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

Committee on Transport  
Twelfth session  
Beirut, 17-19 May 2011

Item 5 (a) of the provisional agenda

**PROGRESS ACHIEVED IN THE FIELD OF TRANSPORT SINCE THE  
ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT****FOLLOW-UP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS  
MADE BY THE COMMITTEE AT ITS ELEVENTH SESSION****Summary**

The Committee on Transport of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) holds its sessions yearly. The eleventh session was held in Beirut from 22 to 24 March 2010. At the final meeting, a series of recommendations related to the work of ESCWA in the field of transport were issued knowing that the Economic Development and Globalization Division is in charge of follow-up. Recommendations covered the harmonization of institutional frameworks and legislation in the transport sector in the ESCWA region, components of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq (ITSAM) and other topics related to ESCWA programme of work in the field of transport. These recommendations are included in the report of the Committee on Transport at its eleventh session in document E/ESCWA/EDGD/2010/IG.1/8/Report.

This document reviews recommendations related to the harmonization of institutional frameworks and legislation in the transport sector in the ESCWA region and ITSAM components, in addition to recommendations related to ESCWA programme of work in the field of transport. Each recommendation is followed by the procedures of follow-up.

**RECOMMENDATIONS MADE DURING THE ELEVENTH SESSION  
OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT  
AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES**

**A. RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE HARMONIZATION OF INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS  
AND LEGISLATION IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR IN THE ESCWA REGION**

**Recommendation**

Adoption of the document on the formation of a Working Group on the Harmonization of Institutional Frameworks and Legislation in the Transport Sector in the ESCWA Region, presented by the ESCWA secretariat, after introducing modifications agreed upon by the Committee, according to the form included in annex I to the report of the eleventh session.

**Follow-up to implementation**

This recommendation was implemented during the eleventh session of the Committee on Transport.

**Recommendation**

Requesting ESCWA secretariat to establish dialogue with member countries on the above recommendation by 30 May 2010 at the latest, to encourage them to name their representatives in the Working Group prior to end of August 2010.

**Follow-up to implementation**

ESCWA secretariat prepared the requested document and presented it to member countries on 29 May 2010. The document included a reminder of the necessity to name representatives prior to 31 August 2010. Egypt, Jordan, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen therefore sent names of their representatives to the Working Group.

**B. FOLLOW-UP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS ADOPTED BY THE  
TENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORT**

**Recommendation**

Participants invited member countries to take note of the information contained in document E/ESCWA/EDGD/2010/IG.1/4(Part I) regarding the follow-up on the implementation of recommendations adopted during the tenth session of the Committee on Transport, to update it as needed and to send it, along with their observations, to the secretariat by 30 June 2010 at the latest. Should no observations be received from any country, the document will be considered to have been adopted.

**Follow-up to implementation**

Up until 30 June 2010, the secretariat had not received any observations, and thus adopted the document as is.

**C. FOLLOW-UP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF TRANSPORT-RELATED ACTIVITIES  
AND RECOMMENDATIONS WITHIN ESCWA WORK PROGRAMME**

**Recommendation**

Participants invited member countries to take note of the information contained in document E/ESCWA/EDGD/2010/IG.1/4(Part II) regarding the follow-up on the implementation of transport-related activities under ESCWA programme of work, to update it as needed and to send it, along with their

observations, to the secretariat by 30 June 2010 at the latest. Should no observations be received from any country by set date, the document will be considered to have been adopted.

### **Follow-up to implementation**

Up until 30 June 2010, the secretariat had not received any observations, and thus adopted the document as is.

## **D. RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE COMPONENTS OF THE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT SYSTEM IN THE ARAB MASHREQ**

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

#### **Recommendation**

Participants invited member countries to take note of the information contained in document E/ESCWA/EDGD/2010/IG.1/5(Part I) regarding the progress made in the implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq, to update it as needed and to send it, along with their observations, to the secretariat by 30 June 2010 at the latest. Should no observations be received from any country by set date, the document will be considered to have been adopted.

#### **Follow-up to implementation**

Up until 30 June 2010, the secretariat had not received any observations, and thus adopted the document as is.

#### **Recommendation**

To call upon Oman to speed up its procedures for accession to the Agreement.

#### **Follow-up to implementation**

On 29 November 2010, Oman sent a memorandum on the follow-up on the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee on Transport, which included supplements on all developments in the transport sector in Oman. With regard to the accession to the Agreement, it was pointed that Oman (to the date the memorandum was sent) was at the final phase of accession to the Agreement.

#### **Recommendation**

To call upon the United Arab Emirates to accelerate the ratification of the Agreement.

#### **Follow-up to implementation**

On 13 August 2010, the United Arab Emirates sent a letter including the report on the follow-up on the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee on Transport at its eleventh session and its annexes. Furthermore, the official website of the United Nations International Treaties (<http://treaties.un.org/Home.aspx>) shows the ratification of the Agreement by the United Arab Emirates on 28 February 2011.

#### **Recommendation**

Participants called upon the secretariat to clarify some articles of the questionnaire related to the follow-up on the implementation of the Agreement and send the clarification to member countries by 30 May 2010 at the latest.

### **Follow-up to implementation**

The secretariat introduced the requested clarifications to the questionnaire related to the follow-up on the implementation of the Agreement, and sent it attached to the letter on the follow-up on the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee on Transport at its eleventh session to member countries on 29 May 2010.

### **Recommendation**

Participants called upon members of the Agreement to update the information included in the questionnaire on the follow-up of the Agreement and send it to ESCWA by 31 August 2010 at the latest.

### **Follow-up to implementation**

- (i) *Bahrain*: the report sent on 20 July 2010 clarified that M80 is the only axis passing through Bahraini lands. Data concerning this axis have already been sent, and no modifications have been made;
- (ii) *Egypt*: the updated questionnaire was sent along with the report of the Ministry on Transport on 6 September 2010;
- (iii) *Iraq*: is requested to accelerate filling out the questionnaire;
- (iv) *Jordan*: sent the questionnaire on CD attached to the report of Jordan on 2 November 2010;
- (v) *Kuwait*: is requested to accelerate filling out the questionnaire;
- (vi) *Lebanon*: the questionnaire was sent on 11 December 2009, and was not updated later on;
- (vii) *Palestine*: is requested to accelerate filling out and updating the questionnaire;
- (viii) *Qatar*: is requested to accelerate filling out the questionnaire;
- (ix) *Saudi Arabia*: the updated questionnaire was sent along with the report of the Ministry on Transport on 26 November 2010;
- (x) *The Sudan*: is requested to accelerate filling out the questionnaire;
- (xi) *Syrian Arab Republic*: the modified questionnaire was sent along with the report on 21 September 2010;
- (xii) *United Arab Emirates*: is requested to fill out the questionnaire, particularly in view of its recent ratification of the Agreement;
- (xiii) *Yemen*: is requested to accelerate filling out and updating the questionnaire.

### **Recommendation**

Participants called upon the secretariat to prepare an information note on the article related to establishment of identification signs on international roads, to be presented to the twelfth session of the Committee on Transport and added to the Agreement.

### **Follow-up to implementation**

The requested information note was prepared.

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

### **Recommendation**

For all member countries to review and update data stated in document E/ESCWA/EDGD/2010/IG.1/5(Part II) regarding the implementation of the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq and convey them along with their observations to the ESCWA secretariat by 30 June 2010 at the latest. Should no observations be received from any country by set date, the document will be considered to have been adopted.

### **Follow-up to implementation**

No observations were received before the set date and therefore the document was considered to be adopted as is.

### **Recommendation**

Participants called upon countries that have still not signed the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq (Iraq, Oman and Qatar) to accelerate accession to it.

### **Follow-up to implementation**

In its memorandum on the follow-up on the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee on Transport at its eleventh session (29 November 2010), Oman confirmed that it was still in the process of studying acceding to the Agreement. Iraq and Qatar are required to notify the Committee on Transport on their position from accession to the Agreement.

### **Recommendation**

Participants called upon countries that have signed but not ratified the Agreement (Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates) to accelerate their ratification.

### **Follow-up to implementation**

- (i) *Kuwait*: is required to notify the Committee on Transport of its position from ratification of the Agreement;
- (ii) *United Arab Emirates*: on 31 October 2010, the National Transport Authority informed the secretariat that action was taken towards the ratification of the Agreement.

### **Recommendation**

Participants requested the secretariat and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States to cooperate and coordinate in all fields related to the implementation of the railway Arab land linkage (plans, feasibility studies, operations and so on).

### **Follow-up to implementation**

The two secretariats are currently working on implementing the recommendation.

## 3. *Facilitation of transport and trade in the countries of the ESCWA region*

### **Recommendation**

Participants called upon countries that have still not established national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade (Kuwait, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates) to accelerate this process, and to seek guidance for this purpose from the guidelines for the establishment of national committees for the facilitation

of transport and trade in the countries of the ESCWA region, prepared by ESCWA in 2003, and to make use of the technical support provided by ESCWA to establish those committees.

### **Follow-up to implementation**

- (i) *Kuwait*: ESCWA is to be notified of any action taken in this view;
- (ii) *Qatar*: ESCWA is to be notified of any action taken in this view;
- (iii) *United Arab Emirates*: on 31 August 2010, the National Transport Authority informed the secretariat of all developments concerning the establishment of the national committee and the issuance of the Ministerial Decree No (11) on the formation of the preparatory committee on the project of transport and trade facilitation.

### **Recommendation**

Participants urged countries that have already established national committees to accelerate their activation through formulating and adopting operational plans of action for each committee, and to make use of the technical support provided by ESCWA for the preparation of plans of action and the activation of those committees.

### **Follow-up to implementation**

- (i) *Bahrain*: On 20 July 2010, the Ministry of Transportation sent a report on the follow-up on the implementation of recommendations made by the Committee on Transport at its eleventh session, which included obstacles to establishing the national committee, knowing that the Ministry is following up with all parties working on the establishment of the committee;
- (ii) *Egypt*: The report sent by the Ministry on Transport on 29 May 2010 includes a detailed annex on the work of the national committee for the facilitation of trade and transport since the establishment of the committee on 10 November 2004, as well as the action carried out by the Ministry on Transport, such as chairing the national committee and activating its work. The report also requested ESCWA to appoint an expert in the field of facilitation of trade and transport for a week, whose aim would be to assist in the activation of the committee;
- (iii) *Iraq*: ESCWA is to be notified of any action taken in this view;
- (iv) *Jordan*: The Ministry of Transport sent on 2 November 2010 the questionnaire concerning the establishment and activation of national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade. Activities undertaken by the committee to activate its work and achieve its objectives included the facilitation and standardization of documentation on transport and trade, introduction of information technology in transport and trade, and implementation of regulatory, developmental and training activities;
- (v) *Lebanon*: ESCWA is to be notified of any action taken in this view in 2010;
- (vi) *Oman*: based on the report sent by the Ministry of Transport and Communications on 29 November 2010, along with the questionnaire on the establishment and activation of national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade, the national committee examined a number of matters relating to trade and transport and submitted its recommendations to the competent authorities. The national committee on transport and trade facilitation is also following up the recommendations on the obstacles to trade and transport faced by stakeholders, and previews to hold workshops on the facilitation of trade and transport if required;

- (vii) *Palestine*: ESCWA is to be notified of any action taken in this view in 2010;
- (viii) *Saudi Arabia*: the report sent by the Ministry of Transport on 13 November 2010 included annex (2) which contained the main activities carried out by the General Investment Authority which assumes the functions of the national committee pursuant to the Council of Ministers decision (109) for the activation of the committee. Activities included the preparation for a workshop that would bring together representatives from government agencies and the private sector concerned with trade and transport in Saudi Arabia to discuss the mechanisms for the activation of the committee and its functions as well as requesting ESCWA to appoint an expert who would assist Saudi Arabia for six months in order to prepare for the workshop and help in other tasks assumed by the committee;
- (ix) *The Sudan*: ESCWA is to be notified of any action taken in this view;
- (x) *Syrian Arab republic*: based on the report sent on 21 September 2010, the process of facilitating transport and trade in the Syrian Arab Republic still faces many difficulties detailed in the annex to the report;
- (xi) *Yemen*: ESCWA is to be notified of any action taken in this view in 2010 (if any), after the Ministry of Transport sent its report on 7 September 2009. The national committee for the facilitation of trade and transport was in fact re-established in order to be chaired by the Minister of Transport.

### **Recommendation**

Participants requested the secretariat to draft a regional agreement for the facilitation of transport and trade between the countries of the ESCWA region to be presented to the twelfth session of the Committee on Transport, in coordination with the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to make use of its experience in this field.

### **Follow-up to implementation**

This recommendation is currently being implemented. Contact is made with the GCC General Secretariat in this regard.

## **E. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Recommendation**

To take note of the programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011 in the field of transport, submitted to the Committee in document E/ESCWA/EDGD/2010/IG.1/6.

### **Follow-up to implementation**

This recommendation was implemented during the eleventh session of the Committee on Transport.

### **Recommendation**

To take note of the proposed strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013 in the field of transport, submitted to the Committee in document E/ESCWA/EDGD/2010/IG.1/7.

### **Follow-up to implementation**

This recommendation was implemented during the eleventh session of the Committee on Transport.

### **Recommendation**

Participants called upon the secretariat to carry out the implementation of the methodological framework for the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq, including the development of a mechanism to promote cooperation and coordination with all regional and international organizations, bodies and federations, as well as companies, specialized consulting firms, experts, and consultants in order to make use of their expertise.

**Follow-up to implementation**

The implementation of this recommendation is in progress, in cooperation with several regional parties, including GCC, World Bank, European Union and others.

**Recommendation**

The Committee urged the GCC countries to complete data and information related to the study undertaken by ESCWA on the implementation of the methodological framework for the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq, and to send them to ESCWA no later than 30 May 2010, in order for the secretariat to finalize the study by the end of 2010.

**Follow-up to implementation**

GCC countries are requested to notify ESCWA of all actions taken in this view.

**Recommendation**

The Committee requested member countries to provide ESCWA, by 31 October 2010 at the latest, with two reports: the first on follow-up the implementation of recommendations adopted at the eleventh session of the Committee on Transport; and the second on the progress made in the transport field monitored in each country during the period extending from 1 October 2009 to 30 September 2010.

**Follow-up to implementation**

Some countries sent the two reports as shown in the paragraphs on the follow-up to implementation, under section D.



Annex**INFORMATION NOTE  
IDENTIFICATION SIGNS FOR INTERNATIONAL ROADS****A. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1. The Committee on Transport adopted at its fifth session (Beirut, 2-4 March 2004) document E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/1, which includes the Plan of Action for Implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq, after the introduction of editorial changes. Participants recommended that member countries begin the implementation of the Plan of Action according to the timetable set out in the document. The Plan includes a number of steps that fall into media aspects, identification signs for international roads, identification and specifications of routes, signs and signals, and technical specifications of routes. During the fifth session of the Committee on Transport, participants discussed the specifications of signs and signals and their conformity with the 1968 Vienna Convention and amendments. The secretariat clarified that there were no contradictions with the said Convention. With regards to other specifications that are not included in the Convention, they were developed on the basis of specifications applicable in the countries of the region.
2. At the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth sessions (from 2005 to 2009), the Committee on Transport discussed the specifications of identification and orientation signs for roads included in the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq. The Committee made a recommendation at its eleventh session (Beirut, 22-24 March 2010) calling upon the secretariat to prepare an information note on the establishment of identification signs on international roads, to be presented to the twelfth session of the Committee on Transport and added to the Agreement.
3. The part of the adopted plan of action regarding identification and orientation signs for the roads included in the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq is hereby presented, along with the proposed amendment requested from the secretariat. The Committee on Transport is invited to discuss the proposal at its twelfth session (Beirut, 17-19 May 2011), and in case adopted, to add it to the Agreement and the Plan of action for implementation of the Agreement based on the recommendation mentioned in paragraph 2 above.

**B. PARTS RELATED TO ORIENTATION SIGNS ACCORDING TO THE PLAN OF ACTION FOR  
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL ROADS IN THE ARAB MASHREQ***1. Location of road signs*

Figure I shows full details of the sign as well as adopted dimensions for its classification. Figure II indicates the material used for its manufacturing as well as the specifications and measures of the post on which the sign will be installed, as agreed at the fourth session of the Committee on Transport (Beirut, 14-16 January 2003).

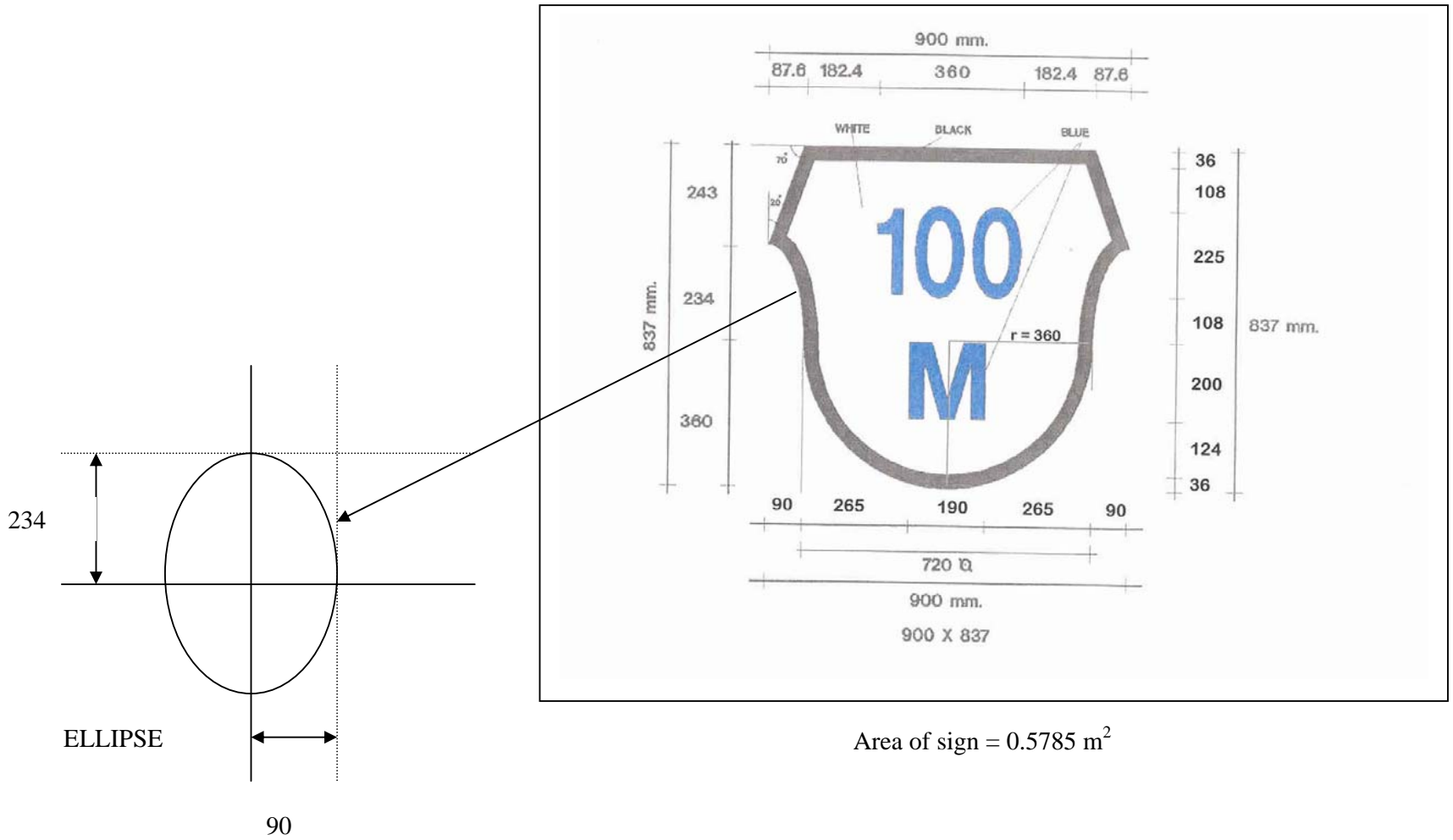
According to the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq, road signs in the international road network should be repeated at intervals of 10 km on first-class freeways and expressways and every 20 km on second-class roads. The road number should be indicated before and after every point of entry or exit to or from international road, whether at interchanges or at-level intersections. It is important in the first phase to focus on the speed and installation of signs on the network between cities, since they will not be modified in the near future.

In segments of the international network covering more than one route (for example, the segment located between Salwah and Algoevat located on routes M5 and M90), two signs are to be placed on the same post.

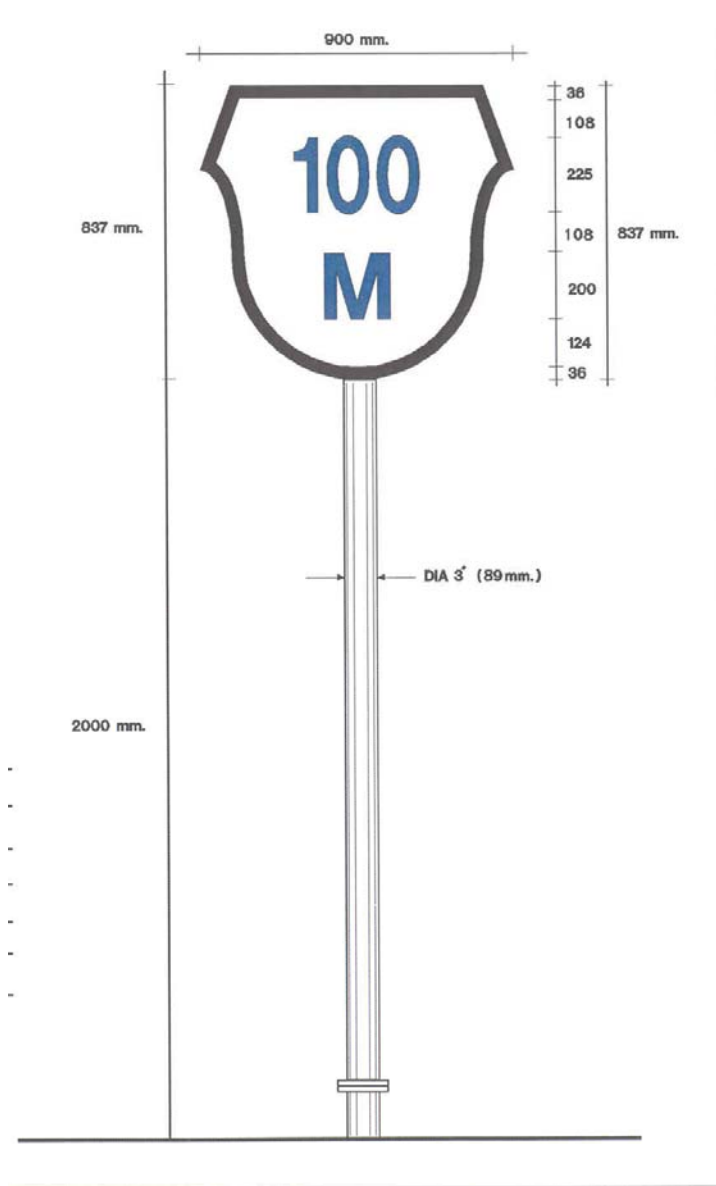
*2. Manufacturing and installation of international road identification signs*

Given the importance of immediate action for manufacturing and installing signs, all countries that have completed the ratification of the Agreement should immediately start to install the signs in the selected locations on the routes included in the Agreement.

Figure I. Final details of the road sign



**Figure II. Full details of the sign and used material in the manufacturing of the sign and post on which the sign will be installed**



- All measures are in millimetre.
- The sign is made of aluminium 3 mm thick.
- White ground (the reflector is no less than 200 candle power).
- Black border.
- Writing is in blue (the reflector is no less than 200 candle power).
- The sign is galvanized; no cavities or protrusions appear on the surface.
- The sign is installed on a post of 3 inch diameter and 3 mm thick.
- The post is equipped with a mobile hinge (single direction).

C. PROPOSED AMENDMENT REGARDING THE INSTALLATION OF  
INTERNATIONAL ROAD IDENTIFICATION SIGNS

4. The installation of international road identification signs and the importance of clarifying this issue to all member countries were raised during the eleventh session of the Committee on Transport (Beirut, 22-24 March 2010). Participants called upon the secretariat to prepare an information note on the item related to the installation of international road identification signs.

5. Most countries that have started to implement the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq have installed identification signs as shown in the picture below. The Committee on Transport therefore stressed the need to modify the design of the indication signs in order to include the number of route, details in Arabic and English as well as the proximity to exit points as indicated in the Manual on uniform traffic control devices issued by the Gulf Cooperation Council in 2004. See for example figure III of the proposed sign.

**Sample of identification signs installed on a number of routes included in the  
Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq**



Figure III. Proposed design for the identification sign



*Note:* Dimensions, measures and installation locations of proposed identification signs are guided by the Manual on uniform traffic control devices issued by the Gulf Cooperation Council in 2004.

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