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Item 6 (c) of the provisional agenda

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

**FOLLOW-UP ACTION AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL ON UNITED NATIONS  
WORLD CONFERENCES AND ESCWA REGIONAL MEETINGS**



## I. UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

1. As follow-up action on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which was held at Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 1992, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) undertook a major role in the establishment of the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR). In paragraph 2 of its resolution 180 (XVI) of 2 September 1992 on regional cooperation and coordination in the field of environment and sustainable development, ESCWA called for the establishment of such a committee "for the purpose of promoting environmentally sound and sustainable development and implementing Agenda 21", the main outcome of UNCED, in the region. In this context, and in cooperation with the League of Arab States, a preparatory meeting involving United Nations regional organizations and other intergovernmental regional organizations was held, after which the mandates and terms of reference of the Committee were established. An interim plan of action for the implementation of Agenda 21 was drafted to strengthen regional cooperation and coordination to respond to the regional aspects of Agenda 21. JCEDAR will sponsor a meeting in 1994 for the Ministers of Agriculture in the Arab region to discuss follow-up action on UNCED with regard to desertification. This topic will be discussed by the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development in its next meeting.

2. In order to acquaint member States with the outcomes and follow-up on UNCED, ESCWA has prepared documentation which was distributed to end-users in the region on topics related to UNCED.

3. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development emphasized the necessity of international, regional and national action to limit and ultimately replace ozone-depleting substances.<sup>1/</sup> ESCWA organized the ESCWA/UNEP Expert Group Meeting on the Substitution of Ozone-Depleting Substances in the ESCWA Region, held at Amman on 1 and 2 December 1993. The Meeting was dedicated to reviewing the study conducted by ESCWA and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on the subject.<sup>2/</sup> It was attended by 26 participants including representatives of 10 countries in the ESCWA region. The experts made several important suggestions, some of which were specifically directed at the formulation of a programme of action for phasing out ozone-depleting substances in the region. The Meeting endorsed the efforts being undertaken by ESCWA to conduct training workshops for engineers from industries considered to be the main users of substances harmful to the ozone layer. That would constitute joint activities with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and UNEP during the next biennium.

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<sup>1/</sup> See Earth Summit, Agenda 21, The United Nations Programme of Action from Rio (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.11), sect. 2, chap. 9.

<sup>2/</sup> ESCWA, Regional Survey of Production and Consumption of Substances Harmful to the Ozone Layer in the ESCWA Region (E/ESCWA/ID/1993/4), vols. I, II and III.

4. UNCED also called for strengthening endogenous scientific and technological capabilities and conducting studies aimed at establishing the implications of new and advanced technologies for the developing countries. In response, ESCWA, in cooperation with UNIDO, organized the High-level Workshop on the Implications of New and Advanced Materials Technologies for the Economies of ESCWA Countries. The Workshop, which was held at Damascus from 21 to 24 September 1992, was attended by 46 experts, including representatives of institutions in seven countries of the region. The Workshop's recommendations included a suggestion for the creation of a multidisciplinary centre for materials research, development and characterization. That suggestion has been taken up by the Scientific Studies and Research Centre in the Syrian Arab Republic, and a feasibility study is being conducted for the proposed centre with assistance from UNIDO. The proposed centre will constitute a regional entity which will coordinate research, development and training in the area of new and advanced materials.

5. ESCWA presented to the United Nations Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development a contribution on issues related to the transfer of environmentally sustainable technologies. The contribution was requested by the Department as follow-up action in relation to the implementation of Agenda 21. The contribution provided by ESCWA dealt with issues of technology transfer in five areas: health, freshwater, human settlements, toxic chemicals and hazardous wastes.

6. In addition, pursuant to the recommendations adopted at UNCED<sup>3/</sup> and those agreed upon by the International Conference on Water and the Environment: Development issues for the 21st century, held at Dublin from 26 to 31 January 1992, the ESCWA secretariat took part in the First Meeting of the Inter-agency Task Force on Land and Water Resources, organized by EMRO/WHO (Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office/World Health Organization) at Alexandria, Egypt, in February 1993, with the objective of discussing the modalities of cooperation and coordination among the United Nations entities and Arab regional agencies.

7. The ESCWA secretariat is also planning to host the second meeting of the Inter-agency Task Force in August 1994 as part of its programme of work for 1994-1995.

8. Moreover, following the Regional Symposium on Water Use and Conservation, held at Amman from 28 November to 2 December 1993, the ESCWA secretariat took the initiative of establishing a regional training network in the water sector. A task force, grouping experts from Jordan University, King Abdul Aziz University of Saudi Arabia, the Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) and ESCWA representatives, has been established to assess the performance of national institutions concerned, formulate training programmes and convene intergovernmental meetings.

9. In 1993, ESCWA formulated the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification for the United Arab Emirates, and a desertification control project in Bahrain.

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<sup>3/</sup> See Agenda 21, chap. 18.

10. In addition, as follow-up action on UNCED, ESCWA is planning, in cooperation with other regional organizations, to hold a ministerial conference on management and sustainable development of drylands in the Arab world. In preparation for the conference, an expert group meeting will be held in either Aleppo, Syrian Arab Republic, or Cairo from 10 to 14 July 1994. ESCWA will prepare, jointly with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and possibly UNEP, a study on wildlife conservation and development in the Arab countries.

11. Furthermore, ESCWA will attend and contribute to the Arab Ministerial Conference on Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development. An expert consultative meeting will be held in Cairo in November 1994. The Commission will present two papers on (a) land and water policies in the Near East countries; and (b) macroeconomic adjustment and agricultural policies.

## II. UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HUMAN SETTLEMENTS (Habitat II)

12. In paragraph 1 of its resolution 47/180, the General Assembly decided "to convene the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) from 3 to 14 June 1996, at the highest possible level of participation."

13. In paragraph 5 of that resolution, the General Assembly invited "relevant or interested organizations, organs, programmes and concerned agencies of the United Nations system and intergovernmental, subregional and regional organizations to participate actively in the preparatory process."

14. In paragraph 19 of the resolution, the General Assembly recommended "that regional and subregional meetings should be held in conjunction with meetings of subregional and regional intergovernmental bodies, wherever possible."

15. Research activities and meetings undertaken by ESCWA should serve as background material for the preparatory process for Habitat II. Relevant studies include: (a) Human Settlements Situation in the ESCWA Region: Development Trends in the Housing Sector during the Last Two Decades (E/ESCWA/HS/1993/1); (b) Housing Finance in the ESCWA Region: Institutions and Procedures (E/ESCWA/HS/1992/2); (c) Manual for Development of Human Settlements: Environmentally Sustainable Shelter Techniques in Southern Arabia (E/ESCWA/1993/2); (d) The provision of shelter and public amenities in rapidly changing urban areas: crisis housing (E/ESCWA/HS/1993/3 [Arabic only]); (e) Guidelines for Appropriate-Planning and Design Standards in the ESCWA Region (E/ESCWA/HS/1993/5); and (f) Assessing neighbourhood and community cohesiveness in urban life: a case-study of sites and services projects (E/ESCWA/HS/1993/6 [Arabic only]).

16. Meetings held included the Symposium on Low-cost Housing in the Arab Region (Sana'a, 24-28 October 1992) and a meeting on the social and cultural context of physical planning in the Arab region (Amman, 9 June 1993). The Symposium reviewed the technical, administrative and financial aspects of providing housing to lower income groups. The meeting explored the social and cultural elements that influenced the evolution of the Arab city and the means of integrating the socio-cultural dimensions into the urban planning process.

17. ESCWA participated in the organizational session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held in New York in March 1993, in which a joint proposal by the regional commissions was presented emphasizing the need to convene regional high-level meetings in preparation for Habitat II. ESCWA also participated in the fourteenth session of the United Nations Commission on Human Settlements, held at Nairobi from 26 April to 5 May 1993, in which active discussions took place to formulate the major themes for Habitat II. ESCWA submitted proposals to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) and the League of Arab States to coordinate regional endeavours, including the convening of a joint regional preparatory meeting. In this regard, ESCWA cooperated with the Government of Jordan, Habitat and UNEP in organizing the First Arab Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), held at Amman from 21 to 23 March 1994. The ESCWA work programme for the biennium 1994-1995, within its available resources, has taken into consideration the themes related to the objectives of Habitat II.

### III. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT (Cairo, 5-13 September, 1994)

18. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/176 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1991/93, 1992/37 and 1993/4 concerning the convening of the International Conference on Population and Development, ESCWA, in cooperation with the League of Arab States and the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, held the Arab Population Conference at Amman from 4 to 8 April 1993, at which the questions of population, sustained economic growth and continuous development in the region were discussed, and the Second Amman Declaration on Population and Development was adopted by the participating Arab delegations.

19. In order to express the Arab point of view on the population question within the context of the interrelated development concerned with economic, social, cultural and environmental affairs, the Arab Governments welcomed the adoption of the Second Amman Declaration on Population and Development.

20. The Arab Population Conference emphasized the importance of population issues and recommended that the Governments of the Arab States treat those issues in their proper development perspective by taking into account the following guidelines:

(1) Population policies should be formulated within the framework of a comprehensive strategy for development. Human development should receive special attention, and the necessary resources should be allocated to it. Moreover, it should be viewed as relating to human requirements, activities and aspirations, including production and distribution, culture, enjoyment of democracy, and protection of human rights. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should have an effective role in achieving population objectives and in implementing population policies.

(2) The interrelationships between population, resources, environment and development need to be better understood. Encouragement of research, establishment of information networks, and evaluation of the environmental

effects of new projects are of major importance in this regard. Furthermore, development policies and pan-Arab plans should be formulated with prior consultation with NGOs and to ensure rational use of land, water and other resources and include measures to combat all forms of environmental pollution, poverty, unemployment and other causes negatively affecting the quality of life.

(3) Special attention should be paid to policies aimed at balancing the distribution of population and sites of production, improving the quality of life in rural areas, retaining the population in small and medium-sized urban areas and providing them with opportunities for development. Furthermore, reliable data should be obtained and studies undertaken to achieve better understanding of population movements and their motives and implications.

(4) Arab States should coordinate and cooperate in planning labour mobility in order to maximize the benefit to both sending and receiving States. The human rights of Arab migrants need to be protected, endeavours should be made to facilitate the integration and absorption of returning migrants in the economic and social life of their home countries. Support for development endeavours in the labour-sending countries is required in order to help to curb labour migration. Support should also be extended to the receiving countries in order to accommodate refugees and displaced persons until they return to their home countries.

Other recommendations relating to policies, studies on international migration, cessation of inhuman Israeli practices against Palestinians and the Arabs under occupation, and a halt to Jewish immigration are also contained in the Declaration.

(5) Policies and programmes should seek the improvement of the status of women as one of the goals of national development plans. Efforts should be made to develop legislation and practices to improve the situation of women, particularly with regard to relations within the family, employment, education, social and health insurance, and to promote the participation of women in public life on an equal footing with men.

(6) The Conference called upon the Governments of the Arab States to focus on maternal and child health as well as family planning programmes. The quality and accessibility of the services should be improved. Priority in development plans should be directed to child services, including health, nutrition and education.

(7) Information, education and communication (IEC) programmes in the field of population should become basic components of national education and information systems.

(8) Governments of the Arab States should promote coordination between active NGOs in the field of population and the concerned governmental agencies, at the national and regional levels. The role of NGOs needs to be strengthened and support of their activities should be encouraged.

(9) The Conference called upon the Governments of Arab States to make sure that population development policies were consistent with adjustment

policies. Governments should also dedicate efforts to strengthening data collection, research, training and exchange of information in the field of population.

(10) Arab and international cooperation within the framework of the United Nations system has to continue to provide technical and financial support for population activities to assist Arab States in their efforts to achieve population and development goals.

#### IV. WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995)

21. In paragraph 14 of its resolution 47/92 of 16 December 1992 on the convening of a world summit for social development, the General Assembly requested the regional commissions to include, in their programme of work for 1993, the preparatory work for the World Summit for Social Development, with particular emphasis on the social situation in their respective regions, and to prepare an integrated report for inclusion in the Secretary-General's report on the World Summit for Social Development, to be submitted to the Assembly at its forty-eighth session. Furthermore, the General Assembly, in paragraph 8 of its resolution 48/100 of 20 December 1993 on the World Summit for Social Development, invited the regional commissions to inform the Preparatory Committee of their contributions to the Summit. In response to those General Assembly resolutions and ESCWA resolution 187 (XVI) of 2 September 1992 on the World Summit for Social Development, ESCWA has undertaken a series of preparatory activities.

22. ESCWA participated in the Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Meeting on the preparation for the report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council (13 April 1993), the Preparatory Meeting on the Social Summit (12-16 April 1993) and the high-level segment of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council on the World Summit for Social Development (28 June 1993).

23. ESCWA contributed to the integrated report of the regional commissions which was submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. Furthermore, in response to the Secretary-General's request, ESCWA prepared a regional overview of the social situation for inclusion in the Secretary-General's report on the "Agenda for Development", stressing the importance of stability and peace in the region so that the human and material resources would then be freed to achieve economic growth accompanied by social development. In addition to its individual paper on preparatory activities, ESCWA contributed to the "Joint Paper of the Regional Commissions for the First Meeting of the Preparatory Committee of the Whole of the World Summit for Social Development" issued on 10 January 1994.

24. The above-mentioned mandates were taken into consideration in the ESCWA 1992-1993 biennium activities with a view to contributing to the three core themes of the Summit (enhancement of social integration, alleviation and reduction of poverty and expansion of productive employment), in addition to a new item on the cultural dimension of social development in the Arab region. These themes were adopted as focal issues for an interdisciplinary approach.



25. In direct connection with the core themes adopted, ESCWA held the Expert Group Meeting on Unemployment (Amman, 26-29 July 1993) to examine the issue of unemployment in the region and measures for reducing it, and the Expert Group Meeting on Human Development (Cairo, 6-9 December 1993) with a view to launching a concerted regional effort in this most important area of development. The conclusions and recommendations of these two meetings will be a consolidated input into the preparation process for the Summit in 1994/1995.

26. A steering committee is being established, composed of three resource persons, four main consultants (one consultant per agenda item) and the secretariats of the organizing agencies (ESCWA, the League of Arab States, the International Labour Organization, the Arab Labour Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)). This Committee will be responsible for the preparation and organization of the regional activities in preparation for the World Summit for Social Development. A technical agenda encompassing the four selected agenda items was prepared.

27. Close contacts are being initiated in the ESCWA region with the national coordinating bodies on the World Social Summit for Social Development.

28. In September 1994, an expert group meeting on the four agenda items will be held, in order to issue a final report and recommendations thereon. Based on the deliberations and recommendations of the meeting, a draft "Arab declaration for social development" will be formulated in October 1994 to be submitted to the Arab Regional Preparatory Meeting for the World Summit for Social Development, to be held in December 1994.

29. During July, September and November 1994, three regional preparatory meetings will be held. They are: (a) the Expert Group Meeting on the Arab Family in a Changing Society; (b) the Expert Group Meeting on the Regional Plan of Action for Arab Women in Western Asia in preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women; and (c) the Intergovernmental Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Fourth World Conference on Women. These meetings will have an input into the final version of the Arab declaration for social development.

30. During the above-mentioned ministerial Arab Regional Preparatory Meeting for the World Summit for Social Development, which will be attended by the Ministers of Social Affairs in the Arab world, the above-mentioned draft declaration will be discussed and adopted as the "Arab Declaration for Social Development", which will be an important input into the World Summit in Copenhagen.

#### V. THE FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN (Beijing, September 1995)

31. Note verbales were sent to all ESCWA member States informing them of the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women. The material transmitted included a set of all preparatory documents (in English and

Arabic). The documents included Commission on the Status of Women resolution 37/7, a DPI fact sheet about the Conference, the guidelines and outlines of national reports prepared by the Division for the Advancement of Women, and periodicals such as Women Envision for the benefit of NGOs. Documents central to the preparation of national reports were translated by ESCWA into Arabic for the benefit of member States.

32. In addition, a timetable was set, fixing dates for submission of national reports to ESCWA and to the secretariat of the Conference, and for convening an expert group meeting and a regional intergovernmental preparatory meeting. National reports were to be submitted to the ESCWA secretariat at Amman by March 1994 at the latest, and to the secretariat of the Conference in New York by May 1994. These national reports will be followed by national workshops during the second quarter of 1994, to be organized by ESCWA in collaboration with the national machineries in order to finalize national platforms of action. These national reports and the national platforms of action will constitute the main inputs into the preparation of a regional position paper on issues and priorities of the member States. An expert group meeting will be convened by ESCWA in September 1994 to draft and finalize the Regional Platform of Action. This will be the main working document for adoption by member States during an intergovernmental regional preparatory meeting to be convened by ESCWA in November 1994. The Regional Platform of Action will be submitted by ESCWA to the secretariat of the Conference in January 1995. The country reports and the Regional Platform of Action will be submitted as Conference documents in Beijing.

33. A team from the Women and Development Unit in ESCWA, funded by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), embarked during November and the first half of December 1993 on a tour to selected ESCWA member States, namely Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Egypt, Yemen, the United Arab Emirates and Oman. Visits to Iraq and the West Bank and Gaza Strip were planned. Technical assistance is being provided to Jordan, which hosts the temporary headquarters of ESCWA.

34. The purpose of the missions is to brief the authorities concerned about the required tasks and discuss details for the Conference preparations at the national level. In particular, the visits assisted in and/or speeded up the process of formation of joint national committees and/or working groups where they had not yet been established. The team advised the authorities regarding the composition and terms of reference of these joint committees to ensure balanced representation from the ministries concerned with women's affairs, notably education, labour, health, planning, statistics, social affairs, justice and legal affairs, and information, as well as NGOs and grass-roots organizations to be entrusted with preparation of the national report and the national platform of action. Focal points were also established for follow-up purposes. Media coverage reflected member States' seriousness regarding the Conference and its objectives of, inter alia, raising awareness at the national level.

35. The team distributed the preparatory documents to all parties directly involved with preparations at the national level and discussed the contents of national reports and indicators during working sessions and informal national workshops with high-ranking officials as well as NGOs and grass-roots organizations. The participatory mechanism was stressed, particularly the active involvement of NGOs and all women including youth.

36. ESCWA will convene national workshops during the second quarter of 1994 in each of the member States visited to finalize the national platforms of action. The ESCWA team will act as facilitator in these workshops to review the platforms of action in the light of the national reports with the joint national committees and the NGOs.

37. The national reports and the national platforms of action will constitute the main inputs into the preparation of a regional position paper on issues and priorities of the member States. An expert group meeting will be convened by ESCWA from 4 to 8 September 1994 to draft and finalize the Regional Platform of Action. The venue of the meeting has not been decided, and will depend upon invitations from interested member States.

38. The Regional Platform of Action finalized by the expert group meeting will be the main working document for adoption by member States during an intergovernmental regional preparatory meeting to be convened by ESCWA from 6 to 10 November 1994. This meeting will be hosted by the Jordanian National Committee for Women in Amman.

39. Under its 1992-1993 programme of work, the ESCWA Women and Development Unit undertook the preparation of the following studies to assess the situation of women in the light of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women in preparation for the Fourth World Conference on Women:

(a) Review of the situation of Arab women in the business and professional areas: case-study of Egypt;

(b) Vocational training as a tool of empowering women in business; lessons and opportunities: case-study of Jordan;

(c) Women and access to higher education in the Arab world: lessons and opportunities;

(d) Reintegration of women returnees and their families in their societies of origin.

40. ESCWA co-sponsored, with the Business and Professional Women's Club in Jordan, and the International Federation of Business and Professional Women, the Regional and National Conference on Arab Women and Sustainable Development, held at Amman from 26 to 28 April 1993. In addition to submitting two case-studies on the situation of professional women and businesswomen in Egypt and vocational training in Jordan and the regional perspective on women and access to higher education, ESCWA prepared the final report of the Conference.

41. In addition to UNIFEM funding for the provision of technical assistance (missions and workshops) to member States in this preparatory phase of the Conference, ESCWA secured partial funding from UNICEF to conduct, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme and UNICEF, a one-day workshop for NGOs in Egypt. Moreover, in collaboration with the FAO Regional Office in Cairo, ESCWA acted as an executing agency to identify four country coordinators for Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, and Yemen to prepare country reports on Women in Agriculture. These sectoral reports will be used as inputs into the national reports on the agricultural sector.

ESCWA participated in the Country Coordinators Consultation Meeting in Cairo on 30 November 1993 and briefed the Country Coordinators from Asia and the Near East on the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women and the role of ESCWA in this process.

42. In this connection, ESCWA has initiated consultations with the League of Arab States in Cairo for the purpose of collaborating in this preparatory phase of the Fourth World Conference on Women. The main objective of such collaboration is to formulate a unified platform of action for women in the Arab world to submit to the Conference at Beijing. It is proposed that this be achieved through (a) the provision of technical assistance (funding to be secured); and (b) joint sponsorship of the expert group meeting of September 1994 and the intergovernmental regional preparatory meeting of November 1994. In order to implement successfully this plan and the two preparatory meetings, financial support is urgently needed.

#### VI. MEETING OF HEADS OF STATISTICAL ORGANIZATIONS

43. The Fourth Meeting of Heads of Central Statistical Organizations in the ESCWA Region was held at Amman from 26 to 28 October 1993. It was attended by representatives of 10 ESCWA countries, six Arab organizations, two national institutions and three international organizations.

44. The following reports were presented and discussed during the sessions of the Meeting:

(a) Follow-up of the recommendations of the Third Meeting of Heads of Central Statistical Organizations;

(b) Progress report for the period 1991-1993;

(c) Report on technical cooperation in statistics;

(d) Report on the setting up of a Committee on Statistics in ESCWA;

(e) Report on the developments in the 1993 United Nations System of National Accounts;

(f) Report on the Western Asia Workshop on Strategies for Accelerating the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems (Damascus, 20-24 June 1993);

(g) Report on the Working Group on the Development of Indicators and Improvement of Statistics on the Status of Arab Women;

(h) Report on the National Household Survey Capability Programme and the services rendered by the Regional Household Survey Project in the ESCWA region.

45. After discussion, the following recommendations were made:

(1) The Meeting welcomed the setting up of a Committee on Statistics in ESCWA as a further step towards cooperation and coordination between ESCWA and member States.

(2) It expressed its appreciation for the efforts by ESCWA, and in particular by the Statistics Division for the implementation of the recommendations of the Third Meeting of Heads of Central Statistical Organizations despite the difficult circumstances experienced by the region.

(3) It urged the central statistical organizations in member States to provide the Statistics Division with statistical publications and questionnaires, with ESCWA supplying member States and Arab agencies concerned with summary reports on international statistical and technical meetings that ESCWA substantive staff usually attend.

(4) The Meeting stressed the importance of technical and advisory services rendered by regional advisors in the field of statistics and requested the continuation of those services.

(5) The Meeting adopted recommendations taken by the Western Asia Workshop on Strategies for Accelerating the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems. It urged member States to join the international programme in the field of civil registration and vital statistics. It also advised member States to coordinate with concerned United Nations bodies in preparing feasibility studies for establishing the national programmes that would improve the existing national vital statistics. It also invited ESCWA member States to set up a regional committee of highly specialized experts in vital statistics for the exchange of cooperation and experience.

(6) The Meeting welcomed the newsletter that the Statistics Division was planning to issue. It also stressed the importance of developing an environmental database in accordance with international efforts in that area.

(7) The Meeting adopted the recommendations of the Working Group on the Development of Indicators and Improvement of Statistics on the Status of Arab Women. It invited ESCWA to develop a unified concept for the measurement of women's participation in economic and social development. It also urged ESCWA member States to participate in the Fourth World Conference on Women and in the regional preparatory meeting to be organized by ESCWA at Amman.

(8) The Meeting expressed its appreciation for the efforts of ESCWA in the field of national accounts and accepted the proposals for organizing a series of workshops and seminars in a transitory period conducive to the implementation of the 1993 United Nations System of National Accounts, and for selecting one or several ESCWA member countries as experimental models for the introduction of the new system. It requested ESCWA to make the necessary contacts with international and Arab funds concerned for financing the above-mentioned seminars and workshops.

(9) The Meeting expressed its appreciation for the services rendered by ESCWA in the field of household surveys and urged ESCWA to do its utmost to recruit a regional advisor on sampling.

#### Recommendations to the ESCWA member States

46. In order to carry out the above-mentioned activities in the most efficient manner, ESCWA requires the fullest support from its member States. It should be noted that the preparatory activities require additional extrabudgetary funds to supplement the regular budget of ESCWA.

