



**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COUNCIL**

Distr.
LIMITED
E/ESCWA/2015/EC.1/3(Part II)
19 May 2015
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Executive Committee
First meeting
Amman, 8-9 June 2015

Item 3 (b) of the provisional agenda

Follow-up issues

**Implementation of the Tunis Declaration on Social Justice
in the Arab Region and resolutions adopted by ESCWA
at its twenty-eighth session**

Summary

The present report sets out the actions taken by the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) to implement the Tunis Declaration on Social Justice in the Arab Region and the resolutions on the various areas of work of the Commission and issues of interest to member States, adopted at the twenty-eighth ESCWA session, held in Tunis from 15 to 18 September 2014.

It also presents the information received from member States on the implementation of the resolutions.

CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE SECRETARIAT	1-27	3
A. Tunis Declaration on Social Justice in the Arab Region	1-2	3
B. Resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-eighth session	3-27	5
II. ACTION TAKEN BY MEMBER STATES	28-40	8

I. ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE SECRETARIAT

A. TUNIS DECLARATION ON SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE ARAB REGION (adopted by the Commission at its twenty-eighth session)

Summary of the Tunis Declaration

1. In this Declaration, member States requested the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) to undertake the following:

(a) To incorporate the elements of social justice in its work on the preparation, monitoring and implementation of a post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals, and establish clear implementation and monitoring mechanisms to ensure the achievement of national, regional and global development goals, in accordance with country capabilities;

(b) To strengthen the policy capacity of member States in all relevant fields through training, research and normative work, including through the production of reports on justice, poverty, inequality, social protection, social inclusion, women's empowerment, natural resource management, renewable energy subsidies, access to technology and good governance, as well as trade policies and their role in achieving development;

(c) To provide advisory services and technical support to member States to improve national policy responses so as to enhance social cohesion, tackle youth and women's development challenges, and promote youth and women's participation and empowerment in decision-making processes;

(d) To monitor the effects of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, its implications in the light of regional and international developments and its detrimental impact on the attainment of the multiple dimensions of justice in Palestine and the region as a whole, so as to uphold the human rights-based and legal efforts to condemn the Israeli occupation and support the Palestinians in demanding their rights;

(e) To create a measurement tool to monitor progress in the area of social justice in the Arab region and strengthen the capacity of member States and statistical agencies to collect, build, analyse and disseminate harmonized related indicators.

Action taken

2. The secretariat undertook the following activities pursuant to the Tunis Declaration:

(a) ESCWA participated in the Conference on Social Water Studies in the MENA Region, held in Madaba, on 28 and 29 September 2014, and delivered a presentation entitled "Water and intergenerational justice in the Arab region" as a contribution to the panel discussion on the theme "The potential of social water studies in the MENA region";

(b) ESCWA is preparing an Arab sustainable development report, which will shed light on deeper issues of social justice in the region and explore their links with the post-2015 sustainable development goals;

(c) ESCWA has included the preparation of technical material on the water-related sustainable development goals in its programme of work for the current and the next bienniums;

(d) ESCWA organized a regional conference in Riyadh, in November 2014, on Social Protection and Development, attended by representatives of member States and the League of Arab States, at which three technical presentations were made and will serve as technical advice for member States;

(e) ESCWA has released a policy brief on social justice and participation and a toolkit on new forms of participation in the region; which will serve as technical material on issues related to social cohesion, participation and social justice;

(f) The forthcoming ESCWA toolkit on social protection will be utilized for technical cooperation activities with member States;

(g) ESCWA is finalizing two studies, one on access to justice for women in the Arab region and the other on child marriage in humanitarian settings, which address issues of inequality and injustice and provide key policy recommendations for increased effectiveness towards social justice at the country and regional levels; the findings of both studies will be articulated in two policy briefs aimed at strengthening senior commitment and targeted action on gender equality in member States;

(h) ESCWA has engaged with member States through its advisory services to ensure the development of policies and strategies for women's empowerment and social inclusion, including the following: the ESCWA Regional Advisor on Advancement and Empowerment of Women has undertaken a needs assessment mission to update the Sudanese National Policy on Women Empowerment and the National Strategy on Family Development; the Regional Advisor has undertaken a mission to Tunisia to support the enactment of national legislation on combating violence against women and will conduct two back-to-back national workshops on international frameworks, instruments and processes related to women, gender equality and development; and ESCWA has reviewed the Palestinian Cross-Sectoral National Gender Strategy within the framework of reviewing Palestinian national development substrategies and how they respond to poverty needs from a gender perspective;

(i) On the occasion of the fourth review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing+20), ESCWA is preparing a detailed study that provides a comprehensive analytical assessment of the situation of Arab women today in the context of key regional and national developments; it identifies gaps corresponding to the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform, with emphasis on selected priority themes, such as legal discrimination, disproportionate effects of poverty, impact of conflict and occupation on women and girls and limited economic participation; it examines the Beijing process in relation to the post-2015 development agenda; it responds directly to strengthening policy capacity in member States through the provision of evidence-based multidimensional knowledge; and it supports the development of frameworks and indicators on progress in ensuring social justice for all;

(j) Pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/42 on the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women, ESCWA has prepared a technical report that reviews the status of women and girls in Palestine over the period July 2012-June 2014, outlining positive changes and their implications for gender equality, and significant challenges that continue to prevent Palestinian women and girls from realising their rights;

(k) ESCWA partnered with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics to implement a household survey on living conditions in Gaza and the impact of the Israeli offensive conducted in July-August 2014 thereon;

(l) ESCWA is preparing a report entitled "De-development in Palestine: the impact of Israeli occupation on the Palestinian people", which will model the channels through which Israeli restrictions affect the Palestinian economy and will eventually produce a base scenario (the current situation) and then simulations of the effects of policy changes/lifting of restrictions on the different sectors of the economy (frequently measured as deviations from the base scenario);

(m) ESCWA is currently working on different methodologies for collecting data on social justice in the Arab region, including the following:

- (i) Developing composite indices;
- (ii) Measuring different development outcomes in early stages of life to measure inequalities of opportunity;
- (iii) Using international standardized tests to measure the quality of education.

B. RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION AT ITS TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION

314 (XXVIII). The Arab Forum on Sustainable Development*Summary of the resolution*

3. In this resolution, the Commission has requested the secretariat to hold sessions of the Arab High Level Forum on Sustainable Development periodically, in participation with the League of Arab States and other organizations concerned with sustainable development, to prepare for the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, review the progress made in achieving the sustainable development goals and contribute to launching regional partnerships to advance sustainable development in the Arab region. It has also requested the secretariat to monitor progress in achieving sustainable development in the Arab region and to prepare reports on the topic on the basis of official data for consideration at the sessions of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development. It has requested the Executive Secretary to present a report, at the twenty-ninth session of the Commission, on the procedures undertaken to implement the resolution.

Action taken

4. The secretariat held the second session of the Arab High-level Forum on Sustainable Development in Manama, from 5 to 7 May 2015. It had held meetings with the League of Arab States and the United Nations Environment Programme, as main partners in the Forum, to discuss format and focus areas. All ESCWA substantive divisions and members of the Regional Coordination Mechanism have been cooperating to prepare the Arab sustainable development report.

315 (XXVIII). Establishing an intergovernmental committee on technology for development*Summary of the resolution*

5. In this resolution, the Commission has endorsed changing the name of subprogramme 4 from “Information and communications technology for regional integration” to “Technology for development and regional integration” and has decided to establish an intergovernmental committee designated as the Committee on Technology for Development, comprising representatives from ESCWA member States with experience in the field, to replace the Consultative Committee on Scientific and Technological Development and Technological Innovation. The Commission has also decided that the Committee shall hold its sessions once every two years, with effect from 2016. It has requested the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the implementation of the resolution to the Commission at its twenty-ninth session.

Action taken

6. The Technology for Development Division has changed the name of subprogramme 4 from “Information and communications technology for regional integration” to “Technology for development and regional integration”. It has started preparing for the establishment of the intergovernmental committee and will hold its preparatory meeting in 2015. The resolution has been endorsed by the Economic and Social Council and ESCWA will hold the first meeting of the Committee in 2016.

316 (XXVIII). Support for the Palestinian people*Summary of the resolution*

7. In this resolution, the Commission has requested the secretariat to increase its support for the Palestinian people and their institutions at all levels, including the enhancement of human resources for subprogramme 7 to support the implementation of the following:

(a) Providing normative and technical assistance to Palestinian institutions according to Palestinian needs;

(b) Developing more activities on Palestine and organizing special events in observance of the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People to raise awareness and mobilize support for the Palestinian people in Palestine and abroad, and secure the widest media coverage for those events;

(c) Submitting periodic reports at the ministerial sessions of the Commission on Israeli practices that violate the economic and social rights of the Palestinian people and other rights guaranteed under international laws, charters and conventions;

(d) Monitoring the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation, mobilizing regional partners to support the Palestinian people and their institutions in Palestine and abroad, assisting them in achieving development, and exerting pressure and conducting advocacy to help them obtain their full rights as guaranteed by United Nations resolutions and international conventions and charters.

8. The Commission has requested the Executive Secretary to follow up on the implementation of the resolution and report on progress made in that regard at the twenty-ninth ESCWA session.

Action taken

9. ESCWA has prepared a note by the Secretary-General on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan, to be presented at the 2015 sessions of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

10. ESCWA has observed the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 2014 and has organized a series of activities aimed at raising awareness and mobilizing support.

11. ESCWA has prepared a publication entitled *Palestine, the Occupation and the Fourth Geneva Convention: Facts and Figures*.

12. ESCWA has organized two consultative meetings with Palestinian civil society organizations working in Lebanon and has agreed to conduct two studies aimed at enhancing capabilities to support Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

13. ESCWA has joined the Committee for Employment of Palestinians in Lebanon, comprising Lebanese and Palestinian civic and official institutions, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and the International Labour Organization, to improve the employment conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

14. As previously mentioned, ESCWA has partnered with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics to implement a household survey on living conditions in Gaza and the impact of the Israeli offensive conducted in July-August 2014 thereon.

15. ESCWA is preparing a report entitled “De-development in Palestine: the Impact of Israeli occupation on the Palestinian people” (see para. 2 (I) of the present document).

317 (XXVIII). Adoption of the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017

Summary of the resolution

16. In this resolution, the Commission has adopted the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017. It has also requested the secretariat to distribute the strategic framework in the form adopted by member States.

Action taken

17. The strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017 was distributed as adopted by member States at the twenty-eighth session of the Commission.

318 (XXVIII). Adoption of session reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

Summary of the resolution

18. In this resolution, the Commission has adopted the recommendations contained in the reports of the subsidiary bodies with the amendments agreed on at the twenty-eighth ESCWA session. It has requested the secretariat to prepare a paper on the reasons and justifications of the requests concerning annual meetings of the sessions of the Statistical Committee, the Committee on Water Resources and the Committee on Energy.

Action taken

19. The secretariat is currently reviewing the request put forward by the member States to prepare a paper on the reasons and justifications of the requests concerning annual meetings of the aforementioned committees.

319 (XXVIII). Adoption of the proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015

Summary of the resolution

20. In this resolution, the Commission has adopted the amendments introduced to the programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015, taking into account remarks made by member States at the twenty-eighth ESCWA session. It has requested the secretariat to follow up on the implementation of the programme of work and, if necessary, include activities to address any challenge that may emerge in the Arab region.

Action taken

21. The secretariat is following up on the implementation of the programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015 through its monthly meetings on deliverables, where it reviews and advises divisions on the implementation of their outputs. The secretariat is also following up through periodic programme performance reporting.

320 (XXVIII). Redesignating the Technical Committee as the “Executive Committee” and amending its terms of reference

Summary of the resolution

22. In this resolution, the Commission has decided to redesignate the Technical Committee as the “Executive Committee”. It has also decided to revise the role of the Technical Committee and its terms of reference, with immediate effect, as set out in the annex to the resolution. It has requested the Executive Secretary to follow up on the implementation of the resolution.

Action taken

23. The secretariat has submitted resolution 320 (XXVIII) to the Economic and Social Council, which has approved the redesignation of the Technical Committee as the “Executive Committee” and the revision of its role and terms of reference.

321 (XXVIII). Redesignating the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia as the “Economic and Social Commission for Arab States”

Summary of the resolution

24. In this resolution, the Commission has recommended that the Economic and Social Council undertake the following:

(a) Redesignate the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia as the “Economic and Social Commission for Arab States”;

(b) Amend the terms of reference of the Commission as set forth in its resolution 1985/69, in line with the new designation.

25. The Commission has requested the Executive Secretary to follow up on the implementation of this resolution and submit a report on the progress achieved in that regard at the twenty-ninth ESCWA session.

Action taken

26. The secretariat has submitted resolution 321 (XXVIII) to the Economic and Social Council, containing a recommendation to redesignate the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia as the “Economic and Social Commission for Arab States” and amend the terms of reference of the Commission as set forth in its resolution 1985/69, in line with the new designation.

27. The Executive Secretary is following up on this recommendation with the member States of the Economic and Social Council to ensure its successful endorsement.

II. ACTION TAKEN BY MEMBER STATES

316 (XXVIII). Support for the Palestinian people

Summary of the resolution

28. In this resolution, the Commission has called upon member States:

(a) To raise the level of their support for the Palestinian people in their efforts to obtain their full rights, to put an end to Israeli violations of their rights and of the international law, to end the Israeli occupation and to establish an independent Palestinian State in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions;

(b) To support Palestine’s efforts to obtain full membership in all specialized international agencies and to join international charters and protocols as an inherent right of the State of Palestine;

(c) To enhance efforts to support and reinforce the resilience of the Palestinian people, so as to ensure their continued existence on their land and mitigate the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation and related policies;

(d) To observe the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People through new or scheduled activities, in particular cultural ones;

(e) To observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November through special activities and/or ensure the highest possible level of representation in the activity organized by the ESCWA secretariat in that regard;

(f) To encourage Arab and foreign civil society organizations to launch initiatives to enhance the capacities of the Palestinian people and support their effort to obtain their full rights and provide moral and material support for those initiatives where possible;

(g) To support the efforts of the Arab humanitarian and charitable associations to help the Palestinian people;

(h) To contribute to the mobilization of international support for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip and effectively participate in the international donors conference to be held in Egypt in October 2014;

(i) To encourage the subsidiary bodies of ESCWA to give special attention to the conditions of the Palestinian people.

29. The secretariat received the following information from two member States on the implementation of the resolution:

Iraq

30. Iraq supports the statement by the Arab Group, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Non-Aligned Movement and reaffirms its complete and genuine solidarity with the Palestinian people and other Arab populations under Israeli occupation in the occupied Syrian Golan and Lebanese territories. Iraq commends the resilience of the Palestinian people and its commitment to its legitimate rights, including establishing an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital city. Iraq condemns the flagrant violations committed by the occupying forces, including arbitrary detention, land clearing, property confiscation, house demolition and the use of excessive force against civilians.

31. Discrimination, blockade and systematic killing policies breach the most basic human rights principles. Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory lack the minimal necessities for a free and decent life and their great suffering unfolds before our eyes on a daily basis as a result of the policies of the Israeli occupying forces. Settlement-building and land-seizure policies in the West Bank, the unjust blockade and the gross violations suffered by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are flagrant breaches of international humanitarian law and human rights law.

32. Iraq affirms the importance of agenda item 7 of the Human Rights Council on the human rights situation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories, given that it maintains the Council's focus on the Palestinian Cause and highlights the practices of the occupying State and its human rights violations.

United Arab Emirates

33. The United Arab Emirates has played a key role towards resolving the Palestinian Cause by making efforts with stakeholders to reach a settlement on the issue and enhance peace in the region, through meetings undertaken by Emirati officials with their counterparts at international events.

34. The United Arab Emirates has participated in the work of the Arab Peace Initiative Committee; several meetings were held to consult with the United States Administration on the aspects and dimensions of the stalled peace process and to present the Arab position on the international methodology and its mechanisms in resolving the Palestinian cause and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

35. The United Arab Emirates supports the rights of the Palestinian people to end the Israeli occupation and establish an independent and sovereign State with East Jerusalem as its capital, in accordance with international resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative and the principle of land for peace.

36. The United Arab Emirates supports the efforts of the State of Palestine to gain membership of specialized international agencies and accede to international treaties and protocols.

37. The United Arab Emirates deplores the continued aggressive practices of the Israeli forces in the Palestinian Territory, urges Israel to halt its settlement activities in the Palestinian Territory and requests the international community to work on empowering the Palestinian people to achieve its rights and establish a State with East Jerusalem as its capital.

38. The United Arab Emirates reaffirms its commitments to providing support for and participating in rebuilding Gaza and supporting the Palestinian people by garnering support, meeting needs and complying with the Middle East Peace Initiative; the United Arab Emirates donated US\$200 million at the *Cairo International Conference on Palestine: Reconstructing Gaza*, which was held on 12 October 2014.

39. The United Arab Emirates has participated in forming a committee to monitor and follow up on the implementation of the Palestinian National Accord.

40. The United Arab Emirates has fulfilled all its financial obligations in support of the Palestinian Authority.
