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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Committee on Transport
Fifteenth session
Rabat, 27-28 January 2015

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

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ANNOTATIONS

1. Opening of the session

The fifteenth session of the Committee on Transport will commence at 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 27 January 2015, at the Conference Hall on Riyadh Street, in Rabat, Morocco. The representative of Libya, in his/her capacity as Chairperson of the fourteenth session of the Committee, will make a welcome statement. Mr. Abdallah al-Dardari, Deputy Executive Secretary for the Programme, will then deliver the inaugural speech. The session is expected to be held under the auspices of His Excellency Mr. Aziz Rabah, Minister of Equipment, Transport and Logistics in Morocco.

2. Election of officers

Rule 18 of the Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia states: "Member States shall chair the sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on a rotating basis, in the Arabic alphabetical order employed by the United Nations. Unless the Commission decides otherwise, those bodies shall elect all their other officers".* Given that the fifteenth session is hosted away from the headquarters of ESCWA, by Morocco, and following the practice in such case, the rotation by alphabetical order will not be applied, and Morocco will chair the session, succeeding Libya, which chaired the fourteenth session from 9 October 2013 to 27 January 2015. As for the sixteenth session, it will be chaired by the country on which the alphabetical rotation would have fallen, namely Egypt.

In keeping with the spirit of rule 18, and with a view to ensuring continuity, the Committee has adopted the following procedure to select its two vice-chairs and its rapporteur: the vice-chairs shall be the representative of the country that chaired the past session and the representative of the country that will chair the subsequent session of the Committee according to the alphabetical rotation. The rapporteur shall be the representative of the country next in the alphabetical order to the country of the second vice-chair. Accordingly, the representatives of Libya and Egypt shall be the vice-chairs and the representative of Saudi Arabia shall be the rapporteur.

3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Rule 8 of the Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, which applies to subsidiary bodies, states: "At the beginning of each session, once the Chair has assumed his/her duties in accordance with rule 12, the Commission shall adopt the agenda for that session on the basis of the provisional agenda ...". Pursuant to that rule, the Committee will be presented with the provisional agenda and annotations for this session in document E/ESCWA/EDGD/2014/IG.1/L.1 and the organization of work in document E/ESCWA/EDGD/2014/IG.1/L.2. The Committee shall adopt the agenda and the organization of work in that or an amended form.

* ESCWA member States in the Arabic alphabetical order are as follows: Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Tunisia, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Sudan, Iraq, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

4. Progress achieved in the field of transport since the fourteenth session of the Committee on Transport (E/ESCWA/EDGD/2014/IG.1/3)

Under this item, the Committee will be presented with the following two reports:

(a) Implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee at its fourteenth session (E/ESCWA/EDGD/2014/IG.1/3(Part I))

In this document, the Committee will review the actions taken in the field of transport in implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee at its fourteenth session. The document lists each recommendation and the related implementation actions.

(b) Implementation of transport-related activities under the ESCWA programme of work (E/ESCWA/EDGD/2014/IG.1/3(Part II))

In this document, the Committee will review the progress made in implementing the transport-related activities undertaken since its fourteenth session, under the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015. Activities planned for 2015 will also be presented.

Representatives of member States are invited to take note of those two reports, make comments thereon and express the needs of their countries with respect to implementation.

5. Progress achieved in implementing the components of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq (E/ESCWA/EDGD/2013/IG.1/4)

The secretariat will present a report on each of the following two components of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq:

(a) Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq (E/ESCWA/EDGD/2014/IG.1/4(Part I))

In this report, the Committee will review the progress achieved in implementing the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq.

(b) Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq (E/ESCWA/EDGD/2014/IG.1/4(Part II))

In this report, the Committee will review the progress achieved in implementing the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq.

Representatives of member States are invited to take note of the progress achieved with regard to the two agreements and make comments and recommendations thereon.

6. Enhancing transport and trade logistics in the Arab region for better linkage with regional and international value chains (E/ESCWA/EDGD/2014/IG.1/5)

This item comprises the following sub-items:

(a) Arab land connectivity scheme

The representative of the League of Arab States will present a general overview on both the road and the railways network schemes in the Arab region, with emphasis on the cooperation and coordination between the League and ESCWA in following up the implementation of those two schemes and considering ways to overcome obstacles to their implementation.

(b) Logistics efficiency and trade costs
(E/ESCWA/EDGD/2014/IG.1/5(Part I))

The secretariat will brief the Committee on the status of logistics services and the related subsidiary services in the Arab region. It will highlight weaknesses in subsidiary services and the impact of the efficiency of the various logistics services on trade costs. This document was prepared on the basis of available data and indicators on logistics performance at the country and regional levels. It also presents some successful world experiences in reducing trade costs through the improvement of logistics performance. It also makes recommendations for improving logistics services in order to reduce trade costs and promote competitiveness.

(c) Methodology used in developing an indicator for the assessment of infrastructure efficiency

The representative of the United Nations Office for Project Services will present the methodology used in developing an indicator for the assessment of infrastructure efficiency and the possible applications, with a focus on the experience of Palestine. The presentation will also include an overview of the infrastructure methodology proposed for disaster risk reduction that is being developed by the United Nations. A discussion will follow on the potential role of the organization in the provision of services related to the assessment of infrastructure efficiency, whereby suggestions of participants will be taken in consideration.

(d) Global Survey on Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade Implementation
(E/ESCWA/EDGD/2014/IG.1/CRP.1)

ESCWA, in cooperation with other United Nations agencies and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, are conducting a global survey on the implementation of trade facilitation and paperless trade measures with a view to collecting data and information on the subject from all countries. The survey aims to deepen countries' understanding of trade facilitation and related issues and monitor progress achieved in that regard. It will also help formulating evidence-based policies, exchange knowledge between developing countries and enhance South-South cooperation.

The secretariat will highlight the main components and characteristics of the survey in order to draw the attention of representatives of member States participating in the fifteenth session of the Committee on Transport to the importance of the survey and mobilize efforts to fill the survey questionnaire in their respective countries.

(e) Trade logistics in the Arab region: challenges and policy options
(E/ESCWA/EDGD/2014/IG.1/5(Part II))

The secretariat will give a brief presentation on the partial results of a field survey on elements of trade logistics in a number of Arab countries, focusing on companies in a certain number of sectors. The survey contributes to the process of defining the following: (a) cost factors sustained by productive sectors to obtain the needed logistics services; and (b) ways to access those services under prevailing conditions.

(f) Improving transport and logistics for export growth in Tunisia
(E/ESCWA/EDGD/2014/IG.1/CRP.2)

The secretariat will present the outline of the strategic study coordinated by ESCWA on effective trade logistics in Tunisia. The study presents a preliminary assessment of the efficiency and adequacy of transport infrastructure and systems in Tunisia, the performance of logistics services in the supply chains and the impact of those services on exports. It aims to devise a plan for the development of logistics services, with a view to improving transport and logistics services and boosting export growth.

Representatives of member States are invited to take note of the aforementioned presentations and make comments and recommendations.

7. Round table on the experiences of Arab countries in enhancing the efficiency of transport and trade logistics

In line with efforts directed towards the development of transport at the regional level and with the framework that was to enhance regional integration policies, the secretariat has dedicated an agenda item of the fifteenth session of the Committee on Transport for a discussion on the experiences of Arab countries in enhancing the efficiency of transport and logistics. Representatives of some of the member States participating in the session will give brief overviews on successful national experiences in developing transport and trade logistics policies, covering the infrastructure and operating systems perspectives. This round table will serve as a platform for the exchange of experiences and lessons learned.

Representatives of member States are invited to participate in the discussions and make comments and recommendations.

8. Impact of conflict on transport and trade in the Arab region
(E/ESCWA/EDGD/2014/IG.1/CRP.3)

The secretariat will make a presentation on the impact of conflict on transport and trade in the Arab region, drawing on the cases of Iraq, Libya and the Syrian Arab Republic, where the deterioration of security created many obstacles to the movement of people and goods at the local and regional levels. Alternative routes adopted to avoid dangerous areas require longer itineraries and induce higher costs. In certain cases, traditional transit lines disappeared and new lines were improvised, with serious political and economic repercussions on the Arab countries that were deprived from the benefits of transit lines on their territories.

9. Harmonization of institutional frameworks and legislation in the transport sector in the Arab region: terms of reference for the assessment of the status of transport legislation
(E/ESCWA/EDGD/2014/IG.1/6)

The Committee will consider the proposed terms of reference for the study to be conducted to assess the status of transport legislation in the Arab region. The ESCWA secretariat updated the proposed terms of reference to reflect the recommendations made by representatives of member States during the third meeting of the Working Group on the Harmonization of Institutional Frameworks and Legislation in the Transport Sector, which was held during the fourteenth session of the Committee on Transport (Amman, 9-10 October 2013). Once the terms of reference are approved by the Committee, the study will be initiated and will aim to identify ways to simplify the measures controlling the movement of goods and passengers.

10. Proposed programme of work for the biennium 2016-2017 in the field of transport
(E/ESCWA/EDGD/2014/IG.1/7)

This document presents the proposed outputs to be achieved by ESCWA in the field of transport during the biennium 2016-2017. The programme of work was prepared on the basis of subprogramme 3, concerning economic development and integration, of the revised strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017, which was adopted by ESCWA at its twenty-eighth session (Tunis, 15-18 September 2014). Subprogramme 3 falls under the responsibility of the Economic Development and Globalization Division at ESCWA.

Representatives of member States are invited to take note of the programme of work in the field of transport and make comments and recommendations thereon.

11. Date and venue of the sixteenth session of the Committee on Transport

Representatives of member States shall agree on the date and venue of the sixteenth session of the Committee on Transport, given that it convenes in the fourth quarter of 2015.

12. Other matters

This item shall cover any other matters that the representatives of member States may wish to discuss.

13. Adoption of the recommendations made by the Committee on Transport at its fifteenth session

The Committee will consider the draft recommendations of its fifteenth session for discussion and adoption.
