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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Committee on Transport
Sixth session
Beirut, 22-24 February 2005

AIDE-MEMOIRE*1. Background to the session*

The sixth session of the Committee on Transport represents the continuing efforts of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) to develop the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq (ITSAM), which was approved by member countries at the twentieth ESCWA session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 May 1999. The System was proposed by the Committee on Transport with a view to facilitating trade and transport between the countries of the region and achieving regional integration.

If ITSAM is to be successful, rapid and well-considered action will certainly be required. Similarly, the identification of issues concerning the integration of transport, the facilitation of trade and the finalization of recommendations relating to general policies on trade at the regional level will require the consideration of many issues. Such issues include the development of infrastructure, involving implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq and the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq, and the adoption of a memorandum of understanding concerning cooperation in the field of maritime transport in the region. In order to facilitate the movement of transport and trade at the regional and international levels and at all the land, sea and air border points of the region, it will also be necessary to increase the efficiency of movement and operations; harmonize laws, systems and standards; and ratify regional and international agreements. Recommendations should be implemented regarding the facilitation of transport and trade in the region and, in particular, the establishment of national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade.

The ESCWA Transport Section began efforts to develop ITSAM as part of its programme of work for the 1998-1999 biennium, and has continued those efforts in its programmes of work for the 2000-2001 and 2002-2003 bienniums and the current 2004-2005 biennium. In the forthcoming session, a review will be conducted of achievements in that field since the fifth session of the Committee on Transport, which was held in Beirut from 2 to 4 March 2004.

2. The provisional agenda of the session

The provisional agenda of the sixth session of the Committee on Transport is contained in document E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/L.1

3. Participants

In view of the multiplicity of transport-related concerns and activities at ESCWA, arising from the variety of means and systems of land, sea and air transport and the number of related aspects, the relevant parties in the Governments of member countries should decide to form a delegation comprising specialists in the various fields and, in particular, in road transport, to follow up the action plan for implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq. It should also include experts on maritime transport and ports, in order to adopt the proposed memorandum of understanding concerning cooperation in the field of maritime transport in the Arab Mashreq; and experts on trade and customs, with a view to discussing and

adopting the necessary executive steps to finalize the establishment and activation of national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade, in their capacity as members of the Committee on Transport. Naturally, in accordance with United Nations practice, member countries are responsible for the travel and subsistence expenses of their representatives at such inter-Governmental meetings. A number of representatives of relevant regional and international organizations will also be invited to attend.

4. Time and venue

The session will be held at United Nations House, ESCWA headquarters in Beirut, from 22 to 24 February 2005. Registration will begin at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, 22 February 2005, and the inaugural meeting will be held at 10 a.m. on the same day. The session will conclude at 1 p.m. on Thursday, 24 February 2005.

5. Accommodation and transportation

In order to facilitate the transportation to the session of participants, ESCWA suggests that participants should make reservations at the Safir Heliopolitan Hotel in Beirut, where the following discounts are offered: \$60 per day for a single room and \$75 per day for a double room, to which 10 per cent VAT should be added. The offer is dependent on a minimum of 15 participants staying at the hotel. Otherwise, the cost of a single room will be \$70. Prices include breakfast and transportation to and from Beirut International Airport and between the hotel and ESCWA each day of the session. In order to reserve, please contact the hotel directly:

Ms. Rita Aby Saad
Sales and Marketing Director
Tel.: 961-1-810555
Fax: 961-1-814888
E-mail: sales@safirheliopolitan.com

In order to ensure that you receive the ESCWA discount, please mention at the time of reservation that you will be attending the sixth session of the Committee on Transport.

6. Entry visas

Any participant who experiences difficulty in obtaining a Lebanese visa in his own country may request assistance from ESCWA. If such assistance is required, please supply ESCWA with a copy of your passport, including the relevant information, by 20 January 2005.

7. Correspondence

All session-related correspondence should be directed to:

Ms. Thouka Al-Khalidi
Chief
Globalization and Regional Integration Division

For the attention of:
Mr. Nabil Safwat
Chief
Transport Section
Globalization and Regional Integration Division
ESCWA
P.O. Box 11-8575
Beirut
Lebanon
Tel.: 961-1-978342
Mobile: 961-3-230410
Fax: 961-1-981510
E-mail: safwatn@un.org