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Report

Twenty-fourth session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics Cairo, 10–11 January 2024

Summary

The Committee on Transport and Logistics of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its twenty-fourth session in Cairo, on 10 and 11 January 2024. The Committee discussed the issues on its agenda, in particular developments related to the transport and logistics sector and their impact on the Arab region, such as logistics performance in Arab States, the development of sustainable transport, and electric mobility options and opportunities. The Committee was also briefed on the progress made in the implementation of activities under the ESCWA programme plan in the field of transport and logistics, the level of implementation of the recommendations of its previous session and developments related to the sector in member States. The session included a round-table discussion on financing road safety.

At the end of its session, the Committee made a number of recommendations, some directed to the ESCWA secretariat and others to member States. The present report contains these recommendations and outlines a summary of the discussions on each agenda item of the session.

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Introduction

1. The Committee on Transport and Logistics of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its twenty-fourth session in Cairo, on 10 and 11 January 2024 pursuant to ESCWA resolution [213 \(XIX\)](#) of 7 May 1997 concerning the establishment of a Committee on Transport within the Commission, which was endorsed by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in 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 Committee.
2. The present report contains a presentation of the recommendations reached by the Committee at the end of its session and the most prominent points raised in the discussions.

I. Recommendations made by the Committee on Transport and Logistics at its twenty-fourth session

3. At the end of its twenty-fourth session, the Committee adopted a set of recommendations, some directed to ESCWA member States and others to the ESCWA secretariat.

A. Recommendations to ESCWA member States

4. The Committee on Transport and Logistics made the following recommendations to ESCWA member States:

(a) Welcome the progress made by the ESCWA secretariat in the implementation of activities of its programme plan in the field of transport and logistics, technical cooperation activities and recommendations of the Committee at its twenty-third session;

(b) Formally notify ESCWA of States' willingness, if any, to join the Arab Integrated Road Safety Observatory (AIRSO) and nominate national coordinators for this project if this action has not yet been taken;

(c) Emphasize that the development of logistical efficiency requires keeping pace with technological developments, simplifying procedures and implementing international conventions related to trade facilitation;

(d) Raise port competitiveness from a holistic perspective, not just through increased investments but by adopting a sound port management approach, keeping pace with technological developments, improving infrastructure efficiency and simplifying procedures;

(e) Maximize road safety financing opportunities by leveraging available resources and learning from successful regional and international experiences to advance national efforts towards improving road safety and accelerating progress in the implementation of the relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs);

(f) Give due consideration to the transition to clean electric mobility through policies that support this sector's growth, such as encouraging investment in its infrastructure, stimulating participation in the global production chains of electric transport, and strengthening partnerships with countries that have successfully introduced electric vehicles into their urban development and transport strategies, in addition to partnerships with the private sector involved in this field;

(g) Welcome efforts to develop sustainable transport that supports the achievement of the SDGs, and benefit from the guidelines and technical studies developed by ESCWA and other United Nations organizations in this field;

(h) Participate in international forums related to sustainable transport and road safety, particularly those related to preparing the implementation plan for the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport 2026–

2036, and participate in the Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety to be held in Marrakech, Morocco in February 2025.

B. Recommendations to the ESCWA secretariat

5. The Committee on Transport and Logistics made the following recommendations to the ESCWA secretariat:

(a) Continue to monitor global developments, explore new trends affecting the transport and logistics sector and supply chains, and study their repercussions on Arab States;

(b) Continue to provide technical support in the field of transport and logistics to interested member States, especially on the issues of sustainable transport and road safety, develop plans to connect with global and regional supply chains, and apply technology to facilitate transport and trade between Arab countries, in accordance with available resources;

(c) Support member States in preparing the implementation plan for the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport 2026–2036 by developing a preliminary vision on key issues affecting the Arab region;

(d) Complete the development of the geographic information system (GIS) project for transport networks and facilities in the Arab region in accordance with available resources;

(e) Introduce ESCWA agreements related to the transport sector to encourage the States that have newly acceded to ESCWA to join these agreements, and explore the prospects of updating and developing them;

(f) Give due consideration to the risks posed by cybersecurity breaches to the transport sector and infrastructure, and make recommendations to mitigate them, in cooperation with the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport and any other stakeholders;

(g) Continue to provide temporary support for the AIRSO activities, and work with Morocco to finalize the hosting procedures in accordance with the standards set by ESCWA and the procedures and regulations of the United Nations;

(h) Promote the transfer of successful regional and global experiences in the fields of sustainable transport and road safety financing in cooperation with international and regional funding entities and relevant organizations, and support the work of the United Nations Road Safety Fund to ensure that Arab countries continue to benefit from it.

II. Topics of discussion

A. Follow-up issues

1. *Implementation of activities under the ESCWA programme plan and of technical cooperation activities in the field of transport and logistics*
(Agenda item 4)

6. On the basis of document [E/ESCWA/C.5/2023/3](#), the representative of the ESCWA secretariat presented the activities carried out by the secretariat in the field of transport and logistics under its programme plan for 2023 and the technical cooperation activities implemented at the request of member States. The representative of the ESCWA secretariat stated that those activities had included the preparation of working papers and studies on the latest developments in the GIS for transport networks and facilities in the Arab region, logistics performance, road safety financing, land electric mobility and the development of sustainable transport in Arab

countries. He invited member States to make interventions on the implementation of recommendations addressed to member States at the previous session.

7. During the discussion, the representative of Iraq enquired about a request made for the establishment of a sustainable transport centre and the organization of training courses, which was not mentioned in the report on the implementation of technical cooperation activities. The representative of Egypt suggested organizing remote meetings on road safety and adopting a systematic approach to manage priorities, while focusing on a single priority that benefited all. He hoped that Arab States would focus on one goal and submit road safety financing projects accordingly, and suggested designing a handbook on road safety. The representative of Morocco requested a brief clarification of the criteria related to submitting requests for technical cooperation under the topics of interest of ESCWA. The representative of Egypt wished that the workshop on climate change and its effects on adaptation in the Mediterranean countries had been mentioned in the awareness-raising section. She asked about the time needed for the ESCWA secretariat to respond to any request for technical support. The representative of Lebanon suggested that a technical paper on cyberattacks and ways to assist member States in preventing them should be prepared and presented at the following session.

8. In response, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat explained that the report on progress in the implementation of activities did not address the request of Iraq as it reviewed activities carried out in 2023 and not those planned for 2024. He reviewed the *modus operandi* of the United Nations Road Safety Fund and its call for project proposals on improving road safety in low- and middle-income countries. He also commended the efforts of Egypt at the Mediterranean Conference to raise awareness on adapting the transport infrastructure to climate change. He explained the mechanism for submitting requests for technical cooperation to the ESCWA secretariat and the criteria used to evaluate them before implementation. Among those criteria, requests should fall within the areas of competence of ESCWA and be integrated with national efforts and those of organizations operating in the country. Their impact and the potential change resulting from their implementation should also be assessed.

*2. Geographic information system for transport networks and facilities in the
Arab region: latest developments
(Agenda item 5)*

9. On the basis of document [E/ESCWA/C.5/2023/4](#), the representative of the ESCWA secretariat presented the latest developments in the GIS project for transport networks and facilities in the Arab region. He briefed the representatives of member States on the plan of the ESCWA secretariat to continue working on that project in the following phase. He also proposed recommendations to member States on ways to maximize benefits from the project and move forward in the development of the integrated transport system in Arab States. He requested national project coordinators to settle in their posts, to the extent possible, to reduce the training burden on the ESCWA secretariat.

10. In the course of the discussion, the representative of Egypt asked about the possibility of updating maps in the agreements because they dated back more than 20 years, and links had been modified or added to the networks. The representative of Saudi Arabia suggested that agreements on air transport in Arab States should be added in view of the problems facing the region in that sector. The representative of Morocco enquired about the terms of those agreements. For his part, the representative of Libya explained that the Ministry of Transportation was taking new measures regarding international land and maritime connectivity with Algeria, Egypt and Tunisia.

11. In response, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat thanked the representatives of member States for their suggestions and interventions, and listed the names of Arab States that had acceded to ESCWA agreements on transport. He stressed the possibility of amending agreements to include new areas agreed upon by State parties, particularly issues relating to international roads and railways, and not air transport, which was the subject of separate international and Arab agreements.

3. *Implementation of recommendations made by the Committee at its twenty-third session, and developments in the transport and logistics sectors in member States*
(Agenda item 6)

12. On the basis of document E/ESCWA/C.5/2023/5, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat presented the activities carried out by member States in implementation of the recommendations addressed to them by the Committee at its previous session. He highlighted the outputs of those activities based on data provided by the States and compiled in the document. He also reviewed the scope of implementation of the recommendations addressed to the ESCWA secretariat. He shed light on international and Arab cooperation between ESCWA and other stakeholders, the studies and technical papers developed, and the coordination meetings held since the previous session.

B. New issues in the transport and logistics sectors

1. *Logistics performance in the Arab region: overview of developments*
(Agenda item 7)

13. On the basis of document [E/ESCWA/C.5/2023/6](#), the representative of the ESCWA secretariat presented the state of logistics efficiency in the Arab region and the evolution of logistics performance, as well as infrastructure and various indicators with their impact on regional development. He highlighted bottlenecks in ports as one of the important issues in logistics efficiency.

14. During the discussion, the representative of Lebanon stated that most studies on logistics focused on the logistics performance of containers, which accounted for only 12 per cent of global cargo traffic in one year, while bulk cargo and general freight accounted for the remainder equally divided, i.e. approximately 44 per cent. He said that world shipping companies had no interest in integrating ports within the same State, and the core issue was international control over ocean trade routes. Unlike the supply chain management, those companies benefited more from container transport than from bulk cargo and general freight. He pointed out that national companies managed most of the general cargo because they were efficient and capable, and because of the proximity of supply chains, stressing the need to improve the national logistics performance of Arab countries. He hoped that a national policy for ports would be developed to encourage their integration.

15. The representative of Iraq wished to include land ports, not just seaports, in the future studies of ESCWA, giving the example of Iraq, which transported most goods by land and a small percentage by sea. The representative of Egypt enquired about the possibility of applying joint inspection of goods between two neighbouring ports. This measure would enhance logistics performance by shortening dwell times in ports, thus benefiting perishable goods. The representative of the Sudan reported that her country scored low on the logistics performance index because customs officers were always opposed to improvements, digital transformation and automation.

16. The representative of Libya suggested that communication be made with the authorities in Egypt to consolidate customs procedures for market access of agricultural goods and products. He also suggested providing the appropriate technology for Arab States to keep pace with the development in that sector, pointing out the need for innovative thinking in the region, especially regarding the cost of inspection and security procedures. He regretted that Arab States imposed transport controls, which delayed the clearance of goods. The representative of Jordan suggested including service providers, not just port end-users, in the survey dedicated to preparing a study on the logistics performance index. He stated that the study did not include the security dimension, despite its importance and impact on the efficiency of ports.

17. The representative of Saudi Arabia suggested that the successful experiences of Arab ports that scored high on the index should be reviewed to identify areas or opportunities for improvement in ports. He also suggested that Arab States should adopt consolidated procedures. He pointed out that Saudi Arabia launched the Fasah platform for shipping agents, freight forwarders and port operators, which expedited trade

transactions for importers and exporters in ports. One of the services available on the Fasah platform was setting appointments for trucks, which greatly addressed the problem of congestion in the port due to trucks. The representative of Morocco suggested highlighting other transport sectors, such as road and railway transport, and the importance of Arab integration to develop logistics terminal networks in Arab States and transform them into communication nodes. She hoped that those points would be included in future studies on logistics.

18. The representative of the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport requested adding a matrix on the correlation between Arab countries to the correlation index, which would result in 42 correlations classified between strong, medium and weak. He also suggested linking that matrix to the volume of trade. He presented the idea of preparing a study on lessons learned and calculating the relative infrastructure efficiency in future studies, noting that the World Bank tackled the infrastructure efficiency index in its studies.

19. The World Bank representative explained that they currently had two indices. First, the logistics performance index, which was partly based on the end-user survey and was related to customs, infrastructure and timeliness. Second, the container port performance index, which only measured the performance of container ports. He added that Arab States performed well on both indices, as a number of Arab ports ranked in the top ten scores. The World Bank representative suggested a presentation on successful experiences in some ports that scored high on those indices, which would help in adopting specific and simplified procedures.

20. In response, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat thanked the representatives of member States for their valuable observations and suggestions, and responded to the representative of Lebanon with two points: first, the focus was on containers because they pertained to international trade, which was a matter of interest to countries with economic influence, and because container trade was an important component of global value chains. He went on to stress the high added value of manufactured and semi-finished goods, regardless of other trades and their importance. The second point was the integration of local ports, which was a complex problem due to the absence of integration and the lack of attempts at integration between ports. He noted that intense competition prevailed between neighbouring Arab ports, and even between ports in the same country. He saw a great achievement in raising the level of integration and coordination between Arab ports. The issue was not limited to investments and infrastructure, but also required efficiency and the optimal use of available capabilities, he said. Infrastructure could be available at various levels in many ports, but only a maximum of 30 per cent of it was utilized. He gave the port of Beirut as an example, noting that it had accommodated the trade needs of the Syrian Arab Republic at the beginning of the crisis without constructing a new pier which had previously been planned, and this increased its efficiency. Consequently, the number of containers received at the port doubled as a result of the increasing need, and the trade of the Syrian Arab Republic was mostly carried out through Lebanon.

21. The representative of the ESCWA secretariat considered that evaluating the situation based on the logistics performance index was subjective and depended on user impressions. The result was based on user satisfaction, regardless of the actual quality level. He also stressed the importance of user evaluation being accurate and reflecting reality. He supported the proposal of the representative of Egypt for the joint inspection of goods, which meant mutual recognition of State procedures, noting that this was one of the recommendations of the World Trade Organization. He also supported the proposal for coordination between common institutions, i.e. cross-border institutional arrangements, which would achieve prior inter-State coordination and determine operating conditions. He suggested that the concerned State should be engaged in the discussion of the World Bank report findings to identify gaps in the evaluation.

22. In response to the representative of the Sudan, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat suggested upgrading the capacity of port operators to optimize the use of technology. If those efforts were not heeded, new personnel capable of accommodating modern technologies could be hired as part of a comprehensive management of change. Responding to the last comment of the representative of Jordan, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat clarified that the security issue could not be underestimated or overlooked. Countries that achieved high efficiency in facilitating trade did not overlook the security issue but sought to restructure

or maybe shorten their procedures, without compromising basic interests such as security, health, intellectual property, specifications and others.

23. In response to the representative of Morocco, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat stated that the role of technology was currently pivotal, but that other roles should not be overlooked, such as administrative efficiency, infrastructure and financial efficiency, among others. He talked about a new element that emerged besides technology, namely artificial intelligence (AI), which could make a difference between success and failure as it saved a lot of time. Indeed, AI played an important role in customs and logistics, as it compensated for human shortcomings and promoted the development of databases. The representative of the ESCWA secretariat welcomed the sharing of experiences among States in sessions dedicated to reviewing and sharing their most prominent successes.

2. Round-table discussion: financing road safety (Agenda item 8)

24. On the basis of document [E/ESCWA/C.5/2023/7](#), a round-table discussion on financing road safety was held, with the participation of the Islamic Development Bank and in collaboration with the World Bank.

25. At the outset, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat delivered an introductory presentation on the situation of road safety in Arab countries. He highlighted the sustainable national financing possibilities to improve road safety, taking advantage of the programmes and opportunities provided by various United Nations organizations and international funding entities. He stressed the importance of leveraging local resources to implement integrated and sustainable programmes aimed at improving road safety and coordinated by leading national entities, noting that the available international funding was only sufficient for the national capacity-building phase.

26. This was followed by a presentation by the Head of the Global Road Safety Facility at the World Bank, Mr. Said Dahdah, on road safety management and financing. Mr. Dahdah addressed the high cost of road crashes, especially in low- and middle-income countries, where it amounted to about \$1.7 trillion, equivalent to 4 per cent of the gross domestic product. He underscored the importance of comprehensive national management of road safety issues and provided examples on the financing of such activities from local resources.

27. During the discussion, the representative of Iraq presented his country's experience in road safety financing. He described the situation as painful because the majority of victims were young men and women, adding that poor road conditions were the main cause of road crashes. He referred to a 2015 decision in Iraq that enabled the Ministry of Interior to deduct an amount from car registration fees for road maintenance. It was then found that the amounts deducted from the registration fee and deposited in the account of the Ministry of Finance were not disbursed. After numerous correspondence with the Ministry of Finance, the funds were released, which would help in the repair and maintenance of damaged roads.

28. The representative of Egypt suggested that the lead agency should be independent of any ministry, that its staff should be full-time, professional and subordinate to the President or the Prime Minister, and that political will should be harnessed to address the problem. He suggested that the collection of speeding fees should be shared by the State and the private sector, and that the human cadre should be trained and qualified to deal with road safety as a mission and not as a job. He concluded by stressing the need to scrutinize the fees and designs of the new road safety projects in the five phases set for that purpose.

29. The representative of Saudi Arabia spoke about his country's experiences in road safety. He referred to the recent establishment of the National Road Safety Center chaired by the Minister of Transport, and praised the work of the Ministerial Committee of Traffic Safety headed by the Minister of Health. All those parties worked for one goal: achieving the global SDG indicator 3.6.1 by reducing the death rate due to road traffic injuries per 100,000 population. He added that the Ministerial Committee of Traffic Safety held regular meetings and

responded to every potential road crash in Saudi Arabia. One of its tasks was to follow up and implement the national transformation initiative and strategies to enhance road safety in cooperation with the concerned authorities. It worked on specific pillars, namely: stimulating awareness, education and community engagement; strengthening and establishing optimal road infrastructure; enhancing data collection, consolidation and measurement methods to ensure the application of road safety laws; establishing a comprehensive system to respond to road traffic injuries; enhancing crash management; and ensuring effective traffic management and vehicle security and safety. The representative of Saudi Arabia also addressed the issue of the 50 per cent increase in the price of diesel since January, for example in Algeria and Egypt. He suggested enhancing air ambulance services to respond to road traffic injuries and stressed that strengthening the health-care capacities of first responders to injuries could be very useful, especially in remote areas and roads. He also proposed providing public transport in densely populated cities to minimize the use of private vehicles and significantly reduce road crashes. He concluded that Saudi Arabia had witnessed a reduction of almost 35 per cent over the past five years in the number of deaths and injuries caused by road crashes, and aimed to achieve a 50 per cent decrease in line with Vision 2030.

30. The representative of Yemen spoke about his country's experience in the field of road safety, explaining that the authorities had sought to establish a national authority to coordinate the efforts of various stakeholders in road safety. He also referred to the establishment of a fund for the maintenance of roads and bridges under the Ministry of Public Works and Roads, which therefore represented only one entity. Thus, all entities were operating individually and had never been brought together to coordinate their work. Roads had been badly damaged as a result of war, and main roads had been cut off, he said, adding that the journey from Sanaa to Aden currently took 15 days, up from three hours before the war. Trucks were also forced to take rough and narrow mountain roads, sometimes causing them to slide, incur damage and result in fatalities. He stressed that most road crashes and deaths were not recorded, and that road fatalities were recorded only when crashes occurred without following up on them in hospitals.

31. The representative of Morocco presented her country's experience in the field of road safety. She stated that great importance was attached to the methods of reducing road crashes and ensuring road safety, which was one of the complex areas that required multi-stakeholder intervention at national, regional and local levels. Morocco was not immune to road crashes, which were taking on dangerous proportions and increasing day by day, causing a heavy loss of life. An urgent intervention was therefore needed to reverse that alarming trend and reduce its severe effects. To that end, Morocco adopted a holistic approach through a coordinated and integrated national strategy. Several regulatory reforms were implemented in the area of road safety since the launch of the first national strategy in 2005 on the occasion of the first meeting of the ministerial committee in charge of road safety. Road safety was also institutionalized through the Prime Minister's chairmanship of the ministerial committee for road safety, which was mandated to determine public policy trends and objectives in the field of road safety and ensure their implementation. The work of that committee was strengthened through the establishment of permanent committees, at the central level, chaired by the Minister of Transport and Logistics, as well as regional committees for road safety. That institutional framework had a significant impact on accelerating the implementation of road safety measures, in particular those related to reforming the legislative framework by adopting a law on the highway code, improving the quality of road transport infrastructure, strengthening road surveillance and preventing road crashes. The National Road Safety Agency was established in 2020 to overcome the constraints associated with overlapping responsibilities in the field of road safety, and to ensure convergence between stakeholders. In that context, a set of quasi-fiscal fees were allocated to the National Road Safety Agency to finance important projects such as the modernization of road surveillance equipment and vehicle speed and load monitoring devices, and the financing of operations to enhance national road safety conditions and raise awareness among road users. Research and innovation activities were also encouraged by engaging higher institutes and universities in national efforts to reduce road crashes. In addition, a system for rescue, ambulance, rapid intervention and care for the injured was approved, which led to a significant reduction in the repercussions of road crashes, which had been increasing as a result of the movement and increase of transport modes. Funding was also allocated for the development of transport for the injured, in particular ambulances equipped with first aid kits and helicopters for transporting the injured in isolated and remote areas.

32. In the same context, the representative of Qatar noted the establishment of the National Traffic Safety Committee in 2010, under the chairmanship of the Minister of Interior. One of its tasks was to develop the public policy for road safety and traffic movement through the application of technical, legislative, research and medical regulations in cooperation with national public and private institutions. The Committee also developed a vision for Qatar on road safety that was based on the following pillars: building knowledge and capacity; implementing international and strategic plans, including the United Nations 2030 plans and targets on road safety, and the Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030 with its targets; reducing road deaths and serious injuries by 50 per cent during the period 2021–2030; implementing the United Nations Political Declaration; exchanging knowledge between States and institutions; and encouraging the spread of advanced sustainable vehicles. In addition, the Ministry of Interior selected around 14 sub-plans for the Ministry of Transport (out of the 34 plans under the Political Declaration) and identified its programmes and projects, including the road network assets survey, the smart transportation strategy, the directional sign development strategy, the international road assessment programme (Q-RAP), traffic congestion reports, the review and evaluation of road network safety requirements, and the national road safety strategy, among others.

33. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic discussed the issue of sustainable national financing to improve road safety in his country. He pointed to the establishment of the Supreme National Committee for Road Safety in 2009, under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. The Committee was tasked with approving the national road safety strategy in the Syrian Arab Republic, coordinating and following up on ministerial plans to implement the strategy, monitoring road safety indicators and making decisions to reduce road crashes. He also mentioned that the Technical Committee on Traffic Safety, affiliated with the Supreme National Committee for Road Safety and chaired by the Minister of Transport, was concerned with the technical aspect of road safety. Road safety was greatly affected by the outbreak of war in 2011 as a result of the accompanying unilateral coercive measures, which hindered the development of the national road safety strategy. The war had also damaged the infrastructure of many highways, bridges and tunnels connecting the Syrian governorates, which had resulted in increased crashes, and consequently more injuries and deaths. Unilateral coercive economic sanctions had also cast a shadow over the reality of foreign trade and the foreign exchange rate. As a result, most suppliers were reluctant to supply materials for improved road safety and spare parts for vehicle maintenance, and the devaluation of the national currency did not help to secure those imports. However, the Ministry of Transport strived to repair and maintain damaged infrastructure, rehabilitate bridges, restore hundreds of kilometres of damaged roads and install traffic signs of all kinds in accordance with international standards. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic praised the efforts of the factory of the Public Establishment for Road Communications, which had manufactured traffic signs, and the efforts of the technical staff that continuously inspected and maintained traffic signs and planted new ones in the necessary locations. In terms of legislation, periodic amendments were made to the Traffic Law, the latest version of which included stricter financial fines owing to their impact on reducing traffic violations. He stressed that the Ministry of Transport relied on ESCWA efforts to establish the AIRSO, which would serve as a form of joint Arab cooperation leading to an exchange of experiences and knowledge among Arab countries, and as an incentive to promote road safety in the Syrian Arab Republic. He stated that the national financing of road safety was limited to the budget allocations made by the Government for that purpose. According to the plan of the Public Establishment for Road Communications, a part of the 2024 budget allocations was channelled to repairing the most damaged locations, especially the Damascus-Homs-Tartous-Latakia-Hama-Aleppo highways, and providing them with traffic safety as a first priority, then focusing on the Damascus-Palmyra-Deir Ezzor axis, and completing the maintenance of the Deir Ezzor, Mayadeen and Al Bukamal axes as a second priority. He praised the continuous work to develop traffic sign factories and increase their production, and focus on rehabilitating many road scales for trucks and linking them electronically. He finally noted that the work on studies, research and awareness campaigns had begun to promote safety, while relying on ESCWA as a house of expertise to support the State's ongoing efforts in that regard.

34. The representative of Libya reviewed the state of road safety in his country, lamenting that it was the worst among Arab countries, with 27 deaths registered in traffic collisions per 100,000 people. Preliminary estimates revealed an increase in the number of deaths to 33, which was very high and dangerous. Therefore, the Land Transport Authority at the Ministry of Transportation sought to raise the level of road safety. As for

the financing of road safety, the Government established a committee to lift fuel subsidies in Libya, where fuel prices were the lowest globally, adding that this goal was expected to be achieved in less than a month. Libya had a huge number of motor vehicles (one for every 3 people), and most people used their own cars instead of public transport. He explained that lifting subsidies would have a positive impact on reducing the number of deaths, and stated that the ministry was cooperating with ESCWA to establish the National Observatory for Road Safety. He specified that most road fatalities occurred on the coastal road, which stretched more than 2,000 kilometres, hence the recent focus on repairing large areas of that road and adding barriers along the route.

35. The representative of the State of Palestine shared his country's experience in financing road safety, explaining that all funds were allocated to the "road transport" account within the consolidated account of the Ministry of Finance, pointing to a permanent deficit in road safety financing. The State of Palestine also faced the problem of stolen cars in Israel that were transported to the Palestinian territory and sold cheaper than new cars. He concluded by noting the permanent discrepancy between the Ministry of Health statistics and the police statistics regarding road crash deaths.

36. In response, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat thanked the representatives of member States for their observations and suggestions and for presenting the reality of their countries. He stressed the desired role of national or leading road safety agencies in coordinating and promoting integrated efforts to improve road safety, regardless of the names of those agencies and whether they were affiliated with a specific entity or working independently. He explained that the authority in charge of road safety had seven core functions identified in the ESCWA guide prepared in 2017. If those seven functions were available, they would pave the way for the emergence of a leading road safety authority, regardless of its form. He noted that governments expressed their interest in road safety by allocating adequate and sustainable funding for its improvement.

3. Land electric mobility in the Arab region: options and opportunities (Agenda item 9)

37. On the basis of document [E/ESCWA/C.5/2023/8](#), the representative of the ESCWA secretariat presented a report prepared by the secretariat as part of an initiative aimed at analysing the megatrends of change with their significant economic, social, financial, cultural and environmental implications. The report focused predominantly on e-mobility on land, discussing the accelerating increase of electric automobiles, trucks and other road vehicles, including micro-mobility and electric buses in public transportation systems.

38. In the course of the discussion, the representative of Egypt shared his country's experience in that area. He explained that Egypt decided to modernize mass transit by electric buses, so it began manufacturing and testing the product, but faced many challenges, including the import of chargers. He stated that the production of chargers in Egypt would begin within a year, as the Ministry of Electricity had prepared a law on the cost of charging from public chargers with the participation of the private sector. The ministry prepared a price list for public and private transport, which encouraged the private sector to participate in the project. Therefore, the private sector began installing chargers in several areas and facilitating access to them through an application, and it received a tariff fee per kilowatt. The representative of Egypt was proud of his country's success in manufacturing 300 electric buses in record time, some of which were exported to Germany and London. He tackled the challenges faced by Egypt in obtaining and recycling battery manufacturing materials, and addressing their environmental impact. He announced the possibility of signing a localization contract to establish a factory for batteries and chassis in Ain Sokhna in Egypt. Another challenge was the quality and cost of electricity used. He stressed that the initial orientation was to invest the country's natural resources, such as the sun, air and waves, in energy production. He concluded by saying that he favoured systematic and rational transition and diversification of energy sources.

39. For his part, the representative of Iraq listed the reasons for not switching to electrical energy, such as lack of experience, difficult maintenance and high cost, and suggested mentioning those reasons in the report. The representative of Egypt shared her country's experience in the field of electric transport, noting the

expanding trend of metro projects, of which five lines had been implemented so far along with an electric high-speed train network. A higher council was formed to localize the automotive industry in Egypt and proved its economic feasibility, thus initiating the manufacturing process with incentives for the electric car industry. She mentioned that conventional vehicles caused pollution due to carbon emissions with impacts on global warming and health savings. She concluded that clear data and figures were needed to prepare feasibility studies and future plans.

40. The representative of Libya stressed the need to benefit from the experiences of Arab countries, especially regarding energy patterns, as those experiences were more relevant to the Arab region. He mentioned that the region had the potential to become the first producer of alternative solar energy, pointing out that there were valuable experiences of solar energy production in Morocco and Saudi Arabia. The representative of the State of Palestine noted that his country relied on European standards in importing cars. He noted that the European Union Strategic Plan towards 2050 called for reliance on electricity in all forms of land, sea and air transport. The State of Palestine relied heavily on electrical energy but struggled to meet demand.

41. The representative of Lebanon asked about the international trend on the issue of energy: should fossil energy be totally abandoned with a total transition to clean energy, or should there be a dual use of polluting energy and clean energy?

42. The representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) asked whether a study had been prepared to show the environmental impact of manufacturing electric vehicles and batteries, and whether a net-zero balance had been achieved in manufacturing. He also enquired about the extent of experience that Arab countries had in that field and whether there were Arab institutions recycling components that were completely different from those used in manufacturing cars with an internal combustion engine. Finally, he enquired about the linkage between the sectors of precious metals used in manufacturing electric vehicles and technology in the Arab region.

43. The representative of the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport suggested that electric mobility should cover all modes of transport. He specified that sustainability in electric mobility implied **finding** alternative energy, **reusing**, and **reducing waste**, and that the source of electricity might be solar energy or another form. He also tackled the six factors of reverse logistics that were in line with the blue economy and circular economy and that were not mentioned in research and applications in the Arab region. He suggested that a recommendation should be made on reverse logistics investment.

44. In response, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat thanked the representatives of member States for their enriching inputs. He pointed out that the report and the intervention were not limited to energy transition or to the transition from fossil fuels to sustainable and alternative energy, and that the report did not tackle all problems facing sustainable energy generation, disposal of materials and the environmental impact. All those problems accompanied energy production in general and were also found in household energy generation through solar panels and batteries, and were a source of concern for all. The report briefly addressed the transport sector, the administrative and operational problems it faced, the challenges it involved and the economically significant opportunities it offered.

45. In addition, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat noted the willingness to shift to clean energy. If that development was not accompanied in the Arab region by policy formulation, infrastructure equipping and the production of electric vehicles, the region would eventually become a dumpsite for conventional vehicles that had an internal combustion engine. Subsequently, the West, which would have disposed of those vehicles or pollutants, would come to impose conditions on the region that would be considered as a cause of environmental pollution. Therefore, keeping pace with that development was crucial to prevent the region from lagging behind the rest of the world. The region had all the necessary potential, despite the difficulty it faced in finding available technology, which was not produced locally but could be easily imported. The region also had other alternative energy sources such as the sun, and human capabilities that were in constant evolution and capable of dealing with and adapting those developments. The Arab region should achieve self-sufficiency

in the production or export of alternative energy, if possible, but export should not be at the expense of the region's energy transition.

46. The representative of the ESCWA secretariat noted that the problems raised by the WHO representative impeded the transition from fossil fuel-generated energy (for industry, domestic use or transport) to alternative energies (electricity or hydrogen) and should be addressed. He also stressed that the private sector played a key role in transition. Just as it previously had a pivotal contribution in the manufacture, fuelling, charging and maintenance of conventional cars, it should now be central for the development of those industries with the State's support in the early stages. The State must first formulate policies that regulated the clean energy industry, and the private sector would then fulfil its role in implementation.

4. Sustainable transport development in Arab countries (Agenda item 10)

47. On the basis of document [E/ESCWA/C.5/2023/9](#), the representative of the ESCWA secretariat presented ways to develop sustainable transport in Arab countries and its role in achieving the SDGs. He reviewed ESCWA initiatives and the current and future activities of the United Nations in the field of sustainable transport, including the proclamation of the World Sustainable Transport Day, the planning of a high-level meeting during 2024, and the ongoing preparations for the proclamation of the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport starting in 2026.

48. In the course of the discussion, the representative of Egypt pointed out that transport planning was currently changing in the world, shifting from a classic four-step model to an interaction between transport planning and land-use planning, a shift that had recently come into focus in Egypt. The plan was to create sustainable transportation that would lead to the development of new areas, which would in turn attract a new mass of the population and result in activities that would reduce congestion in Cairo. He stressed that transport should always be linked to sustainability.

49. The representative of the State of Palestine expressed his country's keenness to improve the internal organization in the Ministry of Transport, including software and electronic services, to enhance citizen service. He explained that the ministry's hardware and software prevented many cyberattacks on the Ministry of Transport and its data. The ministry cooperated with the Council of Ministers, which took more than one decision in favour of transport and communications, such as the establishment of a public transport company. He pointed out that the State of Palestine had about 84 private transport companies, but only 4 or 5 of them provided excellent service. The State had always sought to provide mass transit and establish a company in cooperation with the private sector, following the leading example of Jenin city. In addition, the Government funded the purchase of smart transport applications in cooperation with municipalities and installed cameras in internal streets for the control of citizens' behaviour and for statistics. The representative of the State of Palestine concluded by stating that the traffic movement between Palestinian cities was currently challenging because of the large number of checkpoints.

C. Date and venue of the twenty-fifth session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics (Agenda item 11)

50. The Committee decided to hold its twenty-fifth session in the last quarter of 2024 at the United Nations House in Beirut, unless a member State offered to host it.

D. Other matters (Agenda item 12)

51. The representative of the ESCWA secretariat gave a presentation evaluating previous sessions of the Committee on Transport and Logistics and reviewing the results of the questionnaires of member State

representatives on the performance of the Committee for the period 2013–2022. The results showed that member State representatives provided a very positive evaluation of previous sessions overall, and that their participation in the sessions over the years had been continuous.

**E. Adoption of recommendations made by the Committee on Transport and Logistics
at its twenty-fourth session
(Agenda item 13)**

52. The recommendations from the discussions were presented to representatives of member States, discussed and adopted after the necessary amendments. The present report sets out the recommendations in their final form.

III. Organization of the session

A. Date and venue

53. The Committee on Transport and Logistics held its twenty-fourth session in Cairo, Egypt, on 10 and 11 January 2024.

B. Opening

54. The Committee on Transport and Logistics opened its twenty-fourth session on 10 January 2024, at 10 a.m. Mr. Mohamed El Moctar Mohamed El Hacene, Leader of the Shared Economic Prosperity Cluster at ESCWA, delivered a speech on behalf of the ESCWA secretariat, in which he thanked the attendees for their participation in the meeting. After reviewing the most important issues that the Committee would address on its agenda, he drew the attention of participants to the extremely dangerous and exceptional circumstances, represented by the Israeli aggression against Gaza and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. He also pointed to the global crisis represented by the militarization of the Red Sea, the increasing risks to maritime transport and international trade, the high costs of shipping and insurance, and the growing risks of increased inflation, which was already high, leading to an increased burden on both consumption and investment. This would also affect the availability of liquidity to finance infrastructure and road safety projects, and would exacerbate overall development challenges in most low- and middle-income countries.

C. Participants

55. Representatives from 15 ESCWA member States participated in the twenty-fourth session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics. Experts and representatives of several regional and international organizations also attended. The list of participants is set out in annex I to the present report.

D. Election of officers

56. Rule 18 of the rules of procedure of ESCWA provides that: “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”. Accordingly, the State of Palestine chaired the twenty-fourth session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics after Somalia assumed the presidency of the twenty-third session, held on 20 and 21 October 2022, until the twenty-fourth session on 10 January 2024. The representative of Iraq assumed the position of Vice-Chair and the representative of Lebanon was appointed Rapporteur.

E. Agenda and organization of work

57. At its first meeting, the Committee on Transport and Logistics adopted the agenda as presented in document [E/ESCWA/C.5/2023/L.1](#), after adding the presentation on the evaluation of the previous sessions of the Committee under item 12: "Other matters".

F. Documents

58. Annex II to the present report contains the list of documents submitted at the twenty-fourth session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics.

Annex I

List of participants

A. ESCWA member States

Algeria

Mr. Boualem Kini
General Manager of Logitrans Group

Egypt

Ms. Mona Qutub
Deputy Chairperson of the Transportation Projects
Planning Authority
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Elsayed Metwalli
Chief Executive Officer
Domestic and International Land Transport
Regulatory Authority
Ministry of Transport

Iraq

Mr. Adel Noman Shihab
Executive Secretary of the National Committee for
Transport and Trade Facilitation
Ministry of Transport

Jordan

Mr. Naeem Hassan
Assistant Secretary-General
Ministry of Transport

Lebanon

Mr. Ahmad Tamer
Acting Director General of Land and Maritime
Transport
Ministry of Public Works and Transport

Mr. Mounir Sobh
Director of Joint Management
Ministry of Public Works and Transport

Libya

Mr. Fadlallah Rafallah Ashour
Undersecretary for Land Transport Affairs
Ministry of Transportation

Mr. Ahmed Ibrahim Abu Weden
Head of Land Transport Authority
Ministry of Transportation

Mauritania

Mr. Nouey Ould Cheikh Abeidi
Secretary-General
Ministry of Equipment and Transport

Morocco

Ms. Sana Lazaar
Head of Leadership, Programme Monitoring and
Evaluation
Ministry of Transport and Logistics

State of Palestine

Mr. Ammar Yassin
Undersecretary of the Ministry of Transport and
Communications

Qatar

Mr. Hamad Ali Al-Marri
Director of Land Transport Licensing Department
Ministry of Transport

Saudi Arabia

Mr. Moeed Mohammed Al-Saeed
Senior Advisor
Transport General Authority

Mr. Omar Bin Qurban Niaz
General Manager of Road Maintenance
Ministry of Transport and Logistic Services

Mr. Hamad Bin Mohamed Al-Abdullah
International Relations Supervisor
Ministry of Transport and Logistic Services

Somalia

Ms. Hodma Salad
Deputy Ambassador of Somalia to Egypt

Sudan

Ms. Najwa Mohamed Fadlallah Ahmed
Assistant Director of Planning, Research and
Studies
Ministry of Transport

Syrian Arab Republic

Mr. Moatasem Jumaa
Deputy Minister

Yemen

Mr. Fadl Kassem Saleh Al-Abadi
Undersecretary of the Land Transport Sector
Ministry of Transport

B. Regional and international organizations

League of Arab States

Mr. Bahjat Abu Al-Nasr
Director of the Transport and Tourism Department

Mr. Abdel Karim Fares Abdel Karim Musallam
Head of the Technical Secretariat of the Council of
Arab Ministers of Transport
Transport and Tourism Department

Mr. Saif Bakr
Transport and Tourism Department

Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport

Mr. Ismail Abdel Ghafar Ismail Farag
President of the Academy

Mr. Moustafa Abdelkader Rashid
Economic Advisor and Assistant President of the
Academy

Mr. Khaled El Sakty
Dean of the College of International Transport and
Logistics
Director of the Technical Office for International
Transport and Logistics Affairs

Ms. Aya Mostafa El-Garhy
Dean of the International Transport and Logistics
Institute
Head of Transport Logistics and Supply Chain
Management Department

The World Bank

Mr. Said Dahdah
Head of the Global Road Safety Facility

World Health Organization

Mr. Tarek Ghazzawi
Regional Fleet Manager

Arab Union of Land Transport

Mr. Malek Haddad
Secretary-General

Arab Federation of Chambers of Shipping

Mr. Ahmed Saeed Ibrahim
Assistant Secretary-General

Federation of Arab Chambers

Ms. Dina Al-Wakkad
Economic Analyst

Al Arabi Newspaper

Mr. Ihab Hassan
Editor-in-Chief

Annex II

List of documents

| Title | Item | Symbol |
|---|------|------------------------|
| Provisional agenda and annotations | 3 | E/ESCWA/C.5/2023/L.1 |
| Organization of work | 3 | E/ESCWA/C.5/2023/L.2 |
| Implementation of activities under the ESCWA programme plan and of technical cooperation activities in the field of transport and logistics | 4 | E/ESCWA/C.5/2023/3 |
| Geographic information system for transport networks and facilities in the Arab region: latest developments | 5 | E/ESCWA/C.5/2023/4 |
| Implementation of recommendations made by the Committee at its twenty-third session, and developments in the transport and logistics sectors in member States | 6 | E/ESCWA/C.5/2023/5 |
| Logistics performance in the Arab region: overview of developments | 7 | E/ESCWA/C.5/2023/6 |
| Round-table discussion: financing road safety | 8 | E/ESCWA/C.5/2023/7 |
| Land electric mobility in the Arab region: options and opportunities | 9 | E/ESCWA/C.5/2023/8 |
| Sustainable transport development in Arab countries | 10 | E/ESCWA/C.5/2023/9 |
| List of documents | | E/ESCWA/C.5/2023/INF.1 |