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**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia**

## **REPORT**

### **SIXTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT 22-24 MARCH 2005, BEIRUT**

#### **Summary**

The sixth session of the Committee on Transport was held in Beirut from 22 to 24 March 2005. Consideration was given to the items included on the session agenda. This report contains a brief account of the discussions that were held on each item and the recommendations that were made by the session. The report was adopted by the Committee at its final meeting, which took place on 24 March 2005.

The focus of the discussions was on follow-up to the implementation of the recommendations of the fifth session of the Committee; progress made in implementing transport-related activities in the period between the fifth and sixth sessions of the Committee, including regular programme budget activities and consultancy services and technical cooperation; activities funded by extra-budgetary resources; the review of the programme of work for the biennium 2004-2005; and the proposed strategic framework for the programme of work for the biennium 2006-2007 in the field of transport.

The Committee recommended the adoption of three draft resolutions concerning the selection of the routes to be given priority in the implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq; regional cooperation with respect to road traffic safety; and the memorandum of understanding concerning cooperation in the field of maritime transport in the Arab Mashreq. The Committee also made a number of other recommendations, some of which were general, while others made specific reference to various issues covered by the agenda items.

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## Introduction

1. The sixth session of the Committee on Transport was held pursuant to Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) resolution 213 (XIX) of 7 May 1997 concerning the establishment of a committee on transport in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, which was adopted by the Economic and Social Council by 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 ESCWA Committee on Transport.

### I. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SIXTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT

#### A. DRAFT RESOLUTIONS SUBMITTED TO ESCWA FOR ADOPTION

2. The Committee recommended that ESCWA should adopt the following draft resolutions:

#### **First draft resolution: selection of the routes to be given priority in implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq**

*The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,*

*Referring* to the adoption of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq on 10 May 2001 by means of resolution 235 (XXI) dated 11 May 2001 and the entry into force of the Agreement on 19 October 2003,

*Referring also* to the action plan for the implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq that was adopted by the Committee on Transport at its fifth session, held from 2 to 4 March 2004,<sup>1</sup>

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

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

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

1. *Adopts* Routes M40 and M45<sup>2</sup> as priority routes, for the reasons given in the annex to this resolution;

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> ESCWA, Action plan for implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq, 30 March 2004, E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/1/Rev.1.

<sup>2</sup> ESCWA, *Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq*, 18 May 2001, E/ESCWA/TRANS/2001/3.

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

#### Annex

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

In order to activate implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq and, in particular, the steps that must be taken to that end, which were detailed in the action plan for the implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq, namely:

- (a) Public information aspects;
- (b) The international road sign;
- (c) Identification of routes and their characteristics;
- (d) Route signs and signals;
- (e) Technical specifications of routes.

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

- (a) The routes should pass through the greatest number of member countries, with special consideration being given to those countries that have ratified or signed the Agreement;
- (b) The route should provide a linkage with other regions: the beginning or end of the route should be outside the ESCWA region;
- (c) No parts of the route should be in need of major works to complete or upgrade it that would involve a great deal of time or effort;
- (d) Work should already have begun on installing the international road signs, raising standards and changing signals to comply with Agreement requirements;
- (e) One of the routes should be oriented north-south and the other east-west.

The following two routes met the above-mentioned requirements:

#### *The north-south route*

M45 Syrian Arab Republic - Jordan - Saudi Arabia - Yemen (3,713 kilometres)  
Bab Al Hawa (Syrian Arab Republic - Turkey) - Aleppo - Homs - Damascus - Nasib (Syrian Arab Republic/Jordan) - Jaber (Jordan/Syrian Arab Republic) - Amman - Ma'an - Al Mudawara (Jordan/Saudi Arabia) - Halat Ammar (Saudi Arabia/Jordan) - Tabuk - Qalibah-Medina - Mecca - Abha - Elb (Saudi Arabia/Yemen) - Baqim (Yemen/Saudi Arabia) - Sana'a - Ta'izz.

#### *The east-west route*

M40 Iraq - Jordan - Occupied Palestinian Territory - Mediterranean Southern Coast (2,228 kilometres)  
Munthareya (Iraq/Iran) - Khanaqin - Baghdad - Ramadi - Al Rutbah - Tarabil (Iraq/Jordan) - Karamah (Jordan/Iraq) - Al Azraq - Amman - King Hussein Bridge - (Jordan/Occupied Palestinian Territory) - Jerusalem - Gaza - Rafah (Egypt/Occupied Palestinian Territory) - Arish - Kantara Bridge - Port Said - Alexandria - Salum (Egypt/Libyan Arab Jamahiriya).

**Second draft resolution: adoption of the memorandum of understanding  
on maritime transport cooperation in the Arab Mashreq**

*The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,*

*Convinced* of the need to facilitate transport and trade in order to achieve regional integration,

*Emphasizing* the importance of strengthening cooperation and coordination in the field of maritime transport,

*Referring* to the Declaration on the Adoption of an Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq which was issued by the first session of the Committee on Transport, held on 9 and 10 February 1999, and adopted by ESCWA at its twentieth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 May 1999,

*Referring also* to the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq<sup>3</sup> which was adopted by resolution 235 (XI) of 11 May 2001, and to the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq<sup>4</sup> which was adopted by the Commission by its resolution 243 (XXII) of 17 April 2003,

*Noting* that the fifth session of the Committee on Transport adopted the amended draft of the memorandum of understanding on cooperation in the field of maritime transport in the Arab Mashreq,

1. *Decides to adopt* the Memorandum of Understanding on Maritime Transport Cooperation in the Arab Mashreq;
2. *Urges* member countries to sign and ratify the Memorandum of Understanding as soon as possible;
3. *Requests* the ESCWA secretariat to follow-up on the implementation of this Memorandum and report to the twenty-fourth session of the Commission.

**Third draft resolution: regional cooperation in the field of road traffic safety**

*The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,*

*Recalling* United Nations General Assembly resolution 58/9 dated 19 November 2003 concerning the global road safety crisis,

*Recognizing* that the lack of safety on the roads is responsible for a huge number of dead and injured persons at the global level, and that this problem is ever-increasing in the developing countries, bringing social challenges and direct economic costs,

*Affirming* the importance of the endeavours exerted by the relevant United Nations agencies, particularly at the regional level, with a view to improving road safety,

*Recognizing* the importance of the agreement concluded between the United Nations regional commissions and the World Health Organization at the Second United Nations Road Safety Collaboration meeting held on 16 and 17 March 2005, respecting the five priorities for action in the field of road safety, namely, safety belts; helmets for motor cyclists; reduced speed; not drinking while under the influence of alcohol; and good road infrastructure,

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<sup>3</sup> E/ESCWA/TRANS/2001/3.

<sup>4</sup> ESCWA, *Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq*, 5 March 2003, E/ESCWA/TRANS/2002/1/Rev.2.

*Believing* that it is important to carry out technical studies on road traffic safety issues, in the light of which priorities can be established for work in that field in the ESCWA region, which may differ from the priorities set forth above,

*Welcoming* the alacrity with which the Executive Secretary of ESCWA responded to requests for road traffic safety in member countries to be improved, by adding new activities to the Commission's programme of work for the 2004-2005 biennium and proposing related activities in the programme of work for the 2006-2007 biennium,

1. *Calls upon* member countries to support the resolution that will be presented to the sixtieth session of the General Assembly;

2. *Advises* member countries to accord the issue of road traffic safety the importance it deserves in their development programmes, including by increasing awareness of traffic safety measures through the audio-visual media, educational curriculums, especially for children and youth, cooperation with relevant regional and international institutions and allocating the budgets necessary to promote the needs of road traffic safety;

3. *Urges* member countries to participate in the activities that ESCWA will undertake, including the preparation of studies, regional workshops on good traffic safety practices and preparations for the international traffic week that is scheduled for 2007;

4. *Expresses* its appreciation to the ESCWA secretariat for the speed of its response to the need to improve road safety in member countries;

5. *Hopes* that member countries will provide the material and moral support to the ESCWA secretariat that will enable it to implement activities in support of national efforts to improve road traffic safety;

6. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the implementation of this resolution to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session.

#### B. OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The recommendations made by the Committee focused on the following issues:

1. *The Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq*

4. In this regard, the Committee made the following recommendations:

(a) The draft resolution, concerning selection of the routes to be given priority in the implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq, that it is planned to present at the twenty-third ESCWA session, should be adopted in the form in which it appears in section A above of the recommendations made by the Committee at its sixth session;

(b) Member countries should erect international road signs at all entries to and exits from international roads, indicating the countries through which the route passes. The *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices* recently produced by the States of the Gulf Cooperation Council may be used for that purpose;

(c) Member countries are urged to transmit to ESCWA forthwith tables 1 and 2 of the action plan for implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq, which relate to the technical specifications to be met on the routes covered by the Agreement and the timetable for implementation in each country, to be completed by 30 December 2005 at the latest;

(d) Those countries, namely, Kuwait and Oman, which have not yet signed the Agreement are advised to do so forthwith, while those, namely, Bahrain, Iraq, Palestine and United Arab Emirates, which have signed but not yet ratified the Agreement, should promptly complete ratification procedures.

*2. The Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq*

5. On this matter, the Committee made the following two recommendations:

(a) Those countries, namely, Iraq, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, which have not yet signed the Agreement, are advised to do so forthwith, while those, namely, Bahrain, Kuwait, Palestine, United Arab Emirates and Yemen, which have signed but not yet ratified the Agreement, should promptly complete the ratification procedures;

(b) The ESCWA secretariat should develop an action plan for implementation of the Agreement.

*3. National committees for the facilitation of transport and trade in the countries of the ESCWA region*

6. In this regard, the following recommendations were made by the Committee:

(a) The ESCWA secretariat should address member countries regarding the acceleration of the measures necessary for the establishment and activation of such committees. In that respect, the experience of Egypt may be useful;

(b) National committees for the facilitation of transport and trade should provide ESCWA with detailed reports on their activities;

(c) In establishing and activating those committees, member countries should make use of the technical support which ESCWA can provide them.

*4. Memorandum of understanding concerning cooperation in the field of maritime transport in the Arab Mashreq*

7. The Committee made the following recommendations on this issue:

(a) It should be agreed to call the draft “memorandum of understanding”, rather than “agreement”;

(b) The memorandum of understanding should be adopted in the final form in which it appears in E/ESCWA/23/6 and will be submitted to the twenty-third ESCWA session for adoption;

(c) The memorandum should be available for signature by member countries at the twenty-third ESCWA session;

(d) ESCWA should present the memorandum to the Council of Arab Ministers of Transport for adoption and signature by Arab countries non-members of ESCWA, under the aegis of the League of Arab States.

*5. Regional road transport information system*

8. On this issue, the Committee made the following recommendation:

Member countries that have not yet done so should, by 30 June 2005 at the latest, provide the data on road transport requested on the CD.

## 6. Road safety

9. In this regard, the Committee made the following recommendation:

The draft resolution that will be presented to the twenty-third ESCWA session should be approved once certain amendments have been made to the text.

### *7. The amended strategic framework and proposed programme of work for the biennium 2006-2007 in the field of transport*

10. With respect to this issue, the Committee made the following recommendation:

The amended strategic framework and proposed programme of work for the biennium 2006-2007 in the field of transport should be adopted in the form in which they appear in E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/4.

## 8. General recommendations

11. The Committee made the following general recommendations:

(a) The two annual follow-up reports concerning implementation of recommendations made by the Committee on Transport at its sixth session, and the most significant transport-related developments in 2005, respectively should follow the models attached to this report as annexes III and IV;

(b) Member countries should provide ESCWA with the two above-mentioned annual reports by no later than the end of September 2005.

## II. ISSUES CONSIDERED

### A. GENERAL DEBATE ON TRANSPORT ISSUES IN THE ARAB MASHREQ: SELECTION OF THE ROUTES TO BE GIVEN PRIORITY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL ROADS IN THE ARAB MASHREQ, WITH A VIEW TO STRENGTHENING REGIONAL INTEGRATION (Agenda item 5)

12. In accordance with what was agreed at the fifth session of the Committee on Transport, the above debate was included on the agenda, and participants agreed to focus on the selection of the routes to be given priority in the implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq.

13. An ESCWA representative gave a detailed presentation to the Committee on the current status of implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq, and outlined the criteria proposed for selecting the routes to be given priority in the implementation of the Agreement. He also presented a draft resolution concerning the selection on the basis of those criteria of two major routes, namely, M40 (Iraq-Jordan-Occupied Palestinian Territory-Mediterranean Southern Coast) and M45 (Syrian Arab Republic-Jordan-Saudi Arabia-Yemen).

14. Some participants expressed the desire that a larger number of roads should be adopted, in order to include all the ESCWA member countries, rather than only seven of those countries. Given that those two routes largely met the criteria proposed, it was agreed that they should be selected for the first stage of implementation. It was also agreed that the draft resolution concerning the adoption of the priority routes should be adopted once it had been amended and assumed the form in which it appears in section A of this report.



B. REVIEW OF TRANSPORT-RELATED ACTION TAKEN SINCE THE FIFTH SESSION  
OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT  
(Agenda item 6)

15. The Committee considered this item on the basis of document E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/3, which comprises two parts. The first part deals with follow-up of implementation of the recommendations made at the fifth session of the Committee on Transport, while the second reviews progress made in implementing transport-related activities between the fifth and sixth sessions of the Committee.

1. *Follow-up of implementation of the recommendations of the fifth session  
of the Committee on Transport*

16. The Committee considered this item on the basis of document E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/3(Part I), which briefly reviews the progress made in implementing the recommendations made at the fifth session of the Committee on Transport, and the activities relevant to the main issues considered. Proposals were put forward in respect of each of those issues.

(a) *The Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq*

17. The Committee reviewed the progress that had been made in following up ratification and entry into force of the Agreement and the action taken to begin its implementation, for information and follow-up.

18. Participating delegations considered Agreement-related developments in each country: some countries have taken many steps towards implementing the Agreement. It was agreed that countries should provide ESCWA with a written report on those achievements.

19. The ESCWA representative urged those countries that have not yet signed the Agreement to accelerate the relevant procedures. Similarly, countries that have signed but not ratified it should complete ratification procedures. He commended those countries that had taken steps to apply the action plan for implementation of the Agreement and urged them to continue their endeavours and implement the Agreement in full.

(b) *The Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq*

20. The Committee reviewed the latest developments in respect of this Agreement, which by 31 December 2004 been signed by nine countries and ratified by four, namely, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syrian Arab Republic, as a consequence of which the Agreement will enter into force on 23 May 2005.

21. Participating delegations considered Agreement-related developments: some explained that their countries are making progress towards accession and ratification, in preparation for beginning implementation.

22. The ESCWA representative asked those countries that have not yet signed the Agreement to accelerate accession procedures, and requested those that have signed but not yet ratified it to rapidly complete ratification procedures.

(c) *National committees for the facilitation of transport and trade in the countries  
of the ESCWA region*

23. The Committee reviewed the progress made in establishing national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade in ESCWA member countries and activating such committees as already exist, together with the technical support provided to member countries by ESCWA in that field. At that date, committees had been established in Egypt (2004), Jordan (2003), Syrian Arab Republic (2003), Oman (2003), Palestine (2003) and Yemen (1999).

24. Heads of delegation presented a review of the steps that had been taken by each country in respect of the establishment and activation of those committees.

25. Some participants expressed the view that it was important to coordinate the work of the national committees because the issue of the facilitation of transport and trade was a regional and international issue. The secretariat representative explained that ESCWA was coordinating the work of the national committees at the regional level, and that there was a need to establish national committees responsible for overcoming all local obstacles and problems, with a view to joint regional action.

26. Delegations affirmed the importance of the national committees and the role played by ESCWA in assisting countries to prepare for the establishment and activation of those committees. They also affirmed that it was important that ESCWA should continue to provide technical assistance in that field.

27. Certain delegations requested a mechanism for evaluating the work of the committees. The secretariat representative explained that such evaluation was in fact being effected through the sessions of the Committee on Transport, the submission of periodic follow-up reports, the provision of technical support and the holding of relevant national and regional workshops and seminars.

28. Participants affirmed the need to make use of the expertise that had been acquired in the course of establishing the national committees that had been set up and, in particular, the current successful experience of Egypt. There should be an interchange of experience in that field.

(d) *Memorandum of understanding concerning cooperation in the field of maritime transport in the Arab Mashreq*

29. The Committee reviewed the steps that have been taken since its fifth session with a view to implementing the recommendations in respect of the memorandum of understanding and the amendments made thereto; the points raised by member countries; and the stages through which the memorandum passed before it assumed its current form, in which it will be submitted for adoption and signature to the twenty-third ESCWA session in document E/ESCWA/23/6. The secretariat representative described the measures that have been taken with a view to cooperation with the League of Arab States, and detailed what is required from the sixth session of the Committee and the twenty-third ESCWA session.

30. Participants agreed that, because they were received so late and in view of the financial implications of some, which included the establishment of pollution control centres, the comments received on 17 February 2005 from Egypt should not be incorporated. Several countries had made many comments, some of which were included in the text of the memorandum.

31. Participants also approved the recommendation made jointly by the League of Arab States Arab Academy for Maritime Transport and ESCWA that the memorandum should be submitted to the twenty-third ESCWA session for adoption and signature by member countries and thereafter to the Council of Arab Ministers of Transport for adoption and signature by other countries, under the aegis of the League of Arab States.

32. After exhaustive discussions, participants agreed that the instrument should be designated a memorandum of understanding rather than an agreement, because of time-consuming legislative measures and the flexibility in application afforded by a memorandum of understanding. However, it should be noted that some countries thought that the designation "agreement" would be more likely to induce countries to put the instrument into effect.

(e) *Regional road transport information system*

33. The Committee reviewed the progress that had been made with respect to the regional road transport information system. ESCWA has entered the data that it has received from countries, using the amended table. Data was received from Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman and Yemen. The importance of data being received from the remaining member countries was underlined.

*2. Progress made in implementing transport-related activities between the fifth and sixth sessions of the Committee on Transport*

34. The Committee considered this part on the basis of document E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/3(Part II), reviewing the progress made in implementing transport-related activities in the programme of work for the 2004-2005 biennium and, in particular, those that were carried out between the fifth and sixth sessions of the Committee.

35. The secretariat representative gave a detailed presentation on road safety, which, at the request of member countries and in view of its importance at the international level, has been included in the current ESCWA programme of work. The presentation covered General Assembly resolutions concerning road safety and the activities undertaken by ESCWA in that field, including the preparation of a study to evaluate the status of road safety in certain member countries, and preparations for the regional workshop on best road safety practices and for the Road Safety Week that is to be held in 2007. The representative also presented a draft resolution on regional cooperation in the field of road traffic safety for discussion and approval, prior to its submission to the twenty-third ESCWA session for adoption.

36. Participants affirmed the need for ESCWA to accord priority to the issue of road traffic safety in its programme of work for the forthcoming period, and stressed that the draft resolution should observe the need to deal with the problems from which the ESCWA member countries suffer, which may differ in some respects from those in developed countries. They also stressed the need for member countries to exchange expertise and experiences in that respect.

**C. THE PROPOSED STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR  
THE BIENNIUM 2006-2007 IN THE FIELD OF TRANSPORT  
(Agenda item 7)**

37. The Committee considered this item on the basis of document E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/4, concentrating on the proposed ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2006-2007 in the field of transport. In this regard, participants affirmed the importance of the proposed activities and adopted them as presented in the aforementioned document.

**D. OTHER BUSINESS  
(Agenda item 8)**

38. The issue of the facilitation of transport and trade was discussed at length in the course of the discussion on national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade in ESCWA member countries.

39. With respect to the issue of ESCWA undertaking to inform member countries of any transport-related international conferences and the possible funding of participation by those countries in such conferences, the secretariat representative explained that, because of the limited funds available, ESCWA was not in a position to do that.

40. The issue of the provision to Palestine of technical assistance with respect to transport will be looked into in the future, once the Palestinian delegation has met the Executive Secretary of ESCWA.

**E. DATE AND VENUE OF SEVENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE  
(Agenda item 9)**

41. The Committee on Transport decided to convene its seventh session in Beirut in March 2006.

**III. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF TRANSPORT  
ON ITS FIFTH SESSION  
(Agenda item 10)**

42. At its final meeting, held on 24 March 2005, the Committee on Transport adopted the report on its sixth session as contained in E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/L.5, on the understanding that all the agreed amendments would be made thereto.

## IV. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

### A. DATE AND VENUE OF SESSION

43. The sixth session of the Committee on Transport was held at ESCWA headquarters in Beirut from 22 to 24 March 2005. Five meetings were held during the session.

### B. OPENING OF THE SESSION

44. At the beginning of the inaugural session, Ms. Thouka Al Khalidi, Chief of the Globalization and Regional Integration Division (GRID), welcomed participants and requested them to stand for one minute of silence in respect for the late Mr. Rafic Hariri, former Prime Minister of Lebanon. She commended member countries for the high level of their representation and for their concern that the recommendations of previous sessions of the Committee should be implemented.

45. Mr. Mohamed Al-Marzouki, Head of Land Affairs in the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Communications and Chairman of the fifth session of the Committee on Transport, made a statement in which he thanked heads of delegation and all those in ESCWA for their earnest endeavours and wished the Chairman and officers of the sixth session of the Committee every success.

46. Ms. Mervat Tallawy, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCWA, made a statement in which she welcomed participants and referred to the positive developments that had taken place in the transport sector since the fifth session of the Committee on Transport and, in particular, with respect to implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq. She called for the resolution submitted to the Committee concerning the selection of priority routes to be adopted, in preparation for its presentation to the twenty-third ESCWA session.

47. Ms. Tallawy affirmed the importance of the memorandum of understanding concerning cooperation in the field of maritime transport and the need for participants to reach agreement upon its final form, in preparation for its adoption and signature at the twenty-third ESCWA session.

48. His Excellency Mr. Yasin Jabir, the sponsor of the session and Minister of Transport and Public Works of Lebanon, made a statement in which he referred to the assassination of former Prime Minister, Mr. Rafic Hariri, as a national and Arab tragedy. He also welcomed the country representatives who had attended the session regardless of the difficult circumstances which Lebanon was currently experiencing.

49. Mr. Jabir commended the many achievements that had been realized in the context of the Committee, which included the adoption and implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq, preparation of the memorandum of understanding concerning cooperation in the field of maritime transport in the Arab Mashreq and the establishment and activation in the countries of the region of national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade.

50. He affirmed that Lebanon was taking action to gain the approvals necessary for implementation of the Agreement on International Roads and that the Ministries of Transport and Public Works and Economy and Trade were coordinating with a view to preparing the final version of a draft resolution on the establishment of the national committee for the facilitation of transport and trade. He expressed his gratitude to the Executive Secretary and the GRID task force for the technical assistance that was being provided to Lebanon.

### C. PARTICIPANTS

51. Taking part in the sixth session of the Committee were representatives of the following 12 ESCWA member countries: Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

52. Also attending the session as observers were representatives of the League of Arab States, the Arab Union of Ports, the Arab Union for Land Transport, the Arab Federation of Shipping and the General Union of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture for Arab Countries. The list of participants comprises annex I of this report.

#### D. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

53. In accordance with rule 18 of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, which provides that member countries shall assume the chairmanship of the sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on a rotating basis, in the Arabic alphabetical order employed by the United Nations, Mr. Issa Abdallah Ahmad Yateem, representative of Bahrain, assumed the chairmanship of the session. In accordance with the practice followed at previous sessions of the Committee, Mr. Salem Ali Zaabi, the representative of the United Arab Emirates, and Ms. Ihab Mawaldi, the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, assumed the positions of Vice-Chairmen. Because there was no specialist representative from Iraq and no representative from Oman, Mr. Farid Gharabli, the representative of Palestine, was chosen as Rapporteur.

#### E. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

54. At its first meeting, the Committee on Transport adopted the agenda for its sixth session in the form in which it appears in E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/1, as set forth below:

1. Opening of the sixth session of the Committee on Transport.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Proposed organization of work.
5. General debate: transport issues in the Arab Mashreq: identification of priority routes for the implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq, and for the strengthening of regional integration.
6. Review of transport-related action taken since the fifth session of the Committee on Transport:
  - (a) Follow-up of implementation of the recommendations of the fifth session of the Committee on Transport;
  - (b) Progress made in implementing transport-related activities since the fifth session of the Committee on Transport.
7. The amended strategic framework and proposed ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2006-2007 in the field of transport.
8. Date and venue of the seventh session of the Committee on Transport.
9. Other business:
  - (a) The facilitation of transport between Arab countries;
  - (b) Transport-related regional and international conferences;
  - (c) Rehabilitation of the transport section in Palestine.
10. Adoption of the report of the Committee of Transport on its sixth session.

55. At the same meeting, the Committee approved the proposed organization of work as it appears in E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/L.2, after having been amended in accordance with the agenda.

#### F. DOCUMENTS

56. Annex II of this report comprises the list of documents that were submitted to the Committee of Transport at its sixth session.

## Annex I

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Annex II

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED TO THE COMMITTEE  
AT ITS SIXTH SESSION**

Symbol	Item	Title
E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/1	3	Agenda
E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/1/Add.1	3	Annotated provisional agenda
E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/2	4	Organization of work
E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/3	6	Review of transport-related action taken since the fifth session of the Committee on Transport
E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/3(Part I)	6 (a)	Follow-up of implementation of the recommendations of the fifth session of the Committee on Transport
E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/3(Part II)	6 (b)	Progress made in implementing transport-related activities since the fifth session of the Committee on Transport
E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/4	7	Proposed strategic framework and programme of work for the biennium 2006-2007 in the field of transport
E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/5	10	Report on the sixth session of the Committee on Transport
E/ESCWA/TRANS/2002/4/Rev.5		مسودة مذكرة تفاهم/اتفاق بشأن التعاون المشترك في مجال النقل البحري في المشرق العربي
E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/INF.1		مذكرة توضيحية
E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/INF.2		قائمة وثائق الدورة السادسة للجنة النقل
E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/IG.1/7		Report on the fifth session of the Committee on Transport
E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/1/Rev.1		خطة العمل لتنفيذ اتفاق الطرق الدولية في المشرق العربي

Annex III

**MODEL REPORT ON FOLLOW-UP TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE**

**I. Agreement on international roads in the Arab Mashreq**

1. Number of road signs in place by 30 September 2005.
2. Date by which all signs are expected to be in position.
3. Comments.
4. Date of ratification of the Agreement (or expected date of ratification or accession).
5. Measures that have been taken to carry out the action plan for implementation of the Agreement in accordance with the stages set out in figure 1 of the plan.
6. Measures that have been taken to carry out the action plan for implementation of Agreement priority routes (if any).

**II. Agreement on international Railways in the Arab Mashreq**

Date of ratification of the Agreement (or expected date of ratification or accession).

**III. National committees for the facilitation of transport and trade in the countries of the ESCWA region**

1. Date of the establishment of the national committee for the facilitation of transport and trade (or expected date of establishment).
2. Measures that had been taken by 30 September 2005 in order to establish or activate the national committee.

**IV. Memorandum of Understanding concerning cooperation in the field of maritime transport in the Arab Mashreq**

1. Expected date of signature of the Memorandum.
2. Comments.

**V. Regional road transport information system**

1. Date on which the CDs containing data on transport on international roads will be transmitted to ESCWA.
2. Date on which it is expected that the data requested in accordance with table 1 of the action plan for implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq will be transmitted to ESCWA.
3. Comments.

**VI. Road traffic safety**

Annex IV

**TRANSPORT-RELATED DEVELOPMENTS IN [NAME OF COUNTRY]**

- I. Land transport by road**
- II. Land transport by rail (where available)**
- II. Maritime transport and ports**
- IV. Air transport and airports**
- V. International transport (cross-border)**
- VI. International transport (transit)**
- VII. Laws and regulations**
- VIII. Bilateral regional and international treaties and conventions**
- IX. Other important issues and aspects**
  - 1. Training.
  - 2. Privatization.
  - 3. Application of modern techniques.
  - 4. Other.
- X. Other important projects**
- XI. Future plans and project**