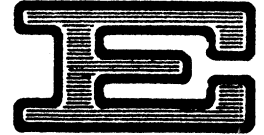




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**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION  
FOR WESTERN ASIA**

Sixteenth session  
30 August - 3 September 1992  
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

(iii) Resolution 167(XV) on promotion of regional cooperation  
in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy

The ESCWA secretariat has been involved in the promotion of cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy since 1984. It contributed substantially to the "United Nations Conference for the Promotion of International Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy", by organizing in 1984 a regional meeting which was attended by policy makers and experts from different ESCWA countries. As follow-up on the recommendations of that meeting, the ESCWA secretariat formulated a regional project aimed at assessing the potential of radioactive materials in the region, identifying suitable nuclear-energy technologies and proposing a regional nuclear-energy project. The regional project proposed by the ESCWA secretariat included the establishment of a nuclear-energy agro-industrial complex using local radioactive materials, and possibly some locally manufactured components of nuclear energy systems for water desalination and agricultural development.

In pursuance of resolution 167(XV) on the promotion of regional cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the ESCWA secretariat circulated its "Regional Project" to the national and regional authorities concerned, stressing their involvement and financial contribution. Several countries of the region have shown interest in the implementation of this project. However, events in the Gulf in the second half of 1990 on the one hand, and the financial requirements for implementing the project's various stages on the other have fettered the progress of the ESCWA secretariat's activities in this regard.

Adverse influences on regional cooperation and a shortage of financing notwithstanding, the ESCWA secretariat has pursued its endeavour to create mechanisms for close coordination with Arab organizations and mutual assistance in the implementation of joint projects. In this context, the ESCWA secretariat in 1989 signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Arab Organization for Nuclear Energy. This memorandum of understanding included three major items in various fields of cooperation:

1. In the field of exchange of information and expertise, it was agreed that the ESCWA secretariat and the Arab Organization for Nuclear Energy would regularly exchange and make available to each other information, data, documents, studies, and expertise in the various areas of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This item also calls for close coordination and consultation in preparing and implementing the respective programmes of work.

2. The Memorandum of Understanding provides for joint activities in formulating and executing nuclear-energy projects for peaceful purposes. These include ways and means for promoting regional cooperation in the implementation of the ESCWA nuclear-energy agro-industrial project, the possibility of preparing a joint project on the use of isotopes for assessing water resources in Western Asia and other Arab countries, and close cooperation in organizing technical meetings on the various aspects of nuclear industry.

Of equal importance are the provisions under this item for cooperation in formulating a project to establish a monitoring network of radioactivity in the Arab world, with special emphasis on the effects of the use of radioactive materials.

In addition, this item stresses the importance of joint training programmes in facing the shortage of expertise in the field of nuclear industry and its peaceful uses.

3. Under this item, a follow-up committee is to be set up. The committee will be responsible for maintaining contacts with parties concerned and expected to meet regularly for reviewing and assessing the joint activities of the ESCWA secretariat and the Arab Organization for Nuclear Energy.

In accordance with this Memorandum of Understanding, the ESCWA secretariat offered in 1990 to host a meeting planned by the Arab Organization for Nuclear Energy on the potential of radioactive materials in the Arab world.

The ESCWA secretariat's efforts to promote regional cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy have not been limited to the aforementioned activities. Attention has also been given to the use of nuclear energy for power generation, and recent developments with regard to nuclear power plants have been closely followed up. Without completely discarding activities related to the use of nuclear energy for power generation, the ESCWA secretariat is now inclined to be wary of too much involvement in projects fraught with such environmental hazards, let alone other ecological and health risks.

However, the technological advances recently achieved in reducing the risks of using nuclear energy for power generation and handling the problems of nuclear waste disposal are encouraging indications of a promising future for nuclear power generation. The ESCWA secretariat will therefore continue to follow developments in this field.