MIDDLE EAST TRADE & ROAD TRANSPORT SURVEY

2009

Arab Union of Land Transport

IRU International Road Transport Union

Working together
for a better future

IRU

نعمل معاً من
أجل غد أفضل

Arab Union of Land Transport

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Land Linkage between the Gulf Countries and the Mediterranean Sea is vital!

Dr. Mahmoud Abdallat

Secretary General Arab Union of Land Transport

The importance of trade in this part of the world is becoming more significant due to the expected huge increase of volume especially amongst Arab countries.

The present volume of trade between Arab countries is only about 11% of their total trade, and this percentage has been static for the last few years. There is a political will, manifested through the last economical Arab summit held in Kuwait last January, to rapidly increase this present percentage.

Furthermore, Arab Countries are expected to better interconnect the big container ports in the Gulf region with the Mediterranean Sea by serving the international transit trade between developing and developed markets. This not only promises considerable additional revenues to transit countries en route but also presents new business opportunities to regional countries and facilitates globally integration of these markets.

Hence, it is foreseeable that the demand for transport services will be increased in the near future. Since almost 100% of the bilateral trade between many Arab Countries (e.g. Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia & Iraq) is already carried out by road transport and the land linkage between Gulf countries and the Mediterranean Sea is vital, road transport will claim the biggest portion of this rising demand.

Therefore, it becomes gradually more imperative to the Arab countries to work together for facilitate and develop road transport on a regional level.

This vision as well as existing global trends and such regional facts have made this study, which was carried out by the IRU in cooperation with the AULT , a necessity I hope that it will reveal some fundamental facts and figures about this important industry in our region and that it will constitute added-value to readers and decision makers in the Arab world.

Road transport facilitation is key to make the Middle East region one of the main transit arteries of the world!

Haydar Özkan

General Delegate to the Middle East and Region International Road Transport Union

The remarkable increase in the pace of globalisation since the collapse of the Berlin Wall has taught that the more borders become transparent the faster trade grows, but only to the extent that road transport can cope with the continuously increasing demand of business for road transport's high quality, door to door services.

Indeed, another lesson is that the smaller our planet becomes, the harsher the competition between entrepreneurs, producers, farmers and even individuals.

Under these pressures, applying innovative logistics solutions and developing new trade routes, where road transport plays a central role, for cheaper and faster transit of international trade goods is a common priority and a rising challenge for all.
In this connection, the Middle East region, which serves as a bridge between the Arabian Sea, Africa, Central Asia and Europe, has an historic chance to serve global trade as one of the main transit arteries of the world.

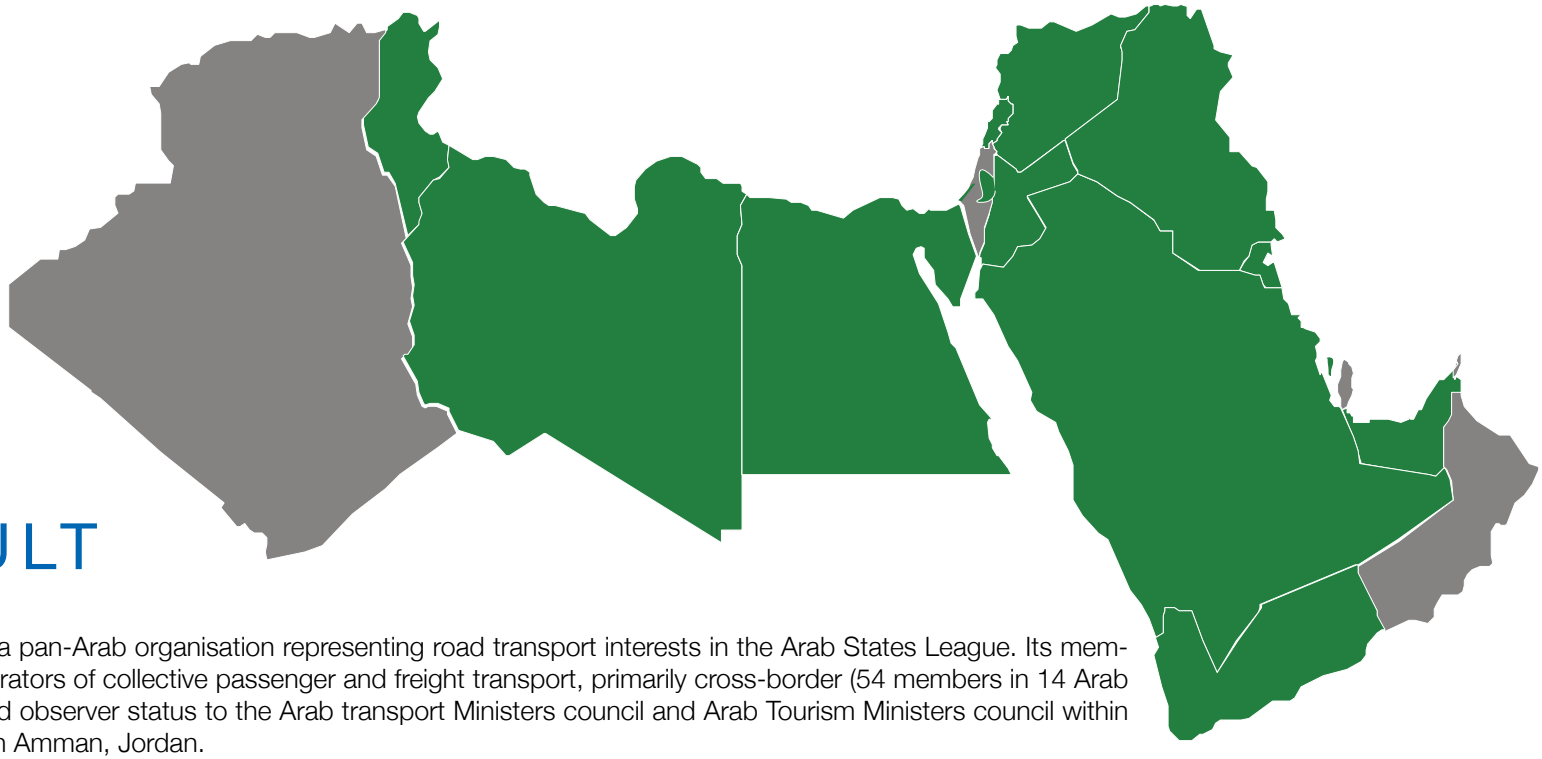
This is not only a chance but also a new source of substantial income for the states in this region, which, however, must promote and facilitate road transport as a top priority. To do so, the road map is very straightforward and clear: accede to and implement all the key UNECE conventions, which to globally harmonise frontier controls, simplify customs procedures and facilitate transit of international trade by road.

The mission of the IRU Permanent Delegation to the Middle East and Region is, in partnership with IRU Member Associations in the region, to accomplish this in the most efficient manner possible.

This study, which is the product of a growing cooperation between the IRU and the Arab Union of Land Transport (AULT), is a first step in this direction, as part of our efforts to collect and share regional trade and transport information with competent state authorities, regional organisations and the private sector.

We hope that it will also assist target groups to build a common vision and become one of the driving forces for working together for a better future in



This is the AULT

The Arab Union of Land Transport (AULT) is a pan-Arab organisation representing road transport interests in the Arab States League. Its members consist mainly of public and private operators of collective passenger and freight transport, primarily cross-border (54 members in 14 Arab countries). It has apermanent relationship and observer status to the Arab transport Ministers council and Arab Tourism Ministers council within the Arab States league. The AULT is based in Amman, Jordan.

Founded in 1976 as an offspring of the Arab Economical Unity Council, AULT implements the land transport strategy laid down by the Council of Ministers of Transport in the Arab States League.

AULT's prime objective is to exert all possible efforts towards the smooth movement of passengers and goods by roads between Arab countries. By facilitating the transport of cargo and the movement of people among Arab countries and encouraging internal domestic Arab tourism, AULT 's ultimate goal is to contribute towards the achievement of Arab economic unity.

AULT also aims to coordinate the efforts of its members and to provide them with assistance that they may require to improve the quality of their operations. AULT endeavours to continuously integrate the land transport fleets of its members in order to encourage operational and commercial cooperation amongst its members.

In addition, AULT conducts studies and research on different issues related to land transport and makes these available to its members and to concerned parties.

Created 1976

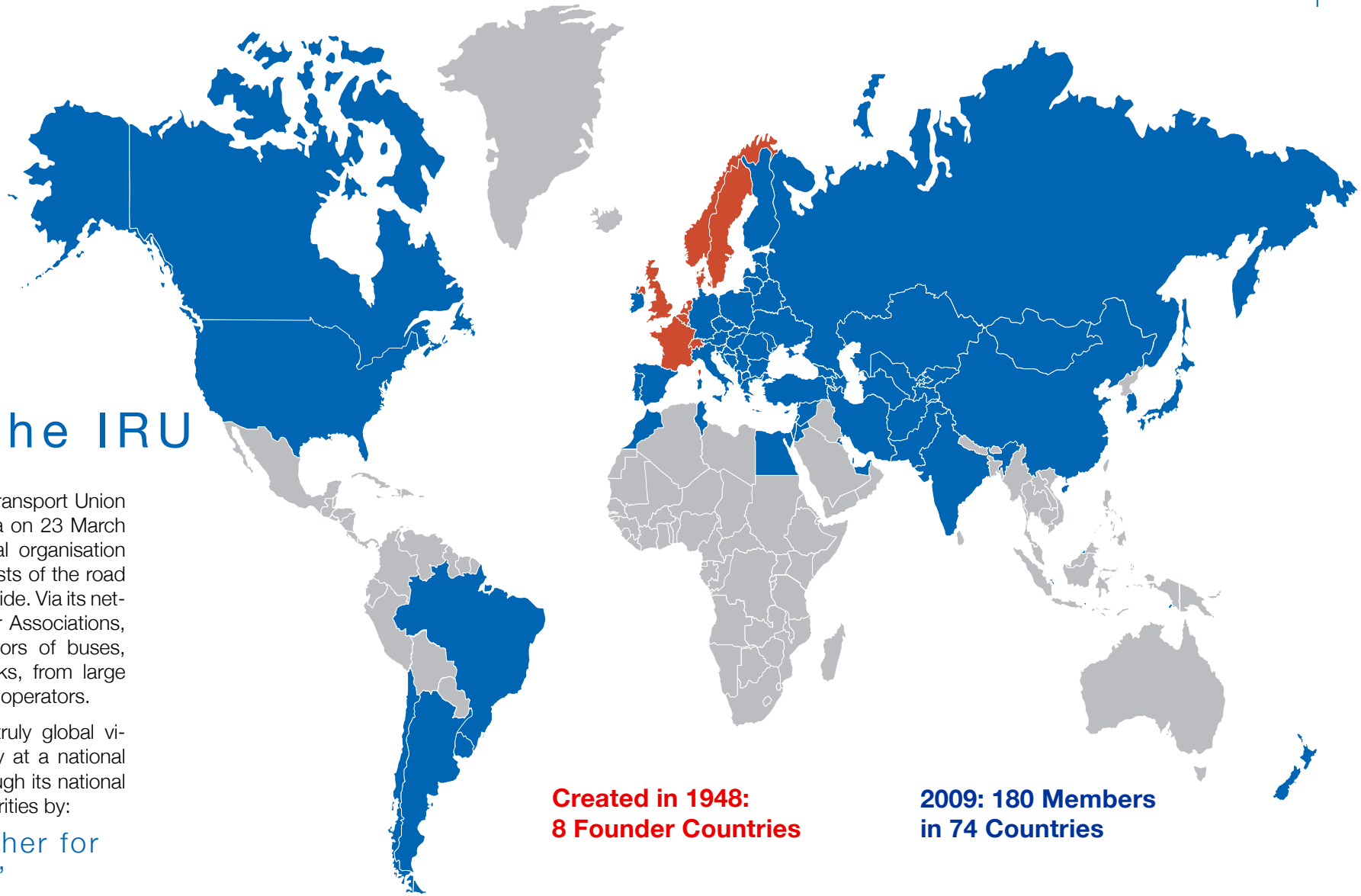
2009: 53 Members in 13 Countries

This is the IRU

The International Road Transport Union (IRU), founded in Geneva on 23 March 1948, is the international organisation which upholds the interests of the road transport industry worldwide. Via its network of national Member Associations, it represents the operators of buses, coaches, taxis and trucks, from large fleets to individual owner-operators.

The IRU, which has a truly global vision, also acts effectively at a national and even local level through its national Members and with authorities by:

"Working together for a better future"



Created in 1948:
8 Founder Countries

2009: 180 Members
in 74 Countries

Regional Trade: Facts and Figures

Intra-Arab Trade

In 1995, the volume of intra-Arab imports was $11,042 million and volume of the intra-Arab exports was $13,185 million. According to available data, total intra-Arab trade witnessed an overall increase over the period 1996-2006, equivalent to around 302%. This was driven by an overall increase in intra-Arab trade for 19 Arab countries. Iraq witnessed an increase of 1,498.8% over the period 1996-2006, followed by Bahrain with a 500% increase and Egypt with 459.5% increase. Only Somalia and Lebanon witnessed an increase of less than 100%, with 20.57% and 91.64% respectively.

This improvement in the overall scene of intra-Arab trade was driven by improvements in the volumes of intra-Arab exports and intra-Arab imports, which in 2006 reached $55.82 billion and $52.31 billion respectively. Gross intra-Arab exports witnessed dramatic annual upsurges starting in 2002, and particularly in 2004 with an annual increase of about 43%, mainly due to an increase in price levels, but declined to 21.7% in 2005 and then increased to 25.8% in 2006.

Table1 : Total Intra-Arab Trade (Million USD)

COUNTRY	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	% change 1996-2005
JORDAN	1713	1670	1352	1360	1701	2122	2326	2559	3840	5078	5871	196.44
EMIRATES	3196	3327	3704	3598	3932	4506	5321	6943	9403	10615	14728	232.13
BAHRAIN	0.91	0.93	0.93	0.98	0.93	1993	2118	2616	5496	4250	5458	467447
TUNISIA	1001	0.84	0.82	0.86	1098	1218	1366	1493	1631	1955	2522	95.30
ALGERIA	0.48	0.59	0.41	0.44	0.48	0.59	0.94	1116	1485	1591	1802	332745
SAUDI ARABIA	7884	8362	6996	7291	7979	8390	9726	13409	18791	26708	32577	238.76
SUDAN	0.58	0.61	0.78	0.61	0.61	0.62	1218	1451	1481	2150	2354	368051
SYRIA	1215	1363	253	1045	1195	1259	2058	1886	2644	2627	3228	116.21
SOMALIA	0.21	0.24	0.23	0.24	0.21	0.24	0.31	0.35	0.40	0.47	0.64	122.97
IRAQ	0.61	0.86	0.56	0.68	0.99	1538	2266	2238	3930	7962	9811	1296643
OMAN	2031	2461	2795	2651	2974	3206	3566	3228	4676	4944	5382	143.43
QATAR	0.68	0.75	0.80	1089	1175	0.90	1591	1414	2197	3054	3374	449018
KUWAIT	1395	1484	1457	1432	1507	1588	1770	2195	3679	3722	4286	166.81
LEBANON	1273	1006	0.93	0.85	1094	1338	1205	1558	2270	2328	2439	82.88
LIBYA	0.90	1119	0.93	0.90	0.98	0.81	1062	1114	1192	1694	1924	187289
EGYPT	1009	1189	1461	1485	2058	1749	1726	1951	3211	4117	5643	308.03
MOROCCO	11767	1189	1014	1191	1688	1635	1677	1584	1892	2758	3205	-76.56
MAURITANIA	0.04	0.08	0.04	25.50	0.04	0.05	0.06	0.07	0.18	0.11	0.13	162.50
YEMEN	0.58	0.67	0.85	959.75	1131	1217	1739	2034	1913	2648	2761	458826
TOTAL	**32,489**	**23,176**	**19,039**	**22,133**	**27,536**	**31,762**	**40,736**	**48,789**	**69,732**	**88,202**	**107,366**	**171.48**
Annual growth rate (%)	n.a.	-28.67	-17.85	16.25	24.41	15.35	28.25	19.77	42.92	26.49	21.73	

Source: Arab Monetary Fund Statistics

In turn, intra-Arab imports improved by around 330% over the period 1996-2006. Iraq witnessed the largest increase (5,693%) in the volume of intra-Arab imports (calculations based on data from AMF statistics) over the period studied, driven by large increases of about 150% in 2001 and 203% in 2005. 2003 however witnessed a decline of 2% in the intra-Arab imports of Iraq, which was countered by an increase of 53% in the following year.

As shown in Table 3, the volume of intra-Arab imports of many Arab countries also increased, such as Egypt with around 507%, Sudan with 425%, Yemen with 413%, UAE with 335%, and Somalia with 311%.

Table2 : Intra-Arab Imports and Exports 1996-2006

Million USD	Total Intra-Arab Exports	Annual Growth Rate	Total Intra-Arab Imports	Annual Growth Rate
1996	14,713.52	n.a.	12,173.86	n.a.
1997	15,910.32	8.13%	12,826.15	5.36%
1998	13,305.25	-16.37%	12,995.42	1.39%
1999	14,081.30	5.83%	13,613.85	4.76%
2000	16,073.70	14.15%	15,685.38	15.22%
2001	16,982.59	5.65%	17,976.58	14.61%
2002	21,062.08	24.02%	20,979.10	16.7%
2003	25,528.45	21.21%	23,683.36	12.89%
2004	36,451.63	42.79%	33,862.83	42.98%
2005	44,361.30	21.7%	44,410.45	31.15%
2006	55,819.38	25.8%	52,309.80	17.79%

Source: Arab Monetary Fund Statistics

External Trade

The total external trade for Arab countries fluctuated over the period 1996-2005, registering a minimum of -7.67% in 1997 and a maximum of 27.21% in 2005. The average growth rate over this period was 4.9%. The annual growth rate declined to 13.66% in 2006 compared to 27.21% in the previous year. Table 4 gives an overview of the value of total external trade of Arab countries over the period 1996-2006.

The statistics indicate that Arab countries were exposed to a regional and global crisis, which led to significant volatility in the evolution of their total external trade during the 10 years from 1996 to 2006.
Despite this fact, the performance of certain countries such as Kuwait, Qatar, Libya, Saudi Arabia and Algeria has been much more successful than others.

In this connection, the average annual growth of total Arab external trade has been 27.93% during the same period, which shows that Arab countries do more business with the rest of world and integrate their markets with world markets in a very healthy manner.
Indeed, this simple fact is the answer to why Arab countries should join the UN multilateral conventions and international agreements to facilitate road transport.

COUNTRY	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	% change 1996-2005
JORDAN	13,014	12,002	9,655	7,226	6,600	6,778	6,792	6,079	7,081	7,726	8,424	-40.63
EMIRATES	114,790	106,418	87,124	75,925	82,370	78,489	78,880	92,109	123,585	151,349	165,559	31.85
BAHRAIN	13,645	12,329	9,754	10,020	11,254	9,962	10,720	10,993	11,098	14,156	15,975	3.74
TUNISIA	20,730	18,738	18,795	17,351	16,279	16,203	16,088	16,767	18,419	18,438	19,490	-11.05
ALGERIA	33,899	33,669	28,211	25,652	33,726	29,035	27,357	33,157	41,135	54,456	63,818	60.64
SAUDI ARABIA	130,272	120,035	86,100	92,460	109,874	99,154	102,661	121,275	155,677	209,314	238,788	60.67
SUDAN	8,693	7,351	4,670	3,662	4,253	3,999	3,501	3,957	5,702	6,403	7,762	-26.34
SYRIA	15,340	13,701	10,559	8,563	9,769	10,033	10,588	9,584	8,930	10,318	12,744	-32.74
SOMALIA	0.95	0.78	0.674	0.538	0.45	0.408	0.392	0.428	0.527	0.54	0.588	-43.11
IRAQ	25,762	24,350	22,821	18,975	27,921	25,139	24,548	11,821	19,241	24,614	29,910	-4.46
OMAN	18,207	16,483	14,137	13,810	17,320	16,866	16,303	16,344	19,206	23,717	25,779	30.27
QATAR	16,333	13,826	10,981	12,008	15,609	14,594	14,230	15,881	22,041	29,083	29,848	78.06
KUWAIT	30,896	30,081	22,246	23,150	28,476	24,117	22,519	29,408	38,706	55,184	67,006	78.61
LEBANON	10,463	9,988	10,120	7,845	7,159	8,180	7,273	7,730	8,806	9,346	9,857	-10.68
LIBYA	21,324	19,945	12,566	11,548	17,879	15,367	11,521	14,119	18,888	34,476	42,825	61.62
EGYPT	38,071	32,883	25,988	20,449	21,165	22,419	23,352	25,010	28,973	29,317	33,581	-22.99
MOROCCO	30,420	27,837	24,952	21,668	19,239	18,170	19,350	19,567	20,185	19,071	20,954	-37.31
MAURITANIA	1,768	2,001	1,389	0.938	0.818	0.872	0.679	0.647	0.757	0.981	1,714	-44.47
YEMEN	7,494	7,282	5,483	6,152	6,712	6,374	5,652	5,740	6,245	7,790	8,139	3.96
TOTAL	552,080	509,710	406,232	377,944	436,879	406,169	402,415	440,626	555,212	706,291	802,770	27.93
Annual growth rate (%)	n.a.	-7.67	-20.3	-6.96	15.59	-7.03	-0.92	9.49	26	27.21	13.66	

Source: Arab Monetary Fund Statistics

The volume of total exports for Arab countries fluctuated over the period 1996-2005, with an average growth rate of 15.88%. They registered the largest increase of 50.34% in 2000 as compared to a decline of 24.14% in 1998. In addition, after registering an annual growth rate of 39.54% in 2005, the volume of total exports witnessed a growth rate of 17.95% in 2006.

Available preliminary data for 1995 show that volume of imports for Arab countries totalled $133,770 million. AMF statistics for the period 1996-2005 show a negative average growth rate of total imports of -9.34%, due to an overall decline in the volume of imports throughout this period, despite the improvement in 2004 which registered an annual total imports growth rate of 10.51% (see Table4).

Table4 : External Arab Imports and Exports during 1996-2006

Million USD	Total Intra-Arab Exports	Annual Growth Rate	Total Intra-Arab Imports	Annual Growth Rate
1996	179,507.66	n.a.	372,572.91	n.a.
1997	184,986.21	3.05%	324,723.86	-12.84%
1998	140,323.31	-24.14%	265,908.93	-18.11%
1999	175,087.86	24.77%	202,857.48	-23.71%
2000	263,226.57	50.34%	173,652.47	-14.39%
2001	238,338.05	-9.46%	167,831	-3.35%
2002	244,857.99	2.74%	157,557.15	-6.12%
2003	300,834.28	22.86%	139,791.72	-11.28%
2004	400,723.10	33.2%	154,489.44	10.51%
2005	559,154.41	39.54%	147,136.65	-4.76%
2006	659,531.29	17.95%	143,239.40	-2.65%

Source: Arab Monetary Fund Statistics

Despite the improvement in intra-Arab trade, it remains below ambitions as compared to the total external trade of the Arab world. According to the data available, the ratio of total intra-Arab trade to total external trade scored 110.4% in 2006 , a rise up from 8.64% in 1996. Throughout the period of 1996-2006, this ratio reached a minimum of 7.82% in year 2000, and a peak of 11.69% in year 2004.

Seen from another perspective, the share of Arab external trade in world trade witnessed an overall decrease over the period-1996-2006, to reach 3.28% in 2006 compared to the peak of 5.19% in 1996. Yet this ratio reached its minimum of 2.88% in 2003 and then increased in the following years. In addition, the share of Arab internal trade in world trade decreased from 0.31% in 1996 to 0.17% in 1998, and then witnessed a steady increase over the period 1996–2006 to score a peak of 0.44% in 2006. Table6 below shows the share of Arab external trade and Intra-Arab trade in world trade. Note that these figures show the very small share of Arab external trade compared to the size of overall world trade. They also show that the flow of external trade is facilitated more in the Arab region compared to the flow of intra-Arab trade, due to many barriers impeding the flourishing of intra-Arab trade.

Table5 : Share of Arab External Trade and Intra-Arab Trade in World Trade*

(Billion USD)	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
World Exports	5273.4	5529	5396.6	5664.5	6385	6140.4	6428.1	7510.7	9133.2	10370.5	12005.2
World Imports	5368.2	5624.4	5524.1	5821.2	6595.6	6392.3	6640	7763.3	9477	10747.9	12448.9
Totsl World Trade	10641.6	11153.4	10920.7	11485.7	12980.6	12532.7	13068.1	15274	18610.2	21118.4	24454.1
Arab External Trade/ World Trade	**5.19%**	**4.57%**	**3.72%**	**3.29%**	**3.37%**	**3.24%**	**3.08%**	**2.88%**	**2.98%**	**3.34%**	**3.28%**
Intra-Arab Trade/ World Trade	**0.31%**	**0.21%**	**0.17%**	**0.19%**	**0.21%**	**0.25%**	**0.31%**	**0.32%**	**0.37%**	**0.42%**	**0.44%**

Source: Arab Monetary Fund Statistics

*In this table, the size of world trade is calculated by adding the values of world imports and world exports as presented in the Arab Monetary Fund – Arab Unified Economic Report, for the period 2002-2007.The ratios of Arab external trade to world trade and intra-Arab trade to world trade are also calculated based on the statistics tables in these reports.

World Trade Statistics

Data from UNCTAD show that in 2000, the volume of exports of developing countries made up 31.7% of the volume of world exports compared to a share of 27.6% in year 1995, while the volume of imports of developing countries slightly increased in 2000 to 28.7% compared to 28.6% in 1995. In particular, the exports of Northern Africa (excluding Sudan) increased slightly over the period 1995-2000, as they made up 0.8% of the world exports compared to 0.7% in 1995, while the share of imports of Northern Africa (excluding Sudan) decreased over the period 1995-2000 from 0.9% in 1995 to 0.7% in 2000.

In addition, world exports registered a mild increase of 0.44% over the period 2000-2002, followed by large annual increases of 16.29% and 21.79% in 2003 and 2004. However, the volume of world exports dropped significantly in 2005 to register an annual growth rate of 13.89%, which then increased to 14.77% in the following year. As for world imports, the period 2000-2002 witnessed a negative growth rate of -0.02%, to be followed also by large positive annual growth rates of 16.5% and 22.11% in the two following years. However, 2005 witnessed a drop in the volume of world imports, which registered an annual growth rate of 13.4%, which increased slightly in the following year to register 13.92%. Table6 gives an overview of the improvement of world exports and imports over the period 2000-2006.

Table6 : World Export and Import Statistics in selected years

(Million USD)	2000		2002		2003		2004		2005		2006	
	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports
World	6444106	6642126	6472603	6640572	7526945	7735944	9167120	9446634	10440780	10712215	11982932	12203386
Developed Countries	4229833	4617741	4237872	4574707	4884506	5304555	5761155	6309661	6291932	7035695	7085021	7913821
Developing Countries	2044590	1904395	2052444	1911101	2410557	2232262	3090696	2877627	3750526	3359059	4408951	3915401
Economies in Transition	169683	119990	182287	154764	231882	199127	315269	259345	398322	317462	488960	374164
Annual Change of World Trade	n.a.	n.a.	0.44%	-0.02%	16.29%	16.50%	21.79%	22.11%	13.89%	13.40%	14.77%	13.92%

Source: UNCTAD,Handbook of Statistics 2006-2007.

Main Exports and Imports of Goods and Products

Data for the period 1997-2006 show that oil remains the major commodity exported by the Arab world. Although its share of total exports declined from 70% in 1997 to 55.3% in 1998, it then increased in the following two years, only to decline again to 68.2% in 2001. However, due to price inflation, the value of oil exports increased as of 2003 to reach 76.6% of total Arab exports in 2006.

The second major commodity exported is manufacturers, whose share of total goods exported also fluctuated throughout the period 1997-1999 to be followed by a declining trend over the remaining years until 2006, where it registered 11.8% of total goods exported.

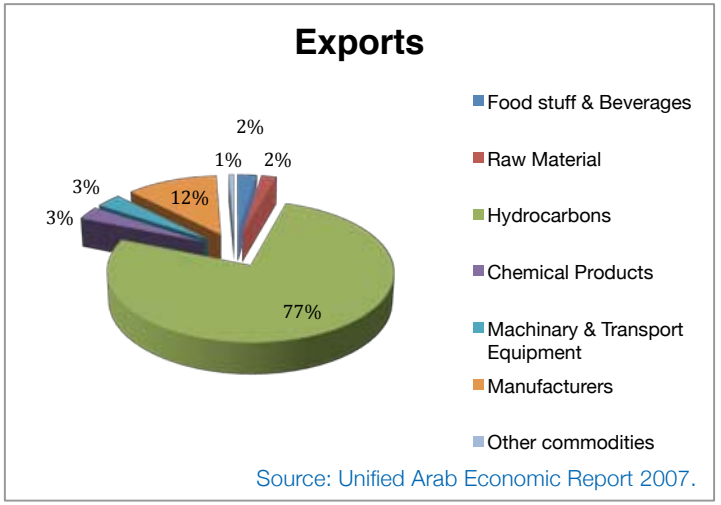
Exports of chemicals followed a similar pattern, as their share of total exports fluctuated over the period 1997-2001, to be followed by a decline until year 2006, where it reached 3.1% of total exports.

It is worth mentioning however, that the decline in the share of exports of commodities compared to total goods declined as of 2003 mainly due to the increase in the value of the share of exports of oil, which in turn is due to the increase in the prices of oil in the international market. Graph 1 shows the distribution of Arab exports according to commodity for the year 2006.

As for commodity imports, machinery and transportation equipment remain the major commodities imported by the Arab world, as their share of total imports increased throughout the period 1997-2006, despite the small decline in years 2002 and 2005.

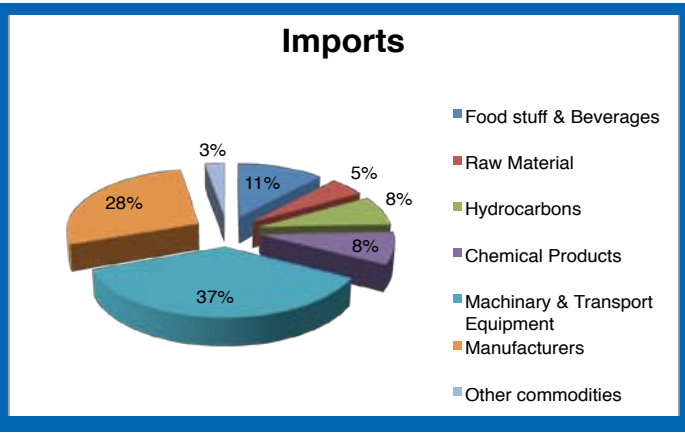
Imports of manufacturers come in second place in their share of total imports, followed by imports of food and beverages. It is important to note that the Arab world is a net importer of food, for structural reasons related to the weak agricultural policies in the Arab world. Graph 2 shows the distribution of major commodity imports of the Arab world for the year 2006.

Graph1: Distribution of Major Arab Exports according to Commodity, 2006



Source: Unified Arab Economic Report 2007.

Graph2 : Distribution of Major Arab Imports according to Commodity, 2006



Source: Unified Arab Economic Report 2007.

Regional GDP compared to World GDP over 1995-2005 and 2006

According to the available data, the gross GDP of the Arab world increased by around 42.68% over the period 1995-2000. Yet it registered a negative growth rate of -0.77% over the period 2000-2002, which was followed by positive annual growth rates in the following three years, registering 9.7% and 18.81% and 22.06% respectively. It should be noted that the contemporary increase in price levels plays a role in amplifying the value of the GDP of many Arab countries, as they benefit from the increase in value of their exports, particularly oil, to invest in economic growth stimulating sectors and fields. Table 7 shows the GDP of the Arab countries in selected years.

Yet the ratio of gross Arab GDP to world GDP over the period studied remains very low, as it scored its maximum level of around 2.41% in2005.

Table7: GDP of the World and Arab Countries in selected years
(Million USD)

Year/ Country	1995	2000	2002	2003	2004	2005
Algeria	42066	54790	56948	68017	85021	102257
Bahrain	5848	7971	8447	9699	11013	13348
Comoros	232	204	247	318	368	380
Djibouti	510	553	592	625	664	705
Egypt	68853	99601	90064	77109	84019	101406
Iraq	6187	20969	17437	10621	27366	33379
Jordan	6732	8461	9561	10161	11515	12535
Kuwait	26554	37718	38119	46200	55718	74214
Lebanon	10965	16679	18462	19396	20856	21184
Libya	25540	34265	19131	23273	28025	37173
Mauritania	1058	928	983	1180	1351	1672
Morocco	32985	33335	36094	43813	50031	51461
Oman	13803	19868	20325	21784	24778	30269
Palestinian territory	3220	4116	3484	3921	4068	4179
Qatar	8138	17760	19707	23701	31591	42113
Saudi Arabia	127641	188442	188551	214573	250558	314021
Somalia	1122	2070	2056	2100	2213	2182
Sudan	13950	11549	14718	16108	19040	24667
Syria	13538	19651	21659	20724	23318	25812
Tunisia	18030	19444	21016	24955	28134	29049
UAE	42807	70522	74959	88536	104204	133757
Yemen	5789	9652	10787	11870	13811	15508
Total Arab GDP	475568	678548	673347	738684	877662	1071271
World	29556282	31678619	32717346	36756087	41278164	44475204
Arab GDP/ World GDP	1.609025	2.141975	2.058073	2.009692	2.126214	2.408693

Road Transport

Before 1989, the world was divided mainly into two blocs: Western countries with market economies and Eastern countries, including China, with planned economies. There was therefore no global economic policy.
Since the end of the Cold War, economic development has been driven by globalisation and we have a global view of the future. If the main effect of globalisation in a liberalised economy is to undertake research, to produce the best products and to trade under the best possible social, economic and fiscal conditions, we should also recognise that the market is global for everyone and that the economic driving force will also seek optimal localisation for its business activities.
This globalisation process – together with the enormous differences between all these liberalised national economies with regard to knowledge, the availability of raw materials and social costs – will lead to a dramatic increase not only in trade and transport but also in specific customer demand and competition.

In fact, the pioneering spirit of the IRU's historic Silk Road Caravan and New Eurasian Land Transport Initiative (NELTI) Project demonstrates clearly that road transport is always at the disposal of everyone, everywhere, to unite people and to better distribute wealth; consequently, road transport needs to be facilitated. With this, in mind Governments must improve knowledge, share experience and implement the numerous UN multilateral agreements, conventions and other regional legal instruments developed in the last 60 years, to facilitate road transport and trade everywhere but in particular in the Middle East region, which is a cradle of civilisations, a melting point of different cultures and a major alternative trade route for international transit traffic between East and West.
In 2008, the World Bank prepared a report on the Benefits of Transit Traffic to Transit Countries within the framework of a knowledge activity on transit facilitation for landlocked developing countries (LLDCs).

The report classifies these benefits as follows:

1. Transport Benefits
   - Benefits from transit vehicles
   - Road infrastructure
   - Transit fees
   - Rail benefits
   - Forwarding/Clearing services
2. Benefits to port-related Industries
3. Trade Benefits
4. Political and Economic Leverage

The report concludes that benefits from transit traffic are much more visible for coastal countries, which can provide both port and inland transport services. However, it also highlights that the development of transit routes for third-country transit traffic would increase the level of connectivity of all countries involved in a transit corridor, and this provides better access for their own traffic.

Therefore, with its existing sophisticated port services and invaluable geographical position land-linking the Arab Sea with the Mediterranean Sea, the Middle East region can better enjoy the benefits of globalisation if road transport is promoted and cross-border movements of goods and passengers are facilitated by all countries of the region in a coordinated manner.

Middle East Needs Road Transport

To distribute wealth: In all developed economies, road transport is the main mode of transport that serves the economy. For instance, in Europe, trucks carry 70% of the total volume and 90% of the total value of goods. Buses and coaches offer their clients the same benefits and comfort as they travel in a private car. Coach tourism represents about 2% of GDP in Europe.

In a globalised economy road transport has become a vital production tool and as such it is the best tool for regional development thanks to its flexibility and superior quality of service (punctuality, tailor-made response and competitive prices). Moreover, road transport is the only mode that can interconnect every business, every country, every region to every major world economy.

Road transport is the partner of agricultural, industrial and commercial businesses, whose transport and logistical needs are satisfied, thanks to its modern, innovative services (just-in-time, storage, and the provision of well-maintained fleets for regional and local distribution of finished and semi-finished goods).

To create employment: Road transport has always delivered good growth performances but it is often perceived through the image of its drivers, in particular of "long-distance" drivers. Yet this is a simplistic assessment. The industry provides jobs for all: coach drivers, taxi drivers and lorry drivers for distribution or long-distance transport, drivers of refrigerated trucks and tankers, but also for maintenance technicians, logistics and computer experts, commercial representatives and managers!
Moreover, without road transport, there will be no economy, no trade and no GDP. Therefore, no jobs!

To achieve sustainable development: Sustainable development has been broadly defined as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. However, to meet mobility needs, every transport mode has an effect on the environment and it is the duty of governments and the private sector to minimise this effect. The main objective of any transport mode is to ensure the mobility of persons and goods in the most efficient manner and compared to equivalent door-to-door transport services, road transport is regularly the most efficient transport mode.

In the current globalisation of the economy, road transport is not only a transport mode, but is above all a vital production tool to ensure competitiveness in the sustainable economic and trade development of each country. The challenge, by working together with governments, is to make any transport more efficient and compatible with the aims of sustainable development. Sustainable development is a priority issue for the IRU and the road transport sector.

The IRU has adopted and implemented the IRU's 3 "i" strategy, based on Innovation, Incentives and Infrastructure, as the most cost-effective means to ensure sustainable development. It is based on this strategy that the road transport industry has invested heavily in vehicles presenting the cleanest emission standards and the latest fuel-efficient vehicle technology.

By applying the IRU's 3 "i" strategy already today:

- one single vehicle built before 1980 makes more noise than 25 modern trucks
- toxic emissions from buses, coaches and lorries have been reduced by up to 97% since 1990
- fuel consumption and thus CO2 emissions have been reduced by 36% in 30 years since 1970 and by another 20% since 1980
- It is expected that emissions will be reduced by another 30% by 2015

The IRU's 3 "i" strategy was even endorsed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and recommended to be emulated by other industry groups. However, today, governments still have to take the appropriate actions to promote sustainable development. Governments should meet their obligations concerning Agenda 21 by:

- Promoting innovative, clean and energy-efficient commercial vehicles through appropriate incentives, as requested by the IRU for many years
- Adapting road infrastructure and bottlenecks to traffic demands
- Maintaining a free choice of transport mode and itinerary to ensure the most efficient mobility of persons and goods.

To develop the Middle East transport system: Road transport of both passengers and goods has the exceptional advantage of providing a unimodal service and acting as a partner for all other modes (rail, maritime and air transport), handling, collection and deliving services for them.

The IRU and its Member Associations have always been in favour of combined transport for capacity reasons and the development of combined transport is also a necessity in the Middle East region.

In order to make combined transport a viable solution, operational, infrastructure related and management problems need to be addressed. Specifically, Hinterland connections and cost-effective and fast permitting horizontal transfers need to be established.

Road Transport Infrastructure and Capacity Utilisation

The demand for road transport in the Arab world remains high mainly due to the high-standard road infrastructure in the region, the low cost of fuel in some Arab countries, the absence of significant fees for road transport and the insufficiency of the existing railway network to cope with the demand for land transport.

The density of national roads, paved roads in particular, is low in the Arab world as compared to more advanced economies, due to the overwhelming desert areas in the Arab world. It is also important to notice that road infrastructure in the region varies between low and high income countries. Table 8 compares the lengths of roadways in different Arab countries.

Table 8: Lengths of Roadways in Different Arab Countries.

Rank	Country	Roadways (km)	Date of Information
1	World	68,937,575	2008
26	Saudi Arabia	221,372	2006
40	Algeria	108,302	2004
43	Libya	100,024	2003
45	Syria	97,401	2006
54	Egypt	92,370	2004
67	Yemen	71,300	2005
78	Morocco	57,625	2006
83	Iraq	44,900	2002
87	Oman	42,300	2005
108	Somalia	22,100	2000
114	Tunisia	19,232	2004
135	Sudan	11,900	2000
137	Mauritania	11,066	2006
144	Qatar	7,790	2006
146	Jordan	7,694	2006
150	Lebanon	6,970	2005
152	Kuwait	5,749	2004
155	West Bank	5,147	2006
158	United Arab Emirates	4,080	2008
163	Bahrain	3,498	2003
167	Djibouti	3,065	2000
187	Comoros	880	2002

Despite continuous efforts to upgrade, modernise and expand the size of the road network in most Arab countries, the road network suffers from poor maintenance and does not accommodate the needs of a modern economy and efficient land transport, especially in the poorer Arab countries.

Efforts are also being made to develop new road networks in order to connect remote areas to cities and major economic areas and to find solutions to the extensive congestions in major cities and capitals of many Arab states, such as the cities of Tunisia, Dubai, Cairo, Beirut, etc. Such efforts also include building new roads, bridges, over and underpasses, etc.

In terms of physical capacity, the road network provides the primary means for passenger and goods transportation within Arab states.

The existing situation in some Arab states is as follows:

Egypt: 85% of domestic freight and 60% of passenger movement is carried out by road. By mid-2006, the roads network expanded to 81,932 km of paved roads.

Iraq: the road network is about 39,000 km; however, the vast destruction of the road network in the recent years have left only 2,000 km of it in good condition, of which only 2,000 km is motorway.

Kuwait: the road network is developed continuously, and covers around 4,967 km.

Yemen: data for the year 2004 show that around 10,500 km of its road network are asphalted and around 13,500 km are graded.

Morocco: the rural network is being extended yearly by around 1,500 km; however, only 50% of the rural population can currently access the roads all year round.

Qatar: data for 2005 show that the total length of the paved and unpaved network is 7,760 km.

Sudan: recent data show that the total road network is around 20,000–25,000 km long, but apart from paved roads in rural areas, only about 3,000–3,500 km are asphalt all-weather roads. About 1,200 km are made up of Sudan's key highway which links Port Sudan to Khartoum. This highway, however was built back in 1980. The road infrastructure in Sudan also includes a number of new bridges over the Nile River which have been built over the past five years, and which are mostly concentrated in Khartoum. A new bridge over the Nile was opened at Marowe in 2007.

Tunisia: 20,000 km of the network composed of primary and secondary roads, which are mostly paved and reasonably maintained but despite the substantial investments, the congestion in the city of Tunisia remains a serious problem. The Tunisian Government is constructing a new 160 km motorway – including a 100 km section connecting M'Saken and Safx – as the country today has less than 300 km of accessible modern motorways.

Untied Arab Emirates: has constructed an extensive high quality road network. Moreover, major investments are taking place in poorer emirates to upgrade the status of their road network. However, severe congestion in Dubai, especially during rush hours, is becoming a serious problem.

Main International Road Transport Corridors

M5	Zakho (Turkey) – Mosul – Baghdad – Al-Samawah – Basrah – Kuwait – Abu Hadriyah – Damman – Manama OR Hufuf – Salwah – Bathaá – Al-Ghweifat – Abu Dhabi – Dubai – Fujaira – Sohar – Muscat – Nizwa – Thumrayt
M7 and M9	Abu Dhabi – Mazyad – Nizwa
M10	Hajj Omar – Irbil – Mosul – Rabieyyah – Yaaroubia – Kamishli – Aleppo – Ariha – Lattakia
M15	Aleppo – Deir Ez-Zor – Ramadi
M20	Kamishli – Hasaka – Deir Ez-Zor – Homs – Tartous
M25	Abu Hadriyah – Hafar El-Batin – Arár – Hadithat – Al-Azraq
M30	Beirut – Damascus – Al-Rutbah
M35	Amman – Al-Azraq – Sakakah – Haíl – Buraydah – Riyadh – Al-Kharj
M40	Baghdad – Ramadi – Al-Rutbah – Al-Azraq – Jerusalem – Gaza – Arish – Kantara Bridge – Port Said – Demiata – Alexandria – Salum
M45	Taízz – Sanaá – Baqim – Elb – Abha – Mecca – Medina – Qalibah – Tabuk – Al-Mudawara – Maán – Amman – Damascus – Homs – Aleppo – Bab Al-Hawa – Turkey.
M50	Baghdad – Karbala – Al-Nukhaib – Arár Sakaka – Qalibah – Tabuk – Halat Ammar – Ad-Durra – Aqaba – Nakhel – Shatt – Suez – Cairo
M51	Kassab – Lattakia – Tartous – Tripoli – Beirut – Naqoura
M55	Al-Mukha – Hodeidah – Harad – Al-Tuwal – Darb – Jeddah – Rabigh – Yanbu – Dhuha – Ad-Durra – Aqaba – Nuweiba – Nakhel – Arish
M65	Ismailia – Suez – Hurdagha – Safaga – Halayeb.
M67	Ismailia – Cairo
M70	Kuwait – Hafar El-Batin – Artawiyah – Buraydah – Medina – Yanbu.
M75	Ismailia – Cairo – Qena – Luxor – Arqin
M80	Manama – Dammam – Riyadh – Mecca
M90	Doha – Abu Samra – Salwah – Bathaá – Harad – Al-Kharj – Sulayyil – Abha – Darb
M100	Thumrayt – Gheizah – Al-Mukalla – Aden – Taízz – Al-Mukha

Note that Morocco is now building a new land transport route of international importance, with a length of 328 km, between the cities of Fass and Wajdah. This is expected to be opened to traffic by mid-2010. This route will then be part of the network of roads of international importance which connect Nuwaqshot, the capital of Mauritania, with the city of Tubruq in Libya, thus passing through the main cities of the Arab Maghreb, hence allowing Morocco to play a major role as a centre of transportation and transit within the Arab Maghreb region and between Southern Europe and Northern Africa.

Number of Road Motor Vehicles

Table 9 shows the total number of road motor vehicles in selected Arab countries during the period 2001–2006.

Table 9 : Road Motor Vehicles in Selected Arab Countries

Country	Type of vehicle	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Bahrain	Total motor vehicles	247,280	268,991	-	-	-
	Passenger cars	205,089	223,266	-	-	-
	Trucks & pick ups	35,437	38,650	-	-	-
	Buses	6,754	7,075	-	-	-
Egypt	Total motor vehicles	-	2,564,511*	-	-	2,898,189
	Passenger cars	-	1,878,712*	-	-	2,095,316
	Trucks & pick-ups	-	623,681*	-	-	730,155
	Buses	-	62,118*	-	-	72,718
Iraq	Total motor vehicles	-	-	-	-	-
	Passenger cars	703,857	711,981	-	-	-
	Trucks & pick ups	-	-	-	-	-
	Buses	56,034	57,757	-	-	-

Table 9 : Road Motor Vehicles in Selected Arab Countries

Country	Type of vehicle	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Jordan	Total motor vehicles	434,166	442,951	496,856	548,125	-
	Passenger cars	309,636	317,983	348,111	386,992	-
	Trucks & pick-ups	122,970	123,546	147,147	159,295	-
	Buses	1,560	1,422	1,598	1,838	-
Kuwait	Total motor vehicles	898,280	934,912	1,020,809	1,109,985	-
	Passenger cars	756,312	780,622	848,590	918,555	-
	Trucks & pick-ups	129,605	140,411	156,848	173,417	-
	Buses	12,363	13,879	15,371	18,013	-
Oman	Total motor vehicles	554,866	440,523	-	-	-
	Passenger cars	389,971	324,085	-	-	-
	Trucks & pick-ups	140,270	109,118	-	-	-
	Buses	24,625	7,320	-	-	-

Country	Type of vehicle	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Palestine	Total motor vehicles	92,830	105,479	-	-	-
	Passenger cars	69,892	77,291	-	-	-
	Trucks & pick-ups	22,107	27,110	-	-	-
	Buses	831	1,078	-	-	-
Qatar	Total motor vehicles	339,878	356,484	390,153	-	-
	Passenger cars	230,155	242,279	267,849	-	-
	Trucks & pick-ups	107,754*	112,231*	120,306	-	-
	Buses	1,969	1,974	1,998	-	-
Saudi Arabia	Total motor vehicles	9,009,111	9,484,891	-	-	-
	Passenger cars	-	-	-	-	-
	Trucks & pick-ups	-	-	-	-	-
	Buses	-	-	-	-	-

Table 9: Road Motor Vehicles in Selected Arab Countries

Country	Type of vehicle	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Syria	Total motor vehicles	594,625	635,693	674,382	-	-
	Passenger cars	181,017	206,130	232,803	-	-
	Trucks & pick- ups	367,048	382,179	393,638	-	-
	Buses	46,560	47,384	47,941	-	-
United Arab Emirates	Total motor vehicles	688,341	777,057	-	-	-
	Passenger cars	606,103	684,092	-	-	-
	Trucks & pick-ups	66,190	74,211	-	-	-
	Buses	16,048	18,754	-	-	-
Yemen	Total motor vehicles	964,827	982,066	1,033,842	-	-
	Passenger cars	367,828	375,758	403,293	-	-
	Trucks & pick-ups	480,173	486,832	491,139	-	-
	Buses	116,826	119,476	139,410	-	-

Country	Type of vehicle	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Algeria**	Vehicles	-	-	-	91,000	-
	Passenger cars	-	-	-	58,000	-
Libya**	Vehicles	-	-	-	257,000	-
	Passenger cars	-	-	-	232,000	-
Morocco**	Vehicles	-	59,000	-	-	-
	Passenger cars	-	46,000	-	-	-
Tunisia**	Vehicles	-	-	95,000	-	-
	Passenger cars	-	-	83,000	-	-

Source: ESCWA. Statistical Abstract of the ESCWA Region.
WorldBank website.
* ESCWA estimates.
** Latest data available.

Road Safety in the Middle East Region

The issue of road safety has become of an increasing concern to the civil societies and governments of the Arab world, due to the high level of fatal accidents occurring every day and the high physical and human costs associated. Hence, the road and driving authorities in the Arab countries have put greater emphasis on promoting road safety, in terms of roads conditions, vehicle conditions, driving regulations and measurements to be adopted by drivers.

Many efforts are being undertaken in various Arab countries to promote road safety and to prevent road crash fatalities and injuries. Partnerships between the private and the public sectors, as well as NGOs and UN agencies participate in developing programmes to promote good practices in the management of road safety. However, available data show that road casualties, in terms of injuries and fatalities, are still dangerously high in the Arab world. The World Bank shows that the proportion of healthy life-years lost due to road deaths and injuries scored 5% for the MENA region in 2002, and is expected to increase to 8% in 2030. In general, the MENA region ranked 3rd world-wide in terms of road deaths and injuries as cause of healthy life-years lost, and is forecasted to rank the 1st world-wide by the 2030. These figures are also confirmed by the World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention 2004, by the World Health Organisation. However, these figures are rather general and not much is known about accidents involving heavy goods vehicles.

The IRU and Road Safety in the Middle East

Road safety has always been a highest priority for the IRU and its Member Associations and for real professionals, each accident is one accident too many. Today, regrettably, road safety is still not the priority of governments.

This is proven by the following facts:

- Almost no government can produce statistics demonstrating the causality of commercial vehicles in road accidents.
- While governments are keen to implement new training obligations, not enough governments are developing true and efficient public-private partnerships with IRU Academy Accredited Training Institutes (ATIs) to improve vocational training and to provide national and international recognition of such training.

This is why, to increase road safety, the IRU has developed the following actions:

- **The IRU Academy**

The IRU Academy has the aim of harmonising vocational training standards and providing online unfalsifiable international recognition of training. In fact, the IRU Academy provides, in more than 30 countries:

-> CPC for road transport managers, drivers, ADR drivers; network of accredited training institutes; individual student diplomas traceable on internet; international recognition (EU, ITF, UNECE, World Bank, Unions, etc.) of standards.

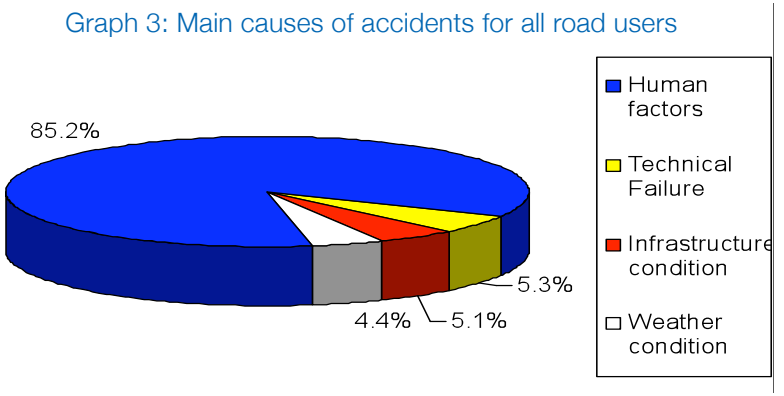
- **The European Commission/IRU Scientific European Truck Accident Causation Study (ETAC)**

The European Commission (EC) and the IRU launched a unique scientific study, the European Truck Accident Causation (ETAC) study. Knowing that there are many factors which contribute to an accident and knowing that those factors are interlinked, the aim of the study was to identify the main causes which have made the greatest contribution to the fact that an accident happened.

The results of the study were established in a scientific, unbiased, independent manner which enabled the identification of truck accident causation. The advantage of the accident data collection is that the study focuses on truck accidents and allows indepth accident investigation, using the same methodology and data codification in any country.

The results of the ETAC study showed that the main accident cause in 85.2% of cases was linked to a human error of one of the road participants (truck driver, car driver, pedestrians etc.). However, of the accidents linked to human error, only 25% were caused by truck drivers. Other factors such as weather conditions (4.4%of cases), infrastructure conditions (5.1%) or technical failures of vehicles (5.3%) played only a minor role. Graph 3 below shows the percentage of main causes for all road users.

Graph 3: Main causes of accidents for all road users



The Middle East region also suffers from a lack of commercial vehicle-specific road safety data. Therefore, the need to conduct a similar truck accident causation study in the region is obvious. The methodology and the necessary data codification system have already been developed and made available by the IRU to interested parties and could be modified to better fit the conditions of the Middle East region. The existing methodology could be used to conduct a Middle East Truck Accident Causation study to enhance the efforts to reduc the number and severity of accidents involving commercial vehicles in the region.

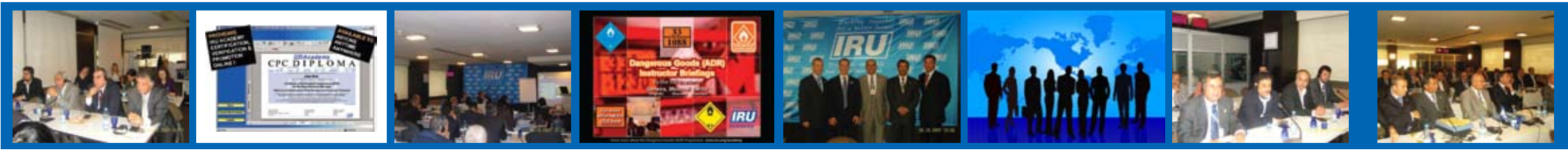
Road Transport Training in the Middle East Region

Given the rising importance of the efficiency of transport in promoting trade within the Arab world and with the external world, and the realisation of the significance of the cost of transport as a part of the total cost of trade, where it ranges between 10%-20% of the final cost of goods in developed countries as compared to 80%-120% in developing countries, waves of modernisation and development have been taking place in the transport industry in the areas of administration, logistics, safety, operations, etc. Thus it has become essential that the human resources and personnel working in the transport industry become acquainted with the new trends in managing and operating transport, whether by land, air or sea. This aspect gains more significance in the Arab world, especially in the light of finalising the adoption of the "Agreement on Multimodal Transport of Goods among Arab Countries", where more than one entity is engaged in a single transport transaction.

Therefore, providing the necessary skills to the human resources and personnel working in the transport industry by conducting training programmes and courses at national and regional levels in the Arab world is gaining more significance.

Within this context, entities specialised in different modes of transport, such as transport schools, unions and federations at the national and regional level in the Arab world focus on providing their members with the necessary up-to-date training programmes and courses in various fields of activities related to transport; some also provide custom-made training courses. Note that such training programs mainly target international transport of goods by land, air or maritime, while local transportation of passengers does not require training as a pre-condition but rather requires drivers to acquire the appropriate driving licence.

Training for road transport currently lacks the existence of a regional entity which provides training for members from the whole Arab world. The Arab Union of Land Transport (AULT), the International Road Transport Union (IRU) and the Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ) are establishing such a regional training centre. Within this context, the IRU and the AULT signed a Memorandum of Understanding focused primarily on improving professional road transport training in the Arab countries through the IRU Academy in February 2007. It was equally agreed to cooperate on achieving goals common to the organisations, such as reducing border waiting times and allowing the region to benefit fully from trade and transport facilitation as well as the security advantages of the TIR System. Following this MoU AULT signed another Memorandum of Understanding with the RACJ on developing jointly, through the IRU Academy, road transport professional training courses for transport operators and drivers in Arab countries. Following the two MoUs the AULT and the educational arm of the IRU, the IRU Academy, staged a joint Seminar to promote professional training in the Middle East and region. This seminar was the first step in the completion of a cooperation agreement between the two organisations, which will include the establishment by the AULT of an IRU Academy Accredited Training Institute (ATI) in Amman, in partnership with the RACJ.



The IRU Academy uses learning and development to improve road safety through its educational arm, the IRU Academy

Recent sustained growth in the Middle East region has placed an increased demand on the transport sector, and although this economic growth is without a doubt a highly positive development, delivering results whilst meeting the stringent business objectives in an ever more global marketplace challenges the road transport industry to transform and adapt.

Road safety regulations and ambitious targets to reduce accidents and casualties are a priority and an obligation for all actors in the industry: new vehicles are being designed following strict security standards, driving and rest time rules are gradually being enforced and innovative technologies are launched in order to ensure compliance.

It follows that road transport operators and drivers are required to be both compliant with the regulations and to deliver the necessary results to ensure a competitive advantage over companies active in local and international markets. Appropriate professional training is essential to building up the necessary skill levels and ensuring long-term success.

However, road transport companies seeking effective training solutions often face a regrettable lack of standardisation and transparency in available offers at a time when training is crucial.

The IRU Academy, as an independent entity with a global reach, is uniquely placed to drive the harmonisation of training standards, incorporate international best practices and verify compliance with international regulations and other national legislative instruments.

Participants who follow the IRU Academy programmes through Accredited Training Institutes (ATIs) not only benefit from high-quality, state of the art IRU Academy professional training, but candidates who achieve the programmes, objectives receive international recognition.

Unfortunately, with the increased costs of professional training, diploma falsification is a reality we cannot ignore, and the IRU Academy has modern IT tools to prevent such fraudulent activity through its website. The IRU Academy website also provides a valuable marketing tool for Accredited Training Institutes (ATIs) through which they can advertise their learning events. Similarly, students can enhance their visibility and market themselves or their company through dedicated webpages.

In its mission to improve safety and increase the level of competence in the road transport sector, the IRU Academy offers to potential students and training institutes a Certificate of Professional Competence (CPC) Manager programme, and has also recently launched three new international programmes:

- The ADR programme which is aimed at transporters of Dangerous Goods by road
- The Tachograph programme
- The CPC Driver Programme

Logistics Performance of Countries in the Middle East Region

In 2007, the World Bank published a report on Trade Logistics in the Global Economy, which aimed to understand how different countries are performing in the area of trade logistics, and what they should do to improve their performance. In this connection, the report presented the Logistics Performance Index (LPI), which was based on a unique dataset to measure country performance across several dimensions of logistics and to benchmark that logistics performance against 150 countries.
The ranking of certain Middle East countries in this report is given in Table 10 below:

Table 10: Logistics Performance Index (LPI) in Arab States

Country	LPI Rank	Score
United Arab Emirates	20	3.73
Bahrain	36	3.15
Saudi Arabia	41	3.02
Kuwait	44	2.99
Qatar	46	2.98
Oman	48	2.92
Jordan	52	2.89
Egypt	97	2.37
Lebanon	98	2.37
Yemen	112	2.29
Syria	135	2.09

This table indicates that the logistics performances of countries in the Middle East region differ significantly.
Indeed, from the perspective of global trade flows and opportunities for developing alternative trade routes, this presents a major concern and a fundamental issue which should be addressed by the countries of the region, collectively.

Barriers to Road Transport in the Arab Region

In 2007, AULT conducted a regional study to identify the main problems and barriers that the Arab fleet operators face in the Middle East region.
The AULT study showed that the road transport industry suffers from various problems, some of which must be addressed by the authorities as a priority and some which could be solved by the fleet operators themselves.
The major problems, which must be dealt with by the authorities, include:

a: Lack of harmonised custom controls: It is natural that customs authorities control the goods and vehicles used for international road transport. However, in the Middle East region, the customs controls at borders are not harmonised, in general. It is not uncommon that the goods are unloaded from the vehicles during such controls at borders, which may lead to cargo damages. Vehicles are occasionally examined by non-technician professionals, whose interventions may lead to technical problems during rest of the journey.

b: Lack of harmonised regulations and procedures: The laws and regulations related to vehicle standards, weights and dimensions vary between Arab countries. This leads to additional waiting times and sometimes penalties. Feet operators are requested to present too many documents at borders, of which many could be avoided or are irrelevant to transport service. This unnecessary paper work needs to be eliminated by appropriate computerisation of procedures.

c: Unfair taxation on commercial vehicles, goods and fuel: Some Arabi countries apply additional taxes on fuel in order to support national fuel prices while others impose taxes on transit to recover their road maintenance expenses, mainly from commercial vehicles.

d: Long waiting times at borders: Necessary documents and stamps that should be presented to the authorities at borders change from country to country, which causes complicated procedures, long waiting times and exceeding stays in some cases.

e: Compulsory escorts: Some countries impose escorts due to security problems and trucks are stopped for days at borders. Whatever the reasons for this requirement, such practices disturb the movement of goods and lead to big increases in the cost of road transport services to the whole economy.

f: Expensive and time-consuming procedures for professional driver visas: The restrictions, complicated, long and costly procedures imposed by authorities for issuing visas to the professional drivers is a major problem for the Arab fleet operators in the Middle East region.

g: Poor infrastructure and lack of regular maintenance.

h: Lack of secure truck parking areas and maintenance stations on the international roads in the Middle East region.

i: Lack of government incentives to facilitate development of the road transport sector.

j:Lack of implementation of the UN conventions and international agreements: Most of the countries in the Middle East region are not interested in acceding to and implementing the main international agreements and UN conventions, which were created in the last 60 years in order to develop road transport. Even after accession, such international conventions and agreements are often not strictly implemented, which is yet another source of major concern for the Arab fleet operators.

In addition to the abovementioned, the AULT study also identified the following issues and problems, which should be handled by fleet operators and through solidarity of the road transport industry in the Middle East region:

a: Fleet operators should modernise their fleets to meet international standards.

b: Road transport companies should invest in human resources and employ experienced personnel, who are trained in international standards.

c: Fleet operators should reinforce their professional cooperation at national and regional levels by establishing or supporting their national professional organisations which are affiliated with regional and international professional organisations, namely AULT and the IRU.

d: Fleet operators must strictly respect rules and regulations with respect to rest times, technical standards, weight and dimensions.

e: There is an urgent need in the Middle East region to increase the number of professional international road transport companies with big fleets, skilled professionals, quality services and corporate culture.

All these problems and barriers facing road transport in the Middle East region not only the road transport industry but such, mainly non-physical, barriers also affect the economy and citizens of a country because they cause additional costs for transport services and decrease the competitiveness of trade goods in global markets, in general. Therefore, such problems must be addressed by all interested parties, particularly governments, in a consistent and systematic manner as a priority.

Economic Cost of Barriers to Road Transport

For any region or international trade corridor, the elimination of physical and non-physical barriers to road transport is the most important condition in order to attract international transit traffic.
In 1998, the Hague Consulting Group undertook an investigation on behalf of the IRU to measure the economic impact of avoidable obstructions to the free movement of road freight and coach operations: so-called "barriers" to transport. The assessment of the costs of these non-physical barriers was calculated and compared with the total cost of road transport to the national economy. Five European countries were selected for the study: the Czech Republic, France, Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom.

The study indicated that the most important non-physical barriers to road transport were congestion (Northwest Europe) and delays at border crossings (Eastern Europe). For the five countries investigated in the study, the experts estimated that the economic cost of non-physical barriers to road transport, together with the lost business opportunities of the hauliers due to such losses, was in the order of USD 16 billion.
The study concluded that a 1 dollar increase in road transport costs resulted in a 2 dollar loss to the economy. The ratio was 1:20 for Poland. One could estimate the ratio to be between 1:50 to 1:100 for the Middle East Region.

In 2007, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of 12 Member States of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation (BSEC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Coordinated Development of Black Sea Ring Highway and requested the IRU to organise a truck caravan in order to promote this project and collect specific transport data about actual road conditions and non-physical barriers at the borders along the planned Black Sea Ring Highway route.
The data collected by transport specialists accompanying this truck caravan was analysed by NEA Transport Research and Training in the Netherlands (NEA).
The barriers identified in NEA's assessment included border delays caused by congestion and administrative procedures, transport permits needed to carry out road goods transport in the region and the visa requirements for drivers.
The costs related to border delays included operational costs (vehicles and personnel), standard business costs (inventory, depreciation, production) as well as business opportunity costs.
As a result, NEA assessed that the annual costs to the BSEC economy of border waiting times, current bilateral road transport permit systems and driver visa requirements and procedures, was EUR 229 million.
All these scientific studies leave no doubt that there is a very high cost of non-physical barriers to road transport anywhere in the world, including in the most developed markets or the developing countries. The Middle East region is not an exception to this well-recognised principle.

The Way Forward: Middle East countries must accede and implement priority transport conventions of the UN

As road transport can play a vital role in driving progress across the Middle East region, which can serve as an important alternative international trade transit corridor to the benefit of all countries in this region, it is timely, if not late, for the national authorities in each country to prioritise road transport development and facilitation on their agenda.
Once this vision is shared and there is a determination, it is the duty of national governments to accede and implement the key road transport conventions and multilateral agreements, which have been created by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) in the last 60 years.
These Conventions and Agreements are open to accession for all member countries of the United Nations. Interested national governments can always receive any detailed information or necessary technical support from the United Nations in order to ensure the most appropriate implementation within their territory following accession.
In this connection, the following UNECE Conventions should be expanded in the Middle East region as a priority because their implementation would bring immediate direct benefits to the road transport industry in the Middle East:

Key Road Transport Facilitation Conventions

The Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods By Road (CMR), established in Geneva on 19 May 1956, facilitates international road transport by providing a common transport contract, including a common consignment note and harmonised liability limits. The CMR fixes the conditions governing the contract for the international carriage of goods by road between the carrier and the forwarder and sets the conditions of liability of the carrier in case of total or partial loss of goods. The CMR belongs to private law and haves no direct implications for governments but, in order for transport operators to implement the Convention, it must be included in their national legislation. A new Protocol to the CMR is being considered in order to introduce the use of an electronic consignment note. The CMR helps to maintain fair competition between carriers and limits the costs of international road transport, including insurance costs.

The Customs Convention on the International Transport of Goods under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention) of 1975 sets up the procedure that permits the international carriage of goods by road vehicles or containers from one customs office of departure to a customs office of arrival, through as many countries as necessary, without intermediate check of the goods carried and without the deposit of a financial guarantee at each border. The procedure includes the use of secure vehicles or containers that have to be approved by authorities according to standards prescribed in the Convention in order for them to be used for TIR operations. It also includes an international guarantee chain, set up under the Convention and administered by the IRU, to cover duties and taxes at risk throughout the journey and whereby in each Party a duly authorised association provides a guarantee towards national competent authorities. In addition, the goods are accompanied by an international customs document, the TIR Carnet, which certifies the contents of the cargo as checked at the customs office of departure and which is also a guarantee document. The Customs authorities at intermediate borders recognise the inspections performed at the customs office of departure, trust the information contained in the TIR Carnet and do not undertake checks except in duly justified cases. The procedure also foresees a controlled access to the TIR System and the exclusion from the system of operators who misuse it for illegal purposes. An electronic control system for TIR Carnets (SafeTIR) was developed by the IRU to strengthen the security of the TIR System. This system uses an international computer network and dedicated software, allowing the IRU and its national Member Associations to ensure risk management. These network applications also allow customs authorities to undertake validation of the status of a given TIR Carnet as well as implement control and risk management measures at customs level. The Safe TIR data are accessible through a secure internet connection by Customs officers or administrations to which authorisations have been granted, free of charge, by the IRU. The control system was approved as Annex 10 to the TIR Convention in February 2005 and became mandatory on 12 August 2006, thus representing an important further step towards a full computerisation of the TIR System. All these new systems result in minimal procedures and delays at borders and in lower transport costs, which in turn result in lower export and import costs.

The International Convention on the Harmonisation of Frontier Controls of Goods of 1982 aims at facilitating border crossings for international transport of goods through harmonisation and reduction of the requirements for completing formalities and the number and duration of border controls.
The Convention establishes the procedures for carrying out efficiently all types of controls that may be necessary at borders, including customs controls, medico-sanitary inspections, veterinary inspections, phytosanitary inspections, controls of compliance with technical standards and quality controls. Procedures largely call for national cooperation and coordination of the various services, as well as for international cooperation between the respective border services of the adjacent countries. The Convention foresees measures that include joint controls of goods and documents through the provision of shared facilities, same opening hours and same types of services at the same border. These procedures apply to all goods being imported, exported or in transit and to all modes of transport. The Convention is foreseen for global application and provides for a reduction in the number and duration of all types of controls and best practices for efficient controls of goods at border crossings. It aims at promoting the one-stop-shop principle for border controls. As a result, the Convention reduces border delays, which results in lower transport costs and, therefore, in lower export and import costs.

The European Agreement concerning the Work of Crews of Vehicles engaged in International Road Transport (AETR) of 1 July 1970 aims at preventing drivers and crews of commercial vehicles of more than 3.5 tonnes, or transporting more than 9 people, engaged in international road transport, from driving excessive hours, as this increases the risk of serious road accidents and may create disparities in the working conditions of this category of workers and in the competition conditions of their companies. To this end, the AETR regulates the driving and rest periods of those professional drivers. The Agreement also defines the on board control device, the so-called tachograph, that is used to control those periods, and sets up the general provisions as well as all technical requirements for the construction, testing, installation and inspection of the device. Additionally, the AETR also sets up requirements for the checking of driving hours by the competent authorities of Contracting Parties. The AETR is now being amended to introduce the digital tachograph, which, contrary to the mechanical tachographs, will be tamper-proof and cannot be manipulated. By regulating the driving and rest periods of drivers of heavy commercial vehicles engaged in international transport, the AETR creates a level playing field in the road haulage industry and helps prevent road accidents caused by fatigue. These accidents may be all the more serious as the vehicles involved are heavy goods vehicles or carry a large number of passengers.

The European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road (ADR) of 1957 aims at ensuring the highest possible level of safety in the transport of dangerous goods at an economically acceptable cost. It identifies the substances that are considered as dangerous goods and that can be admitted in international transport and establishes the conditions under which they can be carried. These include the classification of substances according to their specific type of danger (explosives, flammable liquids, flammable gases, corrosive substances, etc.), packing conditions, labelling, marking, placarding, documentation and special requirements for tanks. The ADR also contains requirements on transport operations, driver training as well as vehicle construction and approval. Security provisions have recently been included. The Annexes to the ADR are usually amended every two years. While obliging Contracting Parties to accept vehicles coming from other Parties if they comply with the ADR, the Agreement preserves the right of Contracting Parties to prohibit, for reasons other than safety during carriage, the entry of dangerous goods into their territory. Contracting Parties also retain the right to arrange less stringent conditions of international transport on their territories, by special bilateral or multilateral agreements. The ADR is open for accession to all UN member States. Accession to the ADR has no financial implications for countries. However, for exporting countries, it imposes administrative structures for testing and approval of packagings, tanks and vehicles, for driver and dangerous goods safety advisor training and for issuing the corresponding certificates. The ADR provides for a high level of safety and security during international carriage of dangerous goods. It also facilitates transport and trade of such goods resulting from mutual recognition of packaging, tank, vehicle and driver training certificates. Being harmonised with the UN Model Regulations that serve as a basis for all modes of transport and most national regulations at worldwide level also facilitates compliance, enforcement and control. Annexes A and B are also used for regulating domestic traffic in EU countries.

IRU DUBAI DECLARATION

"ROAD TRANSPORT, THE VITAL LINK TO PROGRESS!"

Every modern economy or society needs transport in order to function.
Road transport is the principal means of achieving this.
Road transport has become an essential production tool in all economies, providing high quality services to its clients and ultimately to consumers and is thus a vital link to progress.

Without efficient road transport there cannot be sustainable development as defined in the United Nations Millennium Goals. Governments must therefore put in place policies that facilitate rather than hinder road transport operations if they are to meet their agreed upon economic, social and environmental goals.
Economic and trade development all over the world would be greatly enhanced by a strengthened mutual cooperation in road infrastructure and road transport development and the establishment of a sound legal framework governing the facilitation of cross-border and transit transport by road. This should be accompanied by the removal of non-physical barriers in road transport caused by artificial and bureaucratic formalities blocking road transport in and between countries.

The IRU, its Member Associations and road transport operators – recognising the role that road transport plays in economic, social and environmental progress and in accordance with the IRU's 3 "i" strategy for achieving sustainable development calling for innovation, incentives and infrastructure – have taken their responsibilities to meet the mobility needs of progress.

The full potential of road transport's contribution to modern society can, however, only be realised if all stakeholders, including policy makers and the road transport industry, work closely together to

Achieve Sustainable Development by:
Recognising that a modern society requires efficient logistics and that road transport plays a fundamental role in efficient supply chains, passenger transport and intermodal transport systems.
Acknowledging and complementing the road transport sector's own initiatives. Real business incentives should be provided to accelerate road transport operators' contribution to environmental protection through innovative, at source measures. But innovations can bring full benefits only if Governments ensure best use of existing infrastructure and invest adequately in new infrastructure to eliminate missing links and bottlenecks.
Accepting that growing demand for road transport services is a consequence of economic growth and cannot be decoupled from it. At the same time, growth in road transport can be decoupled from its environmental impact. Hence Governments should renounce policies that aim to shift modal split by hindering road transport, which has an even greater negative impact on the economy as a whole.

Establishing a sustainable energy policy that duly takes into account that transport is totally dependent on oil and currently has no economically viable alternative source of energy. Massive investments in cleaner new road vehicles can bring environmental benefits only if the required fuel quality and additives are made available everywhere.

Enhancing road safety by targeting the main causes of accidents involving commercial vehicles based on scientific fact.

Applying solutions of a sustainable and integrated transport system paving the way for the further development of road transport thus providing a sound foundation for economic prosperity and social progress.

Achieve Facilitation by:

Developing further open trading, personal mobility and transport systems that are predictable and non-discriminatory either nationally or internationally by minimising bureaucratic barriers to the movement and transit of people, goods, road vehicles and their drivers.

Encouraging the adherence to and application of United Nations Conventions pertaining to the facilitation of international road transport and creating favourable cross-border and transit transport conditions since non-physical barriers still remain major obstacles to the further development of road transport.

Introducing and implementing efficient fiscal, social and technical regulations. Governments must fully respect the principle of non-discrimination between transport modes.

Making road transport operators fit to compete in the modern market place. Ensure fair competition within the road transport sector and between different transport modes as a precondition for improving efficiency and competitiveness. Proper financial standing and professional excellence of transport managers as well as top-level training for drivers are essential to offer quality service to society and the economy. Utilise, amongst other things, the international recognition provided by the IRU Academy and its wide network of accredited training institutes.

Taking measures to effectively reduce the potential risks and dangers to international road transport by preventing attacks on drivers and the theft of vehicles and cargo, namely by creating a network of secure parking areas.

Providing landlocked countries, many of which are emerging nations, with an access to road transport amenities thus fostering the economic and social development of these countries. Silk-Road-type projects can be extremely useful in this respect.
In calling on road transport's government partners to play their part via this Declaration, the IRU and its Member Associations also renew their pledge to work for the betterment of society as a whole, by providing higher quality and more environmentally efficient road transport services.

Other Modes of Transport

Transport Infrastructure & Capacity Utilisation

Railways

Data from the Arab Monetary Fund (2001) reveal that the railway network in the Arab world passes through 11 countries: Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The gross length of the network (data from year 2001) is approximately 25.3 thousand km, of which only 15.8 thousand km has the standard width of 1,435 mm. The length of the double–track network is about 2,600 km, and the length of the electrified lines is about 1,400 km, while the rest is a single track.

In general, the railway network suffers from its limited expansion and lack of connectivity in many parts of the region, in addition to its poor maintenance which renders its services inefficient and below ambitions of modernity and efficiency. Also, the capacity of the railway network is limited by the heterogeneity of its technical specifications. For instance, the speed of the railway in Sudan is 60 km per hour, while it is 250 km per hour in Iraq. The maximum permitted axial loads varies between 12 tonnes and 25 tonnes across the various tracks of the railway network.

Available data show that most of the railway tracks and vehicles need modernisation and upgrading while some tracks need urgent new investments. In Algeria, the length of the railway track is 4,200 km, most of which is in urgent need of new investments to upgrade it.

Existing situation in some Arab states is as follows:

In **Egypt**, the railway network carries about 435 million passengers per year, or about 1.2 million passengers per day, in addition to approximately 10,000 passengers who ride on top of the carriages without a ticket. The network carries around 11 tonnes of goods annually and cheap third-class trains serve more than 80% of passengers. Recently, the government has constructed a modern underground 2-line metro in Cairo which has a capacity for more than one million passengers daily.

Saudi Arabia has the only railway system in the Arabian Peninsula. It is a 2-line system, with a total of 1,000 km, which runs between Riyadh and Dammam. The older but longer line is a freight line and runs via the city "Hufuf", while the newer line is quite modern and provides passenger service. The Saudi Railways Organisation will construct three new lines with a total length of 2,800 km. These three lines will include: (1) the land-bridge connecting Jeddah on the west coast to Dammam and Jubail on the east coast, while passing via Riyadh; (2) the western railway which will link Riyadh to Hail and Qurrayet; and (3) the north-south railway – also called the "minerals railway" – to connect key phosphate and bauxite mines at Hazm al-Jalamid with their processing facilities at Ras al-Zour in the east. It is noteworthy that the land-bridge allows the land transport of goods between Jeddah and Dammam in only 18 hours, as compared to the current duration of 4-5 days by sea. Additionally, passengers will be able to travel horizontally across the Kingdom in around half the current duration.

The railway system in **Sudan** is a 4,725 km narrow gauge single track network. According to the Zawya BD database, the capacity of this railway network in 2006 was 1.32 tonnes of freight and about 61,000 passengers, which is a 10% improvement compared to the previous year.

As for **Syria**, its railway network is expanding in terms of its capacity and usage, as the number of passengers using it more than doubled during the period 2000 – 2005, to reach about 2 million passengers. Also, the amount of freight transported via this railway network increased by one third this period, to reach 8.2 tonnes.

In **Tunisia**, the railway network is 1,960 km in length. Available data show that the volume of freight carried by the railway peaked in 1999, to reach 12.5 million tonnes, but since then it declined. Also, 70% of the freight weight is phosphates while around 16% of it is fertilizers. However, one aspect of inefficiency of the railway system is that cereal transport has steadily shifted to roads. As for passenger transport, the railways system is generally reliable and also overcrowded. The capacity of the railway system was up to 36-38 million people in recent years, and this number is continuously increasing as more people are using the railway network for short distance routes in Greater Tunis.

In turn, the government of **Dubai**, **UAE** is constructing a multi-billion USD metro system, which will link together downtown Deira and Dubai International Airport and the financial district on Sheikh Zayed Road and Jebel Ali. This metro system is planned to be set in service in 2009.

Main Railway Corridors

East-West Routes

R90 South Arabian Peninsula:
Bab El-Mandab – Aden – Al-Mukhalla – Geizah – Shahan – Mazyounah – Thumrayt

R82 Doha: Doha – Salwah

R80 Jubeil – Jeddah: Jubeil – Dammam – Hufuf – Riyadh – Jeddah

R70 Safaga – Al-Kharja: Safaga – Qena – Al-Kharja

R60 Maán – Verdun: Maán – Aqaba – Nuweiba – Nakhel – Verdun Bridge

R50 Mediterranean Southern Coast – Nile Delta: Rafah – Port Said – Verdun Bridge – Ismailia

R40 West Iraq – Jordan: Haklania – Tarabil – Karamah – Al-Azraq – Zarqaá

R30 Damascus – Beirut: Damascus – Masna – Beirut

R20 Middle Syria: Kamishli – Hasaka – Deir Ez-Zor – Tadmor – Maheen – Homs – Akkary – Tartous

R10 Iraq – East Mediterranean: Khanaqin – Baghdad

North–South Routes

R05 Iraq – East Arabian Peninsula:
Yaaroubia – Mousul – Baghdad – Al-Samawah – Nasiriyah – Basrah – Umm Qasr – Kuwait – Abu Hadriyah – Jubail – Dammam-Salwah – Bathaá – Al-Ghweifat – Abu Dhabi – Dubai – Fujairah – Kalba – Sohar – Muscat – Thumrayt – Salalah

R15 Middle Arabian Peninsula:
Riyadh – Buraydah – Hail – Abu Ajram – Quorayat – Al-Azraq

R25 Syria – Jordan – Saudi Arabia – Yemen:
Midan Ikbis – Aleppo – Homs – Maheen – Damascus – Daraá – Zarqaá – Amman – Maán – Al-Mudawara – Halat Ammar – Tabuk – Medina – Jeddah – Darb – Harad – Hodeidah – Al-Muakha

R27 Homs – Riyyaq

R35 East Mediterranean: Lattakia – Tartus – Tripoli – Beirut – Tyr

R45 Nile Valley: Cairo – Qena – Aswan – Wadi Halfa

Sea Ports

Sea Port Infrastructure and Capacity Utilisation

As the Arab world is geographically at the heart of the "ancient world", and has a strategically important location in the routes of international trade transport, many Arab countries are renovating and expanding their sea ports, with the aim of becoming regional logistics hubs for international and regional trade transport.

The existing situation in some major Arab ports is as follows:

In terms of capacity, the port of Aden in **Yemen** has lost a large share of its capacity after the bombing attack in 2002, as its actual capacity dropped to 42,000 TEUs.

Data for ports in **Algeria** show that the Bejaia Container Terminal currently handles around 50,000 TEU per year, and it has upgraded its capacity to process 30 containers per hour as compared to an initial 10 containers per hour.

In **Egypt**, navigational water is around 3,100 km and carries around 4% of domestic freight. Sea ports process 85%-90% of Egypt's international trade volume. With the privately run ports of Ain al-Sokhna and East Port Said, the total goods handling capacity increased to 82 million tonnes per year in 2004/2005 as compared to 56.4 million tonnes per year in 1999/2000.

In **Lebanon**, sea ports handle more than 70% of all freight incoming to the country.

Kuwait in turn aims to serve as a regional gateway for the northern part of the Gulf, by developing good sea and land transport facilities, with the ambition to develop a rail network and a new sea port. As for its fleet capacity, Kuwait operates its own tanker fleet, which is composed of eight crude carriers with a total capacity of 2,348,552 dead weight tonnes (dwt), eleven 591,567 dwt product carriers, and five 242,161 dwt liquefied gas carriers.

In **Oman**, the Salalah Port accommodates container ships, and its throughput is increasing rapidly. Data show that, in 2006, the port's capacity to handle goods registered 2.3 million tonnes, which reflects a 29% increase compared to the previous year.

Saudi Arabia is witnessing a project to expand the capacity of the Dammam port to 1.9 million TEUs by end–2008 as compared to 900,000 TEUs in mid–2007.

The Suakin port in **Sudan** handles 1.5 million tonnes of goods per year. Also, the tanker terminal at Bashayer is the country's oil-export point, and includes five storage tanks with a capacity of around 2 million barrels. In 2007 this port handled around 400,000 barrels per day for exports.

Tartous port is the largest in **Syria**, as it handled around 60% of total import volume in 2005, according to the available data. Banias port is dedicated to the oil industry, and around 7.5 million tonnes of petrol and related products were exported from it in 2005, as compared to around 13.7 million tonnes in 2003 and 20 million tonnes in 2002.

The port of **Tunisia** have the capacity to handle 26 million tonnes of freight in 2006, and around 660,000 passengers used them for entry and exit – though almost all of them took place at La Goulette. Despite the port's general inadequacy in terms of delays in the transit of merchandise, inefficient goods handling, along with poor links between the ship and road and rail networks, and the delays in the customs procedures, the ports of La Goulette and Rades have been modernised and highly equipped with new quays and computerised systems and facilities to promote easier and more efficient handling of goods, in addition to simplifying the customs procedures to reduce the time needed for goods handling.

The sea ports infrastructure in the **United Arab Emirates** is characterised as being extensive and of good quality, in addition to the ports' well-established client relations and top-class services and facilities provided. The ports of Dubai, namely Jebel Ali and Port Rashid, are by far the region's top hub locations. Other ports of the emirates, such as Khor Fakkan and Fujaira ports are witnessing developments to expand their handling capacities. Also, the main port in Abu Dhabi, Mina Zayed terminal, is undergoing a 20-year expansion project, which is expected to end by 2013. Also, Dubai is expanding its port capacity and developing more efficient port facilities to attract the new generation of vessels capable to carry 6,000 – 8,000 tonnes of goods, and which is currently dominating major shipping lanes.

Main Sea Ports in the Region

Algeria:	Alger, Annaba, Arzew, Bejaia, Beni Saf, Bethioua, Chazaouet, Cherchel, Chetaibi, Collo, Dellys, El-Kala, Jijel, Mers El-Kebir, Mostaganem, Oran, Skikda, Tenes,Tipasa.
Bahrain:	Al-Manamah Harbor, Mina Sulman, Sitrah.
Djibouti:	Port of Djibouti
Egypt:	Abu Zanimah, Adabiya, Ain Sukha Terminal, Alexandria, Al-Ghudaqah, Al-Qusayr, As-Sallum, Bur Safaga, Damietta, Dekheila, El-Hamra Oil Terminal, El-Ismailia, Geisum, Matruh, Port Said, Ras Gharib, Rashid, Ras Shukheir, Sidi Kerir, Suez, Wadi Feiran , Zeit Bey Terminal.
Iraq:	Al-Basarah, Al-Faw, Khawr Al-Amaya, Mina Al-Bakr, Umm Qasr.
Jordan:	Al-Aqaba
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:	Dammam, Jeddah, Jizan, Juaymah Oil Terminal, Jubail, King Fahid, Ras Al-Khafji, Ras Al-Mishab, Ras At-Tannurah, Yanbu.
Kuwait:	Al-Kuwait, Ash-Shuaibah, Mina Abdallah, Mina Al-Ahmadi, Mina Az-Zawar.
Lebanon:	Beirut, Tripoli.
Libya:	As-Sidr, Banghazi, Darnah, Marsa Al-Burayqah, Marsa Al-Hilal, Marsa Sabratah, Marsa Susah, Misratah, Ras Lanuf, Tripoli, Tubruq, Zawia Oil Terminal, Zeitina, Zuwarah.
Morocco:	Agadir, Alcazar, Casablanca, Essaouira, El-Jadida, Larache, Mehdiya, Mohammeadia, Port Nador, Rabat, Safi, Tanger.
Oman:	Mina Al-Fahl, Mina Qabus, Mina Raysut.
Qatar:	Ad-Dawhah, Jazirath Halul, Umm Said (Musayid).
Sudan:	Port of Sudan.
Syria:	Al-Ladhiqiyah, Baniyas, Tartus.
Tunisia:	Al-Muhdiyah, As-Sukhayrah, As-Suq, Banzart, Burj Qulaybiyah, Gabes, Halq Al-Wadi, Hawmat Souse, Ras Sidi Abd Allah, Sfax, Tabarqah, Taserka, Tunis.
United Arab Emirates:	Abu Al-Bu-Khoosh, Abu Dhabi, Al-Hamriyah, Arzanah Island Port, Ash-Shariqah, Az-Zannah Ruways, Das , Dubai, Fateh Terminal, Fujayrah Harbor, Khawr Fakkan, Mina Jebel Ali, Mina Saqr, Mubarraz Oil Terminal, Sharjah Offshore Port, Umm Al-Qaywayn, Umm An-Nar.
Yemen:	Aden, Ahmadi, Al-Mukalla, Kamaran, Ras Isa Terminal.

Airports

Airway Transport Infrastructure and Capacity Utilisation

To benefit from the strategic geographic location of the Arab world, many Arab states are modernising their existing airport infrastructure and facilities, and building new airports, with the aim of becoming regional and international hubs for freight and passenger movements. Despite the availability of high standards airports and modern fleets, the demand for air transport in the Arab world remains larger than the prevailing capacities.

The existing situation in some Arab states is as follows:

In terms of capacity, available data show that **Lebanon**'s Beirut – Rafik Hariri International Airport now holds a capacity of 6 million passengers annually, after its modernisation and expansion in the 1990s after the ending of the civil war.

Kuwait International Airport has a capacity to handle 100 – 150 flights daily, with a total passenger movement of about 6 million per year. Kuwait airport handles this large number of daily flights partly because it acts as a station for many travellers transferring to Iraq, in addition to the Kuwait bound travellers.

Libya is into a project to improve and expand the international airport of Tripoli, which includes constructing a new terminal, in order to handle an extra 8 million passengers per year.

In **Morocco**, the government is planning to expand the capacity of its airport facilities in order to meet a forecasted growth in the number of passengers to reach 27 million in 2020. In particular, the capacity of Mohammad V airport in Casablanca will double to 8 million passengers in 2008, as this airport holds approximately 50% of all passenger air traffic in Morocco and 85% of freight. Regarding the scheduled flight market, the government made a forecast for the year 2010, when 61% of this market will be held by "Royale Air Maroc" (RAM), 38% by foreign carriers and 1% by private Moroccan operators.

In **Oman**, the Seeb International airport, which is the main airport, had been witnessing steady growth over the recent years. In 2006, the total number of arrivals exceeded 21,000 passengers, and the passenger throughput is increasing strongly. The second phase of investment in the airport will allow it to accommodate 24 million passengers annually.

In **Syria**, the airports of Aleppo and Latakia along with Damascus airport (which is Syria's largest airport) together accommodated about 3.2 million passengers and 35,590 tonnes of freight in 2005. The government has set a three-phase strategy to develop Damascus airport and to increase its capacity to 10 million passengers annually by the end of 2020.

Tunisia airport facilities have a capacity of about 12 million passengers per year. New investments target increasing the capacity of Monastir – Skanes from 3.5 million passengers/ year to about 5 million passengers/ year, and increasing the capacity of Jebra – Zarzis from 2.5 million passengers/ year to 4 million passengers/ year. The government is also building new airports to accommodate its forecasted growth in freight and passenger movements passing via the Tunisian airports. In this context, an 8th airport is under construction at Gabes and a 9th airport is planned to be built at Enfidha. In turn, TunisAir carried 3.8 million passengers in 2006 as compared to 3 million passengers in 2000. As for its air freight capacity, available data show that air freight peaked in the year 1994 registering 31,000 tonnes, but then declined to reach 19,000 tonnes in year 2006.

The airport facilities and infrastructure in the **United Arab Emirates** are extensive and of good quality. New investments target building new airport facilities in order to increase the gross passenger capacity to 60 million, as compared to 22 million in 2001. A mega goods terminal is also under construction, and will lift the goods capacity to 3 million tonnes annually by the year 2018. As for the passenger movement, the number of passengers increased steadily over the past years to reach 28.8 million in 2006, compared to 18 million in 2003, 9.7 million in 1998, and 4.3 million in 1988. In turn, the new airport under construction in Dubai will have a capacity of 100 million passengers annually upon its completion, while the expansion project of the Abu Dhabi airport will increase its capacity from 3 million passengers yearly (in 2005) to 20 million passengers yearly in 2010.

Table 11 summarizes the major traits of the transport infrastructure in selected Arab countries, according to the available data.

Table 11 : Major Traits of Transport Infrastructure in Selected Arab Countries

Country	Yemen	Algeria	Egypt	Lebanon
Roads	10,500 km asphalt, 13,500km graded	88,853km national roads, o/w 1/3 trunk roads; 29, 394km dirt roads& tracks accessible to motor vehicles	45,500km paved, poor condition, carry 85% of domestic freight by road	New 6-lane highways on edge of Beirut, built during post-war reconstruction
Railways	n.a.	4,200km track	435 million psgr/yr or 1. 2 million psgr/day; 11 million tones/yr of goods	n.a.
Ports	Port of Aden capacity =42,000 TEUs	Bejaia container terminal handles 50,000 TEU/yr, although its capacity is 300,000 TEU/yr	Navigational waters 3,100km, carry 4% of domestic freight; seaports process 85-90% of Egypt int'l trade	More than 70% of all freight
Airports	5 major airports	4 major airports, new terminal at Houari Boumedienne: original terminal capacity > 4mil psgr/yr, new terminal has 6 mil psgr/yr	EgyptAir carries 8.6 million psgr	Capacity of 6 million psgr/yr
Country	**Iraq**	**Kuwait**	**Libya**	**Morocco**
Roads	39,000km network, 2,000km in good condition & 2,000km is motorway	4,967km excellent road network	25,000km tarmac road, most major towns& villages including dessert oases are accessible by car	Rural network is extended by 1,500km/yr; currently only 50% of rural population is served by roads usable all yr round
Railways	5 major routes. In 2006, plan to build 2,300km of new lines	Plan to build railway down the coast into KSA Eastern Province, expected to begin in 2010. Plan for domestic a 165km 4-line metro running both under and above ground with capacity of 70m passengers	Plans to build 2,178km coastal line from Tunisia to Egypt, & 992km line from Sirte to Sebha in the south	Half of the 1,907km network is electrified, new projects to modernize 400km of electrified line,& construct a high-speed line between Casablanca and Agadir through Marrakesh, to include 18 double-decker trains, 20 locomotives & 300 carriages
Ports	Umm Qasr is main commercial port, a flotilla of 21 ships is supposed to be supplied in 2008 to activate the 2 terminals properly	8 crude carriers: 2,348,552 DWT; 11 product carriers: 591,567 DWT, 5 liquefied petroleum gas carriers: 242,161 DWT	Current project to expand capacity of Tripoli port	Casablanca handles almost half of all shipping traffic, plans to develop the associated industrial and commercial free-trade zones are underway
Airports	3 international ports (Baghdad, Basra, Irbil), 2 domestic airports (Mosul, Kirkuk)	Capacity: 100-150 flight/day; total psgr = 6 million/yr	Current project to improve & expand Tripoli Intr'l Airport & a new terminal to handle an extra 8 million psgr/yr	12 airports, Plan to enlarge capacity to meet forecast growth in psgr number to 27 million in 2020; Moh'd airport in Casablanca handles 50% of all psgr traffic & 85% of freight is to doubt capacity to 8million in 2008.

Country	Oman	Qatar	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Sudan
Roads	Network of paved roads increases annually	7,760 km paved & non-paved	Developing the network has been given priority since early 5-year development plans	Road infrastructure is inadequate
Railways	n.a.	n.a.	Only railway system in Arab peninsula, 2 lines, 1,000 km; Land bridge project between Jeddah & Dammam through Riyadh: transport goods in 18hrs	4,725km of narrow-guage single track.
Ports	Salalah Port: 2.3 million tonnes of goods handled in 2006 increased by 29% annually	Plan to doubt capacity to 800,000 TEU	Project to expand Dammam port capacity to 1.9 million TEUs by end-2008	Suakin can handle 1.5 million tones/yr
Airports	Seeb Int'l Airport steady growth to arrivals to 21,000 psgr in 2006; airport investment to accommodate 24 million psgr.	Increase capacity from 4.2 million to 7.5 million psgr	3 international & main domestic (Jeddah, Dammam, Rhiyad), & newly in Mecca. Expansion projects take place in airports of Mecca and Jeddah to meet transportation challenges	To meet increased demand, a new international airport is being built 40km south-west of capital

Country	Syria	Tunisia	United Arab Emirates
Roads	Increased by 50% in last 5 years, 20% remain unasphalted	20,000km in primary & secondary roads	Extensive & good quality mainly in Abu Dhabi & Dubai
Railways	2 million psgrs, between 2000-2005: freight increased by 1/3 to 8.2 tones	1,960km, freight of 12.5m tones, 36-38 million psgr	Multi-billion USD metro linking Deira to Dubai Int'l Airport & financial district of Sheikh Zayed Road & Jebel Ali. Planned to be set in service in 2009.
Ports	Tartus port: largest, 60% of imports; Banias port: 7.5m tones of petrol products	26m tones,	Extensive & of good quality; Dubai ports are the top regional hub in the Gulf; attract new generation of 6,000-8,000 TEU container vessels
Airports	Damascus, Aleppo, Latakia 3.2m psgr & 35,590 tones. Damascus: plan to expand to 10m psgrs by 2020.	Capacity 12m psgr/yr, expand capacity of Monasir-Skanes to 5m psgr/yr; 8th airport is built to handle 30m psgr/yr	Extensive & of good quality, new facilities to increase annual psgr capacity from 22m to 60m; Mega goods terminal: lift capacity to 3m tones/yr by 2018; New airport in Dubai of capacity 100m psgr/yr; New Abu Dhabi airport (2005) to lift capacity to 20m psgr/yr

Source: Zawya website

Regional Transport Policy

Regional Policy Centres on Transport

Major transport policy centres in the Arab world include primarily the UN-ESCWA and the Organisation of Islamic Conferences, both of which have an important role in regulating transport among their member states. The League of Arab States, which created the Council of Arab Ministers of Transport and has established other sub-organisations specialised in road, railway, air, and sea transport and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) also play an active role in drafting agreements and conventions to promote further integration among their member states in the various fields of transport.

UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA) is a United Nations regional commission which acts as a centre for providing technical assistance and capacity building to its 14 member states, which are the Arab countries of western Asia, along with Egypt, and Sudan which have recently joined ESCWA. Its headquarters are at the UN House in Beirut, Lebanon.

Within the Economic Development and Globalisation Division (EDGD) at UN ESCWA, the Transportation Team conducts studies on land, air and maritime transport covering the ESCWA region. The Committee on Transportation organises an annual meeting for representatives of the member states and experts in transport issues, and it formulates strategies to develop the transport system and its various modes through setting agreements which member states should ratify and adopt. The annual Committee meeting also follows progress in developing the transportation systems in member states in accordance with the agreements set. The transport committee participates in establishing and formulating priorities for work programmes and medium-term plans and monitors developments within the transport sector in ESCWA member states and the progress achieved in the work of the ESCWA secretariat on transport sector matters. UN ESCWA also ensures that member states participate in international and regional conferences and coordinates member states, efforts related to the implementation of resolutions and recommendations.

Organisation of Islamic Conference

The Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) was established on 25 September 1969 as an intergovernmental organisation representing the collective voice of the Muslim world across the globe, to protect the interests of the Muslim world while promoting international peace. It had 30 founding members and today it numbers are 57 nations over four continents. Its permanent headquarters are in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The OIC has established the Islamic Civil Aviation Council (ICAC) to promote greater commercial and economic collaboration among member states. The ICAC acts to speed up the creation of the institutional mechanisms necessary for such activities. More precisely, the Council reviews the development of civil aviation among member states to strengthen their relations and conducts necessary actions to attain and promote common regulations in the technical and economic field of air transport. It also considers any special problems arising in this field.

To attain these objectives in member states, the Council considers (1) achieving modalities of exchange of information, technical know-how and training opportunities available among member states, (2) establishing air services and improving existing air navigation, (3) effectively utilising existing passenger, goods and mail capacities of the airlines, (4) coordinating and harmonising air services, freedoms of air and tariff policies, (5) cooperation between national airlines, (6) fostering economic growth of air transport, and (7) utilising the civil aviation resources of member states to their maximum capacity.

League of Arab States

The League of Arab States (LAS) is a regional intergovernmental organisation, established on 22 March 1945 between six Arab states, namely Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and Syria and Yemen which joined the league on 5 May 1945. Currently it includes the 22 Arab countries which are, in addition to the above mentioned states, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Sudan, Djibouti, Somalia, and Comoros. Its permanent headquarters are in Cairo, Egypt. The main target of LAS is to "draw closer the relations between member states and coordinate collaboration between them, to safeguard their independence and sovereignty, and to consider in a general way the affairs and interests of the Arab countries". LAS designs and sets programmes of political, economic, social and cultural perspectives to enhance and promote the interests of its member states. Thus it acts as a forum for Arab states where they can coordinate their policy positions and formulate plans to promote matters of common interest and concerns, along with taking action in settling disputes and limiting conflicts among Arab countries.

Fields of action at LAS also focus on financial and economic affairs, including trade and customs, currency, agriculture and industry; transport including roads, railways, air and maritime, telefax and mail; in addition to cultural affairs; nationality affairs; and social and health affairs.

The League of Arab States has created a Council of Arab Ministers of Transport as a forum for Arab governments to set policy recommendations at the joint Arab level pertaining to developing modes of transportation in the Arab world.

The Council aims to promote further Arab cooperation in the fields of transportation, particularly by setting joint Arab transport strategies, and projects and programmes to implement these strategies. The Council is responsible for promoting further development and modernisation of transportation modes between the Arab countries in order to facilitate better and more efficient communication and connections in the region, and to facilitate easier and cheaper transport of passengers and goods. In this respect, the Council raises its recommendations to the Economic and Social Council of the League. It also acts to promote further coordination and cooperation on transportation between Arab states, and acts to harmonise legislation and regulations related to transportation between Arab states.

Council of Arab Economic Unity

The Council of Arab Economic Union (CAEU), which acts under the umbrella of the League of Arab States (LAS), has embarked upon its mission of pushing forward the march of Arab economic unity by holding its first session in Cairo in June 1964, as the body in charge of managing and realising the Arab Economic Unity Agreement (AEUA).

Under this Agreement, the CAEU was established as a permanent body to supervise the implementation thereof, i.e., to realise inter-Arab economic unity, provided that the CAEU shall, once being established, develop a practical plan for the implementation phases and determine the legislative, administrative and technical procedures of each phase, while paying heed to the interests of the contracting countries without prejudice to the Agreement's objectives. The CAEU shall also submit its decisions in this respect to the governments of the contracting countries, to be adopted in accordance with the applied constitutional principles in each of them. The CAEU member countries shall be obliged to undertake the decisions of the CAEU.

Since its establishment and the practicing of it's mission as of 1964 the CAEU has been working to achieve Arab economic integration towards the aspired goal of an Arab economic unity. The CAEU has been greatly concerned with all the procedures and studies related to such integration and the different fields thereof. These fields include, inter alia, the establishment and support of specialised typical Arab federations. During the period (1971-2004), the number of such federations amounted to 34 working in various production fields as well as service infrastructures. They constitute effective federations, with each constituting an Arab house of expertise in its field.

Under the umbrella of the CAEU 5 federations serve to promote economic integration and further cooperation between governments and non-governmental entities to develop the transport sector in the Arab world. All the transport entities which are off-springs of the council serve as a tool to execute the relevant transport policy laid down by the Council of Arab Ministers of Transport. These specialised organisations include:

- Arab Union of Land Transport
- Arab Union of Railways
- Arab Sea Ports Federation
- Arab Federation of Chambers of Shipping
- Arab Federation of Shipping

There are two other transport entities which aim at promoting transport between Arab States but which act directly within the framework of or in cooperation with the League of Arab States. These are:

- Arab Air Carriers Organisation
- Arab Civil Aviation Commission

Arab Union of Land Transport

The Arab Union of Land Transport (AULT) is a specialised civil association of Arab firms, institutions, cooperatives and other businesses working in the field of land transport, along with other Arab unions, chambers, syndicates and training centres specialised in matters of land transport. It includes members from 13 Arab countries, namely Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Tunisia, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt and Yemen. It was established in 1976; its permanent headquarters are in Amman, Jordan. AULT's main objective is to coordinate the efforts of its members in developing the land transport sector in all Arab countries, by promoting its operational efficiency and expanding its scope of activities. It also provides assistance to its members to develop intra–Arab transport of individuals and goods, to facilitate transit transport,and to connect their land transport fleets and modernise their road networks.

These objectives are fulfilled by AULT's efforts to use new technologies in land transport and further develop them. Since its establishment AULT has executed a set of activities such as conducting research studies in the field of transport, publishing a guide on Arab land transport, providing technical assistance to members, executing new transport projects and expanding existing ones, solving technical and transport problems facing it's members, harmonising and coordinating regulations, legislations, terms and documentation related to land transport, preparing a table of distances between

Arab cities and a map of roads in Arab countries, in addition to developing the necessary human resources skills through training programmes. It also calls for a unified Arab agreement to organise land transport between Arab countries, as a complement to the Transit Transport Agreement. AULT also supports creating an International Arab Company for Land Transport and co-operates with other specialised Pan-Arab, regional and international organisations in the field of transport.

Among the most recent activities and achievements of AULT are:

- Drafting a multilateral convention for organising the land transport of passengers amongst Arab countries. The draft has been approved by the League of Arab States and is now in the process of ratification by Arab counties.
- Establishing a data base for road safety in Arab countries and analysing available data.
- Drafting a multilateral convention for organising the carriage of goods among Arab countries. The draft was discussed by the Technical Land Transport Committee in the League of Arab States in April 2009.

Arab Union of Railways

The Arab Union of Railways is a civil association of Arab companies and enterprises working in the field of railways transport. It was established in 1979 and its headquarters are in Aleppo, Syria.
The Arab Union of Railways has 10 Arab member countries, and was created under the Arab Economic Unity Council. It aims to coordinate the efforts of its members and assures cooperation between them to guarantee the promotion and modernisation of the railway sector in the Arab world. The union also focuses on promoting more efficient services of the railway sector in the Arab world, through widening the scope of activities of railway transportation networks in Arab countries as well as linking them to international railway networks, in order to facilitate cheap and efficient transportation of passengers and goods.
The Arab Union of Railways conducts studies about the principal railway axes in Arab countries. It also organises special seminars and meetings and periodical scientific symposia every two years, which deal with major problems and impediments facing railway transportation at both Arab and international levels. Up to now, 13 symposia have been organised in the member states of the union. The union also organises professional training courses to develop and upgrade the skills of staff and publishes regular periodicals and guides about the railways sector in the Arab world, as well as publishing a general vocabulary of the railway terms.

Arab Sea Ports Federation

The Arab Sea Ports Federation (ASPF) is an Arab specialised federation of Arab companies and enterprises, authorities, councils, and administrations working in the field of sea ports facilitation in the Arab world. It works under the auspices of the Council of Arab Economic Unity at the League of Arab States. It was established in 1976, with its permanent headquarters in Alexandria, Egypt.

The Federation aims at the coordination of efforts of its members pertaining to the development of the activities of sea ports in Arab states. It gives assistance and support to its members in various technical fields, and encourages its member companies to unite their efforts and positions when dealing with other parties. It also plays an arbitrage role upon request, and sets training programmes for its members. Moreover, it promotes the creation of joint Arab companies in the field of sea ports and supports their proposals at the Arab Economic Unity Council and other concerned Arab organisations.

Arab Federation of Chambers of Shipping

The Arab Federation of Chambers of Shipping (AFCS) was established on 24 July 2002 and was approved on 18 December 2002 by the Council of Arab Economic Unity to work under its auspices, pursuant to resolution No. 1201/ 76D. Its permanent headquarters are in Alexandria, Egypt. Its members are either operating, which are chambers working in the field of maritime shipping; or affiliated, which are specialised federations of companies and establishments and offices working in the field; or are supervising, such as the Council of Arab Economic Unity and other Arab nations specialised in the field.

This Federation gives support and assistance to its members in areas related to harmonising and unifying shipping concepts and modernising working systems, and complementing efforts to act as a single entity in the relations with other foreign organisations. It also promotes the efficiency and skills of the human resources in the field of maritime transport and its related services, in addition to publishing periodicals and conducting seminars on maritime transport and shipping.

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Jordan Aviation, Afriqiyah Airways, Etihad Airways, Air Arabia and Air Cairo.

AACO aims to upgrade the economic environment for airline operations and to promote high safety standards for air carriers and consumer-driven services. It also aims to provide acost-effective and a high quality framework for the development of human resources, and to establish joint projects to promote the synergy of interaction between members. Along with joint projects, the areas of activities of the AACO include coordination, database and interactive publications, and international representation.

Arab Federation of Shipping

The Arab Federation of Shipping is a civil entity which was established in 1979, by virtue of a decree of the Council of Arab Economic Unity No. 745/25 of 7/6/1979. It includes 10 member states, namely Jordan, Tunisia, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Libya, Egypt and Morocco. Its headquarters are located in Baghdad, Iraq. The Federation aims at synergising members' efforts towards achieving cooperation. This comes in addition to providing them with support to improve Arab maritime transport and to ensure its flourishing as to the efficiency of operation and expansion of activities which could, in turn, serve development plans and facilitate passenger and goods transport among Arab countries and between Arab and foreign countries.

For the purpose of achieving such objectives, the Federation acts to establish cooperation among Federation members to make the best use of the Arab shipping fleets for passengers and goods, to widen the scope of its usage and to coordinate efforts to link the Arab world with a comprehensive maritime transport network. It provides support and assistance to members in developing and improving work mechanisms to achieve the best economic outcome and exchange experiences among members, acquiring cutting-edge technologies, preparing feasibility studies for planned projects and providing recommendations, and establishing new projects or expanding the already existing ones in a way that meets the needs in the Arab world.

It also (1) coordinates, develops and unifies systems, legislation and terms in various fields of business related to maritime transport including the instruments involved; (2) coordinates and unifies maritime transport tariffs; (3) urges its members to handle international affairs as one group as well as in relations with other parties; (4) rationalises departments and creates competent human resources working as one group in the field of maritime transport and related fields; (5) assists its members in ensuring their needs concerning materials, tools and requirements; (6) encourages its members to establish Arab joint companies in cooperation with the CAEU; (7) carries out the tasks thereof in cooperation with Arab and international federations and organisations working in the field of maritime transport and other activities related particularly to the Arab Sea Ports Federation; (8) issues publications, journals, and periodicals in order to achieve the Federation's objectives and purposes; and (9) arbitrates disputes or participates in other arbitrations upon request.

Arab Air Carriers Organisation

The Arab Air Carriers Organisation (AACO) was established in 1965 under the League of Arab States. It acts as a regional association of 24 airlines based in Arab Countries. Its members are: EgyptAir, Saudi Arabian Airlines, Middle East Airlines, Iraqi Airways, Syrian Arab Airlines, Sudan Airways, Tunisair, Gulf Air, Trans Mediterranean Airways, Air Algerie, Kuwait Airways, Royal Air Maroc, Yemen Airways, Royal Jordanian, Libyan Airlines, Emirates, Oman Air, Qatar Airways, Palestinian Airlines,

Arab Civil Aviation Commission

The Agreement establishing the Arab Civil Aviation Commission (ACAC) was set within the framework of the League of Arab States to strengthen cooperation and coordination and the development of Civil Aviation between Arab states. The ACAC was thus established as an Arab specialised organisation working under the auspices of LAS in 1996 and its permanent headquarters are in Morocco. At present, 16 Arab states are members of the ACAC, namely Jordan, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Tunisia, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt, Morocco and Yemen, while the remaining states are in the process of ratifying the agreement.

The ACAC aims to set a framework for joint Arab efforts to set a general planning to develop and promote the safety of intra-Arab civil aviation, to increase cooperation and coordination between member states and to harmonise Arab doctrines of civil aviation. It also acts to develop and modernise Arab civil aviation to cope with the need for a safe and regulated Arab aviation system.

To fulfil its goals, the board of the ACAC conducts research and studies on all economic, regulatory, legislative, technical and security related aspects of intra-Arab civil aviation. It also coordinates issues related to joint Arab interests, and promotes complementarity between Arab air transport institutions. It keeps track of new techniques in civil aviation and promotes upgrading the Arab civil aviation system, and acts to harmonise civil aviation legislation between member states. It also acts to facilitate exchange of information and coordinates training programmes, etc.

The ACAC coordinates with the Arab Air Carriers Organisation (AACO) to set a unified Arab policy for air transport, to restructure the air transport system, to minimise barriers to the freedom of air transport and to increase the number of flights between Arab countries. This coordination also aims at encouraging Arab carriers to cooperate in issues related to exchange of spare parts, aircraft maintenance, electronic reservation systems, adopting joint codes, marketing synergies, etc. Coordination also supports cooperation in research and promoting better air aviation services through executing air aviation systems via the satellite the expansion of the framework of cooperation to cover air aviation safety services and the unification of civil aviation legislation and regulation in the Arab states.

Gulf Cooperation Council

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was established in 1981, as an intergovernmental organisation among the six Gulf countries of the Arab peninsula, namely Kuwait, Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Oman, United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. Its permanent headquarters are in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The major objectives of the GCC are to achieve coordination and integration among its member countries in economic, social and cultural fields, with the aim of reaching a Gulf economic unity. Its General Secretariat thus acts to harmonise regulations among its member countries in the fields of (1) finance and economic affairs, (2) trade, customs and transport, (3) education and cultural affairs, (4) social and health affairs, (5) advertisement and tourism, and (6) legislation and administration. It also targets areas of action including promoting scientific and technological advancement in the sectors of manufacturing and mining, agriculture and animal herds, as well as establishing joint scientific research centres and promoting partnership with the private sector.

In the field of transport, the GCC member states have set various codes to regulate a joint transportation system, in order to facilitate transportation of goods and passengers between them. The GCC directorate established a system for transit transport across the GCC, as an outcome of the Unified Economic Agreement which coordinates the economic and trade relations between the GCC member states. This system clarifies the vital issues related to transit across the GCC, which includes mutual customs procedures and facilitation within transit agreements. Thus, this system allows for the transport of goods in vehicles across the lands of the member states, without facing any barriers or discrimination towards the types of these transportation vehicles.

International Road Transport Union Permanent Delegation to the Middle East & Region

The IRU Permanent Delegation to the Middle East & Region was established on 1 May 2005 in Istanbul.

The delegation was created to take better account of important trade developments resulting from the economic changes following the globalisation and liberalisation process in several countries in the region.

The Permanent Delegation has the mission to cooperate with regional and international organisations as well as IRU Member Associations and national authorities. Its mission consists of developing and facilitating road transport at the crossroads of continents and regions stretching from Turkey in Europe to Egypt in Africa throughout the whole Middle East region to the fastest growing world economies in South-East Asia.

Main Objectives

-to promote the role of road transport in the Middle East and Region together with IRU Member Associations according to the global IRU policy;

-To support the identification and elimination of physical and non-physical barriers to road transport through the support of the activities of UN bodies with regard to the expansion and proper implementation of the UN-ECE transport related conventions and agreements in the region;

-To build general awareness of the regional need for and the global importance of internationally recognised professional training with harmonised international standards as provided by the IRU Academy for a better-performing industry to the benefit of the economy and society as a whole.

Since its creation the Permanent Delegation has established a successful network consisting of international and pan-Arab organisations, UN agencies and governments in the region and is working in cooperation with these different institutions and its Member Associations to promote and develop trade and transport in the region.

To serve its objectives the Permanent Delegation organises a range of events and activities in cooperation with its partners in the region. These activities include the following:

-A Members meeting is held annually for the purpose of discussing future activities and exchanging ideas and information with Member Associations about substantial road transport issues in the region;

-The Permanent Delegation participates at UN meetings and events in the region such as the UN Interregional Seminars organised in Cairo and Abu Dhabi;

-A Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the Permanent Delegation and the Arab Union of Land Transport (AULT) in February 2007, focusing primarily on improving professional road transport training in the Arab countries through the IRU Academy;

-An IRU Delegation recently visited the headquarters of the League of Arab State (LAS) and The Arab Administrative Development Organisation (ARADO) and discussed transport issues in the region and areas of potential future cooperation.

Intergovernmental Transport Agreements Within The Region

The Arab states have engaged in several bilateral and multilateral agreements to regulate the transport of passengers and goods between them via the different modes of transport, with the aim to promote further integration among them. The major agreements are stated below.

Decree of the Arab Agreement to Regulate Passenger Land Transport in between and across the Arab Countries

This agreement was ratified by the Board of the League of Arab States in 2006. Bahrain, Tunisia, Syria, Palestine, Libya and Yemen have signed it. This agreement aims ro organise passenger road transport between and across Arab countries and promoting the development of economic and social bonds between Arab countries. It also aims at promoting tourism between Arab countries and removing barriers facing international road movement of passengers between Arab countries.

The passengers transport agreement covers the movement of passengers (public, private, tourism) on the roads across member countries. It ensures that vehicles registered in member countries abide to its bylaws by not exceeding permitted axial loads, dimensions, weights, and the number of passengers allowed passing along the road networks in member states, without pre-approval from the concerned authorities. Moreover, fees and taxes outstanding at border crossings are collected according to the related bilateral agreements signed by the Arab states.

A technical committee controls the execution of this agreement, and is composed of representatives of member states and the Arab Union for Land Transport. As designated by the Internal Code of the Council of the Arab Ministers of Transportation, this committee conducts periodical meetings and suggests recommendations to solve problems arising from the execution of this agreement.

ESCWA Agreements

As part of the promotion of trade and transport facilitation, ESCWA developed in 1999 the *Integrated Transport System for the Arab Mashreq* (ITSAM) as a regional transport network. This aims to modernise the road network in the region and to build a network of railways which connects the Arab Mashreq with Europe and the Arab Gulf region, in order to reduce the costs of transport of passengers and goods and thus activate regional integration. In this regard, a map of the major roads, railways, seaports and airports which are of international importance was thus created. ITSAM also includes the reactivation of the Hijaz Railway by adopting new and modern technologies.

To further develop ITSAM, ESCWA worked on three tracks, which include the regional transport network, along with the association framework system and the methodological framework for a policy analysis. As an outcome of ITSAM, ESCWA member states adopted the *Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq* in 2001, where by the end of May 2002, ten ESCWA countries haved signed and one country had ratified, and the *Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq* in 2002, with nine signatory member states.

International Agreement on Roads in the Arab Mashreq

This agreement covers the roads in the Arab Mashreq which are considered to be of international importance for transport of goods and passengers and for tourism, and thus must be given priority in national strategies and plans for construction, maintenance and development of the roads networks in the member states. It thus considers developing these road networks to increase cooperation between member countries in the light of increasing traffic needs in the future, to promote more inter-regional trade and tourism, and to assure meeting emerging environmental requirements. Member countries must abide by this agreement upon building new roads and in upgrading the existing roads.

International Agreement on Railways in the Arab Mashreq

This agreement gives priority to the railway network in member countries in the formulation of national plans and strategies related to the construction, maintenance and the development of these networks. It also ensures the carrying out of feasibility studies by the concerned states to set the alignment of new routes and lines.

The agreement was put into action based on the parties' concerns to have a railway network in the Arab Mashreq that takes into consideration the matters of construction and running costs, safety, speed, regularity, and personal comfort. The agreement was formulated from the need for an efficient railway network between member countries to cope with the rising transport needs and the importance to facilitate passenger and goods movement, and to assure the protection of the environment. Thus, it acts to increase the interchange of tourism and trade in the Arab Mashreq, as part of promoting greater Arab regional integration.

Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Maritime Transport in the Arab Mashreq

ESCWA also established a memorandum of understanding to promote cooperation in maritime transport in the Arab Mashreq, where member states coordinate with each other in matters of maritime transport by harmonising their individual policies related to regional and international maritime transport and to sea ports, and to enhance the efficiency of maritime services as an engine to further economic and social integration in the region. This agreement aims to set out and execute harmonised maritime policies to assure the sustainability of commercial shipping fleets of member states and to strengthen cooperation between member states at the regional and sub-regional levels. It also aims to harmonise the perspectives of member states in matters of joining other regional and international maritime agreements and conventions.

Member states shall conduct regular discussions to unify their positions vis-à-vis regional and international maritime transport policies, etc. They shall promote further bilateral and multilateral cooperation between sea transport authorities, and conduct studies in this regard, and work to promote an active role of the national maritime institutions, as well as encourage joint activities of carriers' unions and agencies, national shipping lines, national and Arab shipping associations and unions, and maritime trainings and research centres.

Convention on International Multimodal Transport of Goods in the Arab Mashreq

As part of the efforts to build an integrated transport system between its member states, ESCWA has also drafted a convention to organise and regulate international multimodal transport of goods in the Arab Mashreq. This is taking place during a period witnessing a huge progress in the technologies of international transport of goods, as is reflected in the increasing utilisation of large containers in more than one mode of transportation. Thus, international multimodal transport of goods has become a major component affecting the efficiency of the flow of trade among the Arab states and with the world.

The draft Convention on International Multimodal Transport of Goods in the Arab Mashreq, prepared by ESCWA in 2007, defines international multimodal transport as "the process of transporting goods by more than one mode of transport under one transport contract and one transport document, for which one person (the forwarding agent) shall have responsibility from the time of receiving the goods in one country until they are delivered in another country."

The convention draft specifies, among others, the international multimodal transport document, the liability of the international multimodal transport forwarding agent, freight charges, the right to control the goods, and litigation procedures and arbitrage.

Also within the same context, the League of Arab States and UN-ESCWA approved the conclusion of the "Agreement on Multimodal Transport of Goods among the Arab Countries" to reflect their joint efforts in promoting multimodal transport among all Arab countries.

UNECE Conventions

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Inland Transport Committee created the framework for intergovernmental cooperation to facilitate international transport along with improving its safety and its environmental performance. The framework includes 57 international agreements and conventions and these provide the international legal and technical framework for global development of international road, rail, inland waterway and combined transport.

It also includes coherent international infrastructure networks, uniform rules and regulations, and uniform and simplified border-crossing procedures, with the aim to ensure a high level of efficiency, safety, and environmental protection in transport.

The UNECE conventions on transport are concerned with issues of transport infrastructure, road traffic and road signs and signals, road vehicles, legal instruments related to road transport, inland water transport, border crossing facilitation, transit by road, transport of dangerous goods and transport of perishable food stuffs.

Table 12 shows the status of the UNECE transport agreements and conventions in the Arab world.

Table 12 : UNECE Transport Agreements and Conventions Status at 27 January 2009

			Algeria	Bahrain	Egypt	Iraq	Jordan	Kuwait	Lebanon	Morocco	Saudi	Sudan	Syrian Arab Republic	Tunisia	United Arab Emirates
1	Infrastructure networks	Construction Traffic Arteries, 1950													
2		E Road Network (AGR), 1975													
3		E Rail Network (AGC), 1985													
4		E Comb. Tr. Network (AGTC), 1991													
5		Protocol Inl. Nav. To AGCT, 1997													
6		E Inl. Water Network (AGN), 1996													
7	Road traffic and road safety	Road Traffic, 1949	X		X		X		X	X			X	X	X
8		Road Traffic, 1968		X				X		X				X	X
9		Protocol on Road Signs & Signals, 1949			X				S					X	
10		Road Signs & Signals, 1968		X		X		X		X				X	X
11		Suppl. 1968 Convention Road Traffic, 1971													
12		Suppl. 1968 Conv. Road Signs & Signals, 1971													
13		Weights and Dimensions, 1950													
14		Suppl. 1949 Conv.and Protocol, 1950													
15		Road Markings, 1957													
16		Protocol Road Markings, 1973													
17		Issue and Validity of Driving Permits (APC)								X					
18		Vehicles Regulations, 1958												X	
19		Techn. Inspect. Vehicles, 1997													
20	Vehicles	Global Vehicles Regulations, 1998												X	
21		Work of Crews Int. Road Transport (AETR), 1970													
22		Taxation Priv. Road Vehic. , 1956													
23	Other Legal Instruments Related to Road Transport	Taxation Road Passenger Vehic., 1956													
24		Taxation Road Goods. Vehic., 1956								X					
25		Contract Road Goods Transport (CMR), 1956					X		X	X			X	X	
26		Protocol on CMR, 1978					X		X					X	
27		Add'l Protocol on CMR, (e-CMR) 2008													
28		Contract Pass. & Lugg. Rd. Transp. (CVR), 1973													
29		Protocol on CVR, 1978													
30		Econ. Regulat. Road. Transp., 1954													

			Algeria	Bahrain	Egypt	Iraq	Jordan	Kuwait	Lebanon	Morocco	Saudi Arabia	Sudan	Syrian Arab Republic	Tunisia	United Arab Emirates
31	Inland nevigation	Collision Inl. Nav., 1960													
32		Registr. Inl. Nav. Vessels, 1965													
33		Measurement Inl. Nav. Vessels, 1966													
34		Liability Vessel Owners (CLN), 1973													
35		Protocol to CLN, 1978													
36		Contract Inl. Nav. Pass. & Lugg. (CVN), 1976													
37		Protocol on CVN, 1978													
38	Border crossing facilitation	Touring Facilities, 1954	X		X		X		X	X			X	X	
39		Protocol Touring Facilities, 1954	X		X		X		X	X			X	X	
40		Temp. Import. Priv. Road Vehicles, 1954	X		X		X			X	X	X	X	X	X
41		TIR Convention, 1959					X	X		X					
42		TIR Convention, 1975	X				X	X	X	X			X	X	X
43		Temp. Import. Aircraft & Boats, 1956	X												
44		Temp. Import. Commerc. Vehicles, 1956	X								X				
45		Cross. Front. Pass. Bagg. Rail, 1952													
46		Cross. Front. Goods Rail, 1952													
47		Spare Parts Europ. Wagons, 1958													
48		Customs Container Convention, 1956	X												
49		Customs Container Convention, 1972	X							X	X				
50		Customs Treatment Pallets, 1960													
51		Harmoniz. Frontier Controls of Goods, 1982					X								
52		Customs Pool Containers, 1994													
53	Dangerous goods & special	Dang. Goods by Road (ADR), 1957								X				X	
54		Protocol to ADR, 1993													
55		Liabil.Dang. Goods (CRTD), 1989								S					
56		Dang. Goods by Inland Waterways (ADN), 2000													
57		Perishable Foodstuffs (ATP), 1970								X				X	
		TOTAL:	9	2	5	1	9	4	7	15	3	1	6	4	5

Arab Transit System

The League of Arab States established the Agreement Organising Transit Transport in Between Arab League Member States to coordinate transit transport across its member states, in compliance with its continuous efforts to promote further economic and particularly trade integration in the Arab world.

This agreement was ratified to cope with the recent developments in intra-Arab trade, as seen by the continuous increase in the flow of goods and the size of trade between Arab countries, most of which take place via road networks, in addition to the modernisation of the operational modes of border crossings.

This agreement aims to facilitate and simplify intra-Arab trade operations, and thus to reduce its cost and increase its competitiveness. It therefore acts as a unified legal framework for carriers and the authorities in charge. It encompasses the transportation of goods, personal luggage and vehicles on roads, railways, and internal water routes through the lands of its member states. It also includes the transport of goods in their transit transport mode, as long as this transport is comprehensive i.e. starts and ends outside the transit country.

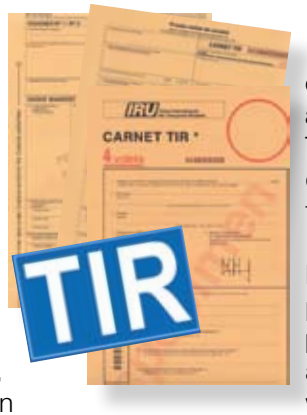
The Arab transit agreement is significant for its use of a crossing document originating in the country of exports instead of the various customs documents which usually originate in the countries along the transit route, as the transportation vehicles pass through the countries which are members of the agreement. This single unified document is thus used at all stages of the transit process.

Yet there is a continuous update and upgrade of the line-items of the Arab transit agreement due to the increase in the size of transit trade transport on the one hand, and the continuous creation of new more efficient and easier routes of transit transportation on the other hand. Within this framework, the Economic and Social Council of the League of Arab States recently took a decision to assign the General Directorate of the League to study the potentials of developing an Agreement, particularly on the following fronts: transit fees, financial guarantees requirements for the transit process, technical features of trucks and other related issues, administrative procedures, the mode of follow-up on conflicts arising upon execution of the agreement and the mode of doing amendments on the text of the agreement.

It is important to mention that the goods and vehicles in transit transport under this agreement are not subject to any taxes or fees, at the point of departure or the transit office points, which exceed four per thousand of the total value of the goods in transit, unlike the case of transportation during importing, exporting, or transiting.

TIR System

The TIR System was created to regulate the international transport of goods under customs seals. It provides the maximum facilitation for the international movement of goods under customs seals by providing the required guarantees to transit countries to cover the customs duties and taxes at risk. Thus it is characterised by the mutual recognition of customs controls carried out by the customs authorities at the customs office(s) of departure in the country(s) of departure, while in transit and throughout the journey until both goods and vehicle along with the TIR Carnet are presented to the customs authorities at the customs office(s) of destination. In other words, usually no extra inspection takes place at the border crossings of the intermediary countries, within the international route of movement of goods.



The TIR Convention applies to the transport of goods without intermediate reloading in road vehicles, combination of vehicles or in containers, which conform to the technical specifications and procedures laid down in this Convention, by which when the goods are placed and sealed in the load compartment of the road vehicle, no additional goods or items can be introduced or removed without leaving obvious traces.

The TIR System provides several benefits in terms of the facilitation of transport and trade, by reducing formalities and delays in transit and thus reducing transport costs and by facilitating transit movements through the application of standardised controls and documentation. Thus, the TIR System encourages the development of international trade.

More precisely, the TIR System provides facilities to the transport industry by moving goods across international frontiers with minimum interference, reducing delays and costs of transit, simplifying and standardising documents, and eliminating the need to make customs guarantee deposits at transit borders.

As for customs authorities, the TIR System guarantees the duties and taxes at risk during international transit movements up to USD 50,000. It assures that only legitimate transport operators are permitted to use TIR Carnets, which increases the system's security. It also reduces the need for physical inspection of goods in transit, and facilitates customs control and documentation, and uses internal clearance points for export and import which allow for more efficient deployment of customs human resources.

The TIR System ensures the security of the transport of goods by the creation of electronic controls for TIR Carnets, which is commonly referred to as the Safe TIR System. By providing confirmation from the customs offices of destination of the final or partial termination of the TIR Carnet, it enables the comparison of this electronic documentation against the paper-based termination in the TIR Carnet.

The TIR System also allows for pre-arrival information to be sent to customs authorities, free of charge, through the IRU's TIR-EPD application, in conformity with the World Customs Organisation's SAFE Framework.

With its global coverage and abovementioned features and services, the TIR System is the only transit facilitation tool for free and secure movement of Arab trade goods across the borders in Asia, Europe and Africa. Therefore, many Arab States have already become Contracting Parties to this Convention while many others are expressing serious interest in doing so.

The TIR System not only ensures a smoother flow of gods and hence integration of markets, but is also an excellent risk management tool for national customs administrations which helps the prevention of organised crime and illegal trafficking of people and goods across borders of the TIR Contracting Parties.

Conclusions Of The IRU Secretary General

Road transport in a liberalised and globalised economy has become an efficient and irreplaceable production tool. As such, any penalty imposed on road transport is an even bigger penalty on trade and the economy as a whole. Thanks to its flexibility and the quality of service offered, road transport, which is accessible to everyone everywhere, remains the best placed to take on the challenges of sustainable development while at the same time contributing to regional and global economic development and peace.

Hence, the Arabic countries in Western Asia and North Africa can and should integrate their economies within the region and to the global economy by further facilitating international road transport.

Benefitting from an increasing portion of world trade, the major Arab ports in the Gulf region can only seize the new opportunities of tremendous growth if they are supported by efficient, reliable and professional road transport services in their hinterlands.

It should be stressed that road transport as such would not only serve the Arab world but moreover the global supply chain and act as a catalyst to interconnect every business in the region to every major world market.

In order to achieve this, an appropriate legal framework to effectively facilitate road transport, both cross-border and in transit by giving equal opportunity to everyone everywhere, is necessary in order to benefit economic and social development. Moreover, the abolition of non-physical barriers, due to burdensome artificial and bureaucratic formalities, would also constitute a major advancement.

However, realisation of these objectives require the Governments to adopt and share a common global vision particularly in the context of road transport facilitation by implementing the United Nations road transport conventions and international agreements instead of bilateral or sub-regional measures and regulations.

In the international context but particularly in the Arab world, even if the effects of the failure of the incomplete Doha Round in December 2005 and July 2006 are not yet quantifiable. However to effectively facilitate global trade in road transport, there is no alternative than to implement the supra-national agreements on economic liberalisation, which have proved their efficiency in several regions to the world.

The blockage of the multilateral agreements and the recent burgeoning of bilateral free trade agreements demonstrate that every State wishes to better control its relations with its partners. Even so, in order to benefit from the advantages of a bilateral agreement, the multilateral system must work. The bilateral agreement must remain a complement and not become a substitute to multilateral rules, and it must remain compatible with them. Indeed, certain issues, such as harmonising border controls, the application of security or social regulations as well as customs transit procedures can only be regulated through the UN multilateral agreements.

To summarise, transport policy lacking a global vision, which is too often based on dogma instead of facts, totally hides not only the fact that modern road transport is the most environmentally friendly mode of transport but also that road transport is the engine of economic development.
In the Arab world, however, we can avoid dogmas and seize the opportunities by effectively facilitating road transport through the implementation of the UN global facilitation instruments to bring economies closer, interconnect businesses and transform the Middle East region to one of the most important global trade centres bridging the Asian economies with the western markets.

This can be accomplished by implementing the IRU slogan “working together for a better future”.

Martin Marmy

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