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**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia**

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Item 6 (a-i) of the provisional agenda

**FOLLOW-UP OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF  
THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT**

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

**Summary**

The Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq entered into force on 19 October 2003. A plan of action for its implementation was subsequently adopted, together with a resolution on the routes to be given priority in implementation, and many of the countries which ratified the Agreement have begun to implement it.

This report summarizes achievements since the Agreement entered into force.

A. FOLLOW UP TO IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL ROADS  
IN THE ARAB MASHREQ SINCE ITS ENTRY INTO FORCE ON 19 OCTOBER 2003

1. On the entry into force of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) prepared a draft plan of action for its implementation which was discussed at a seminar for capacity-building in respect of facilitating trade and transport that was held in Beirut from 2 to 4 December 2003. At that seminar, the representatives of Saudi Arabia and the Syrian Arab Republic presented two working papers on the action that had been taken in their respective countries in order to implement the Agreement.<sup>1</sup>

2. Participants at the abovementioned seminar recommended that, before the end of 2004, international road signs should be expeditiously manufactured and put in position, beginning with the network linkages between cities to which no changes will be made in the near future. They further recommended that ESCWA should present for adoption to the Committee on Transport at its fifth session the amended plan of action for implementation of the Agreement, which should then be put into effect.<sup>2</sup>

3. The Committee on Transport held its fifth session from 2 to 4 March 2004 and made the following recommendations:<sup>3</sup>

(a) Before the end of 2004, countries should expeditiously manufacture and put in position international road signs, beginning with the network linkages between cities to which no changes will be made in the near future;

(b) Document E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/IG.1/1, which contains a draft plan of action for implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq, should be adopted once the editorial changes have been introduced, and it should be implemented in accordance with the timetable set forth in the document;

(c) Countries that have signed but not ratified the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq should complete ratification procedures forthwith and deposit the instrument of ratification with the United Nations Secretary General. Similarly, countries that have not yet signed the Agreement are urged to accelerate the completion of accession procedures;

(d) Member countries should rapidly implement the proposed plan of action for implementation, without waiting until the latest date permitted under the Agreement, given the importance of keeping abreast of developments and technological progress in the world, and with a view to putting the Agreement into effect as soon as possible.

4. On 4 May 2004, ESCWA sent to member countries a letter in which it urged them to rapidly implement the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq and to manufacture and put in position international road signs. Set forth below are the developments that have taken place in that regard:<sup>4</sup>

**Jordan:** In February 2004, the Ministry of Public Works and Housing manufactured 222 signs that were then put in position on the international roads which run through the country.

**United Arab Emirates:** No reply received.

**Bahrain:** No reply received.

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<sup>1</sup> E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/IG.1/3(Part I).

<sup>2</sup> E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/IG.1/7.

<sup>3</sup> E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/IG.1/7.

<sup>4</sup> E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/5.

**Syrian Arab Republic:** Manufacture of 1,000 signs has begun.

**Iraq:** No reply received.

**Oman:** No reply received.

**Palestine:** No reply received.

**Qatar:** No reply received.

**Kuwait:** Currently acceding to the Agreement.

**Lebanon:** Signs are being manufactured.

**Egypt:** Signs are being manufactured and put in position.

**Saudi Arabia:** The Ministry of Transport has authorized the execution of the signs in accordance with the agreed specifications on roads to which no changes will be made and on planned routes that are currently being built.

**Yemen:** Signs are currently being manufactured and it is expected that they will be in position in the near future.

5. At its fifth session, the Committee on Transport adopted the plan of action, having agreed upon the amendments to be made thereto. The amended plan is contained in E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/1/Rev.1. Implementation was begun in accordance with the timetable set forth in table 2 of that document.

6. To date, the developments set forth in the table below have taken place with regard to ratification and accession:

Country	Date of signature	Date of ratification
Jordan	10 May 2001	Instrument of ratification deposited on 18 January 2002
United Arab Emirates	10 May 2001	--
Bahrain	8 March 2002	--
Syrian Arab Republic	10 May 2001	Instrument of ratification deposited on 21 July 2003
Iraq	19 December 2002	--
Oman	10 May 2001	--
Palestine	10 May 2001	--
Qatar	10 May 2001	Instrument of ratification deposited on 28 June 2002
Lebanon	10 May 2001	Instrument of ratification deposited on 1 May 2003
Egypt	10 May 2001	Instrument of ratification deposited on 5 May 2004
Saudi Arabia	10 May 2001	Instrument of ratification deposited on 26 July 2004
Yemen	10 May 2001	Instrument of ratification deposited on 15 November 2003

7. With respect to implementation of the plan of action, the following developments have taken place:

**Jordan:** the Ministry of Public Works and Housing is studying, designing and building the roads in accordance with the most recent specifications and scientific guidelines. It is also carrying out the necessary maintenance and strengthening traffic safety elements on roads in the country.

**United Arab Emirates:** No reply received.

**Bahrain:** No reply received.

**Syrian Arab Republic:** No reply received.

**Iraq:** No reply received.

**Oman:** No reply received.

**Palestine:** No reply received.

**Qatar:** No reply received.

**Kuwait:** No reply received.

**Lebanon:** No reply received.

**Egypt:** No reply received.

**Saudi Arabia:** The plan of action is being implemented.

**Yemen:** Action is being taken.

8. On 27 July 2004, ESCWA wrote to member countries regarding preparation of a report on follow-up to the recommendations made by the Committee on Transport at its fifth session and transport-related developments in those countries. A model for the follow-up report required was attached.

9. With respect to publicity, the following developments have taken place:

**Jordan:** On 13 April 2004, the Minister of Transport attended a ceremony held under his aegis in order to mark the completion of work to put in place the international road signs. The Executive Secretary of ESCWA was also present, at the head of an ESCWA delegation. At the ceremony, 100 copies were distributed of the coloured map of the international road network in the Arab Mashreq, together with 100 copies of the plan of action for implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq that was adopted by ESCWA in 2004, and 20 copies of the Agreement.

**Egypt:** A ceremony similar to that held in Jordan was held on 2 February 2005 in order to mark the initiation of Agreement implementation.

10. At its sixth session, which was held from 22 to 24 March 2005, the Committee on Transport recommended that the Agreement should be expeditiously implemented. ESCWA proposed that two main routes should be selected and that the focus should be on implementing the Agreement on those routes as a priority. It put forward the criteria for the selection of those routes and prepared a draft resolution in that regard,<sup>5</sup> which was adopted at the twenty-third ESCWA session, which was held in Damascus from 9 to 12 May 2005. Annex I contains the text of that resolution.

11. Pursuant to the aforementioned resolution, ESCWA organized an expert group meeting on the facilitation of transport for regional integration. It was held in Beirut on 5 and 6 December 2005 and discussions focused on implementation of the resolution. Requests were sent to all member countries for working papers on the steps that had been taken to implement the Agreement in accordance with the plan of action. With respect to the seven countries through which the priority routes M40 and M45 run, ESCWA has contracted experts to prepare detailed plans of action for the projects that must be carried out on those routes in the countries concerned.

**B. PROGRESS MADE IN IMPLEMENTING THE AGREEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL ROADS  
IN THE ARAB MASHREQ IN THE MEMBER COUNTRIES THAT ARE PARTY  
TO THE AGREEMENT**

12. The Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq entered into force on 19 October 2003. It has been signed by 11 member countries and to date, it has been ratified by seven, namely, Jordan

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<sup>5</sup> See E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/5.

(18 January 2002); Qatar (28 June 2002); Yemen (15 November 2002); Lebanon (1 May 2003); the Syrian Arab Republic (21 July 2003); Egypt (5 May 2004); and Saudi Arabia (26 July 2004).

13. Pursuant to resolution 257 (XXIII), that was adopted at the twenty-third ESCWA session, which was held in Damascus from 9 to 12 May 2005, routes M40 and M45 were selected to be given priority in implementation of the Agreement. All member countries through which any part of those routes runs were therefore requested to submit a comprehensive and detailed plan of action for implementation of the Agreement on those two routes. The seven countries concerned are Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

14. Set forth below is a brief summary of what has been done to implement the Agreement by the countries that have ratified it and the action that has been taken with respect to the two priority routes M40 and M45:

#### **Jordan<sup>6</sup>**

15. Jordan was the first country to put international road signs in position on the roads covered by the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq. Signs have been erected on all routes and an inventory is currently being taken of the signs and signals on roads covered by the Agreement, with a view to preparing a plan of action for applying all the relevant specifications. The specifications of the roads covered by the Agreement have been circulated to all the consultancy offices that are preparing studies and tender documents for Agreement-related projects, in order to ensure that all specifications relating to dimension, script and environmental considerations are observed in the designs for signs and signals. Jordan also pays great attention to preventative and routine maintenance, as may be seen from the sums that the Ministry devotes to it every year. Funds have been allocated for the purpose of raising safety standards on roads, including traffic specifications, road markings, reflectors and metal barriers, and there is an ongoing programme for maintenance and the installation of safety devices.

Routes M40 and M45 run through Jordan as follows:

**M40:** Karamah (on the border with Iraq) - Al Azraq - Amman - King Hussein Bridge (on the border with Occupied Palestinian Territory).

**M45:** Jaber (on the border with the Syrian Arab Republic) - Amman - Ma'an - Al Mudawara (on the border with Saudi Arabia).

16. The Ministry of Public Works is undertaking many activities, projects and studies and has many plans for the future aimed at raising road standards on those two routes, rehabilitating, improving and widening them. In previous years, money from the Ministry budget has been allocated to projects on those roads. Furthermore, several projects are being prepared that will have a direct or indirect impact on traffic movements on those routes. The Ministry is focusing on the following border crossings, which comprise part of routes M40 and M45: Karamah, Al Mudawara, Jaber and King Hussein Bridge.

17. Currently, the Ministry is preparing measures to be taken in the future in order to improve levels of service on certain roads and ensure the free movement of traffic on the main roads that pass through populated regions. A rapid survey has been carried out of the main roads along which are sited residential communities, villages and towns and a proposed solution has been adopted for the upgrading of service roads alongside the main roads within populated areas. Guidelines are currently being prepared for a study of the desert road that comprises part of M45 between the airport junction and the turnoff to Ma'an.

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<sup>6</sup> This information has been taken from a report presented by the Ministry of Public Works at the Expert Group Meeting on Transport Facilitation for Regional Integration that was held in Beirut on 5 and 6 December 2005.

## Saudi Arabia<sup>7</sup>

18. Improvements are being made to the parts of the international road network that run through the country. On route M25, the 631 kilometres between Qariyat and Rafaha' are currently being upgraded to a dual carriageway, and the 1,203 kilometres between Qariyat and Abu Hadriyah are being repaired. On route M35 work is currently being carried out in order to link the Ha'il region to the Jauf region via a dual carriageway 336 kilometres in length. A 245 kilometre motorway is being built between Ha'il and Qasim, while the 275 kilometres between Qariyat and Sakakah are being made into a dual carriageway. On route M55, the road from the border crossing of Durra, which runs for 771 kilometres to Yanbu through Dhuba, is being made into dual carriageway. A 262 kilometre motorway has been completed from Yanbu and Rabigh to Thul, (Jedda North), and the 754 kilometres between Jedda and the Tuwal border crossing via Darb is currently being made into dual carriageway. On route M70, 19 kilometres of the road between Ruqi and Hafar El Batin is being made into dual carriageway, as is the 172 kilometre road between Hafr El Batin and Artawiyah. A motorway 153 kilometres in length is being constructed between Medina and Yanbu. On route M90, the 116 kilometres between Salwah and Batha'a are currently being made into dual carriageway, and 714 kilometres of dual carriageway between Aflaj and Abu Botool are being completed.

19. With respect to priority route M45 between the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, passing through Jordan and Saudi Arabia, Saudi responsibility begins at the border crossings with Jordan at Al Mudawara and Halat Ammar and continues via Tabuk, Qalibah, Taima', Jahra', Khaibar, Medina, Mecca, Taif, Baha, Abha, Khamis Mushait and South Dahrn to the Yemeni border crossing at Alab. The following action has been taken on this route:

- **Between the Mudawara and Halat Ammar border crossings**, Saudi Arabia has made 890 kilometres of the 1.80 kilometres of poor quality road into dual carriageway. A maintenance contractor has been commissioned to rebuild the road and complete the part which is dual carriageway;
- **On the 93 kilometres between the Halat Ammar border crossing and Tabuk**, work has been completed on a dual carriageway and the old road is being rebuilt. Work is expected to be complete by March 2009;
- **The 124 kilometre stretch between Tabuk and Qalibah** was made into dual carriageway at previous stages. The remaining parts of the old road are currently being rebuilt and work should be completed by June 2007;
- **On the 249 kilometres from Qalibah through Taima to Jahra**, work has begun on a dual carriageway and is expected to be completed by February 2006. It has been decided to rebuild the old road along this entire stretch and work should be finished by December 2009;
- **From Jahra through Khaibar to Medina**, it is expected that all 317 kilometres will be made into dual carriageway under the 2006 budget and that work will be completed by the end of 2010;
- **The 434 kilometres between Medina and Mecca** are a three lane motorway which does not need any improvement;
- It has been decided to complete the dual carriageway in the mountain section of **the 98.5 kilometres between Mecca and Taif**. Work should be finished by August 2009;
- **On the 240.9 kilometres between Taif and Baha**, a number of projects are being carried out in order to make the original road into a dual carriageway. Work is expected to be complete by

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<sup>7</sup> This information has been taken from a report presented by the Ministry of Transport at the Expert Group Meeting on Transport Facilitation for Regional Integration that was held in Beirut on 5 and 6 December 2005.

December 2008. Once that dual carriageway has been finished, consideration will be given to changing the course of route M45;

- **On the section between Baha and Abha**, which is 331 kilometres in length, 50.3 kilometres have been made into dual carriageway. Further work is being carried out and should be completed by September 2009;
- **On the Abha-South Dahrhan-Alab section**, the part to South Dahrhan is currently being made into dual carriageway and should be ready by November 2009. There are currently no plans to make the remaining 14.5 kilometres between South Dahrhan and Alab into dual carriageway.

20. Saudi Arabia is currently concentrating on raising standards on M45 by making those parts of it which are single lane into dual carriageway and rebuilding the existing road to meet ESCWA specifications. Work to put in position the international road signs for Agreement routes, including M45, was concluded in February 2005. A total of 378 signs have been erected on that route.

21. As may be seen from the foregoing, work to implement the Agreement is well in hand in Saudi Arabia and may be considered a model for other countries in the region. It should be noted that 40 per cent of the Agreement network is situated in that country.

### **Syrian Arab Republic<sup>8</sup>**

22. Some 1,000 international road signs have been manufactured and will be put in position shortly on all routes. The Agreement has been circulated to all interested parties for compliance with the technical specifications contained therein. Consideration has been given to a new numbering system for roads in the country, with a view to bringing them into line with those of the Agreement.

23. The part of M45 that runs through Syrian territory begins at Bab Al Hawa on the border with Turkey and ends at Nasib on the Jordanian border. The status of the route is as follows:

- **Bab Al Hawa-Aleppo (41 kilometres)**: second class road, which is regularly maintained as required;
- **Aleppo-Hamah (146 kilometres)**: fast road, regularly maintained as required;
- **Hamah-Homs (47 kilometres)**: fast road, regularly maintained as required;
- **Homs-Damascus (162 kilometres)**: fast road, regularly maintained as required. In 2005 a consultancy company was commissioned to study the rehabilitation of the 100 kilometres between Damascus and Qara, which is near Homs, as part of the plan formulated by the General Corporation for Road Communications, Ministry of Transport, for the rehabilitation of all the existing route between Damascus and Aleppo. The study will take 10 months and will be completed by the end of March 2006;
- **Damascus-Jordanian border (104 kilometres)**: fast road, regularly maintained as required.

24. More than 1,000 international road signs are currently being put in position on all the international roads covered by the Agreement. Service installations will be provided on route M45, including bridges, junctions, the necessary interchanges, petrol stations, public road police centres, emergency centres and rest areas. Five rest areas have already been built on this route.

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<sup>8</sup> This information has been taken from a report presented by the Ministry of Transport at the Expert Group Meeting on Transport Facilitation for Regional Integration that was held in Beirut on 5 and 6 December 2005.

25. Centres have also been established for observing loads on this route at the Dara' and Nasib border crossings with Jordan and at Bab Al Hawa on the Turkish border. Further positions have been put in place along the entire route with a view to penalizing cars and lorries with irregular loads and prevent them proceeding further into the country before the irregularity is rectified.

### **Iraq<sup>9</sup>**

26. Route M40 begins at the border crossing with the Islamic Republic of Iran at Munthareya and goes via Khanaqin, Baaqubah, Baghdad, Ramadi and Al Rutbah to the border crossing with Jordan at Tarabil. It then continues across Jordan, Palestine and Egypt to end at the Egypt-Libyan Arab Jamahiriya border crossing of Salum. Of the route, 837 kilometres lie within Iraq, and most of the roads that constitute this part of the route are first class freeways or motorways. The exception is the part of the road that connects Munthareya to Baaqubah, which is a single track second class road. The following action has been taken on this route:

- **The 140 kilometre stretch between Munthareya and Baaqubah** is a single track second class road. A project to install a second lane on the 140 kilometre section between Khanaqin and Baaqubah was included in the State budget investment plan for 2005 with a view to developing the road from its current state to meet the specifications for first class high speed roads or dual carriageways. The work to be carried out includes the building of four bridges, a large number of earth and gravel works and asphalted concreting. The project will be carried out in three stages, beginning in 2005. It is expected to be finished by 2010;
- **The 60 kilometres of road between Baaqubah and Baghdad** are first class. As a result of contacts with the capital secretariat to familiarize it with the requirements of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq, the construction of a road has been included in the programme for 2006. That road will reduce distances: by using the international M40 route, travel time through Baghdad's northern suburbs will be lessened, and there will be no need to use the busy roads inside the city. Work should be completed by 2007;
- **The 410 kilometre section between Baghdad and Ratabah** is a 1F-type freeway that was built to very high standards. It is a divided dual carriageway. The General Corporation for Roads and Bridges has built three integrated rest areas along this section and continues to announce further investment in other such areas;
- **The 132 kilometres between Al Rutbah and the Tarabil border crossing with Jordan** is a 1F-type divided dual carriage freeway that was built to very high specifications. On each side there are two traffic lanes and one hard shoulder, the total width of paved road being 11.75 metres.

27. The State Corporation for Roads and Bridges in Iraq uses international specifications when preparing traffic signs for public roads. Current conditions in Iraq have led to the loss or damage of a huge number of the signals that were in position on those roads. However, the Corporation is determined to organize a campaign to install signs as soon as circumstances permit.

### **Egypt<sup>10</sup>**

28. Once Egypt had put all the international road signs in place in February 2005, it prepared an integrated plan of action for completion of all Agreement requirements within the specified period. All the current specifications were identified, as were the signs and signals that do not conform to specifications. ESCWA was provided with a detailed electronic report on them. All the action that must be taken has therefore been

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<sup>9</sup> This information has been taken from a report presented by the State Corporation for Roads and Bridges, Ministry of Transport, at the Expert Group Meeting on Transport Facilitation for Regional Integration that was held in Beirut on 5 and 6 December 2005.

<sup>10</sup> This information has been taken from a report presented by the Ministry of Transport at the Expert Group Meeting on Transport Facilitation for Regional Integration that was held in Beirut on 5 and 6 December 2005.



determined, traffic signals have been harmonized and the technical specifications for them have been amended in order to conform to those in the Agreement. The plan proposed by Egypt indicated that all the international road signs will be in place by the end of 2005, and that signs and signals that do not conform to the Agreement will have been changed by the end of 2011. All the work required to upgrade the parts of the international road network that lie within Egypt and form part of the Agreement and bring them into line with Agreement specifications will, the report indicates, have been completed by the end of 2019.

29. Route M40 passes through the following towns in Egypt: Salum, Marsa Matruh, Alexandria, Port Said, Kantara Bridge, Arish and Rafah. Its total length is 1,053 kilometres. It is made up of the following sections:

- **Rafah-Arish (45 kilometres):** the surface is earth and in a good state;
- **Arish-Kantara Bridge (160 kilometres):** asphalted and in good condition;
- **Kantara Bridge-Port Said (40 kilometres):** asphalt, in poor condition;
- **Port Said-Damietta (46 kilometres):** asphalt, in poor condition;
- **Damietta-Alexandria (215 kilometres):** asphalt, in poor condition;
- **Alexandria-Marsa Matruh (267 kilometres):** asphalt, in good condition;
- **Marsa Matruh-Salum (230 kilometres):** asphalt, in excellent condition.

30. On most sections of the route, the load bearing capacity has been increased to 13 tons; work is being done on the other sections to increase their capacity and should be completed within the time specified in the Agreement.

#### **Yemen<sup>11</sup>**

31. After the draft agreement had been reviewed and considered and the routes to link up with the international roads that pass through Yemen had been determined, the second class specifications given in the annex to the Agreement were selected, for the following reasons:

- When the main asphalted roads are built, they will in general be 7 metres wide, each lane being 3.5 metres wide. The hard shoulder will vary between 1 and 1.5 metres in width, depending on the nature of the terrain through which the road is passing. Those are the dimensions used in many countries, thus Yemen will be achieving the lowest or medium level of the model characteristics specified in the ESCWA proposal. That will help to reduce the cost of building the roads to a reasonable level: there is a great need to expand the road building programme in the whole country, as the economic situation of the country permits;
- With respect to the technical standards and specifications applied in designing roads in Yemen, the basic principles used are those of the American Association of State Highways and Transportation Officials, in determining the thickness of pavement layers and the field and practical tests at all stages of the road building process;
- Application of the specifications set out in the Agreement which have been selected may begin, particularly on the linkage routes that come under the Agreement, when new road projects are built, in accordance with the attached tables;
- With respect to existing projects, there are some sections to which the specifications do not apply which need to be changed and improved, and the Ministry has carried out such improvements on several sections of the existing roads.

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<sup>11</sup> This information has been taken from a report presented by the Ministry of Transport of Yemen at the Expert Group Meeting on Transport Facilitation for Regional Integration that was held in Beirut on 5 and 6 December 2005.

## **The international link roads that pass through Yemeni territory**

32. Yemen has, in principle, selected three international link roads to connect its borders to the borders of Oman and Saudi Arabia. When those roads were selected, it was because most sections of them conformed to ESCWA specifications of the second class. Those routes are as follow:

- M45: Albain-Sa'ada-Amran-Sana'a-Taizz;
- M55: Tiwal-Harad-Hodeidah-Mafraq-Taizz-Aden;
- M100: Aden-Mukallah-Ghaida-Shahan.

## **Steps applied in implementing the programme of work on the link roads**

### *Route M45*

33. This route begins in the far north and goes south, from the Albain region and the city of Sa'ada to the Hauban region and the city of Taizz and it is proposed that it should be extended to the city of Aden. Set forth below is the work that has been carried out to date:

- **Albain-Baqim (13 kilometres):** this section was completed in 1999; the camber and bends must be changed;
- **Baqim-Sa'ada (84 kilometres):** this section was built in 1981. The width of the hard shoulders must be changed, an additional layer added to the surface and some of the bridges are in need of maintenance. The road fund has therefore included this route in the 2006 budget;
- **Sa'ada-Huth-Harf Sufyan (104 kilometres):** The General Corporation for Roads and Bridges has been commissioned to bring this section up to ESCWA specifications. Under the contract, work will be completed in 2006, and the whole project is expected to be finished in July 2006;
- **Harf Sufyan-Raydah (88 kilometres):** The Arab Contracting Company has been commissioned to build some 10 kilometres of dual carriageway beginning at the Raydah end. The route has been changed in order to avoid going in to Amran city and now runs Raydah-Thayfan-Darwan. A ring road has also been built around Khamir;
- **Amran-Sana'a (50 kilometres):** the Ministry of Works must bring this section up to ESCWA specifications;
- **Sana'a-Ma'bar (68 kilometres):** a dual carriageway some 21 kilometres in length must be built between the governorate of the capital and the Taizz road. Some 30 kilometres have been designed in accordance with ESCWA specifications;
- **Ma'bar-Dhamar (32 kilometres):** Does not conform to specifications and must be altered and widened;
- **Dhamar-Barim-Kitab (42 kilometres):** Does not conform to specifications and must be widened; bends must be altered in accordance with the specifications;
- **Kitab-Dalil-Ibb (51 kilometres):** the topography of this region requires large amounts of money and technical resources to improve this stretch of the road;
- **Ibb-Al Qa'adah-Huban/Taizz (44 kilometres):** Does not conform to specifications and a ring road must be built or some other alternative considered;
- **Taizz-Lahej-Aden (153 kilometres):** Does not conform to specifications and must be brought into line therewith.

#### *Route 55*

34. This route runs north-south, beginning in the Al Tuwal region on the border with Saudi Arabia and ending in Aden governorate. It is proposed to change the route to join the M45 from Taizz to Aden. An addition is proposed to the Hodeida-Khaukha-Mocha route, which meets most of the ESCWA specifications with respect to lane width, shoulder width, bends and camber.

#### *Route M100*

35. This route runs south-east, from Aden governorate through Mukalla governorate and Ghaithah to Shahan on the Omani border. It is proposed to add to the route two further stretches, namely, Mocha-Bab Al Mandeb-Ras Al Ara-Aden and Ghaithah-Fatak Hauf. The route does not conform to specifications and work has begun on widening it, changing bends and rehabilitating the final sections.

36. Under the Agreement, 200 road signs are required, of which 160 have been erected, while the remaining 40 will be put in position as soon as the widening work at the entrance of Aden has been completed, which is expected to be by the end of 2006.

### **Lebanon**

37. The appropriate steps are being taken to commission contracts for signs and signals on the international roads that are included in the Agreement. The Council for Development and Reconstruction has been requested to expedite those contracts. On 30 September 2005 the Council asked the Council of Ministers to allocate funds for signs, signals and central reservations on two international roads, namely, the coast road that runs from Abboudieh through Tripoli and Beirut to Naqoura, and the road between Masna' and Beirut. The matter is to be considered.<sup>12</sup> Lebanon is currently carrying out some work on the parts of routes M30 and M51 that run through the country, as follows:<sup>13</sup>

(a) Contracts have been awarded for two sections of M30, which links Beirut and Damascus, namely, between Mudairaj and Tanaayil (20 kilometres) and Tanaayil and Masna' (10.9 kilometres). A new road will be built in order to link Mudairaj to Masna' via Tanaayil, using high specifications that are in complete conformity with those of the Agreement. Furthermore, studies are being undertaken on the improvement and bringing into line with Agreement specifications of the section that links Jumhour with Aley;

(b) With respect to the coast road, M51, tenders have been solicited for a study of the section that links Qalamoun to Badawi (11.3 kilometers), and a study is being made on building the section between Tripoli Port and Badawi (5.8 kilometres), in order to avoid the heavy traffic in Tripoli town centre. However, there is no timetable for beginning that work.

38. To date, Lebanon has not put any international road signs in position or taken any action to change existing signals in accordance with Agreement specifications.

### **C. EXPANDING THE AGREEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL ROADS IN THE ARAB MASHREQ TO INCLUDE ALL THE ARAB COUNTRIES**

39. At its twenty-seventh session, on 24 November 2004, the Council of Arab Ministers of Transport adopted resolution 230 concerning the possibility of implementing the Agreement in Arab countries non-members of ESCWA and commissioning the Technical Council for Land Transport of the League of Arab States to study ITSAM, the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq and the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq, with a view to considering the feasibility of expanding work to include all the Arab countries.

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<sup>12</sup> Letter from Ministry of Public Works and Transportation dated 2 December 2005.

<sup>13</sup> Information provided by the Development and Construction Council.

40. The Technical Council for Land Transport held its fifteenth meeting on 30 and 31 August 2005 in Cairo, which ESCWA attended. The Council expressed its appreciation of the endeavours exerted by ESCWA with respect to ITSAM and the two Agreements. In that regard, it made a number of positive recommendations.<sup>14</sup> When that report was submitted to the Council of Arab Ministers of Transport at its twenty-eighth session, which was held in Damascus on 23 and 24 November 2005, the following decisions were made:

(a) Note was taken of the ITSAM Framework, and it was conveyed with the relevant report to the Arab countries non-members of ESCWA for consideration;

(b) In principle, the idea of expanding the two ESCWA Agreements to include all the Arab countries was welcomed;

(c) The technical secretariat was commissioned, after consultation and coordination with ESCWA, to hold technical meetings for experts from Arab countries non-members of ESCWA on the inclusion of those countries in the international road and rail networks, to which the ESCWA member countries that have ratified the two Agreements should be invited, together with the relevant Arab unions.

41. Those recommendations are considered a great success for ESCWA at the Arab country level and a clear expression of appreciation of ESCWA efforts in adopting and developing ITSAM and the two Agreements.

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<sup>14</sup> General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, report of the fifteenth meeting of the Technical Council for Land Transport, 30 and 31 August 2005, Cairo.

Annex I

**257 (XXIII). Selection of the Routes to be given priority in Implementation  
of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq**

*The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,*

*Recalling* the adoption of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq on 11 May 2001 by means of resolution 235 (XXI) dated 11 May 2001 and the entry into force of the Agreement on 19 October 2003,

*Recalling also* the plan of action for the implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq that was adopted by the Committee on Transport at its fifth session, held from 2 to 4 March 2004, the text of which appeared in E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/1/Rev.1,

*Recalling further* the major steps that have been taken by some member countries to implement the Agreement in accordance with the plan of action, with particular reference to the manufacture and positioning of international road signs on routes that are part of the Agreement,

*Affirming* that it is important to identify the routes to be given priority, in order to accelerate implementation of the Agreement and achieve maximum benefit therefrom in the majority of member countries,

*Recognizing* that, for that purpose, countries must prepare a detailed plan of action of the projects necessary to establish those priority routes,

1. *Adopts* Agreement routes M40 and M45 as priority routes, for the reasons given in the annex to this resolution;

2. *Requests* member countries through whose territories the aforementioned routes pass to accelerate preparation of a detailed plan of action for the projects that must be carried out in respect of those routes, complete that plan by 30 September 2007 at the latest, and begin taking the measures necessary to develop the routes to the standard required under the Agreement as soon as possible;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to provide technical assistance in the preparation of the plans of action relating to those routes and follow up their implementation;

4. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report on this issue to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session.

## Annex II

### **JUSTIFICATIONS FOR THE SELECTION OF THE ROUTES TO BE GIVEN PRIORITY IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL ROADS IN THE ARAB MASHREQ**

Within the framework of the plan of action for the implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq,<sup>15</sup> the following five steps were specified:

1. Public information issues.
2. International road signs.
3. Identification of routes and their characteristics.
4. Route signs and signals.
5. Technical specifications of routes.

Moreover, in order to select the routes to be given priority until such time as the technical specifications set forth in the Agreement can be applied to all routes, the following standards were adopted:

1. An international road should pass through the greatest number of member countries, with special consideration being given to those countries that have ratified or signed the Agreement.
2. An international road should provide a linkage with other regions. Specifically, the beginning or end of a route should be outside the ESCWA region.
3. No parts of an international road should be in need of major works to complete or upgrade it that would involve a great deal of time or effort.
4. Work should already have begun on installing the international road signs, raising standards and changing signals to comply with Agreement requirements.
5. One international road should be oriented from north to south and the other from east to west.

The following two routes met the above-mentioned requirements:

(a) *The north-south route:*

M45: Syrian Arab Republic - Jordan - Saudi Arabia - Yemen (3,713 kilometres)

Bab Al Hawa (Syrian Arab Republic - Turkey) - Aleppo - Homs - Damascus - Nasib (Syrian Arab Republic/Jordan) - Jaber (Jordan/Syrian Arab Republic) - Amman - Ma'an - Al Mudawara (Jordan/Saudi Arabia) - Halat Ammar (Saudi Arabia/Jordan) - Tabuk - Qalibah - Medina - Mecca - Abha-Elb (Saudi Arabia/Yemen) - Baqim (Yemen/Saudi Arabia) - Sana'a - Ta'izz.

(b) *The east-west route:*

M40: Iraq - Jordan - Occupied Palestinian Territory - Mediterranean Southern Coast (2,228 kilometres)

Munthareya (Iraq/Iran) - Khanaqin - Baghdad - Ramadi - Al Rutbah - Tarabil (Iraq/Jordan) - Karamah (Jordan/Iraq) - Al Azraq - Amman - King Hussein Bridge - (Jordan/Occupied Palestinian Territory) - Jerusalem - Gaza - Rafah (Egypt/Occupied Palestinian Territory) - Arish - Kantara Bridge - Port Said - Alexandria - Salum (Egypt/Libyan Arab Jamahiriya).

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<sup>15</sup> E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/1/Rev.1.