaluate transport and infrastructure in Yemen, and also organize workshops similar to those it had arranged in other countries in the region on the facilitation of transport and trade and capacity-building with respect to field projects. The representative of ESCWA said that the Commission would be willing to do so as part of the programme of work and the technical cooperation programme, provided resources permitted and a formal request was received from the Government of Yemen.

**C. REVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2004-2005
IN THE FIELD OF TRANSPORT
(Agenda item 7)**

28. The representative of the ESCWA secretariat presented this item on the basis of document E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/IG.1/4/Rev.1, concentrating on the activities that had been added to the programme of work on the previous recommendation or at the request of member countries. Such activities related to cooperation in the field of maritime transport, road traffic safety and the development of structural organizations and legal frameworks in the transport sector in the countries of the region. The decision was taken to adopt the additions that were made to the programme of work.

**D. OTHER BUSINESS
(Agenda item 8)**

29. Under this item, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat presented the strategic framework for the biennium 2006-2007 in the Globalization and Regional Integration Division, explaining that the framework proposed included strategic goals, the expected outcomes and indicators of success rather than activities, a division having been made between the two at the time of the formulation of the programme of work for that biennium.

30. Following the discussion, participants expressed the wish that the proposed strategic framework should include the issue of maritime transport. They also said that they needed some time in which to formulate their views on the proposed framework that had been presented to them in the course of the meeting.

**III. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE
OF TRANSPORT ON ITS FIFTH SESSION
(Agenda item 9)**

31. At its final meeting, held on 4 March 2004, the Committee on Transport adopted the report on its fifth session as contained in E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/IG.1/L.7, on the understanding that all the agreed amendments would be made thereto and that it would be officially edited.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. DATE AND VENUE OF SESSION

32. The fifth session of the Committee on Transport was held at ESCWA headquarters in Beirut from 2 to 4 March 2004. Five meetings were held during the session.

**B. OPENING OF THE SESSION
(Agenda item 1)**

33. Ms. Thouka Al Khalidi, Chief of the Globalization and Regional Integration Division, welcomed participants and commended member countries for the high level of their representation and for their concern that the recommendations of the fourth session of the Committee should be implemented.

34. Mr. Alaa Al-Batayneh, Secretary General of the Ministry of Transport of Jordan and Chairman of the fourth session of the Committee on Transport, made a statement in which he thanked heads of delegation and all those in ESCWA for their earnest endeavours and discussed the recommendations made by the fourth session of the Committee. He said that perceptible progress had been made in implementing those recommendations, noting, in particular, that the Ministry of Public Works and Housing in Jordan had begun to manufacture international road signs and, with effect from 22 February 2004, to erect them on such roads. Progress had also been made with regard to both the establishment of national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade in ESCWA member countries and the memorandum of understanding concerning cooperation in the field of maritime transport in the Arab Mashreq. He highlighted the importance of the

maritime transport sector and the urgent need for increased coordination and cooperation between the countries of the region in that field. He also stressed the need to exert greater efforts to achieve a sophisticated and integrated system of transport that would serve the common interests of the countries of the region.

35. Ms. Mervat Tallawy, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCWA, made a statement on behalf of the Commission in which she welcomed participants and noted that the participation of such a distinguished group of officials and specialists in the fields of transport, customs and the facilitation of trade demonstrated the importance attached to those issues by Governments and their institutions and their genuine desire to increase their mutual cooperation and coordination and discuss the most important issues and challenges regarding the facilitation of transport in the region and ESCWA related priority programmes and activities.

36. Ms. Tallawy referred to the importance of the achievements that had been realized since the previous session of the Committee, that was held in Beirut from 14 to 16 January 2003. The first of those achievements was the entry into force on 19 October 2003 of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq. It was the first international agreement to be signed under the auspices of ESCWA since the Commission had been established in 1974. It was important to adopt an action plan for the implementation of the Agreement. The second significant achievement had been the adoption on 14 April 2003 by the twenty-second ESCWA session of the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq, and its signature by eight member countries. Ms. Tallawy expressed the hope that efforts would continue and that ratification procedures would be completed as rapidly as possible.

37. The third achievement was the completion of the economic feasibility study for the facilitation of the interchange of goods through the ports and territories of Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic, which was carried out by ESCWA at the request of the ministers of transport of those three countries. The results of the study and related recommendations had been submitted to those ministers, who had produced a report thereupon. Reference to the study had been made twice in the resolutions of the Syro-Lebanese Economic and Social Committee that had recently been held under the chairmanship of the prime ministers of both countries.

38. Ms. Tallawy also referred to the cooperation and coordination between ESCWA and the other United Nations regional commissions with respect to linking all the continents by networks of land and maritime transport, with a view to facilitating international transport and trade between the various continents and regions of the world.

39. Mr. Najib Miqati, sponsor of the session and Minister of Public Works and Transport of Lebanon, made a statement in which he thanked ESCWA for inviting him to sponsor the fifth session of the Committee on Transport, which was being held in order to consider a number of issues connected to the development of the integrated transport system in the Arab Mashreq.

40. Mr. Miqati noted the experience of Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic in activating mutual cooperation in the field of transport and in removing obstacles to the movements of land and maritime transport. He also referred to the ESCWA economic feasibility study for the facilitation of the interchange of goods through the ports and territories of the same three countries, and said that the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq, which had entered into force on 19 October 2003, would lead to the standardization of systems and increase cooperation, the interchange of goods and tourists and concern for the environment. He also discussed the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq and the action currently being taken to establish the national committee for the facilitation of transport and trade in Lebanon, which would be chaired by the Minister of Economy and Trade and enjoy support from the Ministry of Public Works and Transport.

41. Mr. Miqati underlined the need for each of those steps to be closely connected by political will that would promote action on the ground to facilitate the movement of transport between Arab countries. In conclusion, he commended ESCWA endeavours in the field of transport and wished the Committee on Transport every success in its fifth session.

C. PARTICIPANTS

42. Taking part in the fifth session of the Committee were representatives of the following 11 ESCWA member countries: Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

43. Also attending the session as observers were representatives of the League of Arab States, the Arab Railway Union, the Saudi Fund for Development and the General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture for Arab Countries. The list of participants comprises the annex of this report.

D. ELECTION OF OFFICERS (Agenda item 2)

44. In accordance with rule 18 of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, which provides that member countries shall assume the chairmanship of the sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on a rotating basis, in the Arabic alphabetical order employed by the United Nations, Mr. Muhammad Al-Mazuqi, Head of the Department of Land Affairs in the Ministry of Communications of the United Arab Emirates, assumed the chairmanship of the session. In accordance with the procedure agreed upon at the fourth session of the Committee on Transport, Mr. Alaa Al-Batayneh, the representative of Jordan, and Sheikh Muhammad Bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, the representative of Bahrain, assumed the positions of Vice-Chairmen. Ms. Ihab Mawaldi, the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, was chosen as Rapporteur.

E. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK (Agenda items 3 and 4)

45. At its first meeting, the Committee on Transport adopted the agenda for its fifth session in the form in which it appears in E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/IG.1/L.1, as set forth below:

1. Opening of the fifth session of the Committee on Transport.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Proposed organization of work.
5. General debate: transport issues in the Arab Mashreq.
6. Review of transport-related action taken since the fourth session of the Committee on Transport.
 - (a) Follow-up of implementation of the recommendations of the fourth session of the Committee on Transport;
 - (b) Progress made in implementing the activities covered by the regular programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003; consultancy services and technical cooperation; activities funded by extra-budgetary resources.
7. Review of the programme of work for the biennium 2004-2005 in the field of transport.
8. Other business.
9. Adoption of the report of the Committee of Transport on its fifth session.

46. At the same meeting, the Committee approved the proposed organization of work as it appears in E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/IG.1/L.2.

Annex

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

A. ESCWA MEMBER COUNTRIES

Bahrain

Sheikh Muhammad Bin Khalifa Al Khalif
Deputy Minister of Transportation

Mr. Arif Al Mansoori
Head of Financial Affairs
Acting Director of Administration and Financial
Affairs
Ministry of Transportation

Mr. Issa Abdulla Yatim
Director of Maritime Safety and Environmental
Protection
General Ports Authority

Khalifa Hassan Al-Ammari
Manager of Office of Under-Secretary
Ministry of Transportation

Egypt

Mr. Muhammad Talaat Khattab
First Deputy Minister of Transport
Deputy Head of Planning Institute Administrative
Council
Transport Projects
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Adel Youssef
Director of Board of General Roads and Bridges
Authority
Ministry of Transport

Jordan

Mr. Alaa Batayneh
Secretary General
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Ma'n Jaradat
Assistant General Director of Roads
Ministry of Public Works and Housing

Mr. Mahmoud Abdul-Salam
Maritime Transport Affairs
Ministry of Transport

Kuwait

Mr. Ahmad Abdul-Aziz Al-Issa
Assistant Deputy Minister, Transport Sector and
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Ministry of Communication

Mr. Nabil Molla Hussein Al-Turkait
Director of Technical Transport Department
Ministry of Communication

Mr. Mubarak Saad Al-Ghuraib
Director of Research and Studies on Road
Transport
Ministry of Communication

Mr. Nabil Basha Muhammad
Director of Registration and Mariners' Affairs
Ministry of Communication

Lebanon

Mr. Abdul-Hafith Al-Qaysi
Director General of Land and Maritime Transport
Ministry of Public Works and Transport

Mr. Fadi Nammar
Director General
Directorate General of Roads and Buildings
Ministry of Public Works and Transport

Mr. Josef Abu Samra
Director of Planning and Programmes
Directorate General of Roads and Buildings
Ministry of Public Works and Transport

Ms. Ilham Mansour Khabbaz
Chief of Tutelage and Land Transport Department
Department of Land and Maritime Transport
Ministry of Public Works and Transport

Mr. Hassan Chaban
Expert in Transport Affairs
Department of Land and Maritime Transport
Ministry of Public Works and Transport

Oman

Mr. Hassan Bin Sulayman Al-Majini
Director of Department of Port Affairs
Ministry of Transport and Communications

Mr. Salim Bin Said Al-Amiri
Director of Department of Research and Planning
Ministry of Transport and Communications

Mr. Said Juma Khamis Al Sheyadi
Director of Research and Studies
Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Palestine

Mr. Jibril Al-Talabani
General Director
Ministry of Transport and Communications
Gaza

Mr. Ahmad Qanadilu
Director of Roads and Projects
Ministry of Transport and Communications
Ramalla

Saudi Arabia

Mr. Abdulaziz Bin Abdulrahman Al-Ohaly
Deputy Minister for Transport Affairs
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Aly Jabra Al-Ghaban
Director General of Maritime Transport
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Youssef Bin Ismail Jadu
General Director of Research Department
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Khamis Saleh Al-Ghamdi
Director of Bus Transit
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Tariq Mostafa Gosty
Chief of Traffic Engineering and Safety
Department
Ministry of Transport

Syrian Arab Republic

Ms. Ihab Mawaldi
Director of Planning and International Relations
Department of Roads and Bridges
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Adnan Ahmad Mansoura
Director of New Projects
Department of Roads and Bridges
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Mahmoud Al-Haffar
Director of Research and Environmental Affairs
Ministry of Transport

United Arab Emirates

Mr. Abdul Rahman Al-Marzouki
Head of Department of Land Affairs
Ministry of Communications

Brigadier Mohamed Jassem Yousef Al-Marzouki
Director of Traffic Department
Ministry of Interior
Abu Dhabi

Mr. Rashid Ali Al-Marzouki
Deputy Director of Guidance Department
Zayed Port, Department of Seaports

Mr. Mohamed Saleh Samhan Al Nuaimi
Mezyed Customs Manager
Customs Department
Abu Dhabi

Yemen

Mr. Aly Muhammad Muta'afi
Deputy Minister of Transport
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Yahya Ahmad Al-Kahlani
Ministerial Advisor
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Mohammed Abdul-Wasa Mohammed
Deputy General Manager
Yemen Ports Authority

Mr. Wadi'a Abdul-Majid Said
Deputy Director of Customs
Customs Authority

B. INTER-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

League of Arab States

Mr. Abdul-Latif Sa'dal-Din Madi
Head of Department of Studies and Media
Beirut

C. INTER-GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Arab Railway Union

Mr. Marhaf Al-Sabuni
Aleppo
Syrian Arab Republic

Saudi Fund for Development

Mr. Azzam Abdulaziz Al-Hakbani
Engineer
Riyadh

General Union of Chambers of Commerce,
Industry and Agriculture for Arab Countries

Ms. Noha Hawa
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