



## Report

### **Twenty-third session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics Alexandria, Egypt, 20–21 October 2022**

#### Summary

The Committee on Transport and Logistics of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its twenty-third session in Alexandria, Egypt on 20–21 October 2022. The Committee discussed the issues on its agenda, in particular developments related to the transport and logistics sector and their impact on the Arab region, such as the use of hydrogen in transport and blockchain applications in logistics. The Committee was also briefed on the progress made in the implementation of activities under the ESCWA programme plan in the field of transport and logistics, the level of implementation of the recommendations of its previous session and developments related to the sector in member States. As part of the current session, the Committee held two panel discussions, the first on evidence-based policies to improve road safety in the Arab countries; and the second on preparing transport professions in the Arab region and future challenges, in cooperation with the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, which hosted the session.

At the end of its session, the Committee made a number of recommendations, some directed to the ESCWA secretariat and others to member States. The present report contains these recommendations and outlines a summary of the discussions on each agenda item of the session.

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## **Introduction**

1. The Committee on Transport and Logistics of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its twenty-third session pursuant to ESCWA resolution 213 (XIX) of 7 May 1997 concerning the establishment of a Committee on Transport within the Commission, which was endorsed by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 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 Committee.
2. The present report contains a presentation of the recommendations reached by the Committee at the end of its session and the most prominent points raised in the discussions.

### **I. Recommendations made by the Committee on Transport and Logistics at its twenty-third session**

3. At the end of its twenty-third session, the Committee thanked the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport for hosting the session and the ESCWA secretariat for organizing it. The Committee adopted a set of recommendations, some directed to ESCWA member States and others to the ESCWA secretariat.

#### **A. Recommendations to ESCWA member States**

4. The Committee on Transport and Logistics addressed the following recommendations to ESCWA member States:

(a) Welcome the progress made by the ESCWA secretariat in the implementation of activities of its programme plan in the field of transport and logistics, technical cooperation activities and recommendations of the Committee at its twenty-second session;

(b) Commend the efforts of the national focal points of the geographic information system (GIS) project for transport networks and facilities in the Arab region, and invite all member States to fill in the required data and participate in the training sessions, in particular the States that have not yet appointed national coordinators for the project;

(c) Intensify efforts to use sustainable modes of transport and promote the use of alternative energies, such as green hydrogen, in transport and logistics;

(d) Give particular attention to research and development in blockchain technology to assess the contribution of this technology to enhancing the competitiveness of the transport and logistics sector;

(e) Examine 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.

#### **B. Recommendations to the ESCWA secretariat**

5. The Committee on Transport and Logistics addressed the following recommendations to ESCWA secretariat:

(a) Continue to monitor global developments, explore new trends affecting the transport and logistics sector and study their repercussions on Arab States;

(b) Continue to provide technical support in the field of transport and logistics to interested member States, in particular through the organization of training courses on strategic transport planning, in accordance with available resources;

(c) Complete the development of the GIS project for transport networks and facilities in the Arab region in accordance with available resources, support it with rail and road connectivity plans approved by the Council of Arab Ministers of Transport for countries that have recently joined ESCWA, and prepare a comprehensive report to document the GIS project experience as a regional success story;

(d) Continue cooperation and coordination with the Islamic Development Bank to hold training courses for the national coordinators of the "GIS for Transport Networks and Facilities in the Arab Countries" project to support them in the process of filling in the data required to feed the system platform, and to build their analytical capacity using new technologies;

(e) Follow up on technological developments and build the capacity of member States to use new technologies, including artificial intelligence and blockchain, in trade and logistics to improve efficiency and competitiveness;

(f) Continue to explore available options for the use of alternative energies and fuel enhancers in transport and logistics, and monitor their impact on emission reduction;

(g) Complete the implementation of the Arab Integrated Road Safety Observatory (AIRSO) project to improve the analysis of road safety status and country-specific aspects, and harmonize and coordinate the efforts of member States to improve road safety;

(h) Cooperate with the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport and the Transport and Tourism Department of the League of Arab States to prepare transport professions in the future, taking into account the increasing use of digital technologies, automation and artificial intelligence in the sector, and propose a policy framework to support Arab countries in enabling the workforce in the public and private sectors to adapt to and keep pace with transformations.

(i) Strengthen partnerships with regional and international organizations working in the field of transport and logistics, foremost of which are the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States, the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, with a view to strengthening the capacities of Arab States in formulating and implementing policies;

(j) Identify opportunities for qualifying and training workers in the transport and logistics sector in member States, and upscale these opportunities to maximize their benefit at the regional level.

## **II. Topics of discussion**

### **A. Follow-up issues**

#### *1. Implementation of activities under the ESCWA programme plan in the field of transport and logistics, of technical cooperation activities, and of recommendations made by the Committee at its twenty-second session*

(Agenda item 4)

6. On the basis of document E/ESCWA/C.5/2022/3, the ESCWA secretariat presented the implemented recommendations of the previous session of the Committee, the activities carried out by the secretariat in the field of transport and logistics under its programme plan for 2022 and the technical cooperation activities

implemented at the request of member States. The representative of the ESCWA secretariat stated that those activities had included follow-up on the implementation of the components of the Integrated Transport System in Arab States, and the preparation of working papers and studies on the latest developments in the GIS for transport networks and facilities in the Arab region, the use of hydrogen in the transport sector, blockchain and logistics, evidence-based policies to improve road safety in the Arab countries, the preparation of transport professions in the Arab region and future challenges. The representative of the ESCWA secretariat invited member States to make interventions on the implementation of recommendations addressed to member States at the previous session.

7. During the discussion, the representative of Lebanon stated that most activities implemented by ESCWA in 2022 were focused on the land transport sector without giving due importance to maritime transport despite the important developments it had witnessed, especially in terms of supply chains, during the COVID-19 pandemic followed by the war in Ukraine, with their repercussions on food security and tensions in the region. He suggested that focus should be placed on maritime security and food security for the Arab region in the next phase. The representative of Egypt noted that the GIS project data were drawn from several ministries and requested retrieving them from the national statistical offices.

8. In response, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat thanked the representative of Lebanon for his proposal to cover some aspects of maritime transport in the coming period, noting that ESCWA activities were diverse and that, during a previous programme cycle, ESCWA had addressed maritime transport and issued a paper on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sector and on global supply chains, in cooperation with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and a second comprehensive paper on the impact of the war in Ukraine on the region's priorities, including food security. He stressed that ESCWA followed up on developments in various transport sectors. He also thanked the representative of Egypt for her intervention and stated that data collection difficulties were common to several countries, noting that the Committee would address the latest developments in the GIS for transport networks and facilities in the Arab region under the following item.

*2. Geographic information system for transport networks and facilities  
in the Arab region: latest developments  
(Agenda item 5)*

9. On the basis of document E/ESCWA/C.5/2022/4, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat presented the latest developments in the GIS project for transport networks and facilities in the Arab region, and briefed representatives of member States on the evolution of the project, its platform and capacity-building activities for national coordinators. He touched on the level of data filling, developments that occurred in the previous two years and the plan for the next phase.

10. In the course of the discussion, the representative of Egypt thanked ESCWA for its great efforts in building the GIS for the region, adding that Arab countries needed to analyse the problems of networks aimed primarily at facilitating trade, and asked about the possibility of adding pan-Arab trade and transit traffic to the system. She pointed out that Egypt had added to its road network about 10,000 km of international, domestic and transit roads, but the road network was yet to be updated in the relevant agreement sponsored by ESCWA, and thus inquired about how that addition would be reflected in the agreement.

11. The representative of Tunisia noted that the regions and territories that had built the GIS had not only collected data on all modes of transport but had supplemented it with data on interconnectivity of transport networks, focusing on modes of transport that were efficient, easy and cost-effective, with fewer environmental implications, and identified major transport routes for trade between States and the development of such trade. He added that transport was aimed at trade, but it also brought people closer and achieved prosperity to all. He called to pursue efforts in building a data bank for the transport system, and to identify major transport routes between countries members of the ESCWA Agreement on International Roads and consider them as typical

routes for the development of trade exchange between countries. He also suggested measures to facilitate trade and transactions between Arab countries, with a focus on the most efficient, cost-effective and environment-friendly modes of transport. The representative of Jordan suggested setting a timetable for filling data in the platform to avoid wasting time. The representative of Iraq suggested that a recommendation be issued by the Committee to facilitate the collection of information and data from the competent authorities. The representative of the State of Palestine requested to intensify follow-up and coordination with countries to collect data and information on the platform, and then proceed to analysis.

12. The representative of Kuwait stated that her country's coordinator had entered all information and data on the country's road network as planned, and requested adding information and data on the infrastructure, water and sanitation network. She suggested that the collection of information and data be coordinated between the GCC countries, given the joint railway network between them, which would facilitate the collection and development of data and information for trade exchange. She also suggested issuing a statistical guide on the transport network for all countries and updating it periodically, and another on road safety, similar to the road safety guide developed by Kuwait. She called to benefit from the experiences of European countries in using the GIS, and to expand the topics of interest of the Committee to include food security, water security, clean renewable energy, the impact of the war in Ukraine on the GCC countries in particular, and crisis management. The national coordinator of the GIS project for Kuwait proposed to liaise with the Ministry of Transport to coordinate the collection of information with a view to avoiding multiple sources within the same country, and requested the ESCWA secretariat to prepare a periodic report on the information collected for each country to inform the supervisors of coordinators of the completion of their tasks.

13. The representative of Lebanon noted the importance of coordination with the Transport and Tourism Department of the League of Arab States as it was working on the same topic, and called on ESCWA to analyze the platform data. He commended all the proposals of delegations, especially the one of the delegation of Kuwait on food security. The representative of Libya noted difficulties in collecting some data for the platform in a number of countries, and requested that the names of national coordinators be updated periodically as they would retire or move to another job. He suggested that the ESCWA secretariat had established a data collection mechanism to facilitate the task of national coordinators, stressing the need for coordination between ESCWA, the League of Arab States and all international and regional organizations in the field of transport and logistics. The representative of Morocco hoped that other digital projects and tools would be launched to help build a comprehensive idea of the transport sector in the region, and stressed the importance of updating the information and data on the platform. He also suggested expanding data collection to include statistical information on the possible movement of people and goods, and the level of utilization of infrastructure compared to its maximum capacity.

14. The representative of the League of Arab States proposed cooperating with ESCWA on accession and implementation of the transit agreement by Arab States, and holding workshops to develop trade facilitation tables in the trade annex. He called on ESCWA to participate, as observer, in the League of Arab States committees on transport and trade to coordinate the efforts of both organizations in these areas. The representative of the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport indicated that the Academy would be guided by the GIS project for transport networks and facilities in the Arab region to build its own system.

15. In response, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat proposed that a meeting be held at a later date with the national coordinators of the project to examine the proposals made by representatives of member States. He explained, in response to the representative of Egypt, that the system relied on the road and railway network as stated in the ESCWA Agreement on International Roads and the ESCWA Agreement on Railways, given their clear road and railway maps, nomenclature and numbering, stressing the need to learn about the road updates made in some countries. He pointed to the availability of a GIS in Saudi Arabia covering all roads at all levels, and a GIS in the Syrian Arab Republic covering the main roads, suggesting that States should build their GIS based on their road and railway network. He commended the proposal to establish a timetable

for filling in data, especially that some States were more advanced than others in that regard. He called to update the transport data in the system on an ongoing basis and to add the year associated with the information. He also recalled other features of the system, such as its capacity to determine the status and level of completion of roads.

16. The representative of the ESCWA secretariat explained that the Council of Arab Ministers of Transport was familiar with the GIS project for transport networks and facilities in the Arab region, as it had been presented at a previous meeting of the Council. He pointed out that there was an item on transit transport and an item on international transport in the country layer of the GIS that combined the technical and operational characteristics of roads. That aspect would allow analysing and comparing the current capacity with the theoretical capacity, and calculating the level of service of the road, which was one of the indicators for evaluating the road or railway network. Level of service indicators were available for airports and seaports. The GIS allowed for investigation and analysis of these issues to depict operational deficiencies. He informed participants that ESCWA was preparing a comprehensive GIS project for the region and was exploring the possibility of feeding it with data and information on food security and sanitation along with the transport system. He added that the project sustainability lied with States and national coordinators that fed the platform with data and information, stressing the need for former national coordinators to train their successors.

### *3. Developments in the transport and logistics sector in member States* (Agenda item 6)

17. Representatives of member States gave presentations on national developments in the transport and logistics sectors and progress in the implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee to member States at the conclusion of its twenty-second session (please see pages 3 and 4 of the final report of the session in document [E/ESCWA/C.5/2021/8/Report](#)).

18. The representative of Qatar stated that the Ministry of Transport had organized several training programmes and capacity-building workshops on road safety for its staff, and was following up on the implementation of its strategic plan related to developing the transport network in the country, which mainly included: preparing the comprehensive plan for land transport, preparing preliminary engineering plans for the 10,000 km transport network, and updating the Highway Design Manual and the Traffic Control Manual. He stressed that the Ministry was keen to preserve the environment by reducing harmful carbon emissions as part of a programme aimed at switching to electric vehicles by 2030, and by applying the diesel law to trucks, adding that the Ministry kept pace with developments related to the use of hydrogen energy in transport.

19. The representative of the State of Palestine stated that his Government had decided to establish the first logistics zone in the country and was determined to alleviate the suffocating traffic crisis caused by roads that were unable to accommodate the large number of vehicles, including the many illegal vehicles entering Palestinian cities. The Ministry of Transport and Communications was cooperating with ESCWA to establish traffic control and smart transport centres. It was also working on launching the National Strategic Plan for Traffic Safety in implementation of the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030. The plan addressed legislation, road safety management, control, road and traffic engineering, urban investigation, vehicle safety, traffic awareness, information and studies, technology, smart transport, rescue and road accident response.

20. The representative of Saudi Arabia recalled that the transport and logistics sector was crucial and supportive to all other sectors, hence the great importance attached to it by the Government. The sector witnessed remarkable development following the adoption of an ambitious national strategic plan for transport and logistics that sought to achieve and consolidate the position of Saudi Arabia as a global transport and logistics hub. He pointed to the objectives of the strategic plan, which included establishing and upgrading the performance of many logistics centres; improving the connectivity of local, regional and international trade and transport networks through improved integration between different modes of transport, i.e. land, rail, sea

and air transport; reducing transport accidents; laying the foundations of a safety culture; and reducing the environmental impacts of the use of means of transport.

21. The representative of Algeria reported that his country had put in place a comprehensive national strategy for the development of infrastructure related to transport, equipment, vehicles and human resources to promote regional connectivity, protect the environment, upgrade the level of services to ensure the efficiency of the sector, improve safety and rely on multimodal transport using railways instead of roads. Algeria developed an action plan for the implementation of the strategy within the framework of the National Land Development Plan and the future vision of the Euro-Mediterranean Network. The country made significant progress through the implementation of major structural projects in railways, roads, urban transport and air transport in line with international standards and provided the required services while achieving economic prosperity and environmental protection. A road safety strategy and action plan were under way.

22. The representative of Bahrain focused on the difficulties faced by Arab countries in communicating data to the United Nations or any external parties, which negatively affected indicators in international forums, despite the tireless efforts deployed by countries. He pointed out that Bahrain had formed a national information committee to follow up on the issuance of data to international organizations. He stressed the importance of providing timely information (or performance indicators) to the United Nations, ESCWA or any other regional organization to demonstrate the State's performance.

23. The representative of Libya noted that the Ministry of Transport was working to develop the transport sector despite the prevailing circumstances that prevented it from participating in international initiatives. The Ministry prepared a study for a comprehensive plan on all transport modes (sea, land and air) that fell within the outputs of the executive plan to establish a comprehensive and balanced transport system. Work was underway to update some legislation, including the law on land transport and the Law on Traffic on Public Roads. The draft Libyan law on international multimodal transport was completed and referred to the competent authorities for issuance. The Ministry sought to develop a sustainable solution to improve road safety by submitting a proposal to establish the Supreme Committee for Road Safety and its affiliated bodies with a view to developing an integrated strategy for road safety management. The Ministry was working towards Libya's accession to the International Road Transport Union.

24. The representative of Egypt reviewed the most important developments in transport and logistics. In maritime transport, a national strategy had been developed that defined the country's vision for that sector for a period of 10 years. The strategy included a plan for the integration of Egyptian ports, and an investment map. It recommended developing and regulating the sector due to the existence of multiple ports affiliated with several ministries, thus rendering the sector the main regulator of all maritime transport activities. In the same context, she referred to the completion, expansion and construction of a number of ports. In land transport, she noted that work was carried out to develop the high-speed rail network and a road network through the construction of 7,000 km of new roads. She stated that ESCWA Agreement on International Roads did not take into account the network that was under construction, hoping that the agreement on roads and transit routes would be updated. She stressed the importance of exchanging experiences among Arab countries.

25. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic supported Egypt's proposal for cooperation among Arab States through ESCWA in all projects related to all modes of transport. He recalled the devastation inflicted on the transport sector in his country, and the repercussions of unilateral measures on the international transport sector, such as the weakening of trade exchange, the slowdown in shipping, the imbalance in productivity and revenues, and other repercussions of the economic blockade imposed on the country. He noted that the Government had rehabilitated 400 km of the railway network and put the Damascus–Aleppo road into service. It also completed the digital map of railways and roads to be used within the geographic information system project, and the air navigation map. It enacted several laws related to the transport sector, including an advanced traffic law, a road classification law and a cargo transport law, and updated agreements with Arab countries to enhance cooperation in this field.



26. The representative of Morocco reviewed the latest developments in the transport and logistics sector. He pointed out that Morocco aspired in the coming period to achieve stable, inclusive and sustainable transport for economic growth. The ministry was preparing a national and regional plan for the road transport of people as part of a comprehensive reform of the sector. In the field of road safety, the Ministry was preparing a five-year action plan 2022–2026 on the Global Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030, in addition to enacting laws on the control of dangerous behaviours of road users. In the field of rail transport, the sector witnessed a significant development through the renovation of train stations and the launch of the high-speed railway project. In the field of maritime transport, the liberalization of the cargo transport sector had led to Morocco being ranked 20th in the UNCTAD's annual ranking. Morocco adopted a policy of liberalization of air transport through the Open Skies Agreement with the European Union and more liberal bilateral agreements with Arab, Asian, American and African countries. In the area of environmental protection and mitigation of carbon dioxide emissions from the air transport sector, Morocco supported the ambitious goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions for international aviation in favour of the transition to climate neutrality by 2050. With regard to logistics, considered as an important sector for the national economy, employing 54,300 workers, Morocco adopted the National Strategy for the Development of Logistics by 2030, and created the National Agency for the Development of Logistics and the Moroccan Observatory of Logistics Competitiveness, which aimed to track the performance of that sector and measure its efficiency.

## **B. New issues in the transport and logistics sectors**

### *1. Use of hydrogen in the transport sector: the case of the Arab region (Agenda item 7)*

27. On the basis of document [E/ESCWA/C.5/2022/5](#), the representative of the ESCWA secretariat discussed the use of hydrogen in the transport sector: the case of the Arab region, addressing the technical characteristics and advantages of hydrogen, as well as its potential production and use in the Arab region now and in the future. He gave an overview of the situation of greenhouse gas emissions in the Arab region and the world, the potential uses of hydrogen in the transport sector in the region, and the related barriers.

28. In the course of the discussion, the representative of the State of Palestine considered that the future of hydrogen in the transport sector was not promising because projections indicated that most vehicles would not operate on gasoline by 2050, but on electricity. The representative of Egypt stated that the Government of her country was developing the national strategy for green hydrogen, pointing to some challenges facing the use of hydrogen in the field of transport, as the production of one kg of hydrogen required nine litres of clean water, which would pose a challenge to water-poor countries. Another challenge was the need to change the production lines of the hydrogen-based vehicle industry, the transport of hydrogen and localization of the relevant industry in the Arab countries.

29. The representative of Tunisia identified other challenges facing the Arab States: energy efficiency, the transition from classical to new energy, and environmental protection. He focused on the issue of pollution caused by the transport sector and the resulting disasters, and stressed the need to develop laws and legislation to combat it. He called on ESCWA and the League of Arab States to continue to promote research in the Arab region to find an alternative to fossil energy, and leverage technology to use, produce, store and transport new energies.

30. The representative of Lebanon stressed the need to prepare for the day when the world would dispense with oil, to avoid repeating the great decline that the Arab region had been scientifically witnessing since the nineteenth century, as it could not keep pace with the industrial revolution. This preparation could take place through the development of a coping strategy based on preliminary research. He pointed out that the European Union was currently looking for alternatives to traditional energy, that research tasks were distributed among its countries, and that the current focus was on reducing the cost of producing alternative energy to dispense with oil. If superpowers decided to give up oil, the Arab states would be in trouble. He said that only two

countries, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, were interested in this topic, noting that most Arab countries enjoyed sunny days, water and rivers, or wind. He also pointed to the need to prepare for automation through research and studies.

31. The representative of Kuwait stated that her country was aware of the danger of using hydrogen and the high proportion of greenhouse gases worldwide, and that her Government was determined to begin working to gradually reduce carbon emissions to zero through the implementation of road and bridge projects based on scientific and engineering concepts that mitigated the environmental effects of vehicles and means of transport. She called for the development of a complete and comprehensive strategy for the circular carbon economy, the promotion of a culture of mass transportation using hydrogen and eliminating diesel, while encouraging the use of electric transportation. She noted that the GCC countries had set standards for the use of vehicles with electric chargers, in line with international standards for carbon reduction.

32. In response, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat thanked the representatives of member States for their important and valuable inputs, and hoped that the region would rise to the challenges related to energy and environmental transformations.

## *2. Blockchain and logistics: opportunities for the Arab region* (Agenda item 8)

33. On the basis of document [E/ESCWA/C.5/2022/6](#), the representative of the ESCWA secretariat discussed blockchain, logistics and opportunities for the Arab region. He introduced blockchain and its uses in logistics, addressed the logistics system in the Arab region, and reviewed the current state of the sector. He pointed to the efforts of some Arab countries in the field of implementing blockchain in the logistics sector, especially Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which had initiated the implementation of small pilot projects to test this technology in the transfer of digital documents, digital bills of lading and automated customs systems.

34. In the course of the discussion, the representative of Lebanon asked why this technology was referred to as blockchain and logistics. The representative of Egypt said that most of the problems between developing and developed countries were in technology transfer, capacity-building and support. She noted that the role of ESCWA was to transfer industrial and applied technology and build capacities in the field of transport, and stressed the importance of addressing climate challenges using technological solutions.

35. In response, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat explained that each set of processes in that framework was assembled, placed in a block and stored. Another set was placed in another block and attached to the first, hence the name blockchain. He stated that blockchain was one of the Distributed Ledger Technology and was deeper and more complex. He pointed to the need for developing countries to seek to acquire technology through negotiations, and to include this item in agreements with developed countries. A receiving country could outperform sending countries after two or three decades, and ESCWA could assist in this area by supporting the search for solutions and providing capacity-building.

## *3. Round-table discussion 1: evidence-based policies to improve road safety in Arab countries* (Agenda item 9)

36. Based on document [E/ESCWA/C.5/2022/7](#), the Committee held a first round-table discussion on evidence-based policies to improve road safety in Arab countries. It discussed the latest developments of road safety in the world and the Arab region, the implementation status of the activities of the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030, the requirements for the preparation and implementation of evidence-based policies to improve road safety and the interim results of the project implemented by ESCWA in this area and funded by the United Nations Road Safety Fund. At the beginning of the round-table discussion,

the representative of the ESCWA secretariat touched on the announcement by the United Nations Road Safety Fund for 2022 to finance projects to improve road safety, the requirements for developing and implementing evidence-based policies to improve road safety in Arab countries, and the AIRSO project.

37. The representative of Iraq requested further clarification of the Safe System in the recommendations, and suggested that training and awareness-raising workshops be organized on the subject. The representative of Tunisia noted that his country had developed a strategic vision for improving road safety, followed by a ten-year plan of action drawn from studies that were inspired by successful international experiences in that area. He stressed the importance of disseminating the road safety culture in Arab countries, similar to developed countries that educated their children in schools through road safety programmes. He called on ESCWA to prepare such programmes and suggest introducing them to education with a view to raising future generations on the culture of road safety.

38. The representative of the State of Palestine said that the competent ministry in his country had launched the National Road Safety Strategy 2022–2030, and that it always sought to improve in that area. Despite these efforts, there was an increase in the death toll. He requested to be briefed on new issues raised during workshops to perceive work with national coordinators and follow up on the commitment with ESCWA.

39. The representative of Algeria reviewed the situation of road safety in his country and measures implemented in that area, including the issuance of laws criminalizing all irresponsible behaviours on roads, especially those related to mass transportation, the rehabilitation of highways in sensitive areas, the development of technological systems to monitor traffic such as cameras, radars and lighting, and the intensification of awareness campaigns.

40. The representative of Egypt touched on the situation of road safety in her country. She explained the difficulty of using a single form for accidents because the authorities responsible for highways were different from those responsible for internal roads. She considered that the form should be included in the mandate of frontline staff.

41. The representative of Bahrain spoke about the situation of road safety in the Arab Gulf States. He focused on the Road Safety Week initiative, which included television and educational programmes to raise awareness of road safety, and hoped that an Arab week for road safety would be organized. He pointed out that the Arab Gulf States had issued laws and legislation on road safety, which he wished would be exchanged between countries to maximize their benefit.

42. The representative of Morocco shared part of the Moroccan experience in that area. He focused on the key issue of road education, which held an important place in Morocco's national road safety strategy, and listed some projects related to introducing road education in school curricula. He pointed out that the National Road Safety Agency in Morocco was interested in the AIRSO project, and that his country was coordinating with ESCWA through the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

43. The representative of Qatar referred to the Transportation Master Plan 2050 adopted by his country with the aim of providing an integrated and sustainable system that supported the economy and ensured the well-being of all segments of society, while preserving national identity. The country adopted multiple modern technologies such as the integrated platform for the use of big data in transport network management, which predicted the level of service; the "Connect" programme, connecting all modes of transport and allowing users to choose the most appropriate method; smart signboards and sensors to automatically monitor traffic and road accidents; smart systems for data analysis in asset management; and new devices introduced for the first time in the Middle East to determine the level of safety.

44. The representative of Iraq referred to road safety projects in his country, in particular the road safety observatory. He noted that ESCWA had faced difficulty in analysing the answers to questionnaires, partly

because of overlapping designations and powers among officials. He suggested that a database be established for each country at the relevant ministries in the form of tables, from which the national coordinator could collect the required information and send it to ESCWA. He also suggested that States should adopt electronic traffic data systems to identify the type, cause and location of accidents to facilitate data collection. He hoped for direct cooperation between the national coordinators of the Committee on Transport and Logistics and national coordinators for road safety as their work served the same goal.

45. The representative of Mauritania apologized for not sharing his country's questionnaire and not nominating national coordinators due to a communication problem. He pointed out that Mauritania had adopted a national strategy in that area, and a second five-year plan for road safety that began in 2021, noting that educational curricula had taken into account road safety concepts since 2016. The country adopted the standard form for road collision data in hard copy, which would be converted to an electronic version. He requested adding some statistical criteria such as the population size and car access ratio, given their importance in some countries.

46. The representative of Jordan stated that his country had not provided any information for the questionnaire, noting that it had a national road safety strategy and a higher committee to implement it. He supported the proposal on enhancing coordination between delegates of member States in the Committee and the national coordinators, and suggested that the meeting between the national coordinator for road safety and the delegate of the Committee be convened in each country attending the meeting in view of the integration of information, to make sure the information reached decision-makers. The national coordinator might not be involved in the strategy and might not be the decision-maker; therefore, he should rather have all required information to provide it to the Committee on Transport and Logistics.

47. The representative of Kuwait spoke about her country's initiative in developing the general framework for the preparation of road safety guides for the GCC countries. She confirmed her readiness to provide the Committee with such evidence. She emphasized that road safety must be based on 3 pillars, elaborated in 3 guides: a guide to check road safety, a guide to design roads, and a guide to assess road safety. She stressed the importance of these pillars in establishing the National Road Safety Observatory. She proposed to establish a national information centre on road safety and organize workshops for member State representatives to train them on global road safety standards to apply them in the Arab countries. With regard to the questionnaire on road safety, she requested to resolve the issue of addressing questions to non-competent parties, and suggested corresponding with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which could communicate with the various entities that provided information and data before sending them to ESCWA. She focused on the importance of raising awareness of traffic safety through advertising campaigns, and educating students through manuals, lessons and training workshops.

48. The representative of Saudi Arabia stated that the Arab countries did not lack regulations, procedures, guides, committees and awareness plans for road safety, but rather lacked implementation. If implementation was automated and non-human, the road accident rate would decrease. In Saudi Arabia, for example, the automated monitoring of traffic violations contributed to a significant reduction in accidents, and a plan to reduce deaths by 50 per cent was developed but was awaiting implementation.

49. The representative of the Sudan stated that the circumstances of her country had prevented the appointment of a national coordinator and undertook to collect the required data and appoint the coordinator. She explained that the Sudan had a higher council for road safety. The representative of Somalia noted the enormous challenges facing his country in the area of transport and logistics. He requested the ESCWA secretariat to support the Ministry of Public Works by building the capacity of the public administration in the field of transport and logistics to raise the competency of the Ministry's employees and improve their performance in the area of road safety.

*4. Round-table discussion 2: preparing transport professions in the Arab region and future challenges (in collaboration with the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport)*

(Agenda item 10)

50. As part of its session, the Committee held a second panel discussion on preparing transport professions in the Arab region and future challenges, on the basis of document E/ESCWA/C.5/2022/8.

51. The panel discussion was chaired by Mr. Ismail Abdel Ghaffar, President of the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, who referred to the enormous technological challenges and revolutions affecting our world and their repercussions on transport, especially on the maritime transport sector and its professions such as digitalization. He explained that the Academy was studying that topic across all its colleges, especially the College of Maritime Transport, the College of International Transport and Logistics, the College of Artificial Intelligence and the College of Engineering, and that it established the Regional Centre for Artificial Intelligence.

52. The representative of the ESCWA secretariat reviewed the proposed document and discussed the preparation of transport workers in the Arab region, the major trends in the sector and their future effects on those professions, and the need to develop policies that would respond to the expected transformations in the preparation of transport professions.

53. Mr. Bahjat Abou Al-Nasr, Director of the Transport and Tourism Department at the League of Arab States, gave a presentation on the effects of technological revolution on jobs in the transport sector. He explained that the machine would replace workers through automation, and that new jobs would therefore substitute others, wondering about the position of Arab countries regarding those developments and their willingness to cope with them. He focused on the rapid spread of industrial robots substituting workers, and the creation of new jobs, indicating that 65 per cent of children born in 2017 were unaware of professions in which they would work in the future because these were yet to be created. He stressed the importance of those developments in transport professions in the Arab countries in particular, given the significant contribution of the transport sector to the economy. The global transport sector attracted 6 per cent of jobs, while in the Arab countries this share was high, and the sector sometimes contributed 15 to 20 per cent of GDP. Transport also contributed 30 per cent to trade in services. A study targeting six Arab countries, namely Bahrain, Egypt, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, examined the possibility of automating existing jobs. The study found that 48 per cent of jobs could be automated in Egypt and 42 to 48 per cent in the rest of the Arab countries, against a global average of 50 per cent. The number of jobs to be replaced by the machine reached 20 million in those six countries. These developments would lead to the creation of new jobs that relied on information technology and on a high level of educational attainment. As a result, countries that kept pace with technological development would be able to benefit from these developments and create new jobs, while others would be negatively affected.

54. Ms. Sara El-Gazzar, Dean of the College of International Transport and Logistics at the Academy, gave a presentation on changes in the tasks required in the transport and logistics sector. She pointed out that the rise in investment in the sector, as a result of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and changes in the business environment, forced service providers to build partnerships with digital networks and platforms and emerging digital shipping companies to respond to the needs of consumers who became dependent on e-commerce and digital solutions that ensured fast deliveries. Outsourcing was on the rise, particularly with regard to technological applications. Carriers would rely on technology companies to create applications. They would use external expertise for shipping, operations management and the full management of the 4PL and 5PL supply chain logistics system, so that logistics service providers would operate through online platforms bringing together all customers in the value chain, from suppliers to service providers to consumers. She noted that the adoption of electronic bills of lading and electronic commerce documents had begun, and pointed to

the new role of predictive analytics in the transport and logistics sector, which dictated proactive planning of demand in light of expected fluctuations. She also pointed to big data analytics that mandated ship sensing and predictive analysis. The sector was witnessing the use of advanced robots that operated around the clock and with low energy consumption, the use of drones to deliver goods to ships and conduct monitoring and inspection, and artificial intelligence to reduce disparities within ships. The sector started using blockchain, documents and smart contracts that reduced shipping time and cost and simplified procedures and logistics, and the Internet of Things (IoT), which reduced navigation time by about 13 per cent, minimized costs by up to 50 per cent, and increased container utilization by up to 25 per cent.

55. She touched on the use of augmented reality systems, especially in warehouses, to select items of goods with special glasses, and digital integration management systems that helped improve multimodal transport processes. Those applications and others would therefore manage transport and logistics operations, thus turning their related jobs into the most in-demand jobs in the market in the next phase. Those new jobs would relate to predictive demand management based on modelling and algorithms; production planning and scheduling; contactless demand management through the use of robots and teams that would carry out logistics operations; advanced network configuration to develop the required platforms; and the provision of big data through forecasting based on correct data. She called for speeding up the development of programmes dedicated to building basic knowledge, qualifying for automation, and not investing in jobs that may not be required in the next phase.

56. Mr. Aly Fahmy, Dean of the Artificial Intelligence College at the Academy, stated that the previous presentations focused on disappearing jobs and on new jobs that would be created due to technological development. His presentation focused on how to improve existing jobs by upgrading management methods, planning, expectations and creativity. He was guided by studies from large companies (such as McKinsey and PricewaterhouseCoopers) suggesting that 95 per cent of work would be carried out through artificial intelligence in 2025. Work was underway to complete transport job descriptions to determine what artificial intelligence should know to carry out those jobs.

57. The representative of Iraq stated that he had followed studies on future professions in transport but noted that they did not include any relevant example. He gave an example on the use of unmanned systems in the field of transport, substituting the efforts of captains and fishermen, and cited the project of the train between Mecca and Medina, the port of Tangier in Morocco, and the use of cable cars in one of the Arab Maghreb countries.

58. The representative of Tunisia stressed that the main and most important element was the human mind that used technology, as human intelligence must be prepared to absorb artificial intelligence and employ it to create added value and meet needs. He considered that ESCWA and the European Union studies did not address new professions in the logistics sector. He highlighted the profession of logistician, a person who was interested in door-to-door transport and controlled all its types and components, from ordering, approval, electronic payment to the delivery of goods. The logistician also addressed problems in digital and electronic transactions, and provided that service without moving from his office. He called for giving attention to that new profession and adding it to training programmes.

59. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic requested the development of studies to link the various types of vocational education with the different transport jobs. He spoke about the reality of vocational education in his country, particularly maritime transport, where various public, vocational and maritime high schools had been established and whose graduates were rapidly absorbed by the labour market. A maritime vocational academy was established in 2018 under the Ministry of Transport, and included all navigational specialties in accordance with the international convention. Private maritime institutes were also licensed to provide maritime training. He pointed to a specialized institute for land transport to prepare the necessary cadres for the Syrian railways, and special high schools for railway training, of which graduates would enrol

in universities to specialize in railways. High schools were also preparing the professions of driving teacher, instructor and examiner.

60. The representative of the Sudan raised the problem of resistance among some workers in the sector to any technology and wondered about how to convince them of it. The representative of Saudi Arabia referred to the large investments made in the educational sector in the Kingdom, and in vocational training in the field of transport and logistics, which began to yield programmes and higher certificates in a number of Saudi universities, such as the Saudi Logistics Academy, which promoted the logistics sector by qualifying national competencies. He highlighted the Kingdom's huge investments in science, technology and artificial intelligence. The representative of Egypt noted that it was important for ministries to set regulations and conditions for these professions and to prevent arbitrary increases in the prices of goods affected by logistics.

### **C. Date and venue of the twenty-fourth session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics**

(Agenda item 11)

61. The Committee decided to hold its twenty-fourth session in October 2023 at the United Nations House in Beirut, unless a member State offered to host it.

### **D. Other matters**

(Agenda item 12)

62. The representative of the ESCWA secretariat gave a presentation evaluating previous sessions of the Committee on Transport and Logistics and reviewing the results of the questionnaires of member State representatives on the performance of the Committee for the period 2013–2021. The results showed that member State representatives provided a very positive evaluation of previous sessions overall, and that their participation in the sessions over the years had been continuous.

### **E. Recommendations made by the Committee on Transport and Logistics at its twenty-third session**

(Agenda item 13)

63. The recommendations from the discussions were presented to representatives of member States, discussed and adopted after the necessary amendments. The present report sets out the recommendations in their final form.

## **III. Organization of the Session**

### **A. Date and venue**

64. The Committee on Transport and Logistics held its twenty-third session at the headquarters of the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport in Alexandria, Egypt, on 20 and 21 October 2022.

### **B. Opening**

65. The Committee on Transport and Logistics opened its twenty-third session on 20 October 2022, at 10 a.m. Mr. Mohamed El Moctar Mohamed El Hacene, Leader of the Shared Economic Prosperity Cluster at ESCWA, delivered a speech on behalf of the ESCWA secretariat, in which he thanked the attendees for their personal participation in the meeting. After reviewing the Committee's main agenda, he drew the attention of participants to the unprecedented energy crisis triggered by the war in Ukraine, which would lead to a dramatic surge in the prices of most commodities, and portend significant consequences on various sectors, especially

the transport sector, hence the need to explore its effects on the Arab transport sector and Arab trade, which ESCWA would be working on in the coming months.

### **C. Participants**

66. Representatives from 18 ESCWA member States participated in the twenty-third session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics. Experts and representatives of several regional organizations also attended. The list of participants is set out in annex I to the present report.

### **D. Election of officers**

67. Rule 18 of the rules of procedure of ESCWA provides that: "Member States shall chair the sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on a rotating basis, in the Arabic alphabetical order employed by the United Nations. Unless the Commission decides otherwise, those bodies shall elect all their other officers". Accordingly, Somalia chaired the session after it had postponed its chairmanship at the previous session, where it was participating for the first time in the work of the Committee.

### **E. Agenda and organization of work**

68. At its first meeting, the Committee on Transport and Logistics adopted the agenda as presented in document [E/ESCWA/C.5/2022/L.1](#), after adding the presentation on the evaluation of the previous sessions of the Committee under item 12: "Other matters".

### **F. Documents**

69. Annex II to the present report contains the list of documents submitted at the twenty-third session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics.



## Annex I

### List of participants

#### A. ESCWA member States

##### Algeria

Boualem Chakib Kini  
Chief Executive Officer of the Transport  
and Logistics Community  
Ministry of Transport

##### Bahrain

Mr. Bader Hood Yousef Al-Mahmood  
Assistant Undersecretary for Ports Affairs  
Ministry of Transportation and  
Telecommunications

##### Egypt

Ms. Mona Kotb  
Head of the Central Department of Studies and  
Development  
Ministry of Transport

##### Iraq

Mr. Taleb Abdullah Bayesh  
Undersecretary for Technical Affairs  
Ministry of Transportation

Mr. Adel Noman Shihab  
Chief Senior Engineer  
Executive Secretary of the National Committee  
for Transport and Trade Facilitation  
Ministry of Transportation

Mr. Ali Ahmed Mahmoud Al-Baroudi  
Assistant Technical Director  
Chief Technical Observer  
Director of the National and Regional  
Coordination and Integration Division  
Ministry of Transportation

##### Jordan

Mr. Naeem Hassan  
Assistant Secretary-General  
Ministry of Transportation

##### Kuwait

Ms. Suha Jassim Ashkanani  
Managing Director  
Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport

Ms. Nour Alhuda Ahmed Al-Sammak  
Senior Specialist Engineer  
Head of Planning Department  
National Coordinator of Regional Roads and  
Railways Data  
Public Authority for Roads and Transportation

Mr. Mohammed Suleiman Al-Sarraf  
Civil Specialist Engineer  
Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport

##### Lebanon

Mr. Ahmad Tamer  
Director General of Land and Maritime Transport  
Ministry of Public Works and Transport

##### Libya

Mr. Ahmed Ibrahim Ahmed Abu Weden  
Head of Land Transport Authority  
Ministry of Transportation

##### Mauritania

Mr. Mohamed el Moctar Ahmed Benane  
Technical Advisor in charge of following up on  
strategies  
Ministry of Equipment and Transport

##### Morocco

Mr. Adel Bahi  
Director of Transport Strategy and Coordination  
Ministry of Transport and Logistics

##### Qatar

Mr. Hamad Issa Abdullah  
Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Land  
Transport Affairs  
Ministry of Transport

Qatar (continued)

Mr. Hamad Ali Saleh Al-Ghufrani Al-Marri  
Director of Land Transport Department  
Ministry of Transport

Saudi Arabia

Mr. Moeed Mohammed Al-Saeed  
Advisor  
Transport General Authority

Mr. Mohamed Zaid Al-Askari  
Director of International Organizations  
General Authority of Civil Aviation

Mr. Faisal Abdullah Al-Dosari  
Logistics and Special Economic Zones Specialist  
General Authority of Civil Aviation

Mr. Nader Mufarreh Al-Rashidi  
Assistant Civil Engineer  
Ministry of Transport and Logistic Services

Mr. Salman bin Issa Al-Anzi  
Legal Researcher  
Transport General Authority

Somalia

Mr. Ibrahim Sayyid Shaykh  
Head of Planning Department  
Ministry of Public Works, Reconstruction and  
Housing

State of Palestine

Mr. Ammar Yassin  
Undersecretary of the Ministry of Transport and  
Communications

Sudan

Ms. Najwa Mohamed Fadlallah Ahmed  
Assistant Director of Planning, Research and  
Studies  
Ministry of Transport

Syrian Arab Republic

Mr. Mohamad Ammar Kamal El-Deen  
Assistant Minister for Land and Maritime  
Transport  
Ministry of Transport

Tunisia

Mr. Youssef Bin Romdhane  
Chief of Cabinet of the Minister of Transport  
Ministry of Transport

Yemen

Mr. Fadl Kassem Saleh Al-Abadi  
Undersecretary of the Land Transport Sector  
Ministry of Transport

**B. International and regional organizations**

League of Arab States

Mr. Bahjat Abu Al-Nasr  
Director of the Arab Economic Integration  
Department  
Supervisor of the Transport and Tourism  
Department

Arab Academy for Science, Technology and  
Maritime Transport

Mr. Ismail Abdel Ghaffar  
President of the Academy

Mr. Moustafa Abdelkader Rashid  
Assistant President and Economic Advisor

Mr. Aly Fahmy  
Dean of the College of Artificial Intelligence

Ms. Sara Hassan El-Gazzar  
Dean of the College of International Transport  
and Logistics

## Annex II

### List of documents

Symbol	Item	Symbol
Information for participants		E/ESCWA/C.5/2022/INF.1
Provisional agenda and annotations	3	E/ESCWA/C.5/2022/L.1
Organization of work	3	E/ESCWA/C.5/2022/L.2
Implementation of activities under the ESCWA programme plan in the field of transport and logistics, of technical cooperation activities, and of recommendations made by the Committee at its twenty-second session	4	E/ESCWA/C.5/2022/3
Geographic information system for transport networks and facilities in the Arab region: latest developments	5	E/ESCWA/C.5/2022/4
Use of hydrogen in the transport sector: the case of the Arab region	7	E/ESCWA/C.5/2022/5
Blockchain and logistics: opportunities for the Arab region	8	E/ESCWA/C.5/2022/6
Round-table discussion 1: evidence-based policies to improve road safety in Arab countries	9	E/ESCWA/C.5/2022/7
Round-table discussion 2: preparing transport professions in the Arab region and future challenges	10	E/ESCWA/C.5/2022/8
List of documents		E/ESCWA/C.5/2022/INF.2