

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

Committee on Social Development  
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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

**Implementation of activities under the ESCWA programme plan  
and of recommendations made by the Committee  
on Social Development at its fourteenth session****Summary**

The Committee on Social Development of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its fourteenth session in Beirut on 8 June 2023. The session focused on inequality in the Arab region. Member States emphasized the need to reduce the growing social and economic inequalities by adopting fair and just policies, and to not neglect any person or geographical location by instilling the principles and concepts of social justice in policy reform. The Committee recommended that its sessions be held annually to better address the accelerating and multiple social challenges faced by member States.

At the closing of fourteenth session, the Committee made a set of recommendations, some addressed to member States and others to the ESCWA secretariat. The present document provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the ESCWA secretariat under its subprogramme 2 on gender justice, population and inclusive development since June 2023 to respond to those recommendations.

The Committee is invited to take note of the activities and discuss the way forward.

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## Introduction

1. The Committee on Social Development of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its fourteenth session in Beirut on 8 June 2023. It adopted a set of recommendations, some addressed to member States and others to the ESCWA secretariat. The present document presents the activities carried out by ESCWA between June 2023 and May 2024 in support of member States' efforts, and in accordance with the recommendations made to the ESCWA secretariat under its subprogramme 2.
2. ESCWA subprogramme 2 on "Gender justice, population and inclusive development" aims to support regional efforts towards achieving equitable and inclusive social development and reducing inequality, poverty and unemployment, in line with the principle of leaving no one behind. It covers the following topics: reducing inequalities; advancing social justice; reducing poverty; improving social protection; improving employment opportunities; promoting gender equality; increasing the inclusion of persons with disabilities; advancing the rights of older persons and of migrants. Efforts in these areas are geared towards supporting member States in implementing related Goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
3. Throughout the year, the ESCWA secretariat has endeavoured to forge partnerships with United Nations agencies, regional organizations, civil society organizations and academic institutes to ensure concerted efforts at the regional level. Examples of such partnerships include strengthening work with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); the World Food Programme (WFP); Oxfam; Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies; the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development (ISFD); the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women); the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU); the International Labour Organization (ILO); the International Organization for Migration (IOM); the Issue-Based Coalitions on Migration and Social Protection in the Arab Region; and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). The ESCWA secretariat has also partnered with regional organizations, such as the League of Arab States, and with international and regional civil society organizations and academia to implement many of its activities.

## I. Progress in reducing inequality

4. To support Arab States in reducing income inequality, ESCWA developed a technical paper on its measuring techniques, entitled "Inequality projections in the Arab region" (forthcoming). The paper provides policymakers with up-to-date estimates and projections of economic inequality in the Arab region.
5. In recognition that food insecurity is driving life-long and intergenerational inequalities, ESCWA supported policymakers in unpacking the relationship between food insecurity and inequality and in identifying practical policy solutions to reduce inequalities. ESCWA published a flagship publication, entitled "[Inequality in the Arab region: Food insecurity fuels inequality](#)", analysing the complex relationship between inequality and food security, and exploring solutions to reduce inequalities.
6. Findings of the publication were discussed during the second [Arab Forum for Equality](#), held in Beirut on 6 and 7 June 2023, which brought together political leaders, concerned ministers, the private sector, experts, civil society organizations, and young people, from across the Arab region and globally. The publication and the Forum were developed in partnership with Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies, ISFD, FAO, WFP, and Oxfam.
7. ESCWA investigated the growing vulnerabilities of the middle class in the flagship publication "[The Middle Class in Arab Countries](#)". The report assesses the size and characteristics of the middle class in six Arab countries (Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the State of Palestine and Tunisia). It analyses the middle class from an inequality lens and as a stabilizing factor for society. The report provides policy recommendations to safeguard the living standards of the middle class and enhance their future prosperity.

8. The war on Gaza has triggered a humanitarian crisis that is threatening the lives of a large portion of the population. To raise attention to the severity of the war on Gaza on different population groups, including women, girls and persons with disabilities, ESCWA published a policy brief entitled “[War on Gaza: where everyone is left behind](#)”. The policy brief called for urgent life-saving action, unconditional humanitarian aid, adherence to international law, a comprehensive and inclusive sustainable development plan, and the inclusion of women in peacebuilding.

9. Nevertheless, inequality is not inevitable. To prove that reducing inequalities is possible, and to support member States in identifying practical policy solutions, tailored to their country circumstances, ESCWA, in partnership with Pathfinders for Peaceful, Just, and Inclusive Societies, developed the [Inequality Solutions Portal](#). The portal is a resource for policymakers and academics to identify policy solutions from other countries that have successfully overcome challenges similar to theirs, including solutions that have worked in the South for the South.

## **II. Progress in advancing social justice**

10. Social justice requires adherence to human rights, equality in access to services, participation in policymaking, and equity. It is an important principle that is essential to achieve sustainable development and the promise of leaving no one behind. To unpack the principles of social justice and determine progress in the Arab region in leaving no one behind, ESCWA authored the flagship publication “Social Development Report (SDR5): Unpacking the Promise of Leaving no One Behind in the Arab Region” (forthcoming). The publication identifies the groups that are left behind in the Arab region, and analyses the root causes of how and why they are left behind. It provides targeted policy recommendations for the inclusion of those groups and for ensuring that the root causes of their exclusion are adequately addressed.

11. ESCWA also published a policy brief on “Leaving no one behind”, which summarizes findings of the SDR5 and provides a concise read on policy advice in relation to the state of leaving no one behind in the Arab region.

## **III. Progress in reducing poverty**

12. The Arab region is the only region in the world where poverty is growing. This issue requires concerted efforts by ESCWA and regional partners, including the League of Arab States, to identify solutions to poverty and deprivations faced by many in the region. A flagship ESCWA publication, entitled “Arab Poverty Report: Conflicts derail region from SDG1 tracks” (forthcoming), provides a nuanced and up-to-date report on the status of poverty across different parts of the region, and makes policy recommendations to different groups of countries on how to reduce poverty.

13. ESCWA has also advanced the [Money Metric Poverty Assist Tool \(MPAT\)](#) and the [Multidimensional Poverty Index Assist Tool \(MAT\)](#) to monitor, analyse, and project manifestations of poverty in the region. Two technical papers, entitled “Methodologies and disaggregated results for assessing poverty in Arab countries” (forthcoming) and “[Methodologies for assessing world poverty](#)”, provide further details on measuring and projecting poverty under various scenarios.

## **IV. Progress in improving social protection**

14. Social protection, especially when financed by progressive taxation, is fundamental to reduce inequalities and poverty and achieve social justice. However, social protection systems must be very carefully designed to be effective and efficient in protecting all people. ESCWA is committed to supporting Governments in reforming their social protection systems to be inclusive, comprehensive, and efficient. The “[2022 Annual Digest of Social Protection Reforms in the Arab Region](#)” and the “[2023 Annual Digest of Social Protection Reforms in the Arab Region](#)” serve as a knowledge base to facilitate peer-to-peer learning and

inspire policymakers and policy implementers, civil society organizations, researchers, and development partners, by providing examples of the ongoing social protection reforms in the region.

15. ESCWA also held [the eighth meeting of the Expert Group on Social Protection Reform](#) (EGSPR) in Beirut on 9 June 2023. The meeting highlighted the exclusion of informal workers from social protection and discussed extending social insurance coverage to this group. It focused on policy reform options to cover the "missing middle" who are neither eligible for social assistance nor formally employed. The meeting emphasized that well-designed social protection systems should lift individuals out of poverty by enhancing productivity and providing income-generating opportunities.

16. The [ninth meeting of the Expert Group on Social Protection Reform](#) was held in Muscat on 21 and 22 February 2024. The meeting aimed to identify key policy reform options for member States to lift the ultra-poor out of poverty, such as through asset transfers and coaching. The meeting also provided an opportunity for peer exchange, for countries to learn from the recent social protection reform experience of Oman, including the proven positive spill-over effects of cash assistance in benefiting local economies.

## V. Progress in the labour market

17. In 2023, ESCWA embarked on a pivotal mission to promote and improve its Skills Monitor. Advocacy activities began in January 2023 with a presentation to the Advisory Council of the Crown Prince in Saudi Arabia. The team introduced the Monitor, highlighting its potential to transform the labour market through data-driven insights. On 26 and 27 May, ESCWA presented at the conference of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) on [“The state of foresight studies in the world”](#) at Mohammed VI Polytechnic University in Rabat, underscoring the significance of the Skills Monitor in forecasting future labour market trends, thereby guiding educational institutions, policymakers, and businesses in preparing for the demands of tomorrow. In July, at the [Arab Youth Forum for Economic and Social Empowerment](#) of UNICEF, ESCWA demonstrated the Skills Monitor's capacity to empower young people by providing them with valuable insights into market trends, thus enabling them to make informed career choices. In December, at the Annual Statistical Conference of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), ESCWA shed light on how the Skills Monitor could serve as a critical tool for the GCC council, fostering an environment where policy decisions are informed by comprehensive labour market data.

18. ESCWA also developed a widget for Arab universities to be posted on their websites with a link to the Skills Monitor, so that any student can understand the current needed skills and the future skills to acquire. On 5 September 2023, ESCWA organized a webinar to present the widget to 40 universities from around the region, entitled "ESCWA Skills Monitor (ESM) Widget: Building a Bright Future for Arab University Students." The event focused on how the Skills Monitor could be leveraged to directly benefit Arab university students by aligning their education and skills with the evolving needs of the labour market.

19. To generate additional knowledge, ESCWA issued a report entitled [“Skill diversification in the Arab region: a pathway for economic prosperity”](#) (forthcoming) and a policy brief with the same title (forthcoming) as a summary of all key messages and policy recommendations. These publications utilize the ESCWA Skills Monitor to show how the Arab region could align with the fourth industrial revolution and artificial intelligence (AI) advancements. ESCWA also developed Skill Demand Diversity Scores (SDDSs) in August 2023 and organized an expert meeting, with participants from universities, ministries, and sister agencies, to validate the results and the report.

20. In collaboration with the World Bank office in Beirut, ESCWA co-authored a report on [“Understanding MENA's Labor Markets Needs through Big Data Insights from Lebanon”](#) (forthcoming). The report delves into the use of big data to analyse labour market trends and skill demand in the country.

21. In August 2023, ESCWA issued the policy brief [“Skills trends in the Arab region in the wake of ChatGPT \(Generative AI\)”](#), which examines the evolving landscape of the Arab region's virtual job market in

the wake of advancements in generative pre-trained transformers (GPT), highlights the current demand for skills, and projects future trends. The brief utilizes the Monitor to demonstrate that while fourth industrial revolution jobs are present, the region lacks a cohesive skillset to fully embrace these opportunities. The brief calls for a strategic focus on innovative sectors and digital economies to foster job growth and ensure the Arab region remains competitive in the global market.

## **VI. Progress in advancing gender equality and the empowerment of women**

22. The ESCWA initiative “[Justice and Equality between Women and Men in the Law](#)” highlights the degree to which national legislations in member States support the goal of attaining gender justice under global frameworks. By identifying where the gaps are, the initiative can support member States to accurately bridge these gaps. On 10 December 2023, ESCWA, in partnership with UNDP, UNFPA and UN-Women, announced the results of the annual periodic review of legislative updates for 17 Arab States who are part of the initiative.

23. ESCWA has provided support to strengthen national women’s machineries (NWMs) in the Arab region to access information on strategies, policies and knowledge materials relevant to advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment through the online platform “[National Women Machineries in the Arab region](#)”. The platform is a one-stop shop for accessing information about NWMs operating in every Arab country, which provides a basis for peer exchange and South-South cooperation. It also allows policymakers, government representatives and researchers to learn about NWMs, their mandates and the important work they do in advancing women’s rights.

24. The platform is linked to the Index Simulator for Policymakers ([ISPAR](#)), which assists member States in improving their rankings in global indices, including those related to gender equality, which was further developed in 2023-2024. ISPAR provides information regarding a country’s position in numerous global indices and offers an interactive tool to predict the potential impact that new policies would have on national rankings.

25. Throughout the period, ESCWA has supported member States in measuring the cost of child marriage, which strengthens arguments to end child marriage, and to identify policy solutions that would limit the practice. In partnership with UNFPA and UNICEF, ESCWA produced a study entitled “[Estimating the economic cost of child marriage in the Arab region](#)”. This has been supported by an in-depth study developed in partnership with UNFPA, UNICEF and UN-Women, entitled “[The cost of child marriage over the life cycle of girls and women: evidence from Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Tunisia](#)”. The studies estimate the costs of child marriage at different stages of women’s lives, and on the gross domestic product (GDP), and estimate that reducing instances of child marriage in the Arab region would boost the regional economy by 3 per cent each year, equivalent to more than three trillion dollars between 2021 and 2050. The studies also provide new insights into the multifaceted costs of child marriage and highlight the urgent need for action to eliminate this harmful practice.

26. In recognition of the burden that unpaid care work, whether for children, older persons, and persons with disabilities, has on women’s economic empowerment, ESCWA organized a peer exchange for parliamentarians from across the Arab region to share experiences in implementing care policies and legal frameworks that promote gender equality, early childcare and education, and the dignity of older persons. The event “[The role of parliamentarians in accelerating the achievement of women’s economic empowerment in the Arab region](#)” was held online, in partnership with IPU, UN-Women, and ILO, on 31 January and 1 February 2024.

## **VII. Progress in advancing the rights of persons with disabilities**

27. ESCWA is working with member States and the private sector to support the inclusion of persons with disabilities in labour markets. In collaboration with the ILO, ESCWA developed a guide to support member States in creating an inclusive and enabling policy environment that promotes equal employment opportunities

for persons with disabilities. The guide, entitled “[Understanding and translating article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into a national employment policy on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Arab region](#)”, details how member States can develop inclusive employment policies, measures and regulations.

28. ESCWA has also further assessed how poverty affects persons with disabilities, including how their limited access to resources and opportunities exacerbates their economic and social disadvantages, especially in access to health, education, employment, and living conditions. To support member States in breaking the relationship between persons with disabilities and poverty, ESCWA developed a policy brief (forthcoming), which provides tailored recommendations on how to improve access to, and the cost of, health care, education, and employment for persons with disabilities.

29. Finally, ESCWA held the “[eighth annual meeting of the Intersessional Group of Experts on Disability](#)” virtually on 15 November 2023. The meeting discussed how to protect persons with disabilities in times of war and crises, and how to measure the interlinkages between poverty and disability using the multidimensional poverty index assist tool developed by ESCWA. It also reviewed progress in achieving digital accessibility of persons with disability and the implementation of the Arab Digital Inclusion Platform. Participants shared experiences on activities that supported policy reform and the inclusion of persons with disabilities, and finalized the 2024 action plan of the Group.

## VIII. Progress on migration issues

30. Integrating migration issues in countries’ sustainable development policies is essential for maximizing the positive benefits of migration and reducing its negative aspects. It is also essential to fulfil the mandate of leaving no one behind. Addressing migration requires a coordinated approach across Governments, countries, and the United Nations system. As such, ESCWA is a member of the Issue-Based Coalition on Migration in the Arab Region, which supports member States in maximizing the positive benefits of migration. In the reporting period, the Coalition helped in unpacking the nexus between migration and climate change and integrating migration into voluntary national reviews (VNRs).

31. Issued in January 2024, the Coalition’s policy brief on “[Migration and climate change in the Arab region](#)” highlights how climate change frequently increases migration and the vulnerability of migrants, but also how migration could support climate resilience and adaptation. The policy brief supports member States in taking advantage of the migration-climate change nexus by providing policy recommendations to ensure safe, regular, and orderly migration, promote productive employment and decent work, and overcome the direct and longer-term impacts of climate change.

32. The Issue-Based Coalition also issued a briefing note entitled “[Addressing migration issues in the Arab region: Briefing for United Nations Resident Coordinators](#)”, to provide key facts and figures on migration, highlight key migration priorities at the local, national and regional levels, and recommend concrete actions that can be implemented.

33. The VNRs that countries are encouraged to conduct as part of the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda present an opportunity to reflect on the state of migration governance, the progress achieved, and the barriers hindering potential progress. To support this process, ESCWA developed the guidance note “[Integrating migration in voluntary national reviews](#)”, issued in July 2023, which provides an overview of key migration trends in the Arab region, examines the connections between migration and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), offers step-by-step instructions on how to report on the SDGs through a migration-sensitive lens, lists best practices, and suggests additional resources to improve migration policymaking post-VNRs.

## **IX. Progress on population and older persons' issues**

34. ESCWA has supported member States to monitor progress on population and development issues since the 2013 Cairo Declaration, identify emerging trends, share successful experiences, highlight challenges faced in fulfilling commitments, and propose actionable policy solutions to accelerate the implementation of the 2013 Cairo Declaration. To this end, and in collaboration with the UNFPA Arab States Regional Office (UNFPA ASRO) and the League of Arab States, and in partnership with the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) – Arab World Region, ESCWA organized “[The Arab Regional Conference on Population and Development: Challenges and prospects ten years after the 2013 Cairo Declaration](#)”, in Beirut on 13 and 14 September 2023.

35. The Conference concluded with an [outcome document](#) containing key messages from the Conference and from three stakeholder consultations organized in May and June 2023. The outcome document offered guidance for the Arab region and a road map aimed at accelerating the implementation of commitments under the 2013 Cairo Declaration. Together with the findings of the regional review report, “[The sixth review of the International Conference on Population and Development in the Arab region: Ten years after the 2013 Cairo Declaration: regional review report](#)”, the document will feed into the report of the Secretary-General on “Programmes and interventions assessing the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and its contribution to the follow-up to and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development during the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”.

## **X. Implementation of recommendations made by the Committee of Social Development at its fourteenth session**

36. At its fourteenth session, the Committee on Social Development made several recommendations to member States and to the ESCWA secretariat. The following section sets out the recommendations made to the ESCWA secretariat and the actions taken to implement them.

### **Recommendation (a)**

Continue providing technical assistance to member States to support the formulation of national policies and strategies that adopt an integrated and holistic approach to inclusive social development, promote social justice, and take into account the needs and aspirations of groups at risk, in particular older persons, persons with disabilities, women and young people.

### **Actions taken**

ESCWA held a drafting meeting for the “[national strategy for social justice in Libya](#)” on 24 and 25 January 2024 in Tunis.

ESCWA, in cooperation with the High-Level National Committee for Social Justice, held a workshop on “[institutionalizing the principles of social justice in Iraq](#)” on 16 and 17 July 2023 in Baghdad.

ESCWA is supporting the Parliament of Somalia to develop a National Strategy for Social Justice (forthcoming).

ESCWA held a workshop on “[optimizing poverty reduction pathways in Iraq](#)” in Baghdad on 29 and 30 January 2024.

ESCWA held a “[planning workshop at the Department of Statistics to develop a national multidimensional poverty index in Jordan](#)” on 2-5 October 2023. The workshop was followed by a “[technical workshop at the Department of Statistics to develop a national multidimensional poverty index in Jordan](#)” on



6-9 November 2023, a “methodology workshop at the Department of Statistics to develop a national multidimensional poverty index in Jordan” on 23-25 January 2024, and finally a workshop entitled “[Stakeholder validation: A national multidimensional poverty index for Jordan](#)” on 7 March 2024. All of the workshops were held in Amman.

ESCWA, in partnership with national stakeholders, the Resident Coordinator’s Office and UNICEF, held a workshop on “[optimizing poverty reduction pathways in Mauritania](#)” on 11 March 2024 in Nouakchott.

ESCWA produced the technical report “National Multidimensional Poverty Index for Somalia” and the policy brief “Multidimensional poverty in Somalia: strategic policy optimization for poverty reduction”.

ESCWA, in partnership with UNFPA, developed a situational analysis entitled “[Persons with disabilities in Lebanon: a situational analysis to develop a national strategy](#)”.

ESCWA published the policy brief “[Persons with disabilities: labour market perceptions survey - Morocco](#)”.

ESCWA held a workshop entitled “Mainstreaming ageing in policymaking in Egypt”, in Cairo on 13 and 14 June 2023.

ESCWA supported the Syrian Commission for Family Affairs and Population to develop the “[National Strategy for the Protection and Welfare of Older Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic \(2023-2030\)](#)”. The “[launch of the National Strategy For The Protection And Welfare Of Older Persons in the Syrian Arab Republic 2023-2030](#)” was held on 14 December 2023 in Damascus.

## **Recommendation (b)**

Continue examining the various forms of social and economic inequality, and provide practical recommendations aimed at developing public policies that address them, guided by successful global and regional experiences, especially those among the countries of the South.

## **Actions taken**

ESCWA held the second [Arab Forum for Equality](#) in Beirut on 6 and 7 June 2023, and published the flagship publication “[Inequality in the Arab region: Food insecurity fuels inequality](#)”.

ESCWA developed the [Inequality Solutions Portal](#).

ESCWA published the technical paper “[Inequality projection for poverty analysis](#)”.

ESCWA published the policy brief “[Migration and climate change in the Arab region](#)”, the guidance note “[Integrating migration in voluntary national reviews](#)”, and the policy brief “[Addressing migration issues in the Arab region: Briefing for United Nations Resident Coordinators](#)”.

ESCWA held “the Arab Regional Conference on Population and Development: Challenges and prospects ten years after the 2013 Cairo Declaration” in Beirut on 13 and 14 September 2023, which was supported by an outcome document and “the sixth review of the International Conference on Population and Development in the Arab region: Ten years after the 2013 Cairo Declaration: regional review report”.

ESCWA published the “Social Development Report (SDR5): Unpacking the Promise of Leaving No One Behind in the Arab Region”.

ESCWA published the flagship publication “[The Middle Class in Arab Countries](#)”.

ESCWA published the policy brief “[War on Gaza: where everyone is left behind](#)”.

ESCWA published the technical paper “[Inequality in Egypt: facets and challenges](#)”.

ESCWA launched the [Josour](#) regional platform and the Egyptian national chapter.

ESCWA published the policy briefs “[Youth employment dynamics in Egypt: challenges and opportunities](#)” and “[A better future: SME potential to generate youth employment in Egypt](#)”.

ESCWA held a virtual training entitled “[Urban monitoring framework and VLRs in the Arab region](#)” on 12 September 2023.

### **Recommendation (c)**

Continue developing interactive tools that support knowledge- and evidence-based decision making, and provide customized training on the use of these tools.

### **Actions taken**

ESCWA developed the online platform “[National Women Machineries in the Arab region](#)”.

ESCWA provided tailored training on the use of two interactive measurement tools: the “[Money Metric Poverty Assist Tool](#)” (MPAT) and the “[Multidimensional Poverty Index Assist Tool](#)”.

ESCWA developed the “[ISPAR](#)” platform, and provided relevant training to Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, the Syrian Arab Republic, and Tunisia. Several workshops on the “[Index Simulator for Policymakers in the Arab region for the advancement of gender equality](#)” were held, including on 17-19 October 2023 in Kuwait City, on 1-2 February 2024 in Beirut, on 14-15 June 2023 and 19-20 February 2024 in Rabat, on 9-10 May 2023 in Damascus, and on 5-6 June 2023 in Tunis.

### **Recommendation (d)**

Continue supporting member States in eradicating poverty in all its forms, and propose practical and effective solutions to achieve Goal 1 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and to improve livelihoods.

### **Actions taken**

ESCWA published the technical paper “[Methodologies for assessing world poverty](#)”.

In collaboration with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the League of Arab States, ESCWA organised a workshop on “[optimizing poverty reductions in Arab countries](#)” in Amman on 28-29 November 2023.

ESCWA published the technical paper “[Nowcasting the national multidimensional poverty index for the State of Palestine \(2017–2022\)](#)”.

### **Recommendation (e)**

Support the efforts of member States to strengthen social protection policies and increase their efficiency and effectiveness.

**Action taken**

ESCWA published the “[Annual Digest of Social Protection Reforms in the Arab Region, 2022](#)” and the “[Annual Digest of Social Protection Reforms in the Arab Region, 2023](#)”.

ESCWA held a cross-regional conference on “extending social insurance to irregular workers in Egypt” in Cairo on 21 and 22 May 2024.

ESCWA developed the “Comprehensive national social protection systems and reforms country profile of Jordan” (forthcoming) and held a workshop on “[social protection reform options in Jordan](#)” in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development on 22-25 June 2023 in Amman.

ESCWA developed the “Comprehensive national social protection systems and reforms country profile of Tunisia” (forthcoming).

ESCWA, the Yemeni Social Welfare Fund and UNICEF held a training called “[TRANSFORM](#)” in Aden, Yemen, on 13-17 August 2023 and another entitled “Review of data on social welfare beneficiaries and development of data collection tools and protocols” in Aden, Yemen, on 6-10 August 2023.

**Recommendation (f)**

Continue supporting member States in developing a workforce that responds to the changing demands of labour markets, by identifying the skills required by employers and facilitating the transition of young people, women, persons with disabilities, the unemployed and informal workers to the labour market.

**Action taken**

ESCWA published the guide “[Understanding and translating Article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities into a national employment policy on the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Arab region](#)”.

**Recommendation (g)**

Support the efforts of member States in developing policies and strategies aimed at integrating persons with disabilities in society, so as to increase their participation in the development process.

**Actions taken**

ESCWA published a policy brief on “poverty and disability”, which provides tailored recommendations on how to improve access to, and the cost of, health care, education, and employment for persons with disabilities.

ESCWA partnered with SETI (Support, Education, Training for Inclusion) Center, the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Jordan and the British Women Council to organize a regional training course on community-based inclusive development from 6 to 11 August 2023 in Amman.

ESCWA developed a training guide, entitled “[Inclusion of Disability in the Workplace](#)”.

**Recommendation (h)**

Continue coordinating with regional organizations, such as the League of Arab States, and United Nations organizations on issues of common interest.

**Actions taken**

ESCWA published “[The cost of child marriage over the life cycle of girls and women: evidence from Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Tunisia](#)” and “[Estimating the economic costs of child marriage in the Arab region](#)”.

ESCWA held a “[discussion on the guidance note for comprehensive national reviews of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action after 30 years](#)” in Amman on 6-7 December 2023.

**Recommendation (i)**

Strengthen the activities of the Intersessional Group of Experts on Disability and of the Expert Group on Social Protection Reform, in particular activities related to supporting policy reform.

**Actions taken**

ESCWA held the “[eighth meeting of the Expert Group on Social Protection Reform](#)” on 9 June 2023 in Beirut, and the “[ninth meeting of the Expert Group on Social Protection Reform](#)” on 21 and 22 February 2024 in Muscat.

ESCWA held the “[eighth annual meeting of the Intersessional Group of Experts on Disability](#)” virtually on 15 November 2023.

**Recommendation (j)**

Work towards holding annual meetings of the ESCWA Committee on Social Development; and take the necessary measures, in accordance with United Nations rules and procedures, to intensify regional efforts to address the accelerating and multiple social challenges faced by member States.

**Action taken**

ESCWA held the 15<sup>th</sup> Intergovernmental Meeting of the ESCWA Committee on Social Development on 3 June 2024 in Cairo.

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