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**Sustainable transport development in Arab countries****Summary**

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations pursuant to General Assembly resolution [70/1](#) of 25 September 2015, provide a general framework for development for the period up to 2030. Although transport is not considered a stand-alone Goal among the 17 SDGs, its issues affect the SDGs given its integration in many economic and social activities.

On 16 May 2023, the General Assembly adopted resolution [A/RES/77/286](#), which declares 26 November as World Sustainable Transport Day; and invites all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, international and regional organizations and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, individuals and other relevant stakeholders to mark World Sustainable Transport Day by means of education and the holding of events aimed at enhancing the knowledge of the public on sustainable transport issues, in particular enhancing intermodal transport connectivity, promoting environmentally friendly transportation, developing socially inclusive transport infrastructure and other aspects of transport sustainability.

In this context, the ESCWA secretariat prepared the present document on developing sustainable transport in Arab countries, in which it addresses the role of transport in achieving the SDGs, and reviews the initiatives undertaken by ESCWA in that field. It also aims to inform member State representatives of United Nations current and future activities in the field of sustainable transport, including World Sustainable Transport Day, a high-level meeting in 2024, and ongoing preparations to declare the United Nations Decade for Sustainable Transport starting in 2026.

The Committee is invited to comment on the development of sustainable transport in Arab countries, and to take note of future activities in this field to enhance Arab countries' participation in them.

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## Introduction

1. Undoubtedly, transport is an essential element in all social and economic activities.<sup>1</sup> It is inconceivable to conduct human activities without transporting people or goods from one place to another. Nonetheless, various transport activities are accompanied by the emergence of numerous challenges at the economic, social and environmental levels, owing to the negative effects that these activities produce, such as air pollution, noise pollution, visual distortion, and road crashes and resulting fatalities and physical and financial damage.

2. The role of transport in sustainable development was recognized for the first time at the [Earth Summit](#) held by the United Nations in 1992, and was confirmed in its outcome document entitled [Agenda 21](#). At the [2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development](#), the role of transport was mentioned again in the outcome document – the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. This plan includes multiple pillars for sustainable transport in terms of infrastructure, public transport systems, freight delivery networks, affordability, efficiency and ease of transport, in addition to improving air quality and health in urban areas, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>2</sup>

3. The United Nations adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) pursuant to General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015. These Goals provide a general framework for development for the period up to 2030. Although transport is not considered a stand-alone Goal among the 17 SDGs, its issues directly or indirectly affect eight of the Goals, and also impact other Goals given its role in meeting most economic and social needs.<sup>3</sup>

4. In 2014, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, formed the High-level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport to provide recommendations on the role of the transport sector in promoting sustainable development, which includes eradicating poverty, promoting economic growth, and promoting efforts to combat climate change. The report issued by the Advisory Group defines sustainable transport as the provision of services and infrastructure for the mobility of people and goods – advancing economic and social development to benefit today’s and future generations – in a manner that is safe, affordable, accessible, efficient, and resilient, while minimizing carbon and other emissions and environmental impacts.<sup>4</sup>

5. The report presents a set of recommendations for developing sustainable transport, centred around the following three pillars. It also defines the role of the United Nations in supporting countries in this field:<sup>5</sup>

(a) **Policy development and implementation:** formulating decisions related to policies, strategies and investment in the transport sector, guided by the SDGs, taking into account the integration of transport modes in providing services; collaborating with international organizations to build capacity and establish institutional, legal and regulatory frameworks that support the development of sustainable transport in partnership with the public; and providing tools for monitoring and evaluating results;

(b) **Financing:** promoting diverse sources of financing and consistent financial frameworks to stimulate sustainable transport initiatives and programmes, by making optimal use of available resources and diversifying them through public-private partnerships;

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<sup>1</sup> The Geography of Transport Systems, [Chapter 3 – Transportation, economy and society](#), 2020.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations, [Sustainable transport](#).

<sup>3</sup> United Nations, [Transport for Sustainable Development: The Case of Inland Transport](#), 2015, p. 196.

<sup>4</sup> United Nations Secretary-General’s High-Level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport, [Mobilizing sustainable transport for development](#), 2016.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40–43.

(c) **Technological innovation:** focusing on the Government's pioneering role, increasing government investments in research on the transport sector, and moving towards technological solutions that enhance sustainable transport.

6. The present document reviews efforts by ESCWA and Arab countries to develop sustainable transport in a way that achieves the SDGs at the economic, social and environmental levels. It sets out recommendations aimed at developing sustainable transport within and between Arab countries, and at stimulating the participation of Arab countries in various global initiatives in the field of sustainable transport, which are being prepared for the coming period.

## I. ESCWA activities in the field of sustainable transport

7. ESCWA participated in the first [Global Sustainable Transport Conference](#), held by the United Nations in Ashgabat on 26 and 27 November 2016. Participants reiterated their commitment to enhancing the role of sustainable transport in connecting people and communities to jobs, schools and health care centres, and in delivering goods and services to rural and urban communities, thus providing equal opportunities for all and leaving no one behind.

8. ESCWA prepared a document entitled "[Transport in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: transport and the Sustainable Development Goals](#)", which was presented at the seventeenth session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics (Cairo, 23–24 January 2017). The document was based on a systems approach to demarcate the interconnected relationships and mutual influences between transport and the SDGs. It set out general principles for including the SDGs in national transport strategies in Arab countries, based on the 2030 Agenda.

9. The document informed the technical workshops aimed at strengthening national capacity in the field of strategic planning for sustainable transport, which were organized by ESCWA under the technical cooperation programme with the State of Palestine (24–25 April 2017), [Kuwait](#) (17, 18, 25 and 26 November 2020), and the [Syrian Arab Republic](#) (10, 16, 24 and 31 March 2022).

10. Following funding provided by the United Nations Development Account, between 2019 and 2021, ESCWA implemented a project addressing the interlinkages of sustainable transport with the SDGs in Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine. The project resulted in a mechanism to evaluate the sustainability of transport within the targeted countries, and a national assessment for each country showing the extent to which its indicators were compatible with the international indicators developed by the project to evaluate the sustainability of transport. A document on the project entitled "[Sustainable transport project](#)" was presented at the twenty-second session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics (Cairo, 6–7 December 2021).

11. In 2021, ESCWA prepared a report entitled [Technology and Innovation for the Development of Land Transport in Arab Countries](#), focusing on the transformative role of technology in land transport. It assessed the appropriate communications infrastructure and requirements for using technology safely, developing the legal and regulatory environment, building capacity and developing skills, stimulating innovation to develop land transport services, allocating adequate budgets, encouraging the private sector to participate in developing the transport sector, and improving governance.

12. In addition, ESCWA participated remotely in the [second United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference](#), held in Beijing from 14 to 16 October 2021. It contributed to the preparation of United Nations [interagency report](#) and concept notes for a number of working sessions at the Conference. Through its participation in a session on the role of sustainable transport in regional development, ESCWA stressed that long-term strategic planning for sustainable transport infrastructure should rely on an innovative method that went beyond traditional cost/benefit analysis, and took into account how wise investments could create future opportunities for shared regional development. The [joint statement](#) issued at the Conference included a call to

the United Nations General Assembly to consider declaring the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport 2022–2032.

13. ESCWA participated in preparing the [Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030](#), which was launched on 28 October 2021 to reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries resulting from road crashes by at least half by 2030, compared with 2021.

14. ESCWA prepared a report entitled “[Land electric mobility in the Arab region: options and opportunities](#)” as part of its initiative to analyse megatrends of change, which have significant effects at the economic, social, financial, cultural and environmental levels. The report focuses primarily on land-based electric mobility, and discusses the rapid increase in the number of electric cars, trucks, and other vehicles on the road, including light-weight transport and electric buses in public transport systems. The report presents key findings, messages, and policy recommendations for decision makers, policymakers, and other stakeholders in the Arab region, to make changes, as needed, whose success could make electric mobility a part of the region's future, and optimize the potential gains of this megatrend.

15. ESCWA also prepared a document entitled “[Use of hydrogen in the transport sector: the case of the Arab region](#)”, which was presented at the twenty-third session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics (Alexandria, Egypt, 20-21 October 2022). The document reviewed the potential uses of hydrogen in the transport sector in the Arab region, and the experiences and initiatives of some Arab countries in this field. The document also highlights the barriers to hydrogen adoption in the transport sector and the opportunities available to tackle them.

16. ESCWA and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe co-organized the [Mediterranean Conference for Raising Awareness on Adaptation of Transport Infrastructure to Climate Change and on Setting up an Effective Intervention Programme](#), so as to raise awareness among transport experts on the effective use of climate projections in assessing climate impacts on transport systems, and identifying necessary and effective adaptation measures to prevent future transport disruptions. ESCWA participated in drafting the concept note, preparing the conference programme and moderating its sessions, and coordinating the participation of representatives of Arab ministries of transport from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

17. ESCWA prepared a document entitled “[Safe, accessible, efficient and affordable transport systems as enablers of women’s economic empowerment](#)”, which was presented at the [eleventh session of the Committee on Women](#), held in Beirut on 10 and 11 October 2023. The document addresses transport from two perspectives: transport as a service that leads to women's empowerment, and transport as a sector that has the potential to increase women's employment opportunities. The document also tackles mobility barriers and gender disparities, and examines the economic, social and psychological dimensions and data gaps related to gender issues. It highlights the role of technology in reshaping the transport sector; explores smart mobility, and international and regional good practices; and concludes with practical policy recommendations aimed at increasing universal access to safe and efficient public transport.

18. With support from the United Nations Road Safety Fund, ESCWA is implementing a number of projects to improve road safety in Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia. These projects include organizing a number of national and regional workshops to build capacity in the field of road safety management and data, improve road design, and increase awareness and enforcement of laws and of regulations to improve the behaviours of drivers and road users.

19. Among the activities funded by the United Nations Road Safety Fund, ESCWA, in collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank, is establishing the Integrated Arab Integrated Road Safety Observatory ([AIRSO](#)), which aims to harmonize data collection on road crashes and using them to formulate and implement evidence-based policies, strategies and action plans to improve road safety in the Arab region in line with the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030.

20. In collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank, ESCWA is developing a project to build a geographical information system (GIS) for transport networks and facilities in the Arab region, which includes activities to enhance the capacity of transport ministries in Arab countries to use GIS to analyse the performance of transport modes, identify deficiencies in infrastructure and operations, and determine future projects to improve regional connectivity towards inclusive and sustainable development.

21. Within the framework of technical cooperation with Iraq, ESCWA is preparing to provide technical support to establish a national centre for sustainable transport studies and research within the Iraqi Ministry of Transport, guided by the experiences of developed countries in this field.

## II. Arab countries' efforts to develop sustainable transport

22. Among the recommendations adopted at the twenty-third session of the ESCWA Committee on Transport and Logistics, recommendation (c) stipulates intensify efforts to use sustainable modes of transport and promote the use of alternative energies, such as green hydrogen, in transport and logistics. Recommendation (e) stipulates examining the possibility of adopting a Safe System approach to develop and implement evidence-based policies, strategies and action plans to improve road safety and achieve the goal of the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030 on halving the number of deaths and serious injuries from road traffic accidents by 2030.<sup>6</sup>

23. To track the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee on Transport and Logistics at its twenty-third session, ESCWA collected information provided by Arab countries on recommendations (c) and (e). The results are presented in the table below.

### Measures taken by some Arab countries to encourage sustainable transport and improve road safety

Country	Measures taken to use sustainable means of transport, and develop the use of alternative energies and green hydrogen in the field of transport and logistics	Actions taken to adopt the Safe System approach to improve road safety
Bahrain	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work is underway to install solar panels in Khalifa Bin Salman Port.</li> <li>2. Ports are seeking to reach net zero emissions by 2040.</li> <li>3. The land transport sector is working to provide distinguished services through available modes of public transport, such as public transit buses, electric bicycles, and other means of transport. These modes aim to encourage the use of public transport instead of private cars, which would decrease the number of vehicles on roads and reduce resulting emissions.</li> <li>4. The land transport sector is currently conducting a study on electric buses to test them in Bahrain.</li> <li>5. The land transport sector is currently seeking to appoint a main developer to implement the first phase of the Bahrain metro project, which will run on electric power. A coalition of seven alliances has been formed, with each alliance including</li> </ol>	

<sup>6</sup> ESCWA/C.5/2022/9/Report, p. 3.

Country	Measures taken to use sustainable means of transport, and develop the use of alternative energies and green hydrogen in the field of transport and logistics	Actions taken to adopt the Safe System approach to improve road safety
	a group of companies from several countries with significant experience in designing and building the metro, to begin work after the tender is issued in 2024.	
Iraq	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The General Company for Private Transport Management is considering offering privileges to vehicle drivers who replace their vehicles operating on fossil fuels with modern vehicles operating on environmentally friendly fuels. These privileges also cover individuals wishing to establish mobile taxi companies.</li> <li>2. The General Company for Ports of Iraq is seeking to implement measures to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, by launching projects such as the mangrove tree planting on the Iraqi coasts. This is in addition to other projects under consideration based on the use of clean and renewable energy, and projects that may be proposed in the future related to the use of hybrid marine units and the use of green hydrogen in the operation of marine units.</li> <li>3. A committee to establish a national environmental centre for sustainable transport was formed in the Ministry of Transport, headed by the Director-General of Planning and Follow-up.</li> <li>4. The Ministry of Transport is collaborating with the Ministry of Environment to prepare a national strategy for environmental protection.</li> <li>5. The Ministry of Transport is preparing an environmental strategy to reduce land, sea and air pollution.</li> <li>6. The Ministry of Transport is following up on procedures for purchasing hybrid and electric cars with the General Company for Transporting Passengers and Delegations.</li> <li>7. Seminars and lectures on hybrid cars are being organized at the Ministry of Transport headquarters for Ministry employees.</li> <li>8. The General Railway Company is running daily passenger trains using multi-unit trains powered by diesel engines (DMU), whose engines are less polluting to the environment.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adopting the Safe System approach requires high coordination between the concerned municipalities and the Department of Roads and Bridges to prepare the infrastructure to transform the road network in Iraq into a road network that takes into account modern international standards in terms of numbering, planning, road signs, night signals, and all modern specifications.</li> <li>2. The General Traffic Directorate is working to develop a special protocol regarding the safety standards that must be met in cars that are allowed into the country, and that are used for public transport for citizens and travelers.</li> <li>3. The General Railway Company is continuing its efforts to operate regular crossings equipped with electric barriers.</li> <li>4. Work is underway to establish a project to monitor traffic violations using cameras and speed measuring devices (radar).</li> <li>5. Work is continuing to develop the road fines system, by directly auditing the fines issued by the system.</li> <li>6. Work has begun on a project for vehicle technical inspection centres using modern equipment.</li> <li>7. Ships have adopted a safe navigation system in their commercial maritime trips by applying international maritime law.</li> </ol>

Country	Measures taken to use sustainable means of transport, and develop the use of alternative energies and green hydrogen in the field of transport and logistics	Actions taken to adopt the Safe System approach to improve road safety
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. The electric suspended train project was included in the investment plan projects.</li> <li>10. The General Company for Land Transport is keen to renew its truck fleet and resort to alternative energies such as hydrogen, in accordance with international specifications that contribute to preserving the environment.</li> <li>11. In 2016, Iraq signed the Paris Climate Agreement under the 1992 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which is concerned with preserving the environment and protecting it from pollutants.</li> <li>12. Cabinet decision No. (13) of 2022 approves the exemption of hybrid vehicles exclusively from number plate fees.</li> <li>13. Cabinet decision No. (66) of 2022 included electric vehicles in Cabinet decision No. (216) of 2020 on their exemption from number plate fees and customs duties, similar to hybrid vehicles.</li> <li>14. The General Maritime Transport Company is applying the recommendations of the International Maritime Organization on the efficiency and quality index of the fuel used to operate the company's ships, in a manner consistent with international efforts aimed at improving the climate.</li> </ol>	
Jordan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources is collaborating with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to finalize a draft strategy for using green hydrogen.</li> <li>2. Collaboration is underway with the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources on an electric transport strategy.</li> <li>3. A provision on operating electric buses was included in the tender for the urban transport project in the cities of Irbid and Zarqa.</li> <li>4. A tender was issued for the Amman Electric Bus Project (15 buses).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Ministry of Transport, with the assistance of the National Road Safety Team, prepared a strategic plan for road safety for the 2019–2023, which aims to reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries resulting from road crashes by 20 per cent per 100,000 people within five years from 2019 to 2023 (an annual reduction rate of 4 per cent). The Ministry is currently following up on the implementation of this plan with all concerned bodies and entities, and will work to prepare a new plan for the period 2024–2029.</li> <li>2. The Jordanian Council of Ministers approved a draft law amending the traffic law of 2023 to tighten the financial and administrative penalties for road violations and crashes that cause injuries and fatalities.</li> </ol>



Country	Measures taken to use sustainable means of transport, and develop the use of alternative energies and green hydrogen in the field of transport and logistics	Actions taken to adopt the Safe System approach to improve road safety
Kuwait	<p>The transport strategy, within the fourth structural plan for Kuwait 2040, includes a number of projects, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Kuwait National Railway Network.</li> <li>• A rapid transit system in urban areas in Kuwait: rapid bus services.</li> <li>• Self-driving vehicles.</li> <li>• Smart infrastructure for using smart transport.</li> </ul> <p>Supporting fuel and vehicles that limit environmental pollution, and promoting hybrid and electric vehicles.</p> <p>The Kuwait Low Carbon Strategy 2050 on reducing emissions in the transportation sector included a number of projects, as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing the public transport network and road infrastructure.</li> <li>• Striving to gradually replace cars belonging to government institutions with electric and hybrid cars.</li> <li>• Enacting legislation on importing, operating and providing charging stations that serve electric cars.</li> <li>• Capacity-building for maintenance and repair of electric vehicles.</li> <li>• Complete transformation to e-government.</li> </ul>	<p>With regard to adopting the Safe System approach, the General Authority for Roads and Land Transport initiated the preparation of proposed guidelines for the Gulf Cooperation Council on road safety policies and procedures.</p>
Libya	<p>Libya has recently shown increasing interest in green hydrogen. The issue was raised in meetings conducted by the national oil corporation with foreign officials as part of broader discussions about renewable energy in Libya, without mentioning its use in the field of transport.</p>	<p>The Land Transport Authority submitted a proposal to establish an integrated road safety management system, guided by a <a href="#">manual</a> prepared by ESCWA. Under this proposal, an integrated system was established in line with existing institutions and agencies, after aligning the components of the system with existing institutions in Libya and comparing their role, so that existing institutions covering the proposed specializations were established, and others were created to perform the specializations assigned to them by the proposal. Among the most important of these institutions is a national road safety observatory affiliated with the Ministry of Transport. The proposal was submitted to the Minister of Transport, which approved it and referred it to the Prime Minister's Office for consideration and to take the necessary measures.</p>

Country	Measures taken to use sustainable means of transport, and develop the use of alternative energies and green hydrogen in the field of transport and logistics	Actions taken to adopt the Safe System approach to improve road safety
Oman	<p>The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology is currently working, in collaboration with various government agencies, on 18 carbon laboratory initiatives. In the field of public transport, the Ministry is implementing an initiative to designate a special lane for buses, and an initiative to determine the main and subsidiary public transport network in Greater Muscat. In the field of environmentally friendly vehicles, the Ministry launched several initiatives, including hydrogen-powered vehicles; use of biofuels; a station for the production and use of hydrogen for vehicles; regulatory specifications for the use of electric vehicles; and incentives and promotional packages for environmentally friendly vehicles.</p>	<p>The Royal Oman Police is developing a strategic plan in line with the international standards of the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030.</p> <p>Work has been done to implement the Oman Vision 2040 to give priority to social welfare by setting standards that must be applied within the framework of the vision, including, for example, reducing road crashes, injuries, and fatalities based on the Omani road design manual, the traffic law, and the urban planning manual; and activating road regulations and monitoring on Omani roads.</p>
State of Palestine	<p>The Palestinian Ministry of Transport and Communications aims to provide services and infrastructure for the mobility of people and goods in a safe, efficient, flexible and affordable manner, while reducing carbon and other emissions and environmental impacts through the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encouraging the use of hybrid and electric vehicles, and working to provide infrastructure for them, such as maintenance centres and charging stations.</li> <li>2. Conducting an environmental safety patrol that checks the percentage of gas emissions from vehicles.</li> <li>3. Encouraging sustainable transport and improving existing public transport services.</li> <li>4. Encouraging the use of electric buses in public transport.</li> <li>5. Working to develop the road network to reduce traffic congestion, and improve the level of safety and connectivity.</li> <li>6. Working to provide pedestrian spaces in the centre of urban areas.</li> </ol>	<p>The traffic engineering and safety sector comes under the Palestinian Ministry of Transport and Communications, and plays a major role in implementing procedures and measures to improve road safety and reduce road crashes.</p> <p>The Ministry seeks to adopt the Safe system approach to prepare and implement evidence-based policies, strategies and action plans to improve road safety and achieve the goal of the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030 through the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping pace with technological developments and the use of technological applications in various transport systems, according to a number of pillars set out in a report tracking the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee of Transport and Logistics at its twenty-fourth session (agenda item 6).</li> <li>• Improving existing public transport.</li> </ul>
Qatar	<p>As part of a strategy to transition to environmentally friendly vehicles, the Ministry of Transport has upgraded the specifications of diesel vehicles, including buses and trucks, to use clean Euro 5 diesel fuel.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Transport has adopted the Safe System approach, which is based on the five pillars contained in the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030, which are multimodal transport and land-use planning, safe road infrastructure, safe vehicles, safe road use, and post-crash response.</p> <p>The role of the Ministry of Transport is implementing work related to developing and</p>

Country	Measures taken to use sustainable means of transport, and develop the use of alternative energies and green hydrogen in the field of transport and logistics	Actions taken to adopt the Safe System approach to improve road safety
		<p>modernizing land transport networks, taking into account the achievement of SDGs related to transport, communications and logistics services, and implementing the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030 to reduce road crashes by 50 per cent by 2030.</p> <p>The Ministry of Transport prepared action plans to develop road safety systems and worked to implement several safety improvement measures outlined in the implementation of recommendations report submitted at the twenty-fourth session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics (agenda item 6).</p>
Somalia	<p>The Federal Government of Somalia has not yet started developing energy renewal projects that include green hydrogen. In contrast, the northern regions are developing green hydrogen. Somalia is a potential hydrogen powerhouse, as electricity is expensive owing to the cost of fossil fuels, making it an ideal country to deploy green hydrogen in the near future.</p>	<p>The Ministry of Public Works of Somalia worked on formulating a national road safety policy, and submitted it to ESCWA for submission to the United Nations Road Safety Fund, with the aim of reviewing it and selecting a road safety strategy based on strengthening road safety management, and improving the behaviours of road users. The goal of this strategy is to improve road safety and achieve the goal of the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030, which is to reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries resulting from road crashes by at least half by 2030.</p>
Syrian Arab Republic	<p>In view of the challenges facing the transport sector in rehabilitating all its facilities damaged as a result of the war and unilateral coercive sanctions, the Ministry of Transport decided to change its long-term vision to a short-term one. The new vision was formulated in line with the current conditions, as follows: “Ensuring the minimum level of work of transport institutions in the public sector and emulating the experience of successful institutions in generating revenues and building on them”. The Ministry of Transport formulated its objectives as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rehabilitating transport networks (road, rail, air, and sea) in line with balanced development and safety factors.</li> <li>• Improving access to all regions, completing connectivity with neighbouring countries, and linking production centres with export gates.</li> <li>• Connecting production areas with railways, establishing dry ports, and</li> </ul>	<p>The General Establishment for Road Transport is preparing necessary plans for central road development in accordance with the SDGs in the Syrian Arab Republic, and with general State policy. It is also coordinating with public authorities to prevent violations and encroachments on roads, monitor road crashes, and ensure road safety. It is working to manufacture, equip and install road signs of all types (indicative, warning, side markers, reflective, etc.) according to international standards, and provide the raw materials for them, including reflective paper, sheet metal, and iron ducts.</p>

Country	Measures taken to use sustainable means of transport, and develop the use of alternative energies and green hydrogen in the field of transport and logistics	Actions taken to adopt the Safe System approach to improve road safety
	maintaining and developing the readiness of existing airports and ports. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involving the private sector in the process of promoting the transport sector.</li> </ul>	
Tunisia	The Tunisian Ministry of Transport, in partnership with the World Bank, is currently working on guidance for land transport companies to gradually generalize the use of electric buses for passengers.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A project to revise the Road Journal and some of its applied texts was implemented to enhance automatic and remote surveillance, develop the current road surveillance system, and review the classification of some mobility crimes and their penalties.</li> <li>It was decided to compulsorily reduce speed to 30 km/hour and prevent overtaking near educational and training institutions and institutions of higher education and scientific research.</li> <li>As a result of communication with ESCWA to implement a project funded by the United Nations Road Safety Fund to improve motorcycle safety, the Ministry agreed that the Technical Agency for Road Transport would replace the National Chamber of Driving Education Centres in implementing the project.</li> </ol>

Source: Compiled by ESCWA.

24. The disparities are clear between the countries that sent their responses on the development of sustainable transport. Countries can be divided into three groups, as follows: a group of countries that are still in the initial stage of studying this subject, a group of countries that have made important strides in formulating executive instructions and decisions, and a group of countries that have begun implementing executive procedures in this field.

25. There is diversity in the measures that countries are considering to develop sustainable transport. These measures vary between encouraging the use of public transport, improving traffic flow in cities, enhancing fossil fuel specifications to reduce emissions, and promoting the use of vehicles operating with clean and renewable energies, such as hybrid, electric, and hydrogen vehicles.

26. Most countries' reports indicate their interest in improving road safety through various programmes and actions based on the Safe System approach, and are sometimes guided by the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030.

27. However, there is an absence of a common agreed-upon general framework among Arab countries for developing sustainable transport, and the measures taken are mostly based on individual initiatives in each country.

### **III. Expected future activities of the United Nations in the field of developing sustainable transport**

28. The United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution No. [77/286](#) of 16 May 2023, which stipulates the declaration of 26 November as World Sustainable Transport Day. In the resolution, the General Assembly

Invites all Member States, organizations of the United Nations system, international and regional organizations and civil society, including non-governmental organizations, individuals and other relevant stakeholders to mark World Sustainable Transport Day by means of education and the holding of events aimed at enhancing the knowledge of the public on sustainable transport issues, in particular enhancing intermodal transport connectivity, promoting environmentally friendly transportation, developing socially inclusive transport infrastructure and other aspects of transport sustainability.

29. The resolution also requests the President of the General Assembly to consider convening, through voluntary contributions and without duplication of effort, including activities within the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a half-day high-level meeting, in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in New York, during the seventy-eighth session of the Assembly, to promote sustainable transport cooperation in support of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the New Urban Agenda and the political declaration of the [high-level meeting on improving global road safety](#).

30. On 14 November 2023, the Second Committee of the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution [78/L.27](#) on strengthening the links between all modes of transport to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, which proclaimed the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport for the 10-year period beginning on 1 January 2026. It also calls upon the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, in collaboration with the United Nations regional commissions, within their respective mandates, to prepare an implementation plan for the Decade in consultation with member States, specialized agencies, funds, programmes and bodies of the United Nations, as well as other intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and relevant stakeholders.

31. The resolution also invites the Secretary-General to consider convening the third United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference, for ensuring the implementation of the objectives of the first and second United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conferences, and encourages member States to indicate their interest in hosting the next United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference.

#### **IV. Recommendations**

32. The following are the recommendations made to Arab countries as part of their efforts in the field of sustainable transport:

- Invite Arab countries to follow up and enhance efforts to develop sustainable transport that supports the achievement of the SDGs, and to benefit from the guidelines and technical studies published by ESCWA and other United Nations organizations in this field.
- Invite Arab countries to celebrate the World Sustainable Transport Day on 26 November of each year, through awareness-raising and organizing events aimed at strengthening public knowledge of issues related to sustainable transport, in particular enhancing the interconnectedness of multimodal transport networks, promoting environmentally friendly transport, and developing socially inclusive transport infrastructure and other aspects of transport sustainability.
- Invite Arab countries to enhance their presence in international forums related to sustainable transport, to highlight their specific experiences and disseminate lessons learned.
- Invite Arab countries to participate in the efforts that will be undertaken by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in partnership with ESCWA and the other regional commissions, to prepare an implementation plan for the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport 2026–2036, so as to highlight the needs of Arab countries in the field of sustainable transport, jointly search for appropriate solutions, and intensify efforts and provide resources to implement them.

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