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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Implementation of activities under the ESCWA programme plan and of technical cooperation activities in the field of transport and logistics

Summary

Since the twenty-third session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics, held in Alexandria (Egypt) on 20 and 21 October 2022, 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, pursuant to requests made by member States in the framework of the technical cooperation programme. 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 of 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 within its subprogramme 3 on shared economic prosperity of its programme plan for 2023. The present document outlines the activities undertaken by the ESCWA secretariat in the field of transport and logistics since the twenty-third session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics, held in Alexandria (Egypt) on 20 and 21 October 2022, including the technical cooperation activities carried out by the ESCWA secretariat following requests received from member States.

I. Activities under the ESCWA programme plan for 2023 in the field of transport and logistics

2. Since October 2022, ESCWA has prepared a series of technical papers and reports, the most prominent of which are highlighted in the following paragraphs.

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

(E/ESCWA/C.5/2023/4)

3. The paper presents the latest developments of the project on “Developing a geographic information system (GIS) for transport networks and facilities in the Arab region”, namely organizing the third physical training workshop for national project coordinators in Beirut on 21 and 22 March 2023, and the individual coordination meetings held with country coordinators between April and July 2023 to provide hands-on training to national coordinators, and discuss details related to transport networks and facilities in each country, as well as data readiness and geographic representation.

B. Logistics performance in the Arab region: overview of developments

(E/ESCWA/C.5/2023/6)

4. The paper addresses logistics efficiency in the Arab region, and performance and infrastructure development, and discusses various indicators and their impact on regional development. It also highlights congestion at ports as an important issue related to logistics efficiency.

C. Sustainable transport development in Arab countries

(E/ESCWA/C.5/2023/9)

5. The paper examines ways to develop sustainable transport in Arab countries, and reaffirms its role in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It also reviews relevant ESCWA initiatives, and current and future United Nations activities in this regard, including proclaiming World Sustainable Transport Day, planning a high-level meeting in 2024, and preparing for the proclamation of the United Nations Decade for Sustainable Transport starting in 2026.

D. Blockchains for trade facilitation: a user implementation guide for Governments

E/ESCWA/CL3.SEP/2023/Guide.1

6. ESCWA issued a comprehensive guide on the use of blockchain technology in trade facilitation, as part of the activities of the project on the use of blockchains for facilitating trade and enhancing competitiveness. The guide outlines operational steps for decision-making and needs assessment for the use of blockchain technology to facilitate trade at the national level. It also includes a detailed account of the operational steps and key elements of implementation from the technical, policy, legislative and regulatory aspects, and provides an overview of the challenges that may hinder implementation and ways to overcome them. ESCWA will issue an interactive electronic version of this guide to provide specialists and decision makers with more flexibility in its use.

E. Safe, accessible, efficient and affordable transport systems as enablers of women's economic empowerment
(E/ESCWA/C.7/2023/7(Part II))

7. ESCWA presented a document entitled "Safe, accessible, efficient and affordable transport systems as enablers of women's economic empowerment" to the eleventh session of the Committee on Women, held in Beirut on 10 and 11 October 2023. The document discusses transport from two perspectives: transport as a service leading to women's empowerment, and transport as a sector with potential to promote women's employability. The document examines barriers to women's mobility, gender disparities, the economic, social and psychological dimensions of women's empowerment, and gender data gaps. It highlights the role of technology in reshaping the transport sector, addresses 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.

F. Land electric mobility in the Arab region: options and opportunities
(E/ESCWA/OES/2022/2)

8. The ESCWA report entitled "Land electric mobility in the Arab region: options and opportunities" was prepared as part of an initiative aimed at analysing megatrends of change with significant economic, social, financial, cultural and environmental implications. The report predominantly focuses on land e-mobility, and discusses the accelerating increase in electric automobiles, trucks and other road vehicles, including micro-mobility and electric buses in public transportation systems. The topic of land e-mobility was chosen because of the greater impact it could have on the Arab region in a shorter period of time. Through research and the employment of strategic foresight around the various transformative development paths that land e-mobility could pave in Arab countries and the Arab region, the report offers key findings and messages as well as policy recommendations to Arab decision makers, policymakers and other stakeholders to make the necessary changes and successfully make e-mobility part of their future and reap the potential benefits of this megatrend.

G. Arab Vision 2045: striving to fulfil aspirations through deliberation, determination and action
(Forthcoming)

9. ESCWA, in partnership with the League of Arab States, prepared the Arab strategic vision 2045 document, which included pillars for the advancement of the Arab region and the well-being of its peoples. The vision tackled different aspects of transport, including road, rail, sea and air connectivity, and presented proposals to ensure greater integration and interdependence among Arab countries and achieve comprehensive regional development. The proposals primarily focused on strengthening rail links to achieve Arab connectivity and reduce inter-transport costs.

H. Report on the implementation of paperless and sustainable trade measures in the Arab region
(Forthcoming)

10. The report and its accompanying database provide a detailed picture of the implementation of sustainable and paperless trade measures in the Arab region, based on a survey of experts and government agencies from member States. The assessment was carried out as part of periodic global efforts to monitor and follow up on developments in trade facilitation, implemented by the United Nations regional commissions every two years since 2015.

II. Technical cooperation activities

11. Since the twenty-third session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics, ESCWA has implemented a set of technical cooperation activities, some of which were carried out at the request of member States, and

others implemented at the regional level in response to the recommendations of the Committee at the twenty-third session or at previous sessions.

A. Workshop on logistics and supply chains: best practices

(Muscat, 27–28 February 2023)

12. At the request of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology in Oman, ESCWA organized a [workshop on tools and best practices in logistics and supply chain facilitations](#), in Muscat on 27 and 28 February 2023. The workshop shed light on the tools and best practices in logistics and supply chain facilities, introduced the concepts of logistics hubs, port community systems and cold chains, and discussed the state of the logistics system in Oman as well as its current projects and development plans. Participants reviewed the experience of Morocco in logistics hubs and port community systems, and the experience of Malaysia in establishing a logistics platform and port community systems. They also addressed port community systems established by the International Port Community Systems Association, and discussed the Agreement on the International Carriage of Perishable Foodstuffs and on the Special Equipment to be used for such Carriage (ATP). The workshop concluded with a review of the opportunities available under the Oman logistics strategy 2040.

B. Regional workshop on road safety data and policies

(Beirut, 7–8 March 2023)

13. ESCWA, with the support and participation of the Islamic Development Bank, organized a [regional workshop on road safety data and policies](#), in Beirut on 7 and 8 March 2023. The workshop was organized within the framework of the project on “Strengthening evidence-based interventions for road safety in the Arab region through effective and reliable data recording, processing and analysis”, funded by the United Nations Road Safety Fund.

14. The workshop was attended by national coordinators of road safety data and policies in the Arab countries contributing to the project on “the establishment of the Arab Integrated Road Safety Observatory (AIRSO)”. The participants reviewed the results of surveys conducted by ESCWA on the status of road safety management and data in the Arab countries, and the prototype of the proposed unified electronic form for collecting road crashes data in these countries. ESCWA took note of the comments and suggestions of the national coordinators on the draft form with a view to developing it in the form of a smart application via smartphones for the electronic recording of data and information related to road crashes records.

**C. Third national workshop on awareness and enforcement campaigns
for road safety in Jordan**

(Amman, 16 March 2023)

15. Under the patronage of H.E. Mr. Mazen Abdullah Al-Faraya, Minister of Interior of Jordan, ESCWA held the [third national workshop on awareness and enforcement campaigns for road safety in Jordan](#), in Amman on 16 March 2023, in the framework of the activities of the project on “reducing road deaths and injuries in Jordan through increasing restraint use”.

16. The workshop was dedicated to discussing and approving awareness and enforcement campaigns to increase the use of seat belts and child restraints. Senior stakeholders from the Ministry of Interior, the House of Representatives, the Public Security Directorate and its departments, the Ministry of Transport, the National Project Team, the World Bank, and other government, private sector and non-governmental associations in the field of road safety participated in the workshop.

17. The workshop reviewed the remaining activities of the project and ways to involve various road safety stakeholders in their implementation. It was an opportunity for stakeholders to exchange experiences to

develop a successful implementation plan that achieves the project's main objective of reducing road deaths and injuries in Jordan by increasing the use of seat belts and child restraints.

D. Third GIS training workshop

(Beirut, 21–22 March 2023)

18. With the support and participation of the Islamic Development Bank, and in the framework of a series of training workshops on the use of GIS for the Integrated Transport System in the Arab States, ESCWA held the [third GIS training workshop](#) on 21 and 22 March 2023, at ESCWA headquarters in Beirut.

19. The workshop was attended by 17 national coordinators from 11 Arab countries, namely Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Somalia, the Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic. National coordinators from Bahrain, the State of Palestine and Saudi Arabia also participated remotely.

20. The workshop aimed at explaining the project stages, and at providing training to coordinators on visualizing and analysing data to assist in decision-making in relation to the development of transport networks and facilities at the national and regional levels. Difficulties and challenges were also discussed, and a roadmap was agreed upon to overcome those challenges and follow up on the implementation of the project in order to connect transport networks and support regional integration in the Arab region.

E. Training of trainers workshop on the enforcement of laws and regulations on the use of seat belts and child restraints

(Amman, 26, 27 and 29 April 2023)

21. In the framework of the activities of the project on “reducing road deaths and injuries in Jordan through increasing restraint use”, ESCWA organized a [training of trainers workshop on the enforcement of laws and regulations to increase the use of seat belts and child restraints](#), in Amman on 26, 27 and 29 April 2023.

22. The training aimed at explaining the proposed amendments to the legislation on the use of seat belts and child restraints, and at enabling trainers to implement this legislation on the ground. A total of 20 officers from the Jordan Traffic Institute and other departments of the Public Security Directorate in Jordan participated in the training. Following the theoretical training, a field campaign was carried out to enforce the law and regulations related to the use of seat belts and child restraints, in accordance with the principles and guidelines covered during the training.

F. Individual coordination meetings with national coordinators of the GIS project for transport networks and facilities in the Arab region

(9 May 2023–4 July 2023)

23. Pursuant to the recommendations of the ESCWA training workshop held on 21 and 22 March 2023, ESCWA organized virtual coordination meetings with the national coordinators of each country to review and audit the data entered into the system. National coordinators from Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, the State of Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia participated in the meetings. Discussions were held on the observations of ESCWA in relation to the data uploaded into the system by national coordinators. Errors, if any, were corrected, and necessary clarifications were provided to national coordinators to enable them to complete data uploading and processing in coordination with the concerned authorities, where necessary.

G. Seminar on blockchains for trade facilitation in Lebanon

(Beirut, 1 August 2023)

24. ESCWA organized a seminar on “[Blockchains for trade facilitation in Lebanon](#)” on 1 August 2023. The seminar aimed at increasing the knowledge of government officials and other participants about blockchain

technology, its benefits, challenges, governance and practical applications in trade facilitation; and to identify areas of trade facilitation in Lebanon, where a pilot project using this technology could contribute to facilitating trade in the country and increasing its competitiveness.

III. Organizing or participating in awareness-raising activities in different areas of transport

A. Workshop of the League of Arab States to discuss preparing an analytical study on the status of the Arab seaports sector (Cairo, 30 April–1 May 2023)

25. ESCWA participated in this workshop remotely and gave a presentation on its efforts and initiatives in the framework of joint Arab action in maritime transport and seaports. The presentation addressed the memorandum of understanding prepared by ESCWA in 2005 on maritime transport cooperation in Arab countries, as well as the most important papers and technical studies prepared by ESCWA and the expert meetings organized in the field of maritime transport development, benefiting from the public private partnership. The presentation concluded with a consolidated summary of ESCWA recommendations related to the role of Arab Governments in developing ports and facilitating maritime transport. The study team mandated by the League of Arab States and the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport was invited to benefit from the studies of ESCWA and the rest of the United Nations organizations to complete the analytical study on the status of the Arab seaports sector.

B. “Mediterranean conference for raising awareness on adaptation of transport infrastructure to climate change and on setting up an effective intervention programme” (Marseille, France, 15 and 16 May 2023)

26. ESCWA collaborated with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in organizing and holding the “[Mediterranean conference for raising awareness on adaptation of transport infrastructure to climate change and on setting up an effective intervention programme](#)”, with the aim of sensitizing transport experts on the effective use of climate projections to assess climate impacts on transport systems, and to identify necessary and effective adaptation measures to prevent future transport disruptions. ESCWA participated in preparing the concept note and conference programme, as well as in moderating the sessions and coordinating the participation of representatives of Arab ministries of transport from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia.

C. Regional dialogue session to “Rethink Mobility” (Beirut and online, 18 May 2023)

27. Within the framework of the 7th United Nations Global Road Safety Week (15–21 May 2023), ESCWA organized a [regional dialogue session entitled “Rethink Mobility”](#), in Beirut and online, on 18 May 2023, with the participation of representatives from the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the World Bank, national focal points of the ESCWA project on the Arab Integrated Road Safety Observatory (AIRSO), and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) concerned with road safety and sustainable transport in Lebanon. The session focused on what was needed to achieve sustainable transport, in particular the need to shift to walking, cycling and the use of public transport, and considered road safety a prerequisite and an outcome of this shift.

28. ESCWA presented the priority areas of the global plan for the second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030, and addressed the recommended actions on multimodal transport and land-use planning. Representatives of international organizations discussed their efforts to improve sustainable transport and road safety in Jordan and Lebanon. Representatives of relevant NGOs addressed the difficulties they faced in their efforts to enhance road safety in Lebanon.

D. Asia-Pacific Regional Forum on Sustainable Maritime Connectivity
(Bangkok, Thailand, 30–31 May 2023)

29. ESCWA participated remotely in the [regional forum organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on sustainable maritime connectivity](#). ESCWA gave a presentation on its [regional strategies to facilitate port development and operation](#), discussing the components of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab States. ESCWA also provided an overview of its initiatives in the field of regional connectivity, while focusing on its recent activities in maritime transport and the expected impact of automation and artificial intelligence on maritime transport functions. The presentation concluded with the relevant policy guidelines proposed by ESCWA to Arab Governments.

E. Workshop of the League of Arab States to discuss the study of an Arab mechanism to support shipbuilding, maintenance and repair and establish a database
(Ismailia, Egypt, 7–8 August 2023)

30. ESCWA participated remotely in the [workshop of the League of Arab States to discuss the study of an Arab mechanism to support shipbuilding, maintenance and repair and establish a database](#). ESCWA gave a presentation on its vision for cooperation in shipbuilding, maintenance and repair. The presentation addressed the memorandum of understanding on maritime transport cooperation in Arab countries, and the operative articles on national maritime fleets and cooperation in the field of shipbuilding, maintenance and repair. Some Arab experiences in shipbuilding, maintenance and repair were reviewed based on information derived from artificial intelligence applications. The presentation concluded by proposing the establishment of an alliance or consortium that fosters coordination and integration between the activities of shipyards that build, maintain and repair ships in Arab countries, and the provision of information about those activities to the concerned authorities and companies in this field.

F. Workshop on multimodal transport corridor management
(Online, 4 September 2023)

31. ESCWA participated remotely in a [workshop on multimodal transport corridor management](#), organized by UNECE as part of the [thirty-sixth session of the Working Party on Transport Trends and Economics](#), held on 4 September 2023. ESCWA gave a presentation on [multimodal transport corridors in the Arab region](#), in which it reviewed the components of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab States, and the agreements and memoranda of understanding concluded by ESCWA and the League of Arab States in the field of multimodal land connectivity between Arab States. The presentation tackled the status of road connectivity, mobility challenges at border crossings, rail connectivity, and the challenge of missing links, which constitute about 60 per cent of the total length of the railway network between Arab countries. Some regional and national experiences in the development of multimodal transport corridors in Arab countries were reviewed. The presentation concluded with an analysis of the opportunities available in this field and the administrative, technical and financing challenges and difficulties facing the development and management of multimodal transport corridors in the Arab region.

G. Supporting the activities of the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety

32. ESCWA participated in the consultative meeting held by the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Road Safety in Geneva on 9 October 2023. It delivered an intervention on the important role of the special envoy in mobilizing the efforts of government, private sector and non-governmental leaders on the issue of road safety, and the need to strengthen the role of international cooperation to create sustainable national capacities for road safety management in low- and middle-income countries, and to identify opportunities at the national level for the sustainable financing of strategies and action plans aimed at improving road safety.

33. ESCWA also contributed to the review of the Arabic content of the [global campaign launched by the Special Envoy for Road Safety on 20 September 2023](#) to raise awareness on the main causes of road fatalities among young people between the ages of 5 and 29.

34. ESCWA provided technical support in preparation for the [visit of the United Nations Special Envoy for Road Safety to Saudi Arabia on 24 October 2023](#), and the planned visit to Lebanon on 26 October 2023 (the planned visit to Lebanon was postponed due to new circumstances after 7 October 2023).

H. Participating in the activities of the United Nations Road Safety Fund

35. ESCWA participated, physically and remotely, in the [meetings of the steering committee of the United Nations Road Safety Fund](#) on 2 December 2022 and 30 May 2023.

36. ESCWA participated in the preparation for the 2023 fund call to solicit project proposals to improve global road safety. The formulation and submission of project proposals was coordinated by the countries of the ESCWA region. On 16 February, the call was sent to the relevant ESCWA focal ministries in the Arab countries, with a request to nominate national coordinators for communication in this regard. A first orientation meeting was organized for national coordinators on 22 February 2023. After receiving project concept notes on 1 March 2023, intensive meetings were organized with national coordinators from the countries that had sent the concept notes between 1 and 30 March 2023 to further develop them and assist in the formulation of project proposals. On 30 March 2023, project proposals received from Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Somalia were submitted. After the review of the Independent Expert Group of the fund and the decision of the steering committee at its meeting on 30 May 2023, no project from the ESCWA region was selected for funding during the 2023 cycle.

37. ESCWA is currently following up on the implementation of the following projects financed by the fund under the calls for project proposals in previous cycles:

- The project “Reducing road deaths and injuries in Jordan through increasing the use of safety belts and child restraints” (the project is in its final stages).
- The project “Strengthening evidence-based interventions for road safety in the Arab region through effective and reliable data recording, processing and analysis”, which is being implemented in Lebanon, Tunisia and Qatar (self-funded).
- The project “Transformative actions for safe motorcycles in Tunisia”, (the project is being rescheduled after the approval of the Tunisian Ministry of Transport to entrust the Technical Agency for Land Transport with the completion of the project instead of the National Union Chamber of Driving Schools in Tunisia).
- The project “Safe and inclusive road design”, which will be led by ESCWA in cooperation with the International Road Federation (IRF) in Mauritania, Morocco and Senegal (the project is being launched in cooperation with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa).
- The project “Alliance of Cities for Road Safety”, which is being co-implemented by ESCWA under the leadership of UN-Habitat and in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (the project is being launched).
