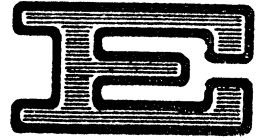




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**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION
FOR WESTERN ASIA**

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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**

- (v) Resolution 169(XV) on support for the
Regional Household Survey Project in
the ESCWA countries

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I. INTRODUCTION

A planner at a national level or below needs up-to-date information about the society for whose welfare he is striving -- society, as exemplified by its corner-stone, the individual within the household. It is difficult for a planner to identify development priorities and draw up policies in the absence of data or to use data whose sources and collection methodologies are diverse. Since compilation of data through complete counting programmes (censuses) is a costly process and requires effort and time, the sampling survey, which costs less and takes less effort and time, has become a standard programme for statistical organizations and other institutions concerned with compiling data. Advanced computer technology has yielded high-quality data and survey results through selecting and processing samples that are highly representative of society.

The household is the mainstay of social and economic life in any country, and it is for its sake that development plans and programmes are designed. Also, the household itself takes part in the implementation of these plans and programmes; it, in turn, is affected by the various aspects of development and the changes they produce. The household is therefore a main source of data. The collection of data about and from the household requires advanced statistical methodology that takes into consideration human and environmental interactions and local circumstances which affect the household. The Economic and Social Council of the United Nations adopted two resolutions -- resolution 2055(LXII) of 5 May 1977 and resolution 1979/5 of 9 May 1979 -- for the establishment of a National Household Survey Capability Programme. Developing countries were invited to take part in this Programme.

The Programme aims at building a flexible, integrated system of statistics to meet a country's data requirements with available funds; it also aims at maintaining a regular, continuous collection of data, with a high degree of efficiency and at less cost. This is achieved by the following means:

- (a) Forming bodies of local staff in developing countries with the technical capability to conduct household surveys. It would also be necessary to set up household survey units within the statistical organizations;
- (b) Assisting countries in drawing up and implementing a sustained and coordinated series of household surveys covering varied topics, according to a given country's needs. This would serve as a work plan for obtaining coherent and renewable data on the social and economic conditions of the household;
- (c) Providing technical advice to Governments to assist them in executing household surveys consistent with international statistical principles and the accelerating progress in computer technology.

II. THE REGIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY PROJECT IN THE ESCWA COUNTRIES

The Regional Household Survey Project (RHSP) for the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) countries (RAB/80/89) started in April 1981 with financial support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) continuing until the end of 1987 and totalling approximately \$US 2,981,440. In the ensuing years expenditure on Project activities was made from budget surpluses of the previous years (\$US 83,632), in addition to financial and human resources that could be provided by ESCWA.

The Project is being implemented in a number of phases, each of which has certain goals in the light of the technical requirements of member countries and the financial resources available to the Project.

These phases are:

- First phase of the Project 1981-1984
- Second phase of the Project 1985-1987
- Third phase of the Project 1988-1991
- Fourth phase of the Project 1992-1997

The last phase is the one whose orientations are the subject of this paper.

The work and progress of the Project are reviewed (annually during the first stage of the Project and biannually afterwards) by the Central Coordination Unit (household survey) of the United Nations Statistical Office in New York, by ESCWA member countries participating in the Tripartite Programme Review meetings and by meetings of heads of central statistical organizations in the ESCWA region.

The review committees extolled the accomplishments of the Project and its significance in supporting statistical work to provide social and economic data on important sector in the State: the household. The technical committees called for continuing the services provided under this project and expanding them to meet the requirements and the increasing demand for them.

The Technical Committee also emphasized the importance of providing the necessary budget for the Project through continued financing by UNDP and contributions by other international and regional organizations; it called upon the Executive Secretary of ESCWA to make efforts to ensure the necessary financial appropriations to guarantee continuation of regional household surveys and to transform this Project into a regular programme of action of the Statistics Division in ESCWA.

III. SERVICES OF THE REGIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY PROJECT

The technical activities of the RHSP are varied but in practice can be outlined under the following topics:

(a) Call upon ESCWA member countries to support statistical work in the household sector and benefit from the services of Project advisers in drawing up a five-year plan of action for conducting a number of statistical surveys compatible with the countries' requirements and available human and financial resources, to compile demographic, health, social and economic data as may be required by the planner at the country level or below;

(b) Provide the necessary consultancy services to implement household surveys. These include: planning the implementation of the survey, costs, duration, and survey objectives; designing and selecting samples representing the community under study; designing forms and statistical tables; planning and supervising field-work and compilation of data; training personnel participating in the surveys, using computer technology for data processing and issuing outputs; prescribing technical norms and standards to ensure the quality of the data and results of the surveys; and documentation of the survey methodologies and the experiences and lessons derived;

(c) Conduct statistical, social and economic analysis, produce indicators and recommendations based on the results of the surveys and establish a dialogue between statistical producers and users in order to strengthen the process of producing data and the various uses to which they are put;

(d) Call for and provide technical advice with regard to building statistical database systems in member countries;

(e) Organize training programmes and technical seminars at country and regional levels to qualify technical personnel and disseminate information on progress made in the field of statistical survey activities, computer technology and data processing. This also includes translation into Arabic and distribution to ESCWA members of statistical manuals and reference books published by the United Nations in this field.

Since 1981, at the request of member countries, plans and programmes of action for a household survey (known as the National Household Survey Project) have been prepared in 10 ESCWA member countries, viz. Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Oman, Palestine (formerly PLO), Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen (formerly Democratic Yemen and the Yemen Arab Republic).

In the light of the population censuses under way at the present time in a number of ESCWA countries and in view of the difficulty of providing the financial resources necessary to conduct population censuses in some countries of the region, it is expected that during 1992 and 1993 new five-year plans and programmes of work for household surveys (country projects) will be required for each of Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. It is also expected that in the years after 1994, other member countries will draw up five-year plans and programmes for household surveys for themselves.

Consequently, demand for advisory services related to household survey activities will increase considerably in the spheres of technical advice and training at the country and regional levels, in addition to technical seminars for the exchange of expertise and know-how among statistical organizations in

member countries. Translation into Arabic of the latest in statistical manuals and data processing technology will also constitute a significant factor in reinforcing knowledge among national personnel.

IV. STATISTICS ON THE SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE REGIONAL
 HOUSEHOLD SURVEY PROJECT

The Project has provided the following services:

A. Services, distributed according to specialization

Specialization	Number of consultancy and training days						Total
	From 1981 to 1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	
1. Head of Statistics Division/Project manager: survey design	405	--	14	20	48	51	538
2. Sampling ^{a/}	437	--	93	--	--	15	545
3. Training and implementation ^{b/}	495	195	--	--	--	7	697
4. Manpower ^{c/}	194	--	--	34	--	15	243
5. Data processing ^{d/}	788	191	199	144	59	71	1 422
6. Consultants on topics other than those above ^{e/}	--	55	--	27	--	--	82
Total	2 319	441	306	195	107	159	3 527

Note: "--" indicates zero.

a/ Regional adviser's work terminated on 31 December 1986 and the post was filled for 10 months during 1988.

b/ Regional adviser's work terminated on 31 December 1987.

c/ Regional adviser's work terminated on 31 December 1984.

d/ Regional adviser's responsibilities were extended to cover, as of 1 January 1988, topics other than household surveys and are not included in this table.

e/ These are short-term contracts for the provision of consultancy services.

B. Services, broken down by country

Country	Number of consultancy and training days							Total
	From 1981 to 1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991		
1. Bahrain	340	68	--	--	15	--	423	
2. Egypt	202	120	12	17	14	22	387	
3. Iraq	31	14	--	--	11	--	56	
4. Jordan	473	39	18	30	--	55	615	
5. Kuwait	67	--	--	--	--	--	67	
6. Lebanon	25	--	--	--	--	--	25	
7. Oman	49	--	77	38	14	28	206	
8. Palestine (PLO)	98	44	27	70	2	7	248	
9. Qatar	74	23	--	--	--	--	97	
10. Saudi Arabia	--	9	62	--	20	2	93	
11. Syrian Arab Republic	406	15	29	19	--	--	519	
12. United Arab Emirates	48	84	27	--	--	--	159	
13. Democratic Yemen	241	21	29	--	15			
Yemen Arab Republic	215	4	13	--	--	45 ^{a/}	583 ^{a/}	
International tasks outside ESCWA region	--	--	12	21	16	--	49	
Total	2 319	44	306	195	107	159	3 527	

Notes: Consultancy services provided to countries declined appreciably after 1988, when financial support from UNDP in New York stopped.

"..." indicates zero.

^{a/} On 22 May 1990, the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen merged to form a single sovereign State called the Republic of Yemen.

C. Regional training courses

(a) Participants from ESCWA countries	Number of participants							Total
	Household expenditure and income survey held in Syrian Arab Republic, 1984)	Manpower survey held in Jordan, 1984)	Sampling and survey methods held in Egypt, 1984)	Data processing held in Egypt, 1986)	Sampling methods held in Jordan, 1986)	Designing statistical forms held in Egypt, 1987)		
Bahrain	--	1	1	2	2	1	1	7
Egypt	2	2	26	6	2	11	49	
Iraq	3	2	3	2	1	1	12	
Jordan	2	10	2	3	3	4	24	
Kuwait	1	1	1	--	1	--	4	
Lebanon	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	
Oman	--	1	1	1	1	2	6	
PLO	4	2	2	3	2	3	16	
Qatar	1	1	1	2	1	2	8	
Saudi Arabia	1	1	--	--	--	--	2	
Syrian Arab Republic	19	3	--	--	1	--	23	
United Arab Emirates	2	1	2	2	1	2	10	
Democratic Yemen	2	2	2	2	2	2	12	
Yemen Arab Republic	2	2	2	2	--	2	10	
ESCWA staff	2	1	2	1	1	2	9	
Subtotal (a)	41	30	45	26	18	32	192	

Note: "--" indicates zero.

(continued)

(b) Participants from non-ESCWA Arab countries	Number of participants							Total
	Household expenditure and income survey held in Syrian Arab Republic, 1984)	Manpower survey held in (Jordan, 1984)	Sampling and survey methods held in (Egypt, 1984)	Data processing held in (Egypt, 1986)	Sampling methods held in (Jordan, 1986)	Designing statistical forms held in (Egypt, 1987)		
Djibouti	1	1	1	--	1	--	4	
Algeria	1	1	1	--	1	1	5	
Somalia	2	2	2	1	1	1	9	
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	2	--	--	--	--	--	2	
Sudan	1	1	1	2	1	2	8	
Tunisia	1	1	1	1	1	2	7	
Mauritania	1	1	--	--	1	--	3	
Council of Arab Economic Unity	--	1	--	--	--	--	1	
Subtotal (b)	9	8	6	4	6	6	39	
Total (a+b)	50	38	51	30	24	38	231	

Note: "--" indicates zero.

Project advisers also participated in country (local) and international training programmes, such as:

- Training programmes on demographic surveys held at the Development Council, Oman;
- Local training programmes on processing social household survey data held at the Ministry of Social Affairs, Oman (1991);
- International training programmes on statistics on the disabled held in Malta (December 1989).

D. Household-survey seminars, meetings and conferences

The RHSP calls for the consolidation of relations and cooperation between data producers (statistical organizations and offices in various government institutions) and data users at the country level (or below) or regional level. To achieve this objective, statisticians, planners and users of data take part in discussions on statistical methodologies, survey data and results, methods of analysis, and producing relevant statistical indicators through country seminars on each survey and regional seminars at the ESCWA level, and through participation in international meetings and conferences to exchange views and knowledge in the field of household surveys. Such seminars have been held in various fields, such as:

1. National (local) seminars on household surveys

- (a) Bahrain seminar (1985) on household expenditure and income;
- (b) Syrian seminar (1986) on labour-force survey;
- (c) Egyptian seminar (1987) on household expenditure and income;
- (d) Syrian seminar (1988) on household expenditure and income;
- (e) First Jordanian seminar (1989) on household expenditure and income;
- (f) Second Jordanian seminar (1989) on household expenditure and income (for higher management);
- (g) Palestinian seminar (1989) on household expenditure and income in Palestinian camps in the Syrian Arab Republic.

2. Regional meetings and seminars on household surveys

- (a) Expert Group Meeting on Household Surveys and Their Use in the Preparation of National Accounts (held at ESCWA headquarters in Baghdad, 17-18 March 1987);
- (b) Regional Seminar on Household Surveys and Data Required for Manpower Planning (held at the National Planning Institute in Cairo, 13-16 December 1987).

3. Regional and international seminars and meetings to which the Regional Household Survey Project contributed research papers

(a) Expert Group Meeting on Income Distribution Statistics in the Arab Countries (ESCWA, 5-8 December 1983);

(b) Regional Seminar on Methods of Collection of Agricultural Data through Household Surveys (ESCWA, December 1984);

(c) Regional Seminar on Population and Housing Censuses (ESCWA, December 1985, Baghdad);

(d) First Meeting of Heads of Central Statistical Organizations in the ESCWA Region (ESCWA, 3-5 December 1985, Baghdad);

(e) Second Meeting of Heads of Central Statistical Organizations in the ESCWA Region (ESCWA, 25-26 March 1987);

(f) International Seminar on Data Processing and Statistical Databases (Geneva, May-June 1988);

(g) International Conference on Dissemination and Uses of Data of Population Censuses (Cairo, October 1988);

(h) Third Meeting of Heads of Central Statistical Organizations in the ESCWA Region (ESCWA, 28 February - 2 March 1989);

(i) Expert group meeting to discuss household expenditure and income guide and manpower survey guide (Geneva, 30 January - 3 February 1989);

(j) Expert Group Meeting for Reviewing Draft Manuals on "Assessing the Nutritional Status of Children through Household Surveys" and on "Measuring Literacy through Household Surveys" (London, 23-27 April 1990);

(k) Seminar on mother's and children's data banks in Iraq (Baghdad, 1990);

(l) Meetings of the Technical Committee on child health surveys in Arab countries (annual meeting).

4. Translation into Arabic of statistical manuals

The following manuals have been translated:

(a) The National Household Survey Capability Programme - a Perspective;

(b) Non-Sampling Errors in Household Surveys: Sources, Assessment and Control;

(c) Sampling Frames and Sampling Designs for Integrated Household Survey Programmes;

(d) Handbook of Household Surveys;

(e) Development and Design of Survey Questionnaires.

Recently a number of new manuals were published by the United Nations Statistical Office, the Central Coordinating Unit (Household Surveys) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). These have to be translated into Arabic to train statistical staff on the methodologies presented in them. They deal with household surveys in areas such as the health and nutrition of children, illiteracy eradication, the disabled, household expenditure and income, and the labour force.

V. ORIENTATION OF THE PROJECT DURING THE FOURTH PHASE (1992-1997)

A. Undertaking new household surveys to meet planners' requirements

During past years the Project participated in household surveys relating to manpower, the labour force, household expenditure and income, the participation of women in development and household consumption of energy.

With the tangible progress and success of the Regional Household Survey Project, planners in ESCWA member States began to feel a greater need for household-survey data in new areas such as:

- (a) Children's health, social care and nutrition;
- (b) Health, social care and family relations of the aged and the services provided to them;
- (c) Youth problems (the generation gap, exposure to unsolicited information which affects behaviour, social evils such as drugs, etc.);
- (d) Health and social care for the handicapped; their problems and their participation in the development of society;
- (e) Measurement of illiteracy eradication;
- (f) Illiterate people and their problems in a world of rapid scientific and technological advancement with its profound impact on life-styles and with the growing importance of knowledge in it;
- (g) Participation of women in development, and training them to perform their role in society;
- (h) Public education and its sources; the influence of habits and customs on members of the family and society;
- (i) Excessive expenditure and ways of rationalization of expenditure;
- (j) Migration from rural to urban areas, causes and effects on rural and urban communities and on certain economic sectors in the country;
- (k) Identification of causes and remedies of social phenomena such as divorce, high dowries, and juvenile delinquency, particularly the use of drugs.

These surveys require the preparation of methodologies to identify: objectives; types of questionnaires; methods of collecting and processing, summarizing and analysing data; and methods of using data to formulate national policies. The methodologies employed should allow comparisons to be made between the data and results in each country in the region and also with the external world. Work of this nature requires a regional effort if it is to be economically feasible; it also requires encouragement at the national level to carry out these surveys and prepare regional studies.

Mention should be made in particular of the importance of orienting efforts towards an integrated household health survey project that would embrace several of the above-mentioned household survey areas.

B. Orientation towards multi-purpose surveys to serve specific national objectives

The present economic and social situation of Arab villages requires development in various aspects: production, health and education. Computer technology has advanced to the point that States are encouraged to build geographical information systems (GIS) linking land (maps and topography) with land use and man, which in one component requires several types of data from the household sector. Within this context, the household survey project will contribute to the preparation of multi-purpose household surveys which provide demographic, health, social, economic and environmental data to serve national planning objectives in projects such as: (a) developing Arab villages; (b) geographical information systems; and (c) introducing computer technology into teaching and household uses.

C. Holding seminars between producers and users of data

Previous experiences have demonstrated the importance of organizing national and regional seminars in which statisticians (the producers of data) and planners (the users) participate in reconciling the planning function's requirements of data with statistical organizations' ability to provide them in a convenient form and within an effective time schedule. These seminars also contribute towards developing the concepts and methodologies of statistical work and strengthening technical uses of data. There is a pressing need for organizing such seminars nationally and regionally to study topics that concern the region and promote interaction between statisticians and planners. The following are some orientations in this respect:

(a) A regional seminar to discuss the studies on household expenditure and income already made in various countries of the region. The conclusions of these studies could be evaluated and suggestions made for developing them to suit planners' requirements for data;

(b) A regional seminar on household consumption of energy;

(c) A regional seminar on health, social and educational surveys;

(d) A regional seminar on problems of statistical data processing and data banks;

(e) Local seminars to be organized following every household survey; participation in such seminars could include local staff responsible for statistics, and planning organizations and other State officials interested in the subject.

D. Development of data collection and processing systems

Data processing is the bottle-neck in handling the results of household surveys. This is in addition to the problems and efforts of office staff to review the coding of data obtained from statistical forms.

In the light of the rapid development of computer technology and the tremendous possibilities it offers, the latest tendency is towards using portable and notebook computers to collect data from households. These data can later be processed on personal computers for purposes of classification and analysis, thus minimizing the time between collecting the data and the appearance of the results. Such results would be of greater value as they would be more representative of the community surveyed and would enable the planner to use them to formulate policies in harmony with the State's requirements.

This orientation of the Project would require the acquisition of a number of portable and personal computers and appropriate statistical software. After that, training programmes could be conducted on the use of computers, to select good and qualified workers for this type of technology. There is no doubt that the countries of the region are facing a technological challenge in this field, which underlines the importance of regional action in providing expertise in this respect. The costs would also be reasonable, as regional cooperation would make possible the exchange of samples, work programmes, etc.

E. Setting up data banks on results of household surveys

The great mass of data which has been accumulated through household surveys over the years underlines the need to set up computer data banks to facilitate obtaining time series of data and indicators and to provide faster and more efficient services to data users.

F. Training programmes

There is a growing need to conduct regional training programmes to qualify technical personnel in the field of household surveys and data processing. They are particularly necessary if we take into consideration the importance of studies being conducted in Arabic and the fact that the cost of establishing national training centres would be too high to be practicable. Training in non-Arabic-speaking countries would likewise not achieve the desired results for many reasons, including costs and the language problem.

The Project will work to establish a regional centre specialized in assisting national personnel in the field of information (statistics and computer technology).

G. Translation of household survey documents into Arabic

Considering the economics of certain Arabic translations, distribution should run to several thousand copies for a given book to be feasible. Naturally, this is not possible in the case of statistical manuals on

household surveys. On the other hand, such manuals in Arabic are greatly needed for use by technicians and statisticians working in this field. Therefore, arrangements to translate documents on household surveys into Arabic on a regional basis are essential and reflect the Regional Household Survey Project's interest in undertaking these translations and publishing them, particularly in ESCWA countries.

H. Statistical awareness

The Project should undertake sustained efforts to build and promote statistical awareness and, in broader terms, information awareness (by which is meant statistical knowledge and computer technology), in view of its importance to the development of society and man, and should also call for the inclusion of statistics and computer science as subjects in the curricula at various educational levels.

VI. RESOLUTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS SUPPORTING CONTINUATION OF THE SERVICES OF THE REGIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY PROJECT OF ESCWA STATES

The various activities of the Project, since its inception in 1981, have been reviewed by member States, the United Nations Statistical Office, UNDP and ESCWA. These revisions, normally undertaken by evaluation committees, have underlined the importance of this project in consolidating statistical work in member States. Numerous recommendations to this effect have been made. A number of member States have also communicated with UNDP about continuing its financial support of the Project. Below are some of the relevant resolutions, recommendations and contacts.

1. Second Meeting of Heads of General Statistical Organizations in the ESCWA Region (25-26 March 1987)

Thirteen Commission members and six Arab and two international organizations were represented at this meeting, which made ten recommendations to steer and support work programmes of the Regional Household Survey Project.

2. Tripartite Review Meeting on the Regional Household Survey Project at ESCWA (28-30 March 1987)

Taking part in the meeting were representatives of nine ESCWA member States, a representative of the United Nations Statistical Office and Central Coordinating Unit of the global household survey programme in New York and a representative of the Regional Bureau for Arab States and Europe of UNDP in New York. The participants made nine recommendations to support the programme and work of the Regional Household Survey Project and the continuity of its services.

3. Expert Group Meeting on Household Surveys and Their Use in the Preparation of National Accounts (17-18 March 1987)

The participants (six member States, five regional and Arab organizations and institutes and the United Nations Statistical Office in New York) made a number of recommendations which support the Project and call for extending its services to embrace wider fields.

4. Regional Seminar on Household Surveys and Data Required for Manpower Planning (13-16 December 1987)

Representatives of Arab States of ESCWA and a large number of Egyptian and other Arab institutions took part in this Seminar, expressing thanks to UNDP for its support for the Regional Household Survey Project and calling for continuation of this support. They also expressed thanks to ESCWA for its endeavours to finance and support this programme.

5. Meetings of the fourteenth session of ESCWA in April 1987

The Regional Household Survey Project received a high degree of attention. Representatives of most of the States of the region discussed the Project's programmes and expressed appreciation of its achievements. They underscored its importance and called for its continuation during the third phase, 1988-1991, adopting the following resolution:

"155(XIV). Strengthening of national household survey capabilities*

"The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

"Taking note of the report of the Executive Secretary on technical cooperation activities and technical assistance projects, particularly as it relates to the strengthening of national household survey capabilities,^{1/}

"Recalling that the National Household Survey Capability Programme was established to assist members of the Commission to obtain, by means of household surveys, the constant flow of statistical information necessary for the preparation and adoption of development plans and policies and to develop their national capabilities in the conduct of such surveys,

"Recalling the reports of the Second Meeting of Heads of Central Statistical Organizations in the ESCWA Region^{2/} and the Tripartite Review Meeting on regional household survey project RAB/80/009, as well as the recommendations made by them with regard to the importance of continuing the project to the end of 1991,

"Further recalling the contribution of the Commission to the inputs to the regional project and its future plans to increase its support to the project in the light of the budget proposed by the Tripartite Review Meeting held in March 1987,

"Expressing its gratitude to the United Nations Development Programme for its interest in the National Household Survey Capability Programme and its contribution to the financing of the regional project,

* The Technical Committee adopted the draft project on 1 April 1987 at its third session.

^{1/} E/ESCWA/C.1/14/4(Part II) and Add.1.

^{2/} E/ESCWA/C.1/14/6/Add.1.

"Noting that a number of member countries which have prepared detailed household survey programmes have as yet been unable to achieve self-reliance owing to the lack of technical and financial resources and because of the obstacles indicated in the recommendations of the Tripartite Review Meeting,^{1/}

"Further noting that the completion of household surveys within the framework of country programmes is largely dependent on the technical services provided by the regional project,

"1. Stresses the importance of continuing the project to the end of 1991, while calling upon the United Nations Development Programme to continue to contribute to the project and to provide funding at a level no lower than that of its present contribution and requesting the International Labour Organisation to appoint a regional adviser within the framework of the project,

"2. Urges international organizations, the funding agencies and the Arab funds to provide financial and technical support to the members of the Commission in the implementation of their national household survey programmes.

"^{1/} See document E/ESCWA/C.1/14/4(Part II)/Rev.1/Add.1."

6. Contacts by ESCWA States to ensure continuation of the Project's services

A number of ESCWA member States contacted ESCWA and UNDP on the importance of the services of the National Household Survey Project, calling for the continuation of financial support. Among these countries are: Jordan, the Republic of Yemen (contacts were made before unification), the Syrian Arab Republic, Bahrain, Qatar and Egypt.

7. Meetings of the fifteenth session of ESCWA held in May 1989

ESCWA States expressed appreciation for the Regional Household Survey Project services, stressed its importance and the need for its continued services, and stressed that member States should prepare national household survey programmes and projects to be implemented on a continuous basis. They also affirmed that the execution of such national programmes and projects relies to a large extent on the technical services provided by ESCWA in this field.

The following resolution was adopted:

"169(XV). Support for the Regional Household Survey Project in the ESCWA countries

"The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

"Taking note of the report of the Executive Secretary on the progress made in the field of technical cooperation^{1/} and in particular in the field of strengthening national household survey capabilities,

^{1/} E/ESCWA/C.1/15/4(Part II).

^{2/} RAB/80/009.

"Recalling the reports of the Second Meeting of Heads of Central Statistical Organizations, held on 25 and 26 March 1987, and of the Tripartite Review Meeting on the Regional Household Survey Project^{2/} and the recommendations of both meetings concerning the importance of consultancy services in the field of household surveys,

"Recalling also the report of the Third Meeting of Heads of Central Statistical Organizations, held from 28 February to 2 March 1989, and its expression of appreciation of the consultancy services provided by the secretariat in the field of household surveys, its reaffirmation of the continued need of most member countries for more technical services in order to implement household surveys and to strengthen national capabilities in this field, and also the recommendation of the Meeting concerning the need to continue the activities of the Regional Household Survey Project and to strive to transform it into a permanent work programme of the Statistics Division,

"Recalling also the financial support provided by the United Nations Development Programme from 1981 to 1987 in order to strengthen national household survey capabilities, and the statement made at the 3rd plenary meeting of the present session of the Commission by the Regional Director of the United Nations Development Programme,

"Noting that member States are preparing national household survey programmes and projects to be implemented on a continuous basis and that the execution of such national programmes and projects relies to a large extent on technical services provided by the secretariat in this field,

"1. Stresses the continuing importance of the technical services of the Commission in the field of household surveys and the need to develop these services in order to meet the needs of member States and to keep abreast of world developments in the field of information technology;

"2. Invites the Executive Secretary to exert efforts to ensure the necessary funds to guarantee the continuation of the Regional Household Survey Project and to strive to transform it into a regular work programme of the Statistics Division;

"3. Invites the Executive Secretary to request the International Labour Organisation to contribute the services of an adviser in the field of labour statistics;

"4. Requests the secretariat to recontact the United Nations Development Programme for support of the Regional Household Survey Project, provided that member States support this request through their permanent representatives and include it in their country programmes submitted to the United Nations Development Programme;

"5. Conveys its thanks to the Arab Gulf Programme for the United Nations Development Organizations for its support of the Regional Household Survey Project and calls upon the secretariat to pursue its contacts for the purpose of signing the necessary agreement with that body;

"6. Requests the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution to the Commission at its sixteenth session."

VII. PROGRESS MADE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTION

1. ESCWA continued to provide advisory and training services in this respect in the light of the limited financial and human resources available. In 1990 advisory services were provided for 97 work-days to seven ESCWA member States and international concerns outside ESCWA States. In 1991 advisory services increased to 159 work-days, provided to six ESCWA member States. This reflects an increasing demand for advisory and training services, which calls for seeking financing sources apart from ESCWA in order to support the Project and meet requests in a number of fields which had to be suspended for lack of funds.

It is noteworthy that demand for advisory services for the period 1981 to 1988 averaged 383 work-days, and in some individual years in this period averaged 633 work-days when funds were available for the Project. This reveals a gap which has to be bridged.

2. Owing to the circumstances that prevailed in the ESCWA duty area and their effect on its work programmes, ESCWA has not yet been able to incorporate the Project into the regular activities of the Statistics Division.

3. ESCWA approached ILO requesting them to contribute the services of an adviser in the field of labour statistics; no specific agreement has been reached in this respect, although ILO stated that it could consider sending an adviser at various times upon a prior request from ESCWA. This arrangement proved impracticable; the presence of an adviser at ESCWA on a permanent basis would help a great deal in carrying out advisory services directly, without need for numerous contacts each time a request is received from a country. ESCWA will contact ILO with another request to send an adviser.

4. The Executive Secretary of ESCWA communicated with the Director of the Regional Bureau for Arab States and Europe of UNDP with regard to assistance to the Regional Household Survey Project of ESCWA. It appeared that UNDP was interested in the project. UNDP would need to be contacted and a new Project proposal submitted in this respect. So far, ESCWA has no information about what has been done by its permanent delegates to the United Nations to support ESCWA's request for re-funding the Project by UNDP.

5. The Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND) allocated \$US 300,000 for the Regional Household Survey Project and will meet the expenses of training, translation of manuals and short-term advisory services by some consultants.

6. Sustained services are still required to be provided by the Project in the following fields:

Designing household surveys
Sample design and selection
Training and implementation in fieldwork
Manpower

The countries of the region urgently need to reinforce their technical staff and enhance their knowledge and experience in informatics, as computer technology and data-processing software are constantly advancing. This is hard to achieve at a country level, and indeed the establishment of a regional centre specialized in training on informatics is considered an essential goal. ESCWA has initiated preliminary studies for this purpose. The matter has been submitted to member States for their consideration.

**VIII. THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ARAB GULF PROGRAMME FOR UNITED
NATIONS DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS (AGFUND) TO
THE REGIONAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY PROJECT**

In 1988 ESCWA submitted a proposal to AGFUND to fund the Regional Household Survey Project in the ESCWA countries. AGFUND agreed to contribute \$US 300,000. On 30 December 1990 the sum of \$US 80,000 was credited to ESCWA's account for expenditure on the Regional Household Survey Project in the ESCWA countries. Owing to the circumstances facing ESCWA in 1991, which led to the suspension of many of its activities, ESCWA could not use the funds. These funds will be used in certain training activities at a regional level, and for the provision of computers and software, the translation of statistical manuals on household surveys, and meeting expenses of short-term advisory services for household surveys.