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**REVIEW OF ACTION TAKEN IN THE FIELD OF TRANSPORT SINCE THE
EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE**

**PROGRESS MADE IN IMPLEMENTING REGULAR BUDGET TRANSPORT-RELATED
ACTIVITIES IN THE 2006-2007 BIENNIUM, ADVISORY SERVICES, TECHNICAL
COOPERATION AND EXTRABUDGETARY ACTIVITIES**

Summary

As part of the development of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq, which is intended to facilitate transport and trade in the countries of the region in preparation for regional integration, a number of transport-related activities were carried out in 2007, including regular budget activities included in the programme of work for the 2006-2007 biennium, and meetings, studies, consultancy services and technical cooperation which were financed by extrabudgetary funds.

This report reviews the most significant achievements and summarizes the progress made in implementing those activities.

1. The goal of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq (ITSAM) is to facilitate transport and trade between the countries of the region in preparation for regional integration. The programme of work of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for the biennium 2006-2007 in the field of transport represents a continuation of Commission endeavours to develop ITSAM. Member countries have resolved to follow up on the implementation of ITSAM components, in accordance with ESCWA resolution 279(XXIV) of 11 May 2006, concerning follow-up to the implementation of components of ITSAM.
2. In order to achieve regional integration, as represented by facilitating regional and international transport and trade at all land, sea and air border crossings in the region, it is necessary to specify relevant issues and formulate recommendations regarding the general policies related to regional transport and trade. That will involve addressing many issues, including developing the infrastructure necessary for the implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq, the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq, the Memorandum of Understanding on Maritime Transport Cooperation in the Arab Mashreq and the agreement on international multimodal transport of goods in the Arab Mashreq; improving the efficiency of transport flows and operations; and ratifying regional and international agreements.
3. Transport-related activities comprise part of subprogramme 4 of the strategic framework for the biennium 2006-2007 which concerns regional integration and globalization. The principle aim of the subprogramme is to build the capacities of ESCWA member countries to implement and monitor ITSAM by facilitating the flow of goods, services and capital between those countries. In 2007, ESCWA realized a number of transport-related achievements which had a clear and positive impact on several fields of work.
4. Those achievements included completion of a large part of the plan of action which was adopted in 2004 for implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq. In 2007, some countries which had ratified the Agreement in 2006, namely, Kuwait and Qatar, began to implement the plan of action.
5. With respect to the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq, which was adopted on 14 April 2003, and the plan of action for implementing the Agreement that was adopted on 19 April 2006 at the seventh session of the Committee on Transport, ESCWA is currently preparing an economic feasibility study on the establishment of an international railway network in Yemen, as part of a cooperation agreement between ESCWA and the Ministry of Transport of Yemen, which was concluded on 4 December 2006. Seven ESCWA member countries have ratified the Agreement, namely, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia and the Syrian Arab Republic.
6. In regard to the establishment of national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade, nine ESCWA member countries, namely, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, have taken legal measures towards establishing a committee, pursuant to the recommendations made by the Transport Committee at its eighth session and following the relevant ESCWA guidelines that were prepared in 2003. Other member countries, namely, Bahrain, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, are taking the steps necessary to establish such committees in the near future. In 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007, ESCWA intensified its technical support to certain member countries in preparing draft resolutions on the establishment of such committees, and in capacity-building to activate their work. As part of those efforts, and in cooperation with the National Transport Authority in the United Arab Emirates, and the Ministries of Transport and Trade and the private sector in Iraq, ESCWA organized a workshop on training for establishing and activating national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade in Iraq and the United Arab Emirates, which was held on 27 and 28 October 2007 at National Transport Authority headquarters in the United Arab Emirates. A number of outcomes and recommendations resulted from the workshop, the most important of which was approval of the draft resolution on establishing the national committee for the facilitation of trade and transport in Iraq. That resolution had been prepared by ESCWA in cooperation with participants from Iraq and presented for consideration to the Council of

Ministers of Iraq, which was also asked to consider the inclusion of the facilitation of transport and trade as an integral part of general State trade policy and the implementation of such policies as a single package, through coordination between all the relevant parties. The workshop recommended that the United Arab Emirates should complete the establishment of a national committee, and stressed that national committees should undertake their activities in accordance with a comprehensive plan of action that is applied in a coordinated, measured, integrated and progressive manner.

7. The Memorandum of Understanding on Maritime Transport Cooperation in the Arab Mashreq, which ESCWA member countries adopted in Damascus on 12 May 2005, is part of the development of ITSAM. To date, it has been ratified by Jordan (27 September 2005), Lebanon (29 December 2005), Palestine (9 May 2005), Saudi Arabia (6 June 2006), the Syrian Arab Republic (24 February 2006) and the United Arab Emirates (29 October 2007).

8. In response to a request from the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States for technical support, ESCWA participated in the Expert Group Meeting to Determine the Specifications of the Algerian Rail Network with a View to Linking it to Those of the Arab Mashreq, which was held in Algiers from 6 to 8 May 2007, and the Expert Group Meeting to Prepare Plans to Link Arab Rail Networks, which was held in Aleppo, the Syrian Arab Republic, from 19 to 21 November 2007. As part of joint strategic preparations for Arab economic and social cooperation, ESCWA is currently preparing a technical report on transport systems in the region and ways of developing them.

9. From 28 October to 4 November 2007, ESCWA also provided technical support to the National Transport Authority of the United Arab Emirates in preparing a framework for the Authority's work and a bill establishing the national committee for the facilitation of transport and trade in the United Arab Emirates.

10. The high-level representation at ESCWA transport-related meetings, contributions to progress reports and discussions at the aforementioned meetings; the increasing demand for transport publications issued by ESCWA; and the number of requests for technical assistance and invitations issued to ESCWA to take part in technical meetings held within and beyond the region all indicate awareness of the importance of the sector to national economies and an appreciation of the transport-related activities and programmes of ESCWA.

11. The table set forth below contains a summary of the progress made in implementing the transport-related activities of the programme of work for the biennium 2006-2007, including additional activities, advisory services, technical cooperation and activities funded by extrabudgetary resources.

**PROGRESS MADE IN IMPLEMENTING TRANSPORT-RELATED ACTIVITIES INCLUDED
IN THE PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2006-2007**

Activity	Achievement
1. The provision of technical services to intergovernmental bodies and expert institutions	
(a) The provision of services to intergovernmental meetings	
(i) The provision of technical services to the seventh session of the Committee on Transport;	The seventh session of the Committee on Transport was held in Beirut from 17 to 19 April 2006.
(ii) The provision of technical services to the eighth session of the Committee on Transport.	The eighth session of the Committee on Transport was held in Beirut from 27 to 29 March 2007.
(b) Documents to be submitted to legislative institutions	
(i) Submission to ESCWA of the report on the seventh session of the Committee on Transport;	The report on the seventh session of the Committee on Transport was issued on 1 May 2006 as document E/ESCWA/GRID/2006/IG.1/4.
(ii) Submission to ESCWA of the report on the eighth session of the Committee on Transport;	The report on the eighth session of the Committee on Transport was issued on 10 September 2007 as document E/ESCWA/GRID/2007/IG.1/5.
(iii) Submission to the Committee on Transport of the report containing the draft plan of action for implementing the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq;	The draft plan of action was prepared and adopted at the seventh session of the Committee on Transport after some amendments were incorporated. It was issued as document E/ESCWA/GRID/2006/IG.1/3(Part I)/Add.2.
(iv) Submission to the Committee on Transport of the report on follow-up to the plan of action for implementing the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq;	A report containing a summary of achievements set forth in document E/ESCWA/GRID/2006/IG.1/3 (Part I)/Add.1 was presented at the seventh session. A report on implementation of the recommendations made at the seventh session, which contains a summary of what has been accomplished in that regard up to the time of the eighth session, was set forth in document E/ESCWA/GRID/2007/IG.1/4(Part I), and presented at the eighth session.
(v) Submission to the Committee on Transport of the report on follow-up to implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on Maritime Transport Cooperation in the Arab Mashreq;	A report containing a summary of what has been achieved in implementing the Memorandum of Understanding was set forth in document E/ESCWA/GRID/2006/IG.1/3(Part I)Add.4, and presented at the seventh session. The draft plan of action for implementing the Memorandum of Understanding, as set forth in document E/ESCWA/GRID/2006/IG.1/7(Part I)/Add.2/Rev.1, was presented at the eighth session.

Activity	Achievement
(vi) Submission to the Committee on Transport of the report on progress achieved in establishing national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade in the countries of the ESCWA region.	A report containing a summary of what has been achieved in establishing national committees was presented at the eighth session, as set forth in E/ESCWA/GRID/2007/IG.1/4(Part I)/Add.1.
(c) Technical services provided to expert groups	
(i) Expert Group Meeting on Integrated Transport in the ESCWA Region;	The title of that meeting, which was held in Cairo from 4 to 6 September 2007, was amended to "Expert Group Meeting on International Multimodal Transport in the ESCWA Region". The report of the meeting is set forth in document E/ESCWA/GRID/2007/7.
(ii) Expert Group Meeting on Facilitating Transport to Achieve Regional Integration.	The title of that meeting, which was held in Cairo from 12 to 14 February 2007, was amended to "Expert Group Meeting: Towards the Implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding on Maritime Transport Cooperation in the Arab Mashreq: the role of Governments and the private sector in activating and developing maritime traffic and the application of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the seaports of ESCWA member countries".
2. Other technical activities	
(a) Recurrent publications	
(i) <i>Annual Review of Developments in Globalization and Regional Integration in the Countries of the ESCWA Region</i> , Nos. 5 and 6;	Contribution to issue No. 5 during 2006 and issue No. 6 during 2007. The title of the publication was amended to <i>Annual Review of Developments in Globalization and Regional Integration in the Arab Countries</i> .
(ii) <i>The Methodological Framework for the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq (the ITSAM Framework)</i> , Vol. 5.	To be prepared in 2007.
(b) Non-recurrent publications	
(i) A study is being prepared by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and ESCWA on air transport in Western Asia;	The study was published as document E/ESCWA/GRID/2007/3 on 26 July 2007 with the title <i>ESCWA Study on Air Transport in the Arab World</i> .
(ii) Best practices for the use of ICT in the seaports of ESCWA member countries;	The study was published as document E/ESCWA/GRID/2007/12 on 30 October 2007 with the title <i>Good Practices in Information and Communications Technology (ICT)</i> .
(iii) Report on monitoring road safety in ESCWA member countries.	The study was published as document E/ESCWA/GRID/2007/13 on 13 November 2007 with the title <i>Review of Road Safety in Selected Countries of the ESCWA Region</i> .

Activity	Achievement
(c) Electronic issuances and audio-visual materials	
Maintenance and completion of the ITSAM geographical database.	The database is currently being completed.
3. Technical cooperation	
(a) Field projects	
Capacity-building through cooperation in developing regional land and land-sea transport linkages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A study on the economic advantages of regional linkages, which were identified by experts, was presented at the Joint Interregional Seminar on Capacity-building in Economic Assessment of Interregional Linkages and in Facilitation of International Transport, which was jointly organized and attended by ESCWA, the Economic and Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The seminar was held in Cairo from 23 to 26 June 2007. • Maps are being prepared on land and land-sea transport linkages in countries of the ESCWA region and their links to other regions in the world. • By the end of 2007, the database on transport experts in the Arab Mashreq had been established and the requisite data on transport experts in member countries had been gathered. • The final Joint Interregional Seminar between ESCWA, ECE, ESCAP and ECA on Experience Sharing and Lessons Learned from the Interregional Transport Linkages Project, in which all the regional commissions participated, was held in Abu Dhabi from 23 to 25 October 2007.
(b) Advisory services	
Provision of advisory services on ITSAM.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ESCWA was invited to attend the seventeenth session of the League of Arab States Technical Committee for Land Transport, which was held in Cairo on 29 and 30 April 2007. ESCWA participated in a discussion on the axel loads and weight limits of lorries in the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq and intervened in questions related to the draft agreement on international multimodal transport of goods in the Arab Mashreq and the terms of reference for a study on completing infrastructure links for land transport and maritime connections between Arab countries.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At the invitation of the League of Arab States, ESCWA collaborated with the General Secretariat of the League and the Ministry of Transport of Algeria in holding an expert meeting on recommendations for connecting the railway network in Algeria to networks in the Arab Mashreq. The meeting was held in Algiers from 6 to 8 May 2007, during which ESCWA presented two reviews, one on ITSAM, and the other on the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq and the plan of action for implementing the Agreement. It also distributed to participants a set of pertinent documents, studies and maps. ESCWA participated in the discussions, contributed to the drafting of the recommendations and answered questions that were raised on the issue. On the fringes of that meeting, ESCWA participated in a brief expert group meeting, which was held in Algiers on 8 May 2007, with a view to determining the specifications of the network of international roads in Algeria and linking them with those in the Arab Mashreq. In the course of that meeting, ESCWA presented a concise review of ITSAM, the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq, and the plan of action for implementing the Agreement, and distributed a set of relevant documents, studies and maps that had been issued by ESCWA. <li>• At the invitation of the League of Arab States, ESCWA participated in an Expert Group Meeting on the Sectoral Approach to Regional Integration in the Arab World, which was held in Cairo on 11 and 12 July 2007; at that Meeting, ESCWA presented a review on the role of the transport sector in achieving Arab regional integration. <li>• Technical assistance was provided to the National Transport Authority of the United Arab Emirates from 27 October to 4 November 2007 in preparing a framework for the Authority's work and a bill establishing the national committee for facilitation of transport and trade in the United Arab Emirates. <li>• In a meeting held in Amman on 17 and 18 November 2007, technical assistance was provided to the Ministry of Transport in Jordan for the second phase of preparing the

Activity	Achievement
	<p>draft law on international multimodal transport in Jordan. During the meeting, the Ministry was assisted in preparing the executive regulations for a law on the international multimodal transport of goods in Jordan, which includes a system for licensing forwarding agents for the international multimodal transport of goods and a system for insuring against the liability that results from international multimodal transport operations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the invitation of the League of Arab States, ESCWA participated in a meeting organized by the Technical Secretariat of the Council of Arab Ministers of Transport in conjunction with the Arab Railway Union, which was held in Aleppo, Syrian Arab Republic, from 19 to 21 November 2007, in order to prepare the layout of routes connecting railways in Arab countries. ESCWA presented a review of the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq, the benefits of the Agreement and its extension to include all Arab countries. The meeting made recommendations, including that ESCWA should be requested to prepare a map of connecting routes in Arab countries, pursuant to the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq and the proposals of the Arab Railway Union and the Maghreb Rail Transport Committee. • As part of the preparations for joint strategic Arab economic and social cooperation, technical support was provided to the League of Arab States in preparing a technical report on the current status of transport systems in Arab countries and means of developing them. In consequence of that support, an ESCWA expert visited the ministries of transport of the following countries: Egypt (Cairo, 1-4 December 2007), Jordan (Amman, 18 and 25 November 2007), Saudi Arabia (Riyadh, 9 December 2007) and the Syrian Arab Republic (Damascus, 22 November 2007). An ESCWA expert also made an official visit for the same purpose to each of the following: the Arab Railway Union (Aleppo, Syrian Arab Republic, 19-21 November 2007), the Arab Union of Land Transport (Amman, 24 November 2007), the League of Arab States (Cairo, 2-3 December 2007), the

Activity	Achievement
	<p>Council of Arab Economic Unity (Cairo, 2-4 December 2007), the Arab Academy for Science and Technology and Maritime Transport (Alexandria, Egypt, 5-6 December 2007), the Arab Federation of Chambers of Shipping (Alexandria, 5-6 December 2007), the Federation of Arab Ports (Alexandria, 5-6 December 2007), and the Gulf Cooperation Council (Riyadh, 8 December 2007).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESCWA participated in a meeting of United Nations focal points in preparation for the First United Nations Global Road Safety Week, and took part in the second meeting of the Global Organizing Committee, which was held in Muscat from 25 to 28 February 2007. <li>• ESCWA took part in the Second Global Road Safety Stakeholders' Forum, which was held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva on 25 April 2007, and presented a review of the most serious problems that the countries in the region face in terms of road safety and current and future needs for limiting the negative effects of road accidents. <li>• ESCWA participated in preparing activities for the First United Nations Global Road Safety Week, which was held in Geneva, from 23 to 29 April 2007, and for the World Youth Assembly that was held during the Week. <li>• At the invitation of the Ministry of the Interior of the United Arab Emirates and the World Health Organization, ESCWA participated in the closing ceremony of the First United Nations Global Road Safety Week, which was held in Abu Dhabi on 29 April 2007. <li>• At the invitation of the Road Safety Council of Western Australia, ESCWA participated in the Third International Road Safety Conference, which was held in Perth, Australia, on 29 and 30 November 2007. During the conference, ESCWA presented a detailed review of the safety situation on roads in the ESCWA region and the efforts of both the United Nations and ESCWA in that field, particularly in preparing a regional programme of work for road safety.