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**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

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

**INFORMATION NOTE***1. Background information*

The fifteenth session of the Committee on Transport represents a continuation of the efforts made by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in the field of transport, given the effective role of transport in achieving regional integration. At this session, the Committee will review the progress made in that regard since its fourteenth session, which was held in Amman on 9 and 10 October 2013.

The Committee will also follow up on the implementation of the components of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq (ITSAM) pursuant to ESCWA resolution 279 (XXIV) of 11 May 2006, with a view to facilitating trade and transport between countries of the region and achieving regional integration. ITSAM comprises the following components: (a) Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq; (b) priority routes M40 and M45; (c) Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq; (d) Memorandum of Understanding on Maritime Transport Cooperation in the Arab Mashreq; (e) national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade; (f) road safety; (g) ITSAM methodological framework; (h) the related geographical information system; (i) multimodal transport; and (j) institutional frameworks and legislation.

The status of the implementation of ITSAM in ESCWA member States continues to be a major item on the agenda of the Committee, along other related issues of importance to the Arab countries. At the current session, the review of progress made will cover two components, namely the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq and the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq. The component on institutional frameworks and legislation will be addressed at the fourth meeting of the Working Group on the Harmonization of Institutional Frameworks and Legislation in the Transport Sector in the ESCWA Region. The Working Group will consider proposed terms of reference for a 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, which was held in parallel with the fourteenth session of the Committee on Transport.

As practiced in previous sessions, the Committee will dedicate one of its agenda items to discuss a major transport issue in the Arab region. At the current session, the discussion will address the issue of promoting transport and trade logistics in the Arab region for a better linkage with regional and international

value chains. Under this agenda item, the Committee will review reports on the efficiency of logistics and the cost of trade in the Arab region; the land connectivity scheme and the railroads connectivity scheme between Arab countries; the development of an indicator for the assessment of infrastructure efficiency; and the Global Survey on Trade Facilitation and Paperless Trade Implementation.

The Committee will also review the preliminary partial results of the survey of trade logistics and the strategic study on effective trade logistics in Tunisia.

A round-table discussion will be held during the session on national experiences in enhancing the efficiency of transport and trade logistics. Representatives of member States will present successful experiences in developing transport systems, infrastructure and logistics, with a view to exchanging lessons learned.

The agenda also comprises an item on the impact of conflicts on transport and trade in the region, based on examples from the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq and Libya, where the deterioration of security created many obstacles to the movement of people and goods at the local and regional levels.

In addition, the agenda of the current session includes a review of the progress made in implementing the recommendations of the Committee at its fourteenth session and transport-related activities under the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015.

## *2. Agenda*

The provisional agenda and annotations of the fifteenth session of the Committee on Transport are contained in document E/ESCWA/EDGD/2014/IG.1/L.1. The organization of work is outlined in document E/ESCWA/EDGD/2014/IG.1/L.2. The documents related to the session can be accessed through the following link: <http://goo.gl/Qrmm0H>.

## *3. Participants*

In view of the numerous transport-related issues and activities in the region that arise from the variety of transport modes and systems and the many parties involved, it is recommended that the relevant authorities in member States form delegations that include specialists in the various fields related to the topics of discussion, in addition to their representatives designated as members of the Working Group on the Harmonization of Institutional Frameworks and Legislation in the Transport Sector. In accordance with United Nations practice, member States are responsible for the travel and accommodation expenses of their representatives at such intergovernmental meetings. A number of relevant regional and international organizations will be invited to attend as observers, on the understanding that they are also responsible for the travel and accommodation expenses of their representatives.

## *4. Date and venue*

The fifteenth session of the Committee on Transport will be held at the Conference Hall in the Reception and Seminars Centre of the Ministry of Equipment and Transport, Pine Street, Riyadh district in Rabat, Morocco, on 27 and 28 January 2015. Registration will begin at 9 a.m. on Tuesday 27 January 2015 and the opening session will start at 9.30 a.m. The session will conclude at 5 p.m. on Wednesday 28 January 2015.

## *5. Language*

Presentations will be made in Arabic or English. Simultaneous interpretation into and from either language will be provided.

*6. Accommodation*

ESCWA suggests that participants make reservations in one the hotels in Rabat with which the secretariat has made arrangements for discounted rates. A list of those hotels can be accessed through the following link: <http://goo.gl/Qrmm0H>.

*7. Entry visa*

Participants may obtain an entry visa from the Embassy of Morocco in their country. If help is needed in that regard, participants can contact either of the names listed below.

*8. Correspondence*

All session-related correspondence should be addressed to:

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