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# The challenges of public transport in the MENA region

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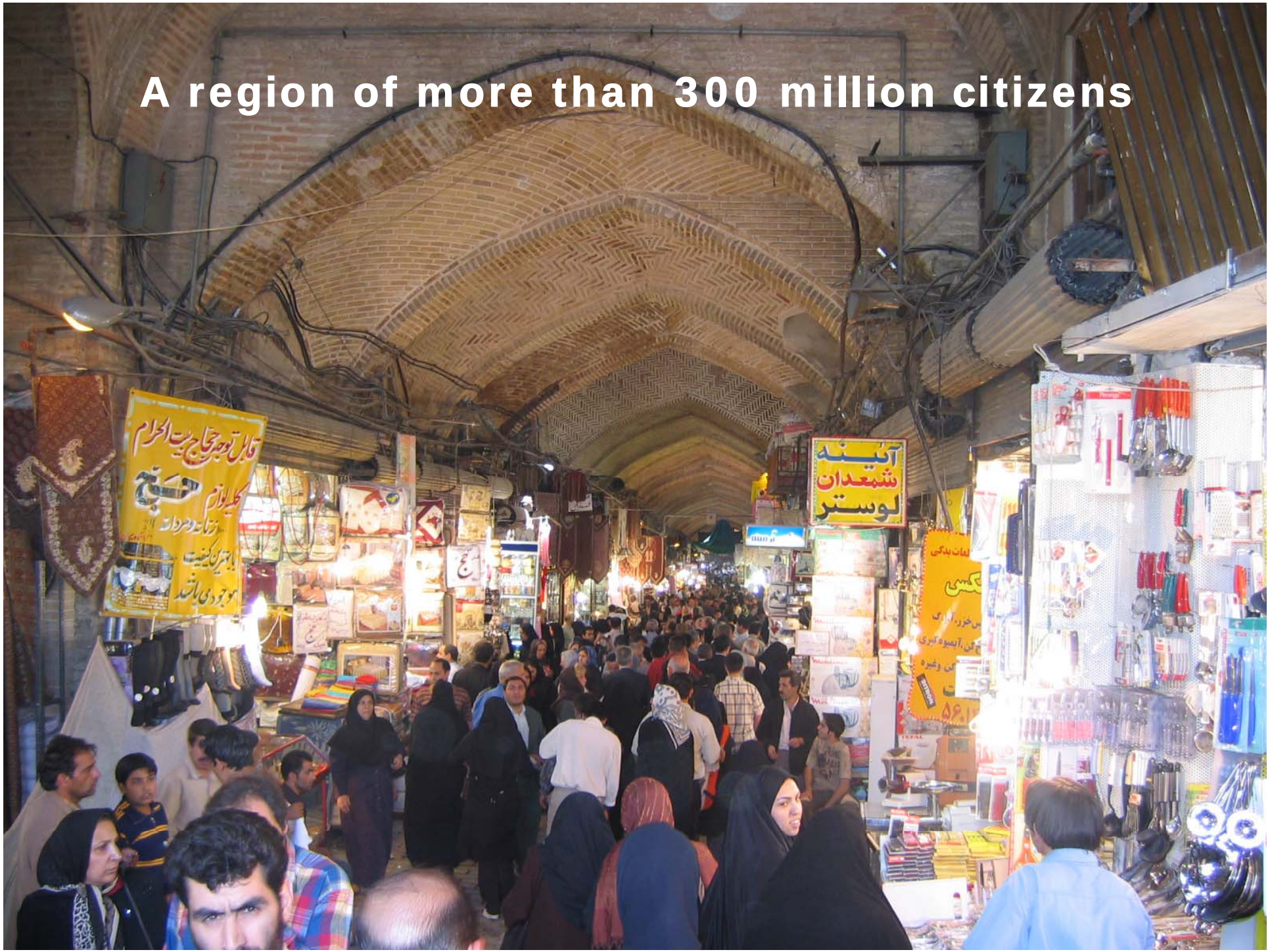
# THE MENA REGION

Palestine Lebanon Jordan Syria Egypt Irak Kuwait Bahrain Qatar

Morocco Algeria Tunisia Libya Saudi Arabia Yemen Oman United Arab Emirates Iran

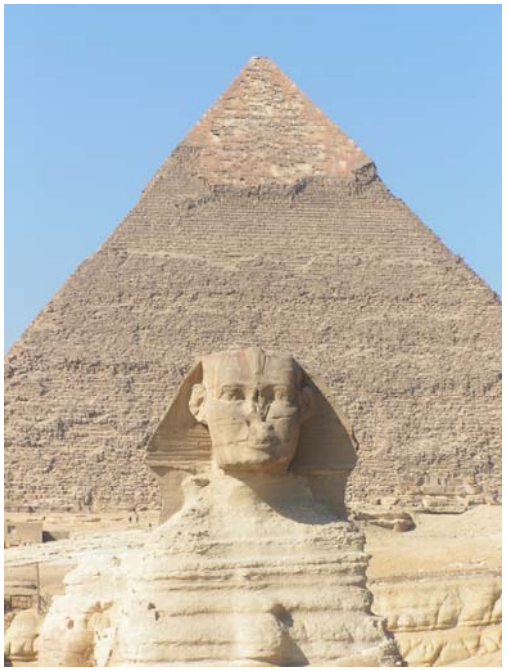
# A region of more than 300 million citizens



# 30 cities of more than 500.000 inh.
# 8 cities of more than 3.000.000 inh.

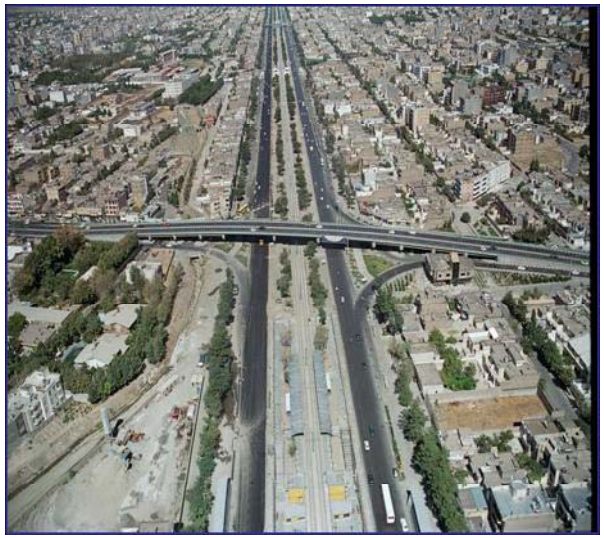
- 2 Mega cities:
  Cairo - 16 million
  Tehran – 10 million
- Plus many other large cities:
  Aden, Alexandria, Algiers, Aleppo, Amman, Baghdad, Beirut, Casablanca, Damascus, Dubai, Esfahan, Abu Dhabi, Riyadh, Tripoli, Tunis, etc.

# Sustained and rapid economic development (+5.1% yearly)



Heavily urbanized region
(60% of the population)

# Rapid urban sprawl



# Young population

# Relatively low car ownership rates ...

# But increasing traffic congestion…

# Public transport issues

- Public transport is seen as the poor man's means of transport
- It is used exclusively by captive users
- Growing car ownership
- Lack of public support
- Lack of organisation of the sector
- Insufficient capacity
- Shared-taxis are very popular

# Challenges in the Region

- To provide basic mobility in low income countries
- To create additional capacity in the middle range countries to match urbanisation and rising public transport usage rates
- To provide a good quality alternative to car use in the rich countries, create a positive image of PT
- To support sustainable transport policies generally

# The context is favourable for public transport (1)

- Greater integration of the region's economies (UMA, GCC, Free trade)
- High urbanisation rate
- Rapid growth in transport demand
- Increasing traffic congestion
- Degradation of the urban environment
- Increasing awareness of the energy issue (Prepare the end of the oil age)

# The context is favourable for public transport (2)

- Institutional reform of the sector: Regulation and organisation
- Private sector involvement
- Development of new PT systems
- Capacity and resources to introduce new technologies

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# The time for reflection is over for public transport in the MENA region.

## Nearly all conurbations are completing final studies or building major transport infrastructure.

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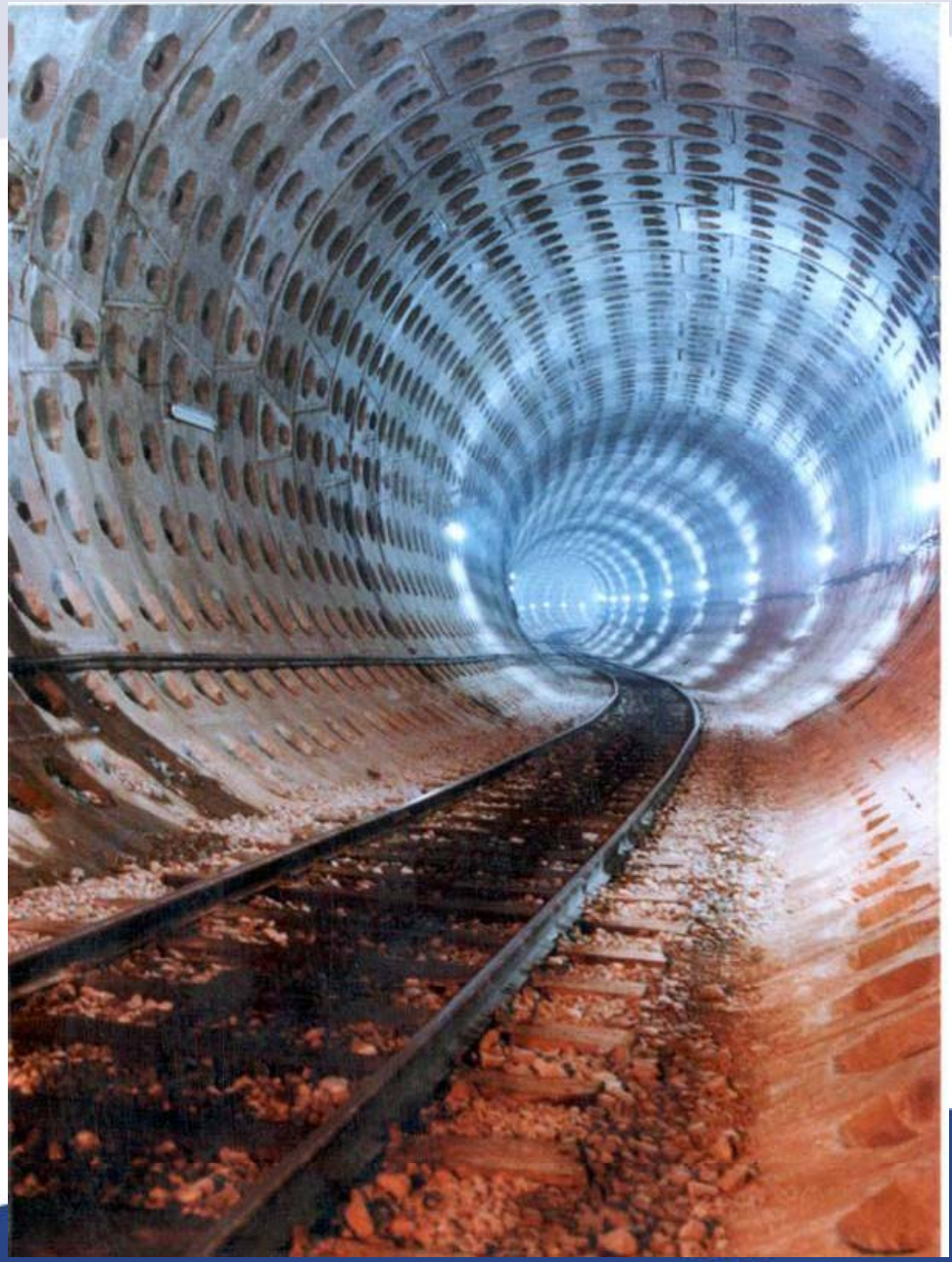
# 7 Iranian cities are building metros and light rail systems



**Tehran is extending its metro network : + 172 km ...**

# ... and developing a BRT system

# In Algeria, one metro line and three light rail systems will open in 2009-2010 …

# … in addition to the introduction of double-articulated buses

# Egypt has a long public transport history

# Tramways since 1896! …

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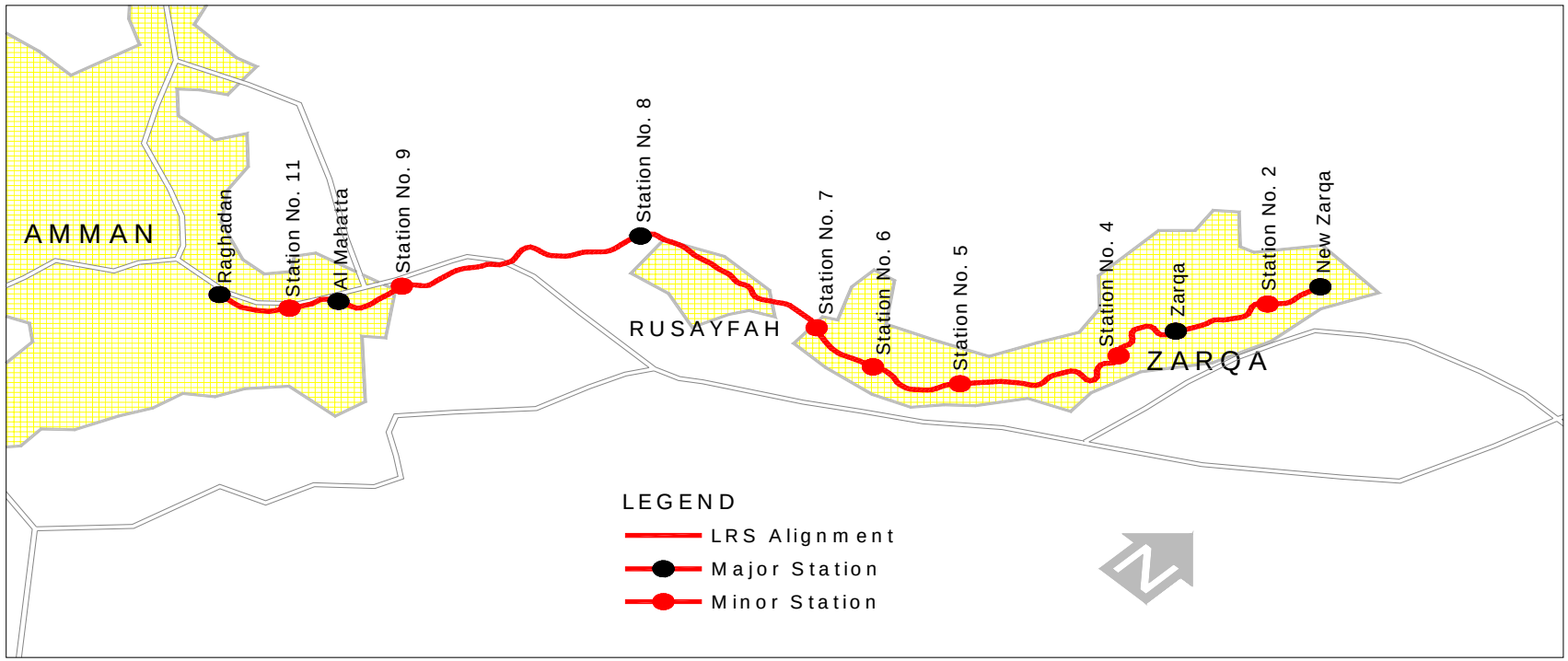
# … and modern metros

# In Jordan, Amman is integrating urban development master plan and transport policy …

- 40 m profile
- 2 lanes in each direction
- + bus- or LRT integrated in separate lane
- sidewalks on both sides + median

# … and started building a 26 km light-rail line to Zarqa



# In Bahrain, transport master plan is being finalised

# In Kuwait, public transport organisation and regulation ...

# ... and feasibility of light rail system

# In Morocco, institutional reform, public-private partnerships for bus operations and regional/urban rail projects

# In Qatar, transport master plan, redefinition of the service and fleet modernisation

# In Saudi Arabia, new policy framework encouraging public transport investments …

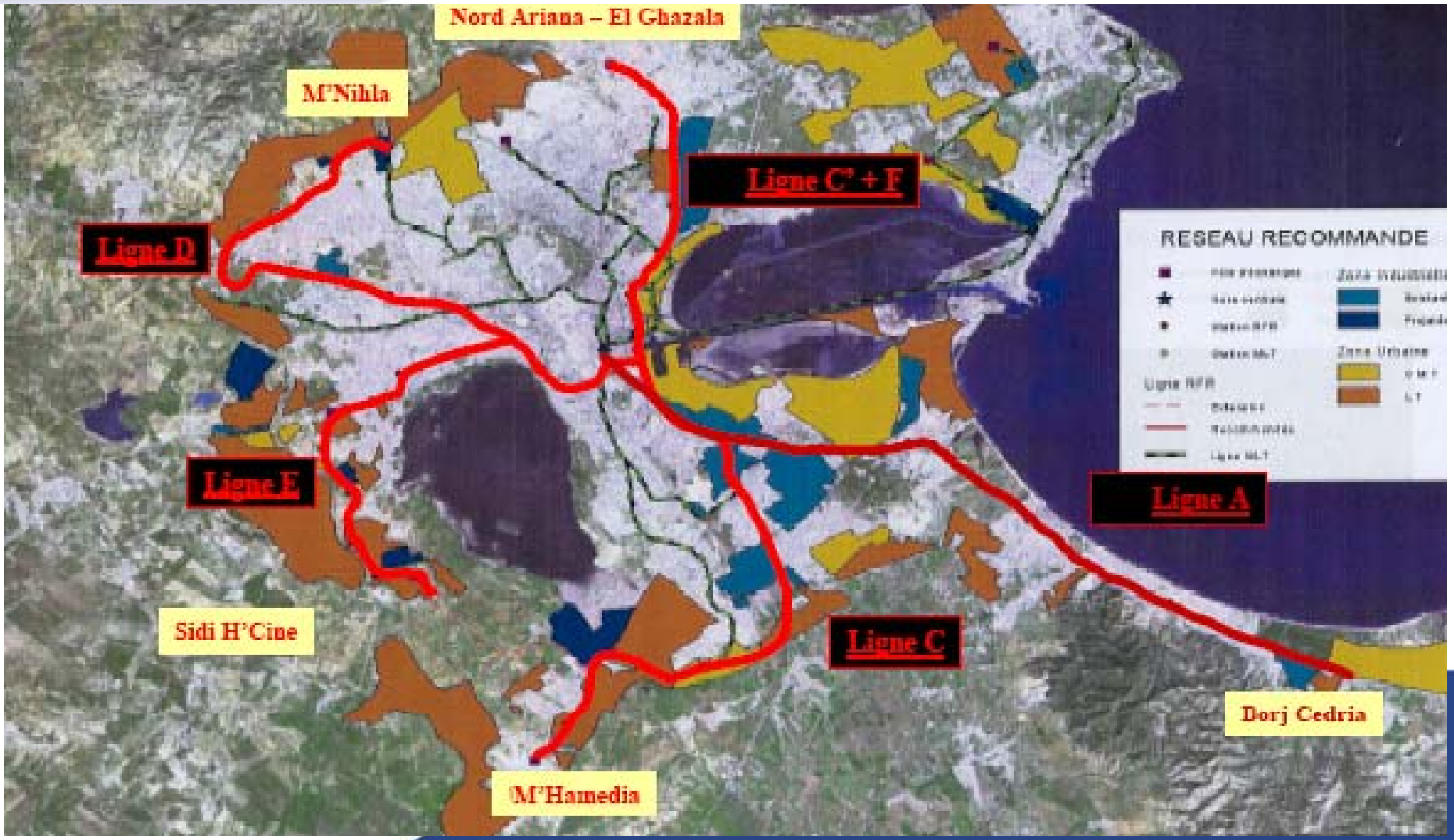
# … and light rail projects

## LRT Project

- Routes:
  - Olaya (N-S)
  - King Abdullah (E-W)
- Mixed of:
  - At-grade
  - Elevated
  - underground
- Length: 40km
- Technology:
  - LRT with feeder buses

# In Tunisia, Tunis light rail network is being expanded and modernised ...

# … and 85 km regional rail will be developed



# In UAE, public transport is in the centre of transport policies and major infrastructure projects are developed

# … and Dubai is building the world longest automatic driverless network

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# Conditions for the development of public transport in the MENA region

## (Conclusions of 1st UITP MENA Congress)

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# Integrated mobility policy

UITP encourages the large and medium size agglomerations to invest in high capacity systems in order to accompany and anticipate the growth in mobility demand. However, it draws the attention of national and local policy-makers in the MENA region on the importance of defining and implementing an integrated mobility policy prior to investment in public transport infrastructure. The latter is only a component of such policy and will have a limited impact if not part of an integrated approach

# Transport master plans

Several MENA cities are expanding fast geographically and demographically. UITP recommends the definition of transport master plans at the design stage of the urban development plans, and their subsequent implementation accordingly. The world cities which followed such approach in the past are those which have the least mobility problems nowadays.

# Public transport integration

UITP emphasises the importance of integration of public transport at all levels: strategic, tactical and operational. At strategic level, one key element is the coordination between land use planning and transport policy. It ensures long term viability and efficiency of the mobility system. At tactical level, it covers the integration of transport networks, modes, services, tariffs, ticketing, information, timetable, etc to make public transport easy to access and use. At operational level, it guarantees the transport company human, financial and technical resources are optimally used.

# Energy and environment

It is indisputable that oil resources are limited and fuel prices will continue to grow. Simultaneously, the contribution of the transport sector as whole to greenhouse gas emissions and to the risk of climate change is rapidly increasing. In this situation, the UITP reminds that public transport is the most energy-efficient motorised mode per passenger transported and contributes to the reduction of carbon use. Moreover, public transport needs less road space to carry high number of passengers; it improves accessibility to goods and services and is safer than individual modes.

# Information technologies

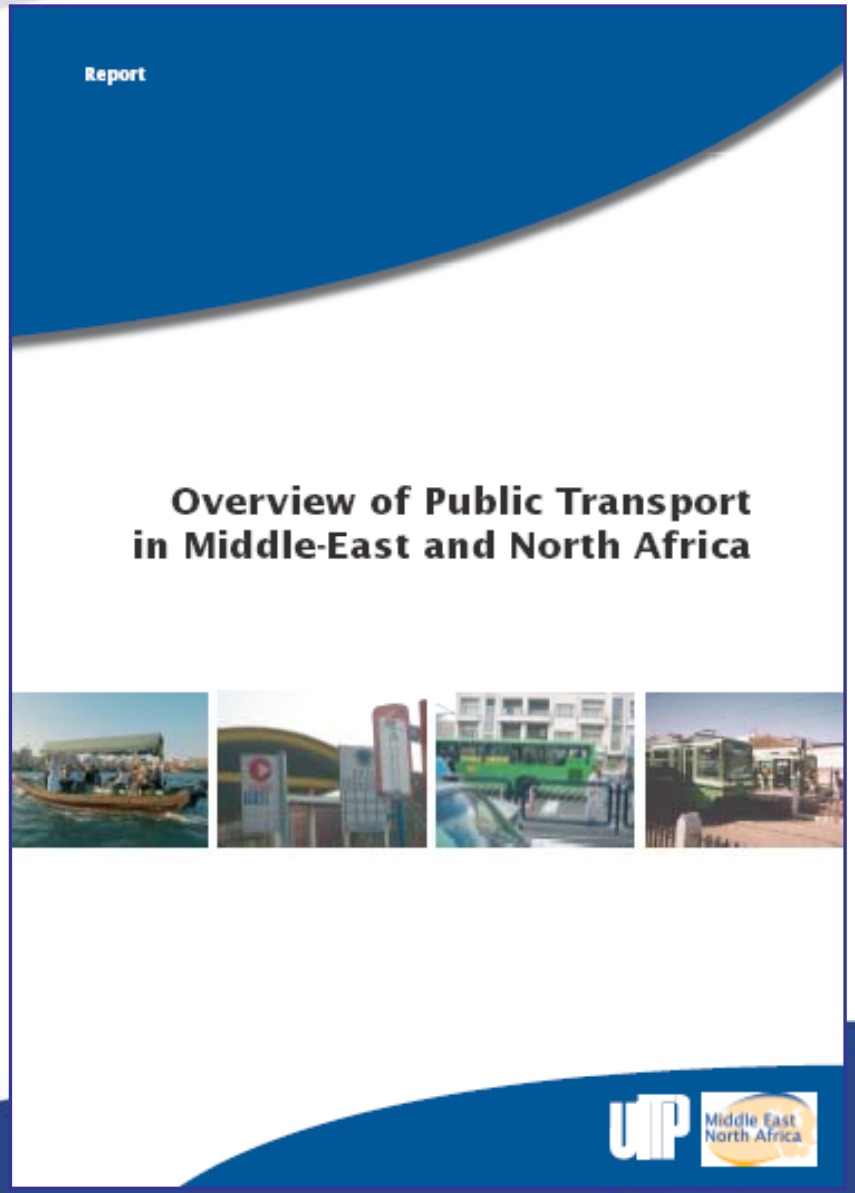
The current context is favourable to the introduction and use on information and communication technologies (ICT) in public transport. ICT could improve efficiency, safety, quality and reliability of the service. They reduce maintenance costs and offer possibilities for increasing revenues. They improve attractiveness of public transport. However, the UITP reminds that ICT are and remain tools and will never replace a clear policy and an efficient management.

# Capacity building

Human resources are a key element in the definition, implementation and operation of public transport systems. The MENA region which is developing fast is in need of qualified staff and managers. Training and capacity building are essential. UITP recommends and supports developing appropriate initiatives at national and international levels in this field and encourages exchanges of knowledge and experiences between members.

# Conclusion

It is technically and economically possible to define sustainable transport solutions for any city; but their implementation will depend on a strong political will of local policy-makers



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- **Training programme on public transport fundamentals**
  **Doha, Qatar, 29-31 January 2008**

- **Seminar on public transport in Mediterranean and Middle-East cities**
  **Tunis, Tunisia, 24-26 March 2008**

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