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**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION
FOR WESTERN ASIA**

Sixteenth session
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Amman

Item 5(b) of the provisional agenda

**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION**

**FOLLOW-UP ACTION ON THE RESOLUTIONS OF THE
COMMISSION AT ITS FIFTEENTH SESSION**

- (xii) Resolution 177(XV) on the international
development strategy for the Fourth
United Nations Development Decade

In accordance with the Commission's Resolution 177(XV) held at its fifteenth session, a meeting of development experts was held to prepare a report reflecting the priorities and objectives which the region aspires to achieve within the framework of the international development strategy of the Fourth United Nations Development Decade.

The meeting was held at the Commission's headquarters in Baghdad during the period 22 to 24 January 1990. In addition to government experts from Member States, the meeting was attended by experts from other Arab States. Also participating were representatives of a member of United Nations and Arab organizations. The secretariat of the Commission sent a copy of the final report (Document E/ESCWA/DPD/90/WG.1/4), which includes the region's priorities and objectives, to the United Nations headquarters in New York as a contribution to preparations for the international development strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade (1991-2000).

The participants discussed the economic and social developments in the ESCWA region during the 1980s and also the priorities and objectives which the countries of the region aspire to achieve within the framework of the Fourth United Nations Development Decade. An appraisal was made of the Arab development experience in the past decade and the political and economic factors, both regional and international, that affected it, notably wars and political and military unrest, which considerably depleted human and material resources that could have financed development. This is in addition to the negative developments in the oil markets during most of the years of the past decade.

The meeting also discussed the developments and challenges that face the region in the 1990s, particularly the establishment of the European single market in 1992 and the changes which Eastern Europe is witnessing.

After reviewing the present situation and potentials of development in the region, the meeting approved the objectives and priorities which the region aspires to achieve during the 1990s in the following manner:

1. Accelerating the rate of economic growth and diversifying the production base, by giving priority to more efficient utilization of the human and material resources available in the region.
2. Developing human resources and improving the living standard and conditions of the individual through: ensuring suitable employment rates for the labour force; promoting regional cooperation to organize the movement of labourers between the countries of the region; and intensifying women's participation in economic activity.
3. Mobilizing local and national savings by furnishing a suitable economic and institutional climate, including monetary and financial policies, systems and incentives, and by providing appropriate investment opportunities to attract national capital deposited outside the region.

4. Agricultural development and realization of food security by: giving special priority to agriculture in development plans; increasing investment allocations; and intensifying applied scientific research aimed at increasing productivity.
5. Guaranteeing water security by adopting a long-term strategy for planning and developing water resources and rationalization of their use.
6. Developing and promoting manufacturing industries by: making management and operation of existing industries more efficient; developing the industries which rely on local resources and also engineering and electronic industries; and encouraging export industries.
7. Protecting the environment and natural resources by: striving towards rational utilization of natural resources and sources of energy; and giving attention to environmental implications of future development plans and programmes.
8. Developing scientific and technological research by endeavouring to formulate integrated policies at national and regional levels to acquire developed technology appropriate to development requirements in the countries of the region.
9. Giving particular attention to the least developed State and Palestine by working to consolidate and expand cooperation and solidarity, by increasing development aid, and by enhancing support and assistance to the Palestinian people to enable it to hold out against Israeli practices and achieve its national rights.
10. Increasing regional cooperation and integration, as this will lead to consolidating national efforts to achieve the objectives and priorities aimed at increasing economic growth and accelerating development through the international development strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade.