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Committee on Transport and Logistics
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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

**Implementation of activities under the ESCWA programme plan,
of technical cooperation activities, and of recommendations
made by the Committee on Transport and Logistics at its
twenty-fourth session to the ESCWA secretariat**

Summary

Since the twenty-fourth session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics, held in Cairo on 10 and 11 January 2024, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has implemented a set of activities under its programme plan in the field of transport and logistics, following requests made by member States within the framework of the technical cooperation programme, and pursuant to the recommendations made by the Committee at the end of that session. Over the same period, the ESCWA secretariat organized meetings and participated in conferences aimed at raising awareness of the importance of transport and logistics in achieving sustainable development, and at disseminating knowledge about the activities and services undertaken by ESCWA in this regard.

The present document includes a brief presentation of those activities and of key related outputs. The Committee on Transport and Logistics is invited to review the contents of the document and comment thereon.

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Introduction

1. The transport and logistics activities of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) fall under its subprogramme 3 on shared economic prosperity of its programme plan for 2024. The present document outlines the activities undertaken by the ESCWA secretariat in the field of transport and logistics since the twenty-fourth session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics, held in Cairo on 10 and 11 January 2024, including the technical cooperation activities undertaken by the ESCWA secretariat following requests from member States. The present document also sets out the Committee's recommendations to the ESCWA secretariat and related implementation procedures.
2. The Committee on Transport and Logistics is invited to review the contents of the document and comment thereon. Representatives of member States are invited to review what has been implemented at the national level in response to the recommendations made by the Committee to member States, and set out in document [E/ESCWA/C.5/2024/10/Report](#) under item 5 of the provisional agenda for the current session.

I. Activities under the ESCWA programme plan for 2024 in the field of transport and logistics

3. Since January 2024, ESCWA has prepared a series of technical papers and reports, the most prominent of which are the following.

A. Sustainable transport in the Arab region: towards a decade of action (E/ESCWA/C.5/2024/4)

4. The transport sector offers many opportunities to reduce its environmental impact and transform it into an environmentally friendly sector. With increasing consumer awareness of climate change and its impact, demand has increased from all sectors, including the transport sector, to adopt practices that protect our planet. Therefore, any effort to mitigate environmental damage in the transport sector is highly appreciated, whether it entails adopting cleaner technologies, improving fuel efficiency, or implementing sustainable practices. This document provides an overview of the status of sustainable transport in the Arab region, and sets out the sustainability requirements of the transport sector and related sectors. It also reviews the most prominent efforts and future projects for sustainable transport, and United Nations preparations to formulate a work programme for a new decade of sustainable transport for the period 2026–2035, noting that its components and vision are currently under development.

B. Transport and food security in the Arab region (E/ESCWA/C.5/2024/5)

5. This document explores the relationship between food security and the transport sector, with a particular focus on the unique vulnerabilities of the Arab region. Through a comprehensive review of the literature and case studies, it seeks to establish a framework for assessing the impact of transport on food security, and formulate recommendations to enhance the role of transport in achieving food security in the Arab region.

C. Inevitability of enhancing cybersecurity in the transport sector in the Arab region (E/ESCWA/C.5/2024/6)

6. This document highlights global and regional initiatives aimed at addressing the challenges facing Arab countries in this area, such as insufficient technological infrastructure, lack of awareness, and widening legislative gaps. It provides examples of national strategies and plans developed to enhance cybersecurity systems, so as to combat cyberthreats in various sectors in general and in the transport sector in particular. It also provides examples of proposed national plans in this area. The document concludes with proposals to enhance cybersecurity in the transport sector in the Arab region.

II. Technical cooperation activities

A. Geographic information system for transport networks and facilities in the Arab region: latest developments

7. The ESCWA secretariat held several remote training sessions for the coordinators of Algeria and Somalia in February and March 2024, respectively. A detailed explanation was provided about the project phases and their descriptive features, and about the method of filling in the data in the geographic information system (GIS) platform for transport networks in Arab countries.

8. On 26 April 2024, the ESCWA secretariat contacted the national coordinators of Qatar and the Syrian Arab Republic to hold individual coordination meetings, and to review routes that deviated in some sections from the base map in both countries. Accordingly, the national coordinators of Qatar and the Syrian Arab Republic provided ESCWA with the road map for each country after amending, correcting and aligning it with the base map.

9. The ESCWA secretariat conducted a preliminary analysis of the ratio of traffic density to street capacity on some international roads in Qatar and the Syrian Arab Republic. In the future, ESCWA seeks to conduct this type of analysis for all roads covered by the ESCWA Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq, after national coordinators have finished feeding the platform with traffic data for the whole road network.

10. ESCWA is currently working on acquiring a new programme called Arc GIS Hub Premium, which will enable separate registration for each country using a unique username and password, and will provide more advanced analysis capabilities compared with the current cloud platform (GIS Cloud).

B. Technical cooperation with the Iraqi Ministry of Transport to establish a national centre for sustainable transport

11. In the context of technical cooperation with the Iraqi Ministry of Transport, the ESCWA secretariat has supported the establishment of a national centre for sustainable transport. A [national workshop](#) was held on 30 and 31 January 2024 on the relationship between transport and sustainable development, and global experiences of sustainable transport research and study centres were presented. The institutional status in the Ministry of Transport and other ministries, government institutions and Iraqi universities in the field of studies and research related to sustainable transport were also assessed. In addition, a study tour was organized for the technical team and the ESCWA expert to the Belgian Road Safety Institute in Brussels (VIAS) from 22 to 24 May 2024, to inform them of methods for preparing terms of reference for sustainable transport study contracts, and to explore opportunities for future collaboration. A final report was provided to the Iraqi Ministry of Transport, which included the draft regulatory instrument for the establishment of a national centre for sustainable transport at the Ministry.

C. Technical cooperation in the field of data quality assessment in the transport performance indicators programme in the Syrian Arab Republic and its use for transport management and planning

12. ESCWA provided technical support in the field of data quality assessment in the transport performance indicators programme in the Syrian Arab Republic and its use in transport management and planning. ESCWA held a number of meetings to collect the necessary data, provide technical support to assess the status of transport data, and contribute to a manual to enhance its quality. The aim is to use artificial intelligence in analysing such data to increase efficiency and improve productivity and the decision-making process related to transport sector management and future planning. The final report of the technical support was presented at a consultative workshop on the theme “Enhancing data quality in the transport indicators programme: current

reality and future prospects”, held in Damascus on 22 July 2024 following collaboration between ESCWA and the Syrian Ministry of Transport.

D. Technical cooperation with the Land Transport Authority of the Libyan Ministry of Transport in the field of using modern technology to plan and manage urban mass transport networks in Libyan cities

13. ESCWA provided technical support to the Land Transport Authority of the Libyan Ministry of Transport in the field of using modern technology to plan and manage urban mass transport networks in Libyan cities. In this context, ESCWA organized a [series of technical workshops](#) to review various organizational and technological solutions that support the planning and management of urban mass transport networks, in line with the current status of urban transport in Libyan cities. These workshops discussed and enriched the final report prepared by ESCWA on the topic. The report emphasized the need to develop an integrated plan that combines all institutional, financial, technical, operational and organizational aspects, and allows for the gradual development of the network, while stressing the central importance of reorganizing the institutional environment, approving appropriate funding for urban mass transport services, and reviewing the relationship with the private sector that provides services in this area.

E. Digital transformation in railways in the Sudan

14. On 5 June 2024, ESCWA, in collaboration with the Sudan Railways Corporation, organized a workshop on the importance of digital transformation and its potential impact on national development in general, and on the railway sector in particular. The workshop presented the basic concepts of digital transformation and discussed selected cases of using digital applications to enhance the user experience, and improve the safety and efficiency of railway transport systems. The workshop also addressed the Corporation’s current plans and initiatives in the field of digital transformation, and future steps to be taken in the Sudan to prepare a road map.

F. Exploring the future of mass transport in cities

15. On 21 August 2024, ESCWA organized a remote technical workshop on the theme “Exploring the future of mass transport in cities” as part of the Arab City Leaders initiative. The workshop included a lecture entitled “Urban mass transport in Arab cities and future challenges” that addressed the current status of mass transport in Arab cities, and the foundations for developing this important facility for life in any city in a manner consistent with the requirements of inclusiveness and sustainability.

III. Organizing or participating in awareness raising activities in various transport fields

**A. Levant United Nations Joint Socioeconomic Recovery Retreat
(Amman, 6–7 March 2024)**

16. ESCWA participated in the Levant United Nations Joint Socioeconomic Recovery Retreat as part of a retreat organized by the Regional Bureau for Arab States of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on the Arab Mashreq, held in Amman on 6 and 7 March 2024. ESCWA made a presentation entitled “Transport: the unsung hero of socioeconomic recovery”, which addressed the role of the transport sector in meeting people’s daily needs, and in supply chains for securing basic commodities such as bread. The presentation also covered ESCWA activities on the transport-sustainable development nexus, and ongoing preparations for a plan to implement the United Nations Decade for Sustainable Transport 2026–2035, while noting the role of municipalities in commemorating the World Sustainable Transport Day on 26 November of each year.

B. Symposium of the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport on the future impact of negotiable shipping documents and electronic negotiable cargo records in the Arab region
(Online, 30 April 2024)

17. The ESCWA secretariat participated in a symposium organized by the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, held online on 30 April 2024, on the future impact of negotiable shipping documents and electronic negotiable cargo records in the Arab region. ESCWA made a presentation on the regional connectivity status of land transport networks between Arab countries.

C. Workshop of the Lebanese Association for Energy Management and for Environment on waste management and sustainable mobility in Lebanon
(Zouq Mkayel, Lebanon, 5 June 2024)

18. ESCWA participated in a workshop organized by the Lebanese Association for Energy Management and for Environment, in collaboration with the French Agency for Ecological Transition, on waste management and sustainable mobility in Lebanon, at the Municipal Palace in Zouq Mkayel, Lebanon, on 5 June 2024. ESCWA made a presentation on sustainable mobility and the Sustainable Development Goals. The presentation addressed the recommended actions of the United Nations Road Safety Fund regarding multimodal transport and land-use planning to improve the sustainability and safety of road transport, and the ongoing preparations for a global plan to implement the United Nations Decade of Action for Sustainable Transport, scheduled to begin in 2026. The presentation stressed the importance of collaboration between the United Nations, and governmental and non-governmental entities in commemorating the World Sustainable Transport Day on 26 November of each year.

D. Participation in the activities of the United Nations Road Safety Fund

19. ESCWA participated in the fourteenth session of the Steering Committee of the United Nations Road Safety Fund, held in Geneva on 28 June 2024.

20. ESCWA is currently implementing the following projects financed by the Road Safety Fund under the project proposal calls of previous cycles:

(a) A [project](#) to reduce road fatalities and injuries in Jordan by increasing the use of seat belts and child seats, in collaboration with the Jordanian ministries of interior and of transport, has reached its final stages:

- The project aims to develop a comprehensive regulatory framework for the use of passenger seat belts and child seats to reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries resulting from road crashes. It also aims to formulate an integrated programme to implement the amended regulatory framework, which includes a training-of-trainers course.
- Four short videos and four posters were produced for awareness campaigns on social media and billboards on roads in Amman.
- Awareness campaigns on the use of seat belts and child seats were launched on social media between August and November 2024.

(b) A [project](#) on enhancing evidence-based policies to improve road safety in the Arab region by increasing the effectiveness and reliability of data collection, processing and analysis, implemented in Lebanon, Qatar and Tunisia through self-financing:

- The project aims to provide ESCWA member States with the necessary tools and materials, capacity building and technical assistance to improve the recording of road crashes by police, which is the primary source of data and evidence needed to formulate and implement road safety policies, strategies and action plans.

- A remote consultation meeting was held on 6 February 2024 with national coordinators to review the comments of countries participating in the project. The national coordinators from Lebanon and Tunisia presented their comments and suggestions to improve the data collection form, so as to cover all possible cases related to road crashes. The form was modified in view of the national coordinators' comments.
- The data collection form is currently being converted into an electronic application that can be downloaded on tablets and mobile phones. This project supports the establishment of an Arab integrated observatory for road safety.

(c) A project to improve motorcycle safety in Tunisia, which is being rescheduled after the Tunisian Ministry of Transport agreed to assign it to the Technical Agency for Land Transport instead of the *Chambre syndicale nationale des chefs d'établissement de formation de la conduite automobile et de la sécurité routière* in Tunisia:

- The project aims to change the behaviour of motorcycle users and vulnerable population groups, including young people and women working in rural areas, to achieve a better understanding of the traffic law. In the context of this project, the legal framework will be reviewed and improved to achieve better applicability. Officials will be provided with a model action plan designed in a participatory manner to improve motorcycle safety in Tunisian cities.
- After the *Chambre syndicale nationale des chefs d'établissement de formation de la conduite automobile et de la sécurité routière* was unable to implement the project, the Tunisian Ministry of Transport was contacted, which appointed the Technical Agency for Land Transport to participate in the implementation of the project.

(d) The Safe and Inclusive Road Design project in North and West Africa, which will be implemented by ESCWA in collaboration with the International Road Federation (IRF) in Mauritania and Morocco:

- The project aims to support countries in Africa, specifically Mauritania and Morocco in reviewing their engineering design standards, manuals and guidelines to ensure that roads are designed in a manner that provides adequate levels of safety and accessibility for all road users.
- A memorandum of understanding was signed between the ESCWA secretariat and IRF to start implementing the project. The project was launched at the [IRF World Congress](#) held in Istanbul, Türkiye, on 15 October 2024.

(e) The Cities Alliance for Improving Road Safety project, co-implemented by ESCWA and led by UN-Habitat in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (project underway):

- The project aims to provide an open platform for cities to inspire, learn and exchange information, so as to find the most appropriate local solutions to solve road safety challenges while contributing to achieving climate goals.

IV. Implementation of recommendations by the Committee on Transport and Logistics at its twenty-fourth session to the ESCWA secretariat

21. At the close of its twenty-fourth session, the Committee on Transport and Logistics made the following recommendations to the ESCWA secretariat:

Recommendation (a)

Continue to monitor global developments, explore new trends affecting the transport and logistics sector and supply chains, and study their repercussions on Arab States.

Implementation

The ESCWA secretariat participated in several regional and international conferences related to the transport and logistics sector, such as meetings of the United Nations Special Envoy for Road Safety, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations working group tasked with preparing an implementation plan for the United Nations Decade for Sustainable Transport 2026–2035. It also participated in workshops held by the United Nations Development Programme and the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport, and in the Arab Mayors Academy initiative.

Recommendation (b)

Continue to provide technical support in the field of transport and logistics to interested member States, especially on the issues of sustainable transport and road safety, develop plans to connect with global and regional supply chains, and apply technology to facilitate transport and trade between Arab countries, in accordance with available resources.

Implementation

Chapter II of the present document lists the regional and national technical cooperation activities undertaken by the ESCWA secretariat in response to requests from member States. The most prominent of these activities include supporting a regional project on GIS for transport networks and facilities in the Arab region; supporting Iraq in establishing a national centre for sustainable transport linked to the Ministry of Transport; supporting the Syrian Arab Republic in enhancing data quality in the transport sector performance indicators programme; supporting Libya in exploring possible opportunities for introducing advanced technology to enhance public transport services; and supporting the Sudan in promoting digital transformation in railways. ESCWA also continues to provide support for the implementation of projects financed by the United Nations Road Safety Fund, as indicated in chapter III of the present document.

Recommendation (c)

Support member States in preparing the implementation plan for the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport 2026–2035 by developing a preliminary vision on key issues affecting the Arab region.

Implementation

A high-level meeting on sustainable transport was held in New York on 17 April 2024, as part of United Nations activities to prepare for the United Nations Decade of Action for Sustainable Transport 2026–2035. The ESCWA secretariat sent a copy of the draft concept note and meeting invitation to the focal points in ministries of transport of member States, urging participation at the highest level to address the issues of the Arab region in the field of sustainable transport.

The ESCWA secretariat also participated in a meeting on the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport (New York, 11 July 2024), on the sidelines of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. ESCWA also participated in a similar meeting at the level of the United Nations regional commissions.

Recommendation (d)

Complete the development of the geographic information system (GIS) project for transport networks and facilities in the Arab region in accordance with available resources.

Implementation

ESCWA has implemented some activities in this regard. Chapter II of the present document entitled “Technical cooperation activities” lists the measures taken by the ESCWA secretariat to complete the development of GIS for transport networks and facilities in the Arab region.

Recommendation (e)

Introduce ESCWA agreements related to the transport sector to encourage the States that have newly acceded to ESCWA to join these agreements, and explore the prospects of updating and developing them.

Implementation

ESCWA has not received any requests in this regard, and the floor is open for future requests.

Recommendation (f)

Give due consideration to the risks posed by cybersecurity breaches to the transport sector and infrastructure, and make recommendations to mitigate them, in cooperation with the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport and any other stakeholders.

Implementation

The ESCWA secretariat has prepared a document on the inevitability of enhancing cybersecurity in the transport sector in the Arab region, which is being discussed under item 8 of the provisional agenda of this session.

Recommendation (g)

Continue to provide temporary support for the AIRSO activities, and work with Morocco to finalize the hosting procedures in accordance with the standards set by ESCWA and the procedures and regulations of the United Nations.

Implementation

An online meeting was held on 18 July 2024 between the ESCWA secretariat and the Moroccan team to discuss hosting arrangements. All ESCWA activities in the field of road safety fall under the temporary support provided to the activities of this observatory, which is still under establishment.

Recommendation (h)

Promote the transfer of successful regional and global experiences in the fields of sustainable transport and road safety financing in cooperation with international and regional funding entities and relevant organizations, and support the work of the United Nations Road Safety Fund to ensure that Arab countries continue to benefit from it.

Implementation

On 5 September 2024, the ESCWA secretariat sent a letter to low- and middle-income member States, inviting them to submit a summary of the project proposed by each country, in accordance with the guidelines of the United Nations Road Safety Fund, so as to support countries in formulating project proposals that are consistent with the priorities of the Fund’s 2024 Declaration.
