

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

Committee on Transport and Logistics
Seventeenth session
Cairo, 23-24 January 2017

Information note*1. Background information*

The seventeenth session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics represents a continuation of the efforts made by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in the field of transport, given the effective role of transport in achieving regional integration. At this session, the Committee will review the progress made in that regard since its sixteenth session, which was held in Cairo on 23 and 24 November 2015.

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

The status of the implementation of ITSAS in ESCWA member States continues to be a major item on the agenda of the Committee. At the current session, the review of progress made will cover components (a) to (f) mentioned in the previous paragraph. The secretariat will also present several reports on issues related to transport and logistics in the Arab region, namely: transport connectivity to global value chains; The ePlatform for the follow-up on the implementation of the components of the Integrated Transport System between the Arab States; maritime transport in the Arab region; the role of road transport within multimodal logistics chains; and transport in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The secretariat will also present the outcome of the Global Conference on Sustainable Transport which was held in Ashgabat, on 26 and 27 November 2016.

* The Integrated Transport System between the Arab States (ITSAS) is the new name of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq (ITSAM). It was adopted upon the request of States members in the Committee on Transport to include countries of the Arab Maghreb, which have lately joined ESCWA.

Representatives of member States are invited to present briefs on the progress made in the implementation of ITSAS components in their countries and the incorporation of transport sector development in national sustainable development plans.

As practiced in previous sessions, the Committee will dedicate one of its agenda items to discuss a major transport issue in the Arab region. At the current session, the general debate will address the benefits of acceding to international transport agreements, with the participation of representatives from the International Road Transport Union.

In addition, the agenda of the current session includes the regular item on the progress made in implementing the recommendations made by the Committee at its sixteenth session and transport-related activities under the ESCWA programme of work; and an item on the strategic framework and proposed activities in the field of transport and logistics for the biennium 2018-2019.

2. Agenda

The provisional agenda and annotations of the seventeenth session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics are contained in document E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/L.1. The organization of work is outlined in document E/ESCWA/EDID/2016/IG.1/L.2.

3. Participants

In view of the numerous transport-related issues and activities in the region that arise from the variety of transport modes and systems and the many parties involved, it is recommended that the relevant authorities in member States form delegations that include specialists in the various fields related to the topics of discussion. In accordance with United Nations practice, member States are responsible for the travel and accommodation expenses of their representatives at such intergovernmental meetings (with the exception of one delegate from each of Mauritania, the State of Palestine, the Sudan and Yemen). A number of relevant regional and international organizations will be invited to attend as observers, on the understanding that they are also responsible for the travel and accommodation expenses of their representatives.

4. Date and venue

The seventeenth session of the Committee on Transport and Logistics will be held at the headquarters of the General Authority for Roads, Bridges and Land Transport of the Ministry of Transport, in Cairo, on 23 and 24 January 2017. Registration will begin at 9.30 a.m. on Monday 23 January 2017 and the opening session will start at 10 a.m. The session will conclude at 5 p.m. on Tuesday 24 January 2017.

5. Language

Presentations and discussions will be made in Arabic.

6. Accommodation

ESCWA suggests that participants make reservations in a hotel nearby the venue of the session in Cairo. The secretariat has prepared a list of hotels that offer discounted rates to participants in United Nations meetings and has posted it on the webpage dedicated to the session on the ESCWA website: <https://www.unescwa.org/events/committee-transport-17th-session>. Participants are invited to call the hotel of their choice to make reservations and mention that they are attending the seventeenth session of the ESCWA Committee on Transport and Logistics.

7. Correspondence

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