

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WEST ASIA (ESCWA)
STATISTICS SUBPROGRAMME
EVALUATION REPORT

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Dr. David S. Bassiouni

Mr. Thopil Mathew Varghese

REPORT OF EVALUATION OF ESCWA STATISTICS SUBPROGRAMME

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B. ACRONYMS

C. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. ESCWA promotes economic and social development of Western Asia through regional and subregional cooperation and integration. It devises, promotes, and executes development assistance activities and projects in tune with the needs and priorities of the region of Western Asia. ESCWA consists of 7 sub-programmes. Five of the sub-programmes will be evaluated in 2011 in order to feed in lessons learned to the planning of the next Biennium's Strategic Framework (2014-15).

2. ESCWA invited a consultancy to focus on undertaking discretionary self-assessments of ESCWA's substantive sub-programmes, as an extra tier to the established and mandated assessment tools and provide an opportunity for review between the biennium periods. These evaluations are being conducted with a view to greater objectivity of evaluations and developing recommendations for corrective measures. The Statistics Sub-programme was selected as the first ESCWA entity to be evaluated. The evaluation report was produced with the objective of emphasizing the UN's core pillars of evaluation, learning and accountability. These pillars were addressed in a manner that would benefit the main recipients of the evaluation i.e. ESCWA, the UN, member states, and major stakeholders within the region.

3. Western Asia has the second highest population growth in the world, following Africa, creating increasing demand for food, water and energy, and adequate infrastructure to provide basic shelter, education, health care and other social services and productive employment opportunities. This requires the countries of the region to coordinate efforts and mobilize more resources for the provision of regional public goods, including water management,

environmental sustainability, the social safety net and coordination and harmonization in trade policies and procedures, transport infrastructure and conflict resolution and peace-building. Countries within the ESCWA region face severe challenges to development and the obtainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

4. There persists a strong need to improve the institutional capacity to produce timely, reliable and comparable statistics for policy and programme formulation and for monitoring the progress made towards the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

5. Recognizing that the period 2008-2009 would be crucial for the member Governments to prepare for the 2010 round of population and housing censuses, the subprogramme gave special focus to the capacity-building of member countries in implementing the recommendations for the 2010 round as well as their capacity in preparing and undertaking household, labour force and other related surveys to collect vital data needed for the policymakers and government officials, and for the private sector and civil society. The subprogramme also continued to focus due attention on the 1993 System of National Accounts and trade and sectoral statistics, and support the member countries in improving existing gaps in the coverage, transparency and quality of statistics and metadata in compliance with agreed international standards.

6. National Statistical Offices of the ESCWA member countries are primary clients of ESCWA's work in the field of statistics, together with other national producers of official statistics. The second important group of clients are other divisions of ESCWA that need statistical support in their activities. Finally, statistical outputs produced by ESCWA may be also useful to other users looking for statistical information on the region. The vision of the Statistics Subprogramme is captured by efforts aimed at capacity development of national statistics partner institutions and coordination of data collection and dissemination in the ESCWA region involving member states, international partners as well as internally within the Commission itself.

7. The evaluation of the Statistics Subprogramme was commissioned to develop a robust process of review of ESCWA's programme performance by increasing the objectivity of ESCWA's discretionary self evaluations, and through the standardization of evaluation tools and expertise to develop baselines for recommendations for calibrating programme activities and relevant processes to increase ESCWA's programmatic delivery to its member states. The evaluations would also review the extent to which ESCWA programmes are in line with latest global trends on thematic areas, through review of the work of ESCWA and the ECOSOC committees, and other regional commissions. It assessed the Statistics Subprogramme's performance to determine its effectiveness, efficiency, client satisfaction, good practices and lessons learned, partnership and unexplored areas and new opportunities.

9. The methodology applied encompassed key questions and criteria; a conceptual framework; a scoping mission; identifying key areas of inquiry; a desk review; data gathering and analysis; applying special evaluation tools including the evaluation assessment matrix; and

analysis; consultations and consultative stakeholder workshops and focused verification and validation and a final report. The final report composes two distinct products (a.) evaluation of the subprogramme and (b) the evaluation methodology for ESCWA Subprogrammes as piloted and tested in this particular evaluation.

10. The evaluation focused on 14 areas of in-depth inquiry and analysis including capacity of the Statistics Division; meeting emerging demands for technical excellence at regional and national levels; continuous engagement of all ESCWA members; an evaluation that helps design the Statistical Subprogramme better; a forward looking evaluation; avoiding duplication; result orientation; capacity to deliver on critical needs in the area of statistics; assessment of the quality and modalities of technical assistance delivery; ESCWA's niche; client and partnership orientation; gender and human rights

11. The major findings of the evaluation include a need for better distribution, balance of and utilization of staff time; appreciation by member states of ESCWA's technical assistance against backdrop of a growing demand for more specialized training and technology transfer; demand for a stronger capacity at the regional level to achieve technical excellence nationally; A persistently strong need to improve the Statistics Division's technical institutional capacity; cultivating and securing greater interest, support, and engagement from all the ESCWA's member states especially the GCC countries to ensure ownership and translate commitment into a flow of resources; creation of a center of excellence; need for the Statistics Division to shift to providing demand based rather than supply driven services; a forward looking evaluation; need to implement April 2010 ES Circular streamlining the process and management of the statistical information system; a revised budget system: importance for quality assurance; strengthening ESCWA's niche; greater importance for client and partnership, gender and human rights .

12. The evaluation proposed a number of strategic recommendations including review and re-organization of the Statistics Division; quality assurances in the generation and management of data; shift to providing demand based technical assistance to clients; re-aligning ESCWA budget system to link budget to activities and inputs to provide one single overview facilitating the gauging of implementation rates measured against available resources and expected outputs and results; strengthening of ESCWA's niche and comparative advantages; giving importance to building stronger working relationships with clients and partners and assigning gender mainstreaming and human rights greater priority in the statistics work of ESCWA

13. The evaluation recommended a shift by the Statistics Division to four priority areas including establishing itself as a center for technical excellence as well a center for coordination and partnership; focusing on gender and youth and a continued focus on MDGs and international comparability of data

1. INTRODUCTION

Established in 1973, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA), headquartered in Beirut, Lebanon, is one of the five regional commissions under the administrative direction of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. It comprises 14 members (Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates and Yemen). ESCWA promotes economic and social development of Western Asia through regional and subregional cooperation and integration. It devises, promotes, and executes development assistance activities and projects in tune with the needs and priorities of the region of Western Asia. ESCWA consists of 7 subprogrammesⁱ. Five of the subprogrammes will be evaluated in 2011 in order to feed in lessons learned to the planning of the next Biennium's Strategic Framework (2014-15).

ESCWA invited a consultancy to focus on undertaking discretionary self-assessments of ESCWA's substantive subprogrammes, as an extra tier to the established and mandated assessment tools and provide an opportunity for review between the biennium periods. These evaluations are being conducted with a view to greater objectivity of evaluations and developing recommendations for corrective measures. The Statistics Subprogramme was selected as the first ESCWA entity to be evaluated.

The Statistics Subprogram has three main objectives. First it assists member states in the development of statistical skills, knowledge, competencies, legal framework, institutional setup and organizational platform. Second the subprogram coordinates data collection and dissemination in the region. The third objective is to coordinate statistics activities of the multiple ESCWA divisions. The production of reliable statistics benefits the region's ability to develop relevant social and economic policies.

ESCWA has laid out two main objectives to be produced in the final report of this evaluation. The first evaluation objective is the creation of a methodology that can be carried out through the evaluation of the other ESCWA subprograms. The second objective will be the analysis and findings of the evaluation.

The report is structured to carry an executive summary; an introduction presenting an overview of ESCWA, its mandate and seven subprogrammes serving the 14 member states and the Commission's plan to evaluate these programmes; the regional context in which ESCWA operates; the purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation; a description of the methodology applied in evaluating the Statistics Subprogramme; the analysis of the achievements, shortfalls and unmet gaps in the Subprogramme performance; the findings, lessons learned and conclusions drawn from the evaluation exercise and a forward-looking set of recommendations for ESCWA's management to consider. The report is supported by 6 Annexes.

ⁱ 1. Management of Natural Resources for Sustainable Development
2. Integrated Social Policy
3. Economic and Development Integration
4. Information and Communication Technology for Regional Integration
5. Statistics for evidence-based policymaking
6. Advancement of Women
7. Conflict Mitigation and Development

The evaluation report was produced with the objective of emphasizing the UN's core pillars of evaluation, learning and accountability. These pillars were addressed in a manner that would benefit the main recipients of the evaluation i.e. ESCWA, the UN, member states, and major stakeholders within the region.

For the biennium 2008-2009, ESCWA pursued its programme objective by promoting economic and social integration at the sub-regional and regional levels and by fostering solidarity in the international political arena and global economy. The regional integration was planned to be scaled up to cover the Arab region through strategic partnerships with sub-regional and regional organizations, especially the League of Arab States (LAS) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The programme would focus on the four regional priority areas: (a) managing water and energy; (b) promoting integrated social policies; (c) stimulating economic development and integration in the increasingly globalizing world; and (d) accelerating the introduction and development of technology, especially information and communication technology. Throughout the programme, the emphasis was to be placed on the effective participation and involvement of women and their advancement special consideration for the people living in conflict-stricken countries and **statistical capacity development. ESCWA would carry out analytical and normative work, building on its accumulated knowledge and multidisciplinary expertise, which would be supported by the provision of technical cooperation. It would also facilitate multilateral dialogue, knowledge-sharing and networking on the outcome of the Commission's work and the national, regional and global development issues.**

In addition, ESCWA would provide a regional platform for the member countries to formulate and implement regional initiatives, agreements and programmes. It was expected that regional support provided by ESCWA would contribute towards: (a) increased national capacity to formulate and implement economic and social policies and programmes that are pro-poor and inclusive, and to tackle trans-boundary issues; (b) provision of joint responses to address multifaceted problems encountered by the countries in the region through the coordinated efforts and consolidated resources of the United Nations entities; (c) enhanced work of and consolidated resources of the United Nations entities; the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions for the review and assessment of progress made in implementing the outcomes of United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields; and (d) increased knowledge-sharing and South-South cooperation among the countries in the region and with countries in other regions, thereby promoting regional and interregional cooperation. The programme would be harmonized through regular interaction with the other entities of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs and the entities of the United Nations Development Group. The latter would be achieved through the Regional Coordination Group, which is led by ESCWA. ESCWA would enhance its collaboration with the sub-regional office for North Africa of the Economic Commission for Africa to ensure synergies in thematic and operational work and to bring its expertise to the countries in the North African sub-region, which share common language and cultural values.

2. REGIONAL CONTEXT

Western Asia has the second highest population growth in the world, following Africa, creating increasing demand for food, water and energy, and adequate infrastructure to provide basic shelter, education, health care and other social services and productive employment opportunities. This requires the countries of the region to coordinate efforts and mobilize more resources for the provision of regional public goods, including water management, environmental sustainability, the social safety net and coordination and harmonization in trade policies and procedures, transport infrastructure and conflict resolution and peace-building. Countries within the ESCWA region face severe challenges to development and the obtainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

Economy

The countries of the region also continue to experience some of the highest unemployment rates in the world, especially among the youth and women. The unemployment rates of ESCWA member states ranges from .5% in Qatar to 23% in Oman with great variance in between. The drastic difference in unemployment rates shows the lack of diversification of economic sectors within the region. Gulf countries often had lower unemployment rates, with Oman being an exception, due to their reliance on the energy sector. Countries without access to natural resources on average maintain a higher unemployment rate than those countries with access. Unemployment demographics note that women represent the majority of the unemployed in ESCWA countries. Diversification of economic sectors would provide member countries with more employment opportunities and amendments to women's employment laws would decrease the amount of citizens unemployed.

Migration, both towards and away from ESCWA countries, is a regional issue that needs to be addressed within the framework of international human treaties, taking into account regional and economic considerations. Women are yet to gain equal rights and opportunities to economic and political participation, although the region achieved general success in making the secondary and tertiary education systems far more accessible to both sexes equally. Among the vulnerable groups, those who suffer most live in the least developed and conflict-stricken countries of the region.

Water and Energy

ESCWA works to advance the management of natural resources to promote cooperation between member states. Member countries have designated water and energy as priorities for the environmental sustainability subprogram. The increasing population is severely depleting the limited freshwater resources left in the region. A report published by ESCWA notes that 6 of the 14 member countries depend on external water supplies for over 50% of their own water supply. Of these 6 countries three, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Egypt receive more than 95% of their water from external sources. Gulf countries fair far better in terms of water resources with the highest dependency rate being in Qatar at 3%. Insufficient water supplies adversely affect the populations of these countries as well as their economies. Without proper access to water the population's health suffers and negatively impacts the development of these countries.

The adverse affects of limited water have forced governments to adapt new methods of water production. Many states employ the use of alternative water sources such as desalination or treated water to compensate for the lack of freshwater. These methods do fix the situation however they are costly and time consuming. The dramatic differences between water resources within the region exhibit how integrated policies between countries are still inadequate. The challenge to ESCWA would be developing a policy that creates equal access and distribution to water supplies throughout the region.

While recent hikes in international energy prices have brought a surge of economic boom in most energy exporting countries of the region, other countries continue to face difficulties in mobilizing domestic and foreign direct investment. Countries dependent upon the production of energy need to develop sectors within their economies to prepare for future demands in other energy sectors. ESCWA needs to assist with the development and implementation of these programs to ensure that regional cooperation and coordination facilitate the changes that these nations need to make. As for non energy producing states they need to cooperate more efficiently with their energy producing neighbors in order to meet the needs of their population. In 2009 almost half of the population within the region lived in rural areas without a direct constant connection to energy resources. With increased cooperation these populations could have better access to energy resources.

Political instability and the lack of adequate structural reforms influence international energy prices have brought a surge of economic boom in most energy exporting countries of the region; other countries continue to face difficulties in mobilizing domestic and foreign direct investment. The region is in need of economic and social policies that ensure social justice and equitable distribution of wealth. Good governance is a prerequisite for the success of economic and social reforms. The prevalence of technology in the region, especially information and communication technologies — a powerful enabler of development — remains below the international average. Addressed within the framework of international human rights treaties, taking into account regional economic considerations women are yet to gain equality. Monitoring of the effects of conflict on economic and social development in the region is increasingly becoming important.

The first Millennium Development Goal is the eradication of poverty and hunger. To meet this goal, ESCWA countries must halve the amount of individuals living on less than 1.25 dollars a day from the period between 1990-2015. Currently the region is on track to meet this goal with only 17% of the population living under the extreme poverty line. However this still represents a large amount of the population and has had effects on countries ability to keep citizens at home. Migration, both towards and away from ESCWA countries, is a regional issue that needs to be addressed within the framework of international human rights treaties, taking into account regional economic considerations. Migration away from the region has created a “brain drain” where it becomes difficult for the region to grow a knowledge base in complex sectors greatly decreasing its opportunities for economic growth. Countries must adapt development policies that will diversify their economies to create an environment in which knowledgeable and skilled works wish to stay. Those that migrate into the country due to conflict or other political or social issues do so without employment opportunities therefore are increasing the extreme poverty level.

Conflict

The continuous occurrence of conflict in Western Asia creates severe challenges for ESCWA and its member states. Maintaining the rule of law and security safety are essential factors to the development and rehabilitation of a country. Western Asia faces a severe challenge with communal conflicts within member states and on a larger scale between states with demographic differences within the region. Iraq and Yemen are two countries that have greatly divided societies. In Iraq the division between Sunni and Shiite Muslims was emphasized by the occupation and even grew after the withdrawal. Yemen's internal structure is greatly divided by a separatist movement in the North and a strong al – Qaeda influence. The cases of Iraq and Yemen provide examples of how internal communal tensions can divide a country creating challenges to the economic and political advancement of the state.

Palestine and Lebanon provide examples of external conflicts negatively impacting the development of a country. Palestinian territories remain in a constant state of conflict due to the occupation by Israeli in their territories. Lebanon is also affected by the actions of Israeli military forces. Other external conflicts exist beside those with Israel the invasion of Iraq in 2003 by American forces exhibits that external actors play a pivotal role in the stability of the region. The threat of constant violence both internally and externally has required countries to devote substantial funds to the development of security forces. Much of the funds allocated to security institutions could be spent on the further development of countries through the obtainment of MDG.

Gender

Western Asian nations maintain some of the highest gender imbalances in the world. Women are yet to gain equal rights and opportunities to economic and political participation, although the region achieved general success in making the secondary and tertiary education systems far more accessible to both sexes equally. The region needs to make efforts to protect these advancements and to create new ones. The Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) promotes the advancement of women through the standardization of women's rights in both times of war and peace. All except three member countries, Qatar, Palestine, and Sudan have ratified the CEDAW agreement and made amendments to their gender laws. The adaption of this agreement has made major changes within member countries. It altered Egypt's divorce laws and expanded social security nets and benefits to women. While these are small steps comparatively they show large advancements towards development for the member countries of ESCWA.

The negative status of women in Western Asia severely inhibits the regions opportunity for development. As the third Millennium Development Goal (MDG) the U.N. recognizes the equality of women as a strong indicator of development. Women are often denied access to education or training to advance their employment opportunities depleting the potential labor force of a country. Wages are also drastically lower than male counterparts negatively impacting women's desire to obtain employment, only 22% of women in the ESCWA region are employed. The public sector is also affected by the adverse gender policies. To remain in accordance with the MDG a countries parliament must be 30% female, the closest country

currently is Iraq with 25%. ESCWA countries economic development are hindered by the employment and economic restrictions placed on women.

Discriminatory laws against women facilitate acts of violence against them and limit their protection from conflict. Sexual gender based violence is a huge problem in the region. Many security agencies such as police and military institutions see sexual assault as an acceptable technique to use against women (WOMEN). By acknowledging the use of these techniques and working to eradicate them from security forces countries can increase the freedoms and security of their female populations. Amending laws to increase the freedoms and protection of women will facilitate the development process of ESCWA member countries.

Political Instability

Political instability and the lack of adequate structural reforms influence economic performance in the countries of the West Asia region that straddles Middle East and Asia. The region is in need of economic and social policies that ensure social justice and equitable distribution of wealth. Good governance is a prerequisite for the success of economic and social reforms. Recently the region has experienced multiple political revolts resulting in the formation of new institutions in some states and in others completely new regimes. Egypt is currently under control the control of a temporary government until new elections can be held nations such as Syria and Bahrain have dissolved some institutions to make room for new institutions and individuals within the government. Revolutionary movements are still demanding more they want new social policies that will address equality issues and create a more equal distribution of political and economic freedoms. ESCWA will need to assist nations in the development and implementation of these issues in order to achieve stability in the region.

Technology

The prevalence of technology in the region, especially information and communication technologies, which are powerful enabler of development — remains below the international average. ESCWA has recognized the need for the dissemination of information and communication technologies within the region and has developed a subprogram to deal with this issue directly. Western Asian countries have made great strides in the increased use of technology however they are still below international standards. Between the period of 2005-2008 mobile phone usage increased 190% or about 150 million people, exhibiting the largest advancement of information and communication technology in the region. In the same time period internet users increase 113% however this increase only meant that 40 million people had internet access in the region.

The digital divide between ESCWA countries and the international community has put Western Asia at a competitive disadvantage. The advancement of a country both economically and socially is highly dependent upon its access to current information and means of communication. Through increased acquisition and use of current technologies ESCWA member countries could better meet the economic, environmental, and social needs of their populations. ESCWA countries need to continue the development trends in their information and communication technology sectors in order to create an environment that is acceptable to

new ideas and technologies. Without this member countries will continue to fall behind international standards of development.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

In its ministerial meeting on 19th May 2011, ESCWA adopted resolution 297(XXVI) that established the Arab MDG Monitor for Societal Progress. The Monitor expressed deep concern for the lack of adequate data to assess national trends in the context of monitoring progress towards the realization of all internationally agreed development goals including MDGs and recognized the fundamental importance of national statistical capacity in producing reliable and timely indicators of societal progress. It reaffirmed the importance of national efforts to build statistical capacity in all countries. It called on all member states to enhance coordination between national statistical offices and implement national strategies for statistical development, with a view to improving the coverage and transparency of indicators and methods of reporting on them and disseminating effective methods of monitoring nationally and internationally agreed development goals including especially the MDGs (See AnnexVI I).

There persists a strong need to improve the institutional capacity to produce timely, reliable and comparable statistics for policy and programme formulation and for monitoring the progress made towards the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

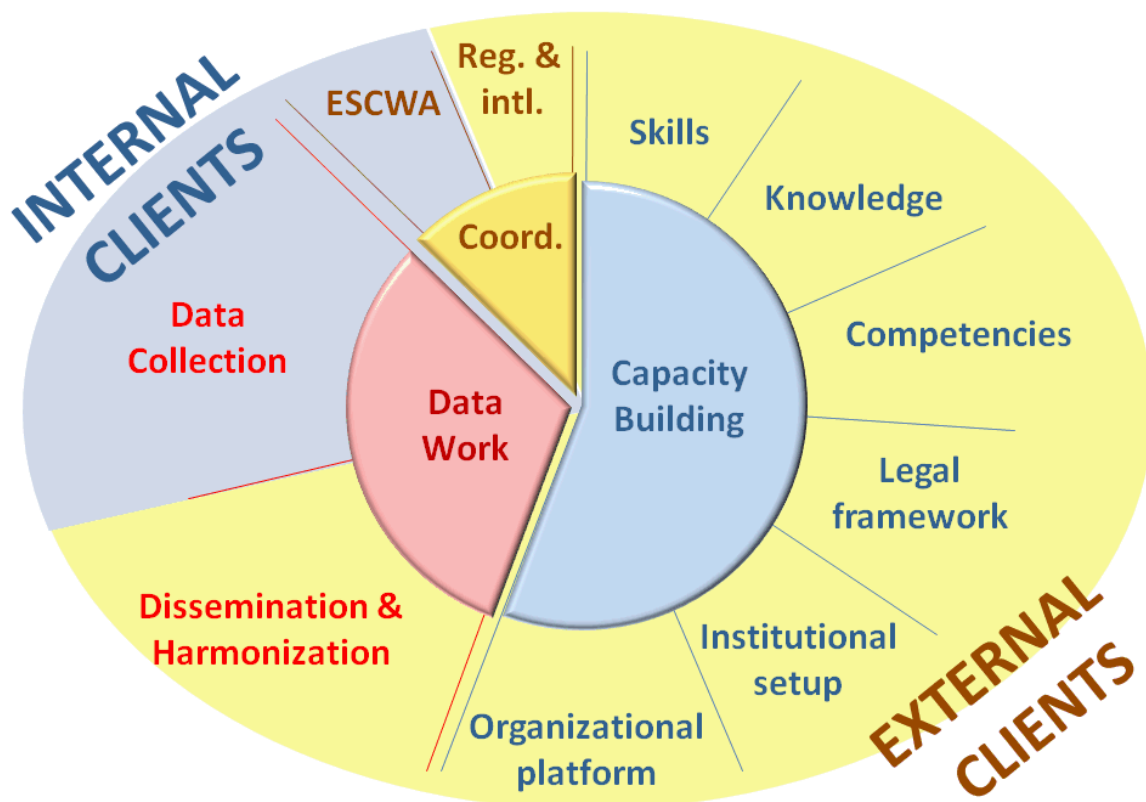
3. THE STATISTICAL SUBPROGRAMME

3.1 Recognizing that the period 2008-2009 would be crucial for the member Governments to prepare for the 2010 round of population and housing censuses, the subprogramme gave special focus to the capacity-building of member countries in implementing the recommendations for the 2010 round as well as their capacity in preparing and undertaking household, labour force and other related surveys to collect vital data needed for the policymakers and government officials, and for the private sector and civil society. The subprogramme also continued to focus due attention on the 1993 System of National Accounts and trade and sectoral statistics, and support the member countries in improving existing gaps in the coverage, transparency and quality of statistics and metadata in compliance with agreed international standards.

3.2 National Statistical Offices of the ESCWA member countries are primary clients of ESCWA's work in the field of statistics, together with other national producers of official statistics. The second important group of clients are other divisions of ESCWA that need statistical support in their activities. Finally, statistical outputs produced by ESCWA may be also useful to other users looking for statistical information on the region. The vision of the Statistics

Subprogramme is captured by the following objectives:

- (i) Capacity development in the field of Statistics covering skills, knowledge, competencies, legal framework, institutional setup and organizational platform
- (ii) Coordination of data collection and dissemination in the ESCWA region involving member states through the ESCWA Statistics Committee in a steering body capacity
- (iii) Coordination of statistics activities of various ESCWA divisions under the responsibility of the Statistics Division



4. PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE OF EVALUATION

In line with a revision of ESCWA's evaluation approach, 5 of the 7 subprogrammes will be evaluated in the 2011 in order to feed in lessons learned to the planning of the next Biennium's Strategic Framework (2014-15). The Statistics Subprogramme was selected as the first entity to be evaluated. The Objective of the consultancy is twofold:

4.1 To develop a robust process of review of ESCWA's programme performance by increasing the objectivity of ESCWA's discretionary self evaluations, and through the standardization of evaluation tools and expertise to develop baselines for recommendations for calibrating programme activities and relevant processes to increase ESCWA's programmatic

delivery to its member states. The evaluations will also review the extent to which ESCWA programmes are in line with latest global trends on thematic areas, through review of the work of ESCWA and the ECOSOC committees, and other regional commissions.

4.2 To conduct evaluation of the ESCWA Statistics Subprogrammes to:

- i. Assess the effectiveness of the statistics subprogramme in achieving its objectives and expected accomplishments outlined in ESCWA's Strategic Framework for 2006-07 and 2008-09.
- ii. Assess the process of planning undertaken to develop the work plan and budget for 2010-11, and the Strategic Framework for 2012-13.
- iii. Assess the efficiency with which the subprogramme utilized the financial and human resources available in achieving these results;
- iv. Gauge the satisfaction of ESCWA's member states on the prioritization of these expected accomplishments as serving their interests and needs;
- v. Identify areas of good practice and lessons learned to feed into the broader work of ESCWA and future programme planning processes;
- vi. Review and assess effectiveness in coordinating, building and managing external partnership with National, LAS, UN and International Development partners and determine to what extent the Statistics Subprogramme is open and accommodating to such collaborations;
- vii. Identify policies, practices and strategies that ESCWA's statistics subprogramme should be implementing that it is currently not undertaking and recommend actions for expanding and improving the effectiveness of the subprogramme to take it to the level of global practice, standard and relevance.

4.3 Scope

ESCWA has planned to evaluate 5 of its Subprogrammes in 2011 and the rest in 2012. First to be evaluated, the scope for the assessment of the Statistics Subprogramme was established to assess its performance to determine achievements, shortfalls, gaps and lessons learned in the Statistics Division's work within the Commission and in its support to member states through the national statistics institutions.

5. METHODOLOGY

The Terms of Reference for this evaluation stipulates in addition to main evaluation report, the development of a methodology for evaluation that could be adapted to evaluate ESCWA Subprogrammes. In fulfillment of this task, the evaluation team developed and submitted a comprehensive methodology system for the evaluation of ESCWA's Subprogrammes. The methodology was tested in conducting this very evaluation of the Statistics Subprogramme. The Inception Report provides an overview of the methodology and the Methodology for the Evaluation of ESCWA programmes describes the details of the process. The methodology encompasses key questions and criteria; a conceptual framework; a scoping mission; identifying key areas of inquiry; a desk review; data gathering and analysis; applying special evaluation tools including the evaluation assessment matrix; and analysis; consultations and consultative stakeholder workshops and focused verification and validation and a final report. The final report will have two distinct products (a.) evaluation of the subprogramme and (b) the evaluation methodology as piloted and tested in this evaluation.

The methodology for conducting the evaluation comprised a scoping mission, desk reviews, data collection and interviews and consultations to be followed by the validation and assessment of the findings and finalization and presentation of the evaluation report. An upward of over 37 staff representing ESCWA and other regional commissions and 7 UN partners were interviewed. Over 98 documents were researched as part of the desk review. Arrangements to interview the UN Statistics Office in New York and a significant segment of the key staff of the 14 national statisticsⁱⁱ offices did not work out limiting assessments and findings pertaining to this important group of external partners and clientele. A very important segment of the methodology was the analysis derived through the application of a special tool, the Evaluation Assessment Matrix to measure the effectiveness and efficiency of the utilization and management of availed resources against the expected outputs targeted.

A Scoping Mission was conducted by the Team Leader in January 2011 to start the dialogue with ESCWA staff through interviews and discussions and have a feel for the organization's work dynamics and an understanding of its outreach programmes of technical assistance serving its member states. The objectives of the scoping mission were to:

- Test the findings derived from the extensive desk review undertaken throughout January 2011-03-15
- Obtain a better understanding of ESCWA Statistical Subprogramme and activities, types of stakeholders involved, as well as the operational environment;
- Assess the availability of evaluative evidence;
- Develop a plan detailing data collection and analysis methods; and

ⁱⁱ UNSD declined to meet with the evaluators and about 50% of the NSOs did not respond to invitations for interviews even when written questionnaires were provided to them.

- Further identify and collect relevant documents and information.
- Engage with ESCWA's Senior Management (Executive Secretary, Deputy Executive Secretary a.i., Director of Administration, Director of PPTCD, and the client of the evaluation, the Director of Statistics Division) to confirm the priority issues to be examined through the evaluation.
- The assessment of effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, sustainability and results remain the overarching criteria for the evaluation. However, thirteen areas of focused inquiry were identified during the interviews and desk review as requiring a more in-depth analysis. This exercise went beyond the objectives established in the evaluation TOR because the evaluation assessed additionally, the work of the Statistics Subprogramme as it relates to quality assurance, client and partnership orientation as well as gender and human rights perspectives.

The thirteen areas identified for focused inquiry under the banner of the programmatic and management areas of the scope of the evaluation include:

5.1 The capacity of the Statistics Division to undertake and lead ESCWA's outreach programme and service in supporting the member states to strengthen their institutional statistics capability to generate, monitor, manage and disseminate vital reliable data and information as well as serve as the hub for coordinating and managing data and information within the Commission (objectives I, ii, iii)

5.2 Meeting emerging demands for technical excellence at regional and national level. How to meet emerging demands in statistical systems that bring the best practices from across the world to the West Asia region and to the countries? How will the demand be resourced in technical capacity and financial availability? ESCWA's technical assistance to the member states is appreciated but there is demand for more specialized training and technology transfer. Members want a strong capacity at the regional level to support their own efforts at technical excellence.

5.3 Continuous engagement of all members. How to ensure ownership and active engagement of all members of the Commission? The Commission meets once every two years. In between the Commissions' Technical Committee and Thematic Technical Committees of the respective Subprogrammes guide the technical and operational work of ESCWA.ⁱⁱⁱ This arrangement and the lack of engagement of especially the richly endowed GCC member countries in providing policy guidelines and extra-budgetary funding, deprive the Commission of much needed guidance from the regional leadership levels. Although the engagement of the membership of the Commission is a two way-street, the issues poses the critical question of how to cultivate and secure greater interest, support, engagement from the Commissions member states especially the GCC and ensure flow of resources?

5.4 An evaluation that helps design the statistical subprogramme better. How to take lessons from the past to design better programmes for the future? The Statistics

ⁱⁱⁱ The frequency of the meetings of the intergovernmental bodies of ESCWA was the subject of a Commission requested evaluation from 2010, which concluded that member countries did not believe that the frequency of the convening of the specialized committees, including the Statistical Committee, was required.

Subprogramme has undergone leadership change in the last year or so and the new head welcomes the evaluation as a means for introducing change and adjustment to the work of the Section. The obvious starting point for this change is the ESCWA database, which is intended to serve as the regional reference hub for the member states and interested clients of information on the region, has not yet been fully populated.

5.5 A regional center for excellence and resource bank on statistical data. How to build a programme that becomes a depository of good practice and data? Consultations are on-going between ESCWA and UN Statistics Division on how to strengthen the regional database.

5.6 A forward looking evaluation The Executive Secretary of ESCWA wants the evaluation to identify practices, policies and strategies that ESCWA should be initiating and implementing that it is not currently undertaking in the statistics subprogramme.

5.7 Avoiding duplication. How every subprogramme can feed into and benefit from a common regional database for core indicators? Some of the Subprogrammes expressed satisfaction with interaction and collaboration with the Statistics Subprogramme but as everywhere there exists some duplication persists especially in respective Subprogrammes maintaining their own database instead of everyone utilizing the common regional database.

5.8 Result orientation, and ultimately measuring the impact of ESCWA's work.^{iv} How can the programme be monitored periodically for results? Currently ESCWA programmes do not have a system that links budgets to activities and outputs to provide one single overview facilitating the gauging of implementation rates to available resources and expected outputs and results.

5.9 Capacity to deliver on critical needs in the area of statistics. Does the Statistical Subprogramme have the capacity to fulfill their work plan and deliver on the critical needs of skill up-gradation of the national statistical office in areas such as administrative data, surveys and gathering internationally comparable information on commitments such as MDGs?

5.10 Assessment of the quality and modalities of technical assistance delivery. Are the approaches appropriate and does the programme of high quality? The Technical Cooperation Section appears to be conducting good coordination in liaising between the technical divisions and the national statistics offices but a more in-depth look at the quality and modality of delivering technical assistance is necessary.

5.11 ESCWA's Niche is a central question pursued in the interviews so far conducted. The Commission's niche as seen by several interviewees lay in extending technical assistance to its member states. In their view it is what has won it a good name and image. However, a strong view is also expressed that within this technical assistance context the Commission's future relevance and demand for its services will depend in its ability to strengthen its expertise in the Economic Pillars rather than its Social Sector Pillars where many institutions in the region have a comparative advantage. This was be an important area of inquiry in the evaluation.

^{iv} While not the subject of this evaluation, ESCWA must consider this evaluation approach as an interim measure to the direction issued by the Executive Secretary during the Evaluation Teams' meeting with her in February 2011, for ESCWA to consider how to best evaluate the impact of ESCWA's work.

5.13 Client Orientation

The Statistics Subprogramme has a dual function towards two distinct groups of clients, that have practically non overlapping demands. The first is the inter-governmental constituency represented by the NSOs and other producers of statistics, as well as users of statistics among national and regional policy and decision-makers. The second group of clients is the users of data for analysis, policy development and technical cooperation within ESCWA itself and partly within the UN System. How will ESCWA meet the demands of clients to facilitate the exchange of expertise and experience, help official statistics services, and defend their interest in the international statistics scene?

5.14 Partnership Orientation

Because of its convening power and level of trust it enjoys amongst its membership, ESCWA is in the position to lead the statistical work in the region by optimizing capacity development through partnership. This falls in line with the important mandate of Regional Commissions as the regional arm of UNSD. This task could be achieved by mobilizing the necessary expertise from a pool of experts and logistics resources coming from various organizations. A common language, culture and traditions should enhance cooperation between ESCWA and partners within the region. How could partnership orientation be used to further the improvement of the Statistics Subprogramme?

5.15 Gender

Gender statistics addresses issues of groups of special interest that also includes youth and elderly population, etc. The interest in gender statistics in the ESCWA and Arab region is very high, and the dedication of experts working in this area may exceed their peers in other regions. They consider statistical issues, as well as cultural aspects having a relationship to gender statistics and gender policies. At the same time, the availability of gender data varies across the region. Therefore, it occupies a high priority within ESCWA's Statistics Subprogramme. How can the Statistics Subprogram improve the quality of gender statistics throughout the region?

5.16 Human Rights

Human rights are not directly addressed by activities undertaken under the Statistics Subprogramme. However, ESCWA follows the change of paradigm in official statistics that moves from a purely technical view towards following the social and economic development in its complexity. The well being of population is part of this paradigm, and the human rights are an important component of well being and how it could receive greater priority in ESCWA's statistics work.

6. EVALUATION GUIDELINES AND CRITERIA

At the core of the methodology are the evaluation criteria and associated questions. These define the scope of what ESCWA want to know and by what factors ESCWA will be judged against. The evaluation is informed and guided by the UNEG, ESCWA Evaluation policy and the newly developed methodology for the evaluation of ESCWA Subprogrammes and the OECD/DAC Evaluation Criteria. Applying the OECD/DAC criteria across the board to the ESCWA Evaluation, the Statistics Subprogramme fared generally well:

- **Relevance** –The planned interventions have been relevant to achieving the regional and national statistical programme objectives and ESCWA has to a certain extent applied the right strategy and a mix of appropriate modalities within the specific political, economic and social context of the region. The design of the interventions and resources allocations has been generally realistic. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement and introduction of new innovative strategies adapted to the special needs of the region.
- **Effectiveness** – To what extent has the statistical subprogramme accomplished its intended objectives and planned results. The strength of the programme lies in its outreach programme to member states and technical expertise contributing to the capacity development of the former. Its weaknesses are the mismatch between staff time use for building member state statistics capacity and producing publications. The unexpected result may be a weaker ESCWA technical support to the member states. The Statistics Subprogramme needs to pose and consider if it wishes to continue in the same direction or adjust its main tenets during the preparations of the 2014-15 Strategic Framework (September-December 2011) to be reviewed by ESCWA's Commission in May 2012.
- **Efficiency** – The Statistics Division maximized the use of its staff time well by assigning a larger ratio of about 5:1 of its work load to its staff compared to the use of the services of consultants. However, by dedicating its staff time more to participating in regular meetings and seminars and producing recurrent publications; ESCWA deprived the NSOs of much needed direct technical assistance to strengthen their statistics capacity. It is too early to determine the change the new leadership has brought to bear on the efficiency of the division although initial indications point towards improvement.
- **Sustainability** – Many of the NSOs have been established over a long period of time operating at their own various levels of efficiency. It is too early to determine if the technical expertise and benefits transferred to them by the Statistics Subprogramme interventions have been owned by these national stakeholders and embedded fully in their systems for sustainability by the time the programmes reach the exit stage. Although sustainability is the outcome of committed proactive partnership by all sides in the equation, ESCWA has the added responsibility of leading, monitoring and translating joint commitments into sustained implementation and management of established capacities and programmes.

7. ANALYSIS

7.1 The capacity of the Statistics Division

An over-arching aim of the evaluation is determining the capacity of the Statistics Division to undertake and lead ESCWA's outreach programme and service in supporting the member states to strengthen their institutional statistics capability to generate, monitor, manage and disseminate vital reliable data and information as well as serve as the hub for coordinating and managing data and information within the Commission (objectives I, ii, iii and vii). This was undertaken through applying the evaluation assessment matrix (see Annex VII). One major expected output respectively for 2006-2007 and 2008-2009 bienniums were assessed:

(a) 2006-2007: Increased output of ESCWA member states to produce macroeconomic international trade and sectoral statistics

The activities planned to achieve this expected output devoting staff time to participating in meetings conducting and facilitating workshops and preparing various reports. The share of staff time on preparing recurrent publications, monitoring programmes and covering routine working group and specialized committee meetings far outstripped time given to engaging with and building national statistics capacity. The targets for producing the recurrent publications were met with 9 major reports issued in 2006-2007. The overall expected output was partially met. No major shortfall in funding was reported. The existing Statistics Division staff complemented by consultants managed to undertake the major tasks planned with mixed results. The member states met the expected ESCWA planned goals partially. A better distribution and balance of work to staff and a greater investment of their time and energy to direct support to NSOs will contribute towards greater national capacity development for statistics at the country levels.

The issue of the need for a re-organization and more efficient use of staff more in direct technical support to countries becomes glaringly clear. The ratio between the uses of regular staff to consultants was about 4:1.^v This is viewed as a reflection of maximizing staff use but not necessarily towards meeting ESCWA's most important mandate—extending technical service to its member states. From the information available it is not possible to determine and conclude on impact of the expected output at the country level. Besides, impact analysis/evaluation is still an emerging practice within the UN and is beyond the current scope of ESCWA's evaluations approach.

(b) 2008-2009: Enhanced capacity of member countries to produce and disseminate timely, accurate and comparable socio-economic statistics and indicators to be used national and international decision-makers and civil society for evidence-based policy-making.

^v Through conversations with PPTCD, it was indicatively understood that this is a fairly common rate across ESCWA's subprogrammes, and not unique to Statistics Division.

Six regular sessions and meetings were organized and 13 regular recurrent publications and 26 non-recurrent publications were produced in the Biennium. Only 5 of the large number of the recurrent publications were produced at the country level. Here again staff time complemented by consultants was consumed entirely on producing publications and meetings and none on the training and capacity development of NSOs. The issue of a better organization and use of staff more in direct technical support to countries became glaringly clear. The ratio between the uses of regular staff to consultants was about 5:1.^{vi} This is viewed as a reflection of maximizing staff time use but not necessarily towards meeting ESCWA's most important mandate—extending technical service to its member states. From the information available it is not possible to determine and conclude the impact of the expected output at the country level. Besides impact analysis/evaluation is still an emerging practice within the UN.

7.2 Meeting emerging demands for technical excellence at regional and national level.

The technical capacity of the Statistics Division (objective iv) was examined against the emerging demands in statistical systems that bring the best practices from across the world to the West Asia region and institutionally to the member states and how these demands are being resourced, managed and met.

The Statistics Subprogramme has strived to meet these demands through:

- the production of technical material;
- development and refinement of Arabic terminology in the field of statistics;
- maintenance and updating of ESCWA home page on statistics and maintenance and updating of ESCWA Statistical Information System;
- Training courses, seminars and workshops;
- Seminars on selected statistical issues for heads of national statistical offices in the ESCWA region;
- United Nations Development Group-ESCWA joint regional training workshop on DevInfo; and United Nations Statistics Division-ESCWA joint regional training workshops on the implementation of the Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 2;
- Field projects: development of national gender statistics in Iraq, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Group; strengthening the development of international merchandise trade statistics and the compilation of e-commerce; and
- Strengthening the use of statistical information in support of progress towards internationally agreed development goals in the ESCWA region.

Interviews of the National Statistics Offices indicate that ESCWA's technical assistance to the member states is appreciated but there is a growing demand for more specialized training and technology transfer. Members States want a stronger capacity at the regional level to support their own efforts at achieving technical excellence nationally. This view is shared within ESCWA

^{vi} As per above citation.

itself and best summed up by one staff member stating, “if ESCWA wants member states to use the database as regional reference hub for information the Statistics Division should populate and keep it current and customize it to the needs of the members”. Many staff subscribed to the need for improved technical capacity. At the level of the regional commissions, a senior staff captured the mood aptly by noting that, “ESCWA could leverage its convening powers to create centers of statistical excellence within the region”.

Overall there persists a strong need to improve the Statistics division’s technical institutional capacity to produce timely, reliable and comparable statistics for policy and programme formulation and for monitoring the progress made towards the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. This and a robust outreach programme will substantively support and enable member states to strengthen the NSOs to achieve national excellence.

The financing of these improvements was met by the annual budget. However, extra-budgetary resources of \$736,000 was mobilized to strengthen the capacity of statisticians for evidence-based policymaking in the region in the priority areas identified by the Statistical Committee, and provide for the networks for statisticians to exchange information and experience in statistical work and methods which would lead to enhancement of statistical capacity in the region. The projected decrease in extra budgetary resources was attributed to the completion of the project on International Comparison Programme in 2008-2009. Funding for the extended new phase did not kick in timely.

7.3 Continuous engagement of all members.

The evaluation looked at the strategic high level organization and management of ESCWA to determine the level of engagement and ownership of all members of the Commission. The Commission meets once every two years. In between the Commissions’ Technical Committee and the seven Specialized Technical Committees Subprogramme guide the technical and operational work of ESCWA. This arrangement and the lack of engagement of especially the richly endowed GCC member countries deprive the Commission of much needed guidance from the regional leadership levels. This poses the critical question of how to cultivate and secure greater interest, support, and engagement from the Commission’s member states especially the GCC and flow of resources (objective iv, vi). Ensuring ownership and active engagement of all members of the Commission is crucial to the success of ESCWA in fulfilling its mandate towards its members.

The Commission has seven specialized subsidiary intergovernmental committees^{vii}, six of them meet biennially and one meets annually. At its twenty-fourth session, the Commission decided

^{vii} i. Committee on Energy (sub-programme 1),
ii. Water Resources (sub-programme 1)
iii. Social Development (sub-programme 2),
iv. Transport (sub-programme 3),
v. Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region (sub-programme 3),
vi. Statistical Committee (sub-programme 5)
vii. Women (sub-programme 6).

to establish a Technical Committee with the aim of enhancing interaction and close consultation between the members of the Commission and its secretariat on substantive development issues. The sessions of the Technical Committee is held every six months.

The Statistical Committee significantly contributed to the standardization of concepts, definitions and methodologies adopted by various statistical organizations of the ESCWA region. This is clearly noticeable in the collection of timely, regionally comparable and quality statistics in economic and social areas, especially, the implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA), and gender statistics. The Committee is instrumental in identifying priority areas for statistical activities in the region as well as coordinating relevant programs among countries of the region as well as between ESCWA and other regions of the world, within the context of international framework. Its regular meetings created momentum for exchanging experiences and enhanced the smooth flow of statistical information, which had clear implications on the coverage, quality and timeliness of ESCWA Statistical publications.

The Committee consists of the heads of Central Statistics Offices, or their representatives, in the ESCWA member States. The Committee elects a Chairperson, two Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur from among the representatives of the members of the Committee; they are elected at each session and serve for a two years period; these representatives comprise the Bureau of the Committee.

The statistics subprogramme pursues its objectives in accordance with the United Nations Principles Governing International Statistical Activities and will implement its work in partnership with the Statistics Division in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, other regional commissions, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, and such regional organizations as the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization, the Gulf Organization for Industrial Consulting, GCC and LAS, with a view to harmonizing and coordinating statistics in the region in accordance with international standards and recommendations.

An interview with a senior ESCWA's staff produced multiple suggestions on how to approach the lack of active engagement between members and the the commission. The staff went on to note that only four members are proactive within the commission. Lebanon has created an Advisory Committee of Ambassadors that meets twice a year to share information between member states. Saudi Arabia and Bahrain on the other hand are two of the highest recipients of technical assistance but GCC countries are some of the least involved within the commission. Palestine has been reaching out to other members for greater engagement and collaboration amongst NSO's. ESCWA must use the needs of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain to their advantage in order to increase the involvement of these countries in the program. The commission must secure the interest, support, engagement, and flow of resources of these countries. ESCWA is a think tank and needs to improve its outreach and relevance through consulting with institutions on the ground. The interview noted that the most effective way to communicate y with ESCWA members at the ministerial level is through television as according to the source, "they view TV more then they eat."

ESCWA and the Statistical Subprogramme have facilitated several meetings and the creation of multiple committees and taskforces in order to increase engagement and improve the experience of member countries^{viii}. The evaluation was not able to determine the usefulness and dynamics of these myriad of bodies and whether they are kept current through a system of rigorous monitoring guiding their phasing out and adjustments to evolving situations. However, the evaluation can offer two views. As platforms for the exchanging of views, monitoring progress and deciding on priorities the committees serve a purpose. The evaluation has already observed the lopsided allocation of staff time to the routine servicing of these bodies to the detriment of strengthening NSO capacities.

7.4 An Evaluation that helps design the Statistical Subprogramme better.

The evaluation grappled with the important question of how ESCWA could take lessons from the past to design better programmes for the future. The current Director of Statistics Subprogramme arrived to the post in early 2009, and welcomes the evaluation as a means for introducing change and adjustment to the work of the Division. The ESCWA database, which is intended to serve as the regional reference hub for the member states and interested clients of information on the region, has not yet been fully populated (objective v). Prior to the issuance of the internal memorandum for the streamlining of statistical information systems in ESCWA, the responsibility for populating data in the system (managed by ICTD) was with the subprogramme responsible for the particular thematic area (eg youth was the purview of the Social Development Division).

The results of the interview portion of the evaluation revealed multiple members of ESCWA and coordinating institutions recognize the need for an evaluation to review current practices and to improve upon them. The Director of the Statistics Division envisions it as a one-stop shopping hub for data and information for ESCWA and its members. To do this ESCWA must develop a relationship of trust with its member countries. The previous lack of leadership in the Statistics Division created an unstable environment from poor coordination. A number of ESCWA staff interviewed expressed confidence in the statistics new leadership as one interested in bringing change to the division and the region through dedication to the UN values and to international development.

^{viii} i. 7th session of the Statistical Committee (7-9 November 2006)
ii. Regional Working Group of ESCWA Statistical Committee (3 September 2007)
iii. Second meeting of the statistical committee bureau (8-11 May 2006)
iv. 8th session of the Statistical Committee (14-16 October 2008)
v. Meeting of the Bureau of the Statistical Committee (10 February 2009)
vi. 1993 System of National Accounts, 12-14 May 2009
vii. 1st Meeting of the Taskforce on Gender Statistics in the Arab Countries, 15-16 Oct 2009
viii. Working group of heads of national statistical offices in the ESCWA region, 10 Feb 2009
ix. Arab IAEGM on Gender Statistics, 12-14 Oct 2009
x. Taskforce meeting on 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses, 23-24 Mar 2009
(xi) Taskforce meeting on 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses, 1-3 Dec 2009

The ESCWA Statistical Information System (ESIS) represented by the Database details of which is presented in Annex II is intended to serve as a regional reference hub for member states and clients interested in information on the region. However it is widely recognized that the database poses a challenge to the improvement of ESCWA's statistics capacity. The Database's three dimensional components limit its use where social statistics data require more than three dimensions to meet their needs whether from the data administrators or users side. In addition, the website displays a mirror view of the database where it displays all indicators, regardless of the availability or none of data which is confusing for users.

The database does not allow the duplicate of values where in some sectors, data is needed from national and international sources for comparison purposes. From a different perspective, data is sometimes not published in a time series and therefore other sources of data fill in the gap; which is statistically incorrect, limiting for data comparison and confusing for users. At the end, the lack of different sources of information is discouraging for users and drives them towards more flexible databases.

Besides its technical limitations one of the biggest debates concerning the database is where it is located. Currently the database is housed and managed by ICTD with unclear guidelines dividing the responsibility between ICTD and the Statistics Division. Opposing views in-house prefer to see the database not be housed by ICTD but by the IT unit of the Administration Division with separate management from the Statistics Division. If implemented fully, the Executive Secretary Memorandum on Streamlining of Information Management within ESCWA should be able to resolve this dilemma and bring about some positive change.

The content of the database is another dilemma that the Statistics Division must address. Currently the database is not fully populated or customized to meet the needs of member states. The Statistics Division must update its content and customize it to meet the needs of member states in order for the database to become a regional information hub.

ESCWA is currently attempting to work with the UN Statistics Division in New York to reach an agreement allowing for the Beirut database to be linked with NY to strengthen it as well as transform it into a specialized information hub for the region. This would also allow the Director of the Statistics Division to have the overall responsibility for data management in the ESCWA region. Collaboration between the two offices could create a database that could serve all LAS and some ECA member countries that share a common socio-economic, cultural and heritage platform with ESCWA's member countries. This could lead to an even further continuation of the database by linking LAS and ECA databases to that of ESCWA.

7.5 A regional center for excellence and resource bank on statistical data.

Consultations are on-going between ESCWA and UN Statistics Division on how to strengthen the regional database (objective iv) to make it a programme that becomes a depository of good practice and data (as above). The Statistical Division aims to standardize national statistics to make them more comparable at regional and international levels, taking into consideration

relevant recommendations of the Statistical Commission of the United Nations and other relevant bodies. Part of the evaluation aims to explore how ESCWA could improve its Statistical subprogramme to become a center for excellence as well as a regional information hub. Currently the database is not fully populated and is not customized to the needs of member states. Meeting these two criteria would create a database that could be used as a resource bank for the entire region.

Creating a strong relationship between ESCWA's statistical division and National Statistics Offices (NSOs) would produce a more inclusive and well populated database. Often, according to a senior ESCWA staff, country level data is not respected because it has not been subjected to the rigorous external analysis that ESCWA's data is required to undergo. However, NSOs want to participate as equal partners with the Statistics Division on technical initiatives as well as strategy development of future programmes. A Statistics Division staff suggested that the Statistical Technical Committee should coordinate between ESCWA and member states to move towards objective target setting, relevance and fund raising. The Director of one NSO suggested that more efforts need to be exerted to harmonize relations between countries through the use of statistics regimes and compatible tools. Another NSO Director observed that linking countries together through an effective and substantive database would increase interaction between member countries.

There is a strong prevailing view especially amongst the NSOs for the creation of a center of excellence as a regional resource bank of statistical data designed and built around the strengthened ESCWA database incorporating more expertise and diversified contents or based in one of the leading NSOs with cutting edge advantage in special technology, expertise and knowledge. The Statistics Division should be developing a database of Statistical experts within the region to exchange experiences and best practices so they can be incorporated throughout the region. Examined more closely, the contents within the database are lacking adequate diversity in the sectors they cover. Statistical data within database focuses on poverty, demography, unemployment, and gender statistics but does not according to one NSO, incorporate the household surveys conducted by them such OPT's "less-sexy work on immigration. It would also benefit the database to focus on administrative data, MDGs and National Accounts. The quality and credibility of data contained within the database needs to meet the standards and needs of the member countries by establishing networks with Arab Statistics Research Centers with ESCWA leading these improvements.

7.6 A Forward Looking Evaluation

The Executive Secretary of ESCWA wants the evaluation to identify practices, policies and strategies that ESCWA should be initiating and implementing that it is not currently undertaking in the statistics subprogramme (objective viii). The evaluation exercise approached this profound insight from the angle of understanding better the vision of the Statistics Division as a one-stop shopping hub for data and information for ESCWA and its members.

Reviewing interview responses from multiple individuals the evaluation exhibits that the current methods in which services are delivered are inefficient. The Statistics Division is set up on issues and themes but there is not one division that is responsible for monitoring request for data from other divisions. The Statistics Division must collaborate with other divisions in order

to address the multiple calls for services. At the same time the Statistics Division must have the authority to lead this exercise. Since the ES Memorandum on Streamlining Information Management in ESCWA is still to be implemented, it was not possible for the evaluation to determine its benefits and limitations. An interview with one NSO Director revealed that ESCWA delivers its services based on demand but supply driven services would be more effective. The Director suggests that to accomplish this ESCWA must determine the needs of its members before attempting to meet their demand for services.

The Statistics Division must collaborate more fully with member states and other regional institutions to enhance its standing as a regional information hub. A senior staff of the commission noted In that ESCWA must improve its outreach through consulting with agencies on the ground. The Director of an NSO agrees advocating for the inclusion and involvement of National Statistics Offices not only at the technical level but also in strategy development for future programs. Along with more direct collaboration with member states the Statistics Division must also create relationships with regional organizations such as Arab Statistics Research Centers and the Arab Statistics Commission. These adjustments pose challenges that ESCWA must address in order for these changes to be implemented. Many member states work with other commission such as Sudan, which is a member of both the ECA and ESCWA. Countries that belong to both of these institutions must gather data internally but apply it differently for publication for each commission. ESCWA must work with other institutions to create interchangeable methodologies of verifying and adjusting data to promote the use of each commission and decrease discrepancies.

A forward looking evaluation that identifies current practices that are not being implemented must include the lack of adequacy in the database and shortfall in adapting the database to provide a reliable reference depository for specialized data and information for the region. ESCWA must determine the most effective location for the database between the ICTD or within the Statistics Division. A view was expressed that the database should be housed the Administrations Divisions IT department for technical reasons but managed by the Statistical Division. The contents of the database must be addressed as well; currently it is not fully populated or customized to meet the needs of member states. Linking the Beirut database to New York would strengthen it to serve as a specialized information hub for the region.

The appropriate location of the database and its mangemnt cannot be divorced from the capacity of the Statistics Division's staff. It may therefore need to look critically at its staffing profile and capacity In light of the evaluation's findings on the database, on the use of its staff time and the recommended shift to new priority areas. However, given the Commission's zero growth budget policy, and based on interviews of senior staff, the division's adjustment in staffing might have to be conducted within the parameters of a better matching and re-assignments of existing staffing The options available to the division are to determine if discrepancies exist in the division between staff qualifications, aptitude and capacity and their assignments and proceed to undertake a desk audit to support the analysis. The exercise may also benefit from a comparison with the manpower of similar entities in the other commissions.

7.7 Avoiding Duplication.

Assured the necessary resources, the Statistics Division has the strategic potential to coordinate and serve as the hub of generating and disseminating data and information to all the other six subprogrammes of ESCWA (objective i). The evaluation examined how every subprogramme feeds into and benefits from a common regional database for core indicators. Some of the subprogrammes expressed satisfaction with interaction and collaboration with the Statistics Subprogramme but as everywhere there exists some duplication. This is mainly due to respective Subprogrammes maintaining their own databases instead of everyone utilizing the common regional database. The interview process as well as ESCWA documents reveals that the streamlining of the subprogramme database would benefit the entire ESCWA programme.

The role of the Statistics Division in relation to the database remains unclear as long as the database lies in a separate division. As discussed earlier, the central location of the database and its efficient management by the Statistics Division will provide a space in which other subprogrammes can merge their respective individual databases to create one common regional database. ESCWA addressed this problem through Executive Secretary Bader Omar Al-Dafa issued a circular (see AnnexVII) dated April 2010 addressing the issue. The memo calls for multiple adjustments to be made within ESCWA in order to ensure that the processes of the statistical information system are streamlined to ensure that the collection, processing, and dissemination of information are coherent and easily accessible to internal and external users. The implementation of the terms of the memo poses no major hurdle to fulfill. The challenge lies in implementing the circular fully in its content and spirit through multiple steps to “promote cross-fertilization amongst divisions, fostering better coordination and a horizontal work approach.”

7.8 Result Orientation.

While periodic evaluation of the Statistics Subprogramme is important and now forms part of ESCWA’s evaluation policy, continuous monitoring of the programme activities is a pre-requisite for the Commission towards a results-based approach in programming. Currently ESCWA programmes do not have a system that links budgets to activities and outputs to provide one single overview facilitating the gauging of implementation rates to available resources and expected outputs and results (objective i). The evaluation methodology developed by the evaluation team includes an important system to meet this need for continuous monitoring, in addition to the regular mandatory process of reporting on implementation of planned programmatic activities through IMDIS.

7.9 Capacity to deliver on critical needs in the area of statistics.

An evaluation inquiry zeroed in on determining the Statistical Subprogramme’s capacity to fulfill its work plan and deliver on the critical needs of skill up-gradation of the national

statistical offices in areas such as administrative data, surveys and gathering internationally comparable information on commitments such as MDGs (objectives i). Determining if the Statistical Subprogramme has the capacity to fulfill its work plan and deliver on the critical needs of skill-up gradation of the national statistical offices is discussed thoroughly in the assessment matrix(see AnnexVII) in the context of the use of its staff time, including the use of consultants.

The 2006-2007 expected output that evaluators examined was ESCWA's ability to enhance the capacity of member countries to produce and disseminate timely, accurate and comparable socio-economic statistics and indicators to be used by national and international decision-makers and civil society for evidence based policy making. The second criterion is to increase the number of member countries committing to implement the United Nations Statistical Commission's Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics Performance Measures. Under these two umbrellas expected outputs a set of 8 goals were established as carried in the Evaluation Assessment Matrix (see Annex VII) for the NSOs to meet. It was not possible to assess how the NSOs performed against the goals as no record of implementation was available to the evaluators.

7.10 Assessment of the Quality and Modalities of Technical Assistance Delivery.

Gross meeting of goals alone without quality assurances is incomplete achievement. There is an added challenge in coordinating and monitoring compliance to programme standards and norms across 14 member states. It is therefore only rational that the evaluation looked at approaches and strategies that ESCWA's Statistics Subprogramme employed to determine if these resulted in high performance and high quality of the services they provide to their clients in at the country level. The Technical Cooperation Section appears to be conducting good coordination in liaising between the technical divisions and the national statistics offices but a more in-depth look at the quality and modality of delivering technical assistance is necessary. This should translate into a well coordinated delivery of technical assistance to the field by the Technical Cooperation Section with the technical divisions ensuring compliance with standards and norms for quality assurances. From the feed-back received from interviewing NSOs indicate on the one hand a general appreciation for the quality of services received from the Statistics Subprogramme and on the other an urge to diversify, specialize and make these services more participatory, relevant and useful.

7.11 ESCWA's Niche

Determining ECWA's niche in general and specifically in the area of statistics is a central question pursued in the interviews conducted with stakeholders. The Commission's niche as seen by several interviewees lay in extending technical assistance and knowledge to its member states. In their view it is what has won it a good name and image. However, a strong view is also expressed that within this technical assistance context the Commission's future relevance and demand for its services will depend in its ability to strengthen its expertise in the Economic

Pillars rather than its Social Sector Pillars where many institutions in the region have a comparative advantage. This has been an important area of inquiry in the evaluation.

Representatives of other Commission consider the ESCWA's smaller manageable operational size (14 members) as a comparative advantage in getting decisions made more speedily by its members and in reaching consensus on urgent issues. Several partners observed positively the versatility and the ability of ESCWA to speak with ease and unified voice on behalf of its members at inter-commission meetings. The evaluation could not pursue and verify with competent authorities within ESCWA the proposed shift to establish strength in the Economic Pillar. There is potential for the Statistics Division to offer a unique demand for specialized region-specific data and information if it can establish a strong and reliable regional database.

The evaluation put across in all its interviews, questions to determine, as requested by the ES policies, strategies and practices that t ESCWA in general and the Statistics Subprogramme in particular are not undertaking which they should do. Amongst a handful of visionary senior experienced staff one Regional Commission staff spoke passionately and profoundly of multiple ways in which ESCWA could improve upon its position within the region. He argued that with discipline and focus ESCWA could "strengthen and leverage its capacity to benefit the region through work in the transportation, water and trade sectors." He went on to state that ESCWA's broad reach also allows it to be an initiator of ideas and development paradigms in the regions socio-economic sector and recommended that the Commission's wide scope outreach should be leveraged to create centers of excellence for specialized statistics in the region. ESCWA's strong ICT is currently not addressing trans-boundary issues that similar commissions are addressing. This is a lost opportunity in which ESCWA could tap into the regions development potential and paradigms for regional integration. The evaluation considered it appropriate that that ESCWA management should not be denied this unique and insightful perspective and vision to reflect over.

7.12 Client Orientation

The Statistics Subprogramme has a dual function towards two distinct groups of clients, that have practically non overlapping demands. The first is the inter-governmental constituency represented by the NSOs and other producers of statistics, as well as users of statistics among national and regional policy and decision-makers. The second group of clients is the users of data for analysis, policy development and technical cooperation within ESCWA itself and partly within the UN System. There are also specific situations when clients become partners by availing their facilities like training and conference centres to other member states for convening ESCWA sponsored events.

After its abolition at the beginning of the century the Statistics Division was restored in January 2008 at the urging of the member states.^{ix} With a zero-growth budget it will take time to be fully re-constituted and flourish. Historically, the clear expectations of the clients is to see ESCWA (Statistics Division) as a house of expertise that provides expertise in selected areas, facilitates exchange of expertise and experience between member countries, and helps official statistics services in member countries to get their leading position within the institutional setup, legislative framework. They also expect ESCWA to defend their interests in the international statistical scene (within the region and globally). To satisfy this demand, the Division is providing technical assistance to member countries, organizing workshops and expert group meeting in areas of their interest, and representing the regional view in the international fora.

In addition it facilitates regional preparations for the annual sessions of the UN Statistical Commission, where the ESCWA countries got a much stronger voice and their views reflected in final conclusions. ESCWA also initiated a dialogue with partners related to variations in data between national and international sources, and as an example a recent workshop for GCC countries was convened jointly with UNDP on statistics on human development. Within the Commission, the abolition led to the decentralization of activities with a proliferation of data generation and management resulting in inconsistencies and lower quality of data. The network of Statistics Focal Points was created in June 2010 to address this issue but the impact of this is yet to be seen.

7.13 Partnership Orientation

Because of its convening power and level of trust it enjoys amongst its membership, ESCWA is in the position to lead the statistical work in the region by optimizing capacity development through partnership. This could be achieved by mobilizing the necessary expertise from a pool of experts and logistics resources coming from various organizations. A common language, culture and traditions should enhance cooperation between ESCWA and partners within the region.

The global partners, like DESA/UNSD (UN Statistics Division), WTO (World Trade Organizations), IMF, World Bank, ILO, etc. can provide top level experts in specific areas to either fill the gaps or complement the capacity of ESCWA's experts. This will stabilize relations with experts from global organizations to focus on those who are willing to work regularly in the region and follow in-depth the development in the region within their areas of expertise.

^{ix} ESCWA 2008-2009 Biennium Budget re-establishing the Statistics Division as of January 2008

The regional partners could also complement the expertise, but mainly assist use in logistics issues and enlarging ESCWA's convening power. The ECA Regional Office for Africa, League of Arab States, Arab Institute for Training and Statistics Research. Organization of Islamic Conference help to reach to all Arab countries, and at the same time complement the limited resources that ESCWA has for organizing statistical activities. In addition partnership with the regional offices of global organizations like UNFPA, UNDP, ILO and WHO will add to ESCWA's inter-agency breadth in statistics.

Taking initiatives in new region-specific statistics projects eg on human rights around which a wider partnership could be built based on mutual comparative advantages could place the Statistics Subprogramme in the technical and technological lead and create a demand for its services.

7.14 Gender

Gender statistics addresses issues of groups of special interest that also includes youth and elderly population, etc. The interest in gender statistics in the ESCWA and Arab region is very high, and the dedication of experts working in this area may exceed their peers in other regions. They consider statistical issues, as well as cultural aspects having a relationship to gender statistics and gender policies. Therefore, it occupies a high priority within ESCWA's Statistics Subprogramme represented by a number of publications^x

With the assistance of the Task Force on Gender Statistics, the secretariat has developed an Arabic-English glossary on gender statistical terms to harmonize gender-related terms. The first of its kind, the glossary will be translated into other languages (French, Russian and Spanish) in collaboration with the language services of the other United Nations regional commissions. From the linguistic view point the Glossary is better than the official translation of UN documents. Therefore the UN Statistical Commission recommended at its 2011 session that the Department of General Assembly and Conference Services uses the ESCWA's glossary when translating documents and publications on gender statistics into Arabic.^{xi}

The ESCWA Secretariat has provided member countries with technical material in support of their activities in the area of gender statistics. In 2009, it published a booklet entitled Gender in the Millennium Development Goals: Information Guide for Arab Millennium Development Goal

^x i. Glossary on Gender
ii. Arab Gender Information
iii. Gender in the MDGs

^{xi} Report of the 42nd session of the UN Statistical Commission E/2011/24; E/CN.3/2011/37, Recommendation 42/102 (h); (h) Requested the United Nations Statistics Division to consult with the United Nations translation services to provide appropriate translations of the term "gender", taking into account the work that has been carried out by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in this regard

Reports in both Arabic and English, which was launched at a press briefing by the Executive Secretary of ESCWA.

ESCWA developed the first Arab gender statistics database, entitled Arab GenInfo_09, which was launched at the second Inter-agency and Expert Group Meeting (IAEGM) on Gender Statistics in the Arab Region (Beirut, 12-14 October 2009). This is in line with the resolution adopted by the Commission at its twenty-sixth session (ESCWA resolution 297 (XXVI) concerning the Arab MDG monitor for societal progress), which “Requests the secretariat to develop an MDG monitor for societal progress towards the realization of MDGs, including gender equality and youth empowerment”.

ESCWA presented an initial draft of its manual on the definitions, terms and methodologies used in gender statistics to the second IAEGM on Gender Statistics in the Arab Region, held in collaboration with a broad cross-section of regional and international organizations. The manual was discussed at length by representatives from the following 11 international organizations and agencies who participated in the meeting. Participants also attended from 14 Arab national statistical offices and six women’s machineries including representatives from the Center for Arab Women Training and Research and the League of Arab States. Still a work in progress, it is anticipated that the manual will be finalized during the current biennium.

The Statistics Division has collaborated with ECW around the research and publication of the the first Arab Gender Statistics database entitled Arab Geninfo_09 launched at the Inter-Agency and Expert Group Meeting (EAEGM) in Beirut in October 2009. It also collaborated with ECW in the development of the Arab MDG Monitor to measure the societal progress towards the realization of MDGs that requested the ESCWA Secretariat to work on gender equality and youth empowerment.

7.15 Human Rights

Human rights are not directly addressed by activities undertaken under the Statistics Subprogramme. However, ESCWA follows the change of paradigm in official statistics that moves from a purely technical view towards following the social and economic development in its complexity. The well being of population is part of this paradigm, and the human rights are an important component of well being.

The secretariat is a partner in the Global Project on Measuring the Progress of Societies and a member of its Board. As part of its activities in this field, the secretariat was represented at the third Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) World Forum on Statistics (Busan, Republic of Korea, 27-30 October 2009), at which the Executive Secretary of ESCWA gave a presentation on the role of statistical monitoring in times of crisis. In addition, the secretariat offered financial support to member countries eligible for such funding to enable them to participate in the forum. ESCWA and OECD already undertake joint efforts towards fundraising in order to obtain the funds needed for regional implementation of the Global Project, and during the forum, the Executive Secretary of ESCWA and the Secretary-General of OECD signed a memorandum of understanding on future cooperation between the two organizations in this area.

The secretariat participated in the preparation of the first meeting of the Steering Committee and the Workshop on Progress of Societies (Amman, 3-4 October 2009), at which presentations were made on measuring societal progress in the Arab region. Outside ESCWA's participation in international events addressing human rights issues the organization's work in statistics on Human Rights is still in its infancy with a potential for future growth. So far there has not been any formal direct collaboration between ESCWA and OHCHR working jointly on the human rights arena.

8. MAJOR FINDINGS

8.1 The overall expected outputs for the biennium 2006-2007 and 2008-2009 was partially met. No major shortfall in funding was reported^{xii}. A review of IMDIS indicates the impressive high implementation rates of 104% and 96% for the Statistics Division for the respective bienniums. Additionally IMDIS utilizing the implementation rate and technical cooperation activities ranked the Statistics Division as the top performer consistently over the 2 bienna ahead of the other programmes.^{xiii}The existing Statistics Division staff complemented by consultants managed to undertake the major tasks planned with mixed results. Maintaining a staff time use ratio of 5:1 to the use of consultants indicates consistently a maximization of the use of staff time. However, more staff time was dedicated to participating in routine meetings and seminars and in producing recurrent publications then providing direct technical support to the NSOs. The evaluation could not assess the performance of the NSOs against meeting the goals ESCWA set for them as the records of implementing these goals were not available to the consultants.. A better distribution and balance of work to staff and a greater investment of their time and energy to direct support to NSOs would have contributed towards greater national capacity development for statistics at the country levels. The Subprogramme was able to meet its outputs for meetings and publications but if the implementation records of NSO meeting the ESCWA set goals were available to the evaluators it would have been possible to verify that the Subprogramme did not meet the goals of capacity development and the NSOs fell short of target because of limitation in capacity.

8.2 Interviews of the National Statistics Offices indicate that ESCWA's technical assistance to the member states is appreciated but there is a growing demand for more specialized training and technology transfer. Members States want a stronger capacity at the regional level to support their own efforts at achieving technical excellence nationally.

8.3 Overall there persists a strong need to improve the Statistics division's technical institutional capacity to produce timely, reliable and comparable statistics for policy and programme formulation and for monitoring the progress made towards the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals. This and a robust outreach programme would have substantively supported and enabled member states to strengthen the NSOs to achieve national excellence.

8.4 The Commission meets once every two years. In between the Commissions' Technical Committee and the Thematic Technical Committees of the respective Subprogrammes guide the technical and operational work of ESCWA. This arrangement and the lack of engagement of especially the richly endowed GCC member countries deprive the Commission of much needed guidance from the regional leadership levels. This poses the critical question of how to cultivate and secure greater interest, support, and engagement from the Commission's member states especially the GCC and translate into a flow of resources. Ensuring ownership and active engagement of all members of the Commission through stronger proactive advocacy at the

^{xii} IMDIS implementation rate for Statistics Subprogramme for 2006-2007 stood a 104% including technical cooperation activities ..and for 2008-2009 at 96% including technical cooperation activities

^{xiii} IMDIS 2006-2007 and 2008-2009

leadership level and creative initiatives geared at providing greater lead roles for individual member states in various commission activities, is crucial to the success of ESCWA in fulfilling its mandate towards its members.

8.5 The ESCWA Database is intended to serve as a regional reference hub for member states and clients interested in information on the region. However it is widely recognized that the database poses a challenge to the improvement of ESCWA's statistics capacity. One of the biggest debates concerning the database is where it is located. Currently the database is housed and managed by ICTD with unclear guidelines dividing the responsibility between ICTD and the Statistics Division. Opposing views in-house prefer to see the database not be housed by ICTD but by the IT unit of the Administration Division with separate management from the Statistics Division.

8.6 There is a strong prevailing view especially amongst the NSOs for the creation of a center of excellence as a regional resource bank of statistical data designed and built around the strengthened ESCWA database incorporating more expertise and diversified contents or based in one of the leading NSOs with cutting edge advantage in special technology, expertise and knowledge. The Statistics Division should be developing a database of Statistical experts within the region to exchange experiences and best practices so they can be incorporated throughout the region.

8.7 Current methods in which statistics services are delivered leaves room for improvement. As each Subprogramme has retained its own specialized database it is not clear how much it relies on the ESIS for its day to day needs. It is not also clear who within the Statistics Division is responsible for coordinating, directing and responding to requests from the other subprogrammes. The evaluation understood the focal point network to be an adhoc consultative and not a functional body to assume this task. The Statistics Division receives requests from NSOs for technical assistance but in interviews with these offices several pointed out that they prefer the demand based modality for technical assistance and not a supply driven collaboration. The division needs to adopt a functionally effective modality for extending service within the commission as well as externally to its partners.

8.8 A forward looking evaluation that identifies current practices that are not being implemented must include the lack of adequacy in the database and shortfall in adapting the database to provide a reliable reference depository for specialized data and information for the region. ESCWA must determine the most effective location for the database between the ICTD or within the Statistics Division. The contents of the database must be addressed as well; currently it is not fully populated or customized to meet the needs of member states. Linking the Beirut database to New York would strengthen it to serve as a specialized information hub for the region.

The role of the Statistics Division in relation to the database remains unclear as long as the database lies in a separate division. As discussed earlier, the central location of the database and its efficient management by the Statistics Division will provide a space in which other Subprogrammes can merge their respective individual databases to create one common regional database. ESCWA has already come to grip with this problem and former Executive Secretary Bader Omar Al-Dafa issued a circular (see AnnexVIII) dated April 2010 addressing the

issue. The memo calls for multiple adjustments to be made within ESCWA in order to ensure that the processes of the statistical information system are streamlined to ensure that the collection, processing, and dissemination of information are coherent and easily accessible to internal and external users. The challenge lies in implementing the circular fully in its content and spirit through multiple steps to “promote cross-fertilization amongst divisions, fostering better coordination and a horizontal work approach.”

8.9 The current staffing of the ESCWA’s Statistics Division needs to be reviewed to ensure that staffing is adequate and efficient. The interviews with key senior ESCWA staff revealed some staffing challenges ESCWA faces. The current leadership is now aware that they are methods to work around the UN budgets policy of zero growth. With efficient planning staffing can be shifted between divisions and sectors to not cause a disturbance and imbalance in the efficiency of the division. Currently the Statistics Division is adequately staffed but it is possible that some of the staff do not have the required qualities and capacity for fulfilling the tasks assigned to them. To determine if these discrepancies exist the division may have to undertake a desk audit to analyze the qualifications, skills and aptitudes of its staff. The division may also want to use these results to compare manpower sizes to other commissions with similar objectives.

8.10 Currently ESCWA programmes do not have a system that links budgets to activities and outputs to provide one single overview facilitating the gauging of implementation rates to available resources and expected outputs and results (objective i). The evaluation methodology developed by the evaluation team includes an important system to meet this need for continuous monitoring.

8.11 Under the 2006-2007 and 2008-2009 expected outputs a set of 8 goals with baselines for 2003-2004 and targets for 2006-2007 and 2009 were established for the NSOs to meet as carried in Annex VII It was not possible to assess how the NSOs performed against the goals as no record of implementation was available to the evaluators.

8.12 Gross meeting of goals alone without quality assurances is incomplete achievement. The Technical Cooperation Section appears to be conducting good coordination in liaising between the technical divisions and the national statistics offices but a more in-depth look at the quality and modality of delivering technical assistance is necessary. The feed-back received from interviewing NSOs indicate on the one hand a general appreciation for the quality of services received from the Statistics Subprogramme and on the other an urge to diversify, specialize and make these services more participatory, relevant and useful.

8.13 The Commission’s niche as seen by several interviewees lay in extending technical assistance and knowledge to its member states. In their view it is what has won it a good name and image. However, a strong view is also expressed that within this technical assistance context the Commission’s future relevance and demand for its services will depend in its ability to strengthen its expertise in the Economic Pillars rather than its Social Sector Pillars where many institutions in the region have a comparative advantage.. Representatives of other Commission consider the ESWA’s smaller manageable operational size (14 members) as a comparative advantage in getting decisions made more speedily by its members and in reaching consensus on urgent issues. Several partners observed positively the versatility and

the ability of ESCWA to speak with ease and unified voice on behalf of its members at inter-commission meetings. There is potential for the Statistics Division to offer a unique demand for specialized region-specific data and information if it can establish a strong and reliable regional database.

8.14 Amongst handful of respondents to questions relating to ESCWA's niche and comparative advantages senior and experienced Regional Commission staff spoke passionately and profoundly of multiple ways in which ESCWA could improve upon its position within the region. He argued that with discipline and focus ESCWA could "strengthen and leverage its capacity to benefit the region through work in the transportation, water and trade sectors." He went on to state that ESCWA's broad reach also allows it to be an initiator of ideas and development paradigms in the regions socio-economic sector and recommended that the Commission's wide scope outreach should be leveraged to create centers of excellence for specialized statistics in the region. ESCWA's strong ICT is currently not addressing trans-boundary issues that similar commissions are addressing. This is a lost opportunity in which ESCWA could tap into the region's development potential and paradigms for regional integration. The evaluation considered this unique perspective and vision worth bringing to the attention of the ESCWA management to reflect upon as it considers the commissions future options and engagements.

8.15 It is the clear expectations of the clients to see ESCWA (Statistics Division) as a house of expertise that provides expertise in selected areas, facilitates exchange of expertise and experience between member countries, and helps official statistics services in member countries to get their leading position within the institutional setup, legislative framework. They also expect ESCWA to defend their interests in the international statistical scene (within the region and globally). To satisfy this demand, the Division has tried to provide technical assistance to member countries, organizing workshops and expert group meeting in areas of their interest, and representing the regional view in the international fora. In addition it facilitates regional preparations for the annual sessions of the UN Statistical Commission, where the ESCWA countries got a much stronger voice and their views reflected in final conclusions.

8.16 Because of its convening power and level of trust it enjoys amongst its membership, ESCWA is in the position to lead the statistical work in the region by optimizing capacity development through partnership. This could be achieved by mobilizing the necessary expertise from a pool of experts and logistics resources coming from various organizations. A common language, culture and traditions should enhance cooperation between ESCWA and partners within the region.

8.17 Gender statistics addresses issues of groups of special interest that also includes youth and elderly population, etc. The interest in gender statistics in the ESCWA and Arab region is very high, and the dedication of experts working in this area may exceed their peers in other regions. They consider statistical issues, as well as cultural aspects having a relationship to

gender statistics and gender policies. Therefore, it occupies a high priority within ESCWA's Statistics Subprogramme.

8.18 Human rights are not directly addressed by activities undertaken under the Statistics Subprogramme. However, ESCWA follows the change of paradigm in official statistics that moves from a purely technical view towards following the social and economic development in its complexity. The well being of population is part of this paradigm, and the human rights are an important component of well being. Outside ESCWA's participation in international events addressing human rights issues the organization's work in statistics on Human Rights is still in its infancy with a potential for future growth.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the analysis, findings and conclusions of the evaluation report of the ESCWA Statistics Subprogramme the following recommendations are proposed for the ESCWA Management to consider

Strategic Vision

9.1 Review ESCWA's niche and comparative advantages taking into account its perceived manageable small size that facilitates easy management and faster decision-making; a proposed shift of emphasis from the social pillar to the economic pillar; exploring the transportation, water and trade sectors as potential areas for future involvement; viewing trans-boundary issues and regional integration as unexplored frontiers to look at--all as part of an exercise in exploring what the Commission and the Statistics Sub-programme are not currently doing that they should do to remain current and relevant to the region's changing

9.2 ESCWA to give greater importance to statistic work on Human Rights in its programme by adapting and populating the database with region-specific human rights data accessible, relevant and current to the growing importance of human rights in the region.

9.3 While taking the above suggestions on board and moving forward, this evaluation recommends a shift of the Statistics Division to four key pillars:

- a. A center for technical excellence in statistics: a center that is a repository of latest statistical knowledge and practice and use of information and technology. The members are hoping that ESCWA would raise up to the role of bringing the latest technology, methods and knowledge to the region and help build their capacity to advance.
- b. A center for coordination and partnership. A center that helps coordinate between the National Statistical Office to share and build each other's capacity but also link them to the external world.

- c. A focus on gender and youth. With the rising youth unemployment in the wake of the Arab Spring Revolution and greater participation of women in workforce the region feels it is ready to advance on these issues especially given the recent events in the region. There are good examples such as gender statistics in Saudi Arabia to build on.
- d. A continued focus on MDGs and international comparability of data. All NSOs feel the ESCWA coordinated MDG report for the region is an excellent initiative and ESCWA should build on this and ensure international comparability of data and support NSO in improving data quality.

Management Issues

9.4 Strengthen and adapt the ESCWA Statistics Information System (ESIS) to the special needs of the region and implement the ES Memorandum on streamlining the information system in the Commission that places the administration and management of the Database under the Statistics Division

9.5 Review and reorganize the the functions and work practices of the Statistics Division especially the utilization of its human resources to shift greater priority to adjusting and strengthening its internal capacity and providing more effective technical assistance to the capacity development of the NSOs.

9.6 Ensure adequate resources in support of the Statistics Division's technical institutional capacity to produce timely, reliable and comparable statistics for policy and programme formulation and for monitoring the progress made towards the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals and to meet the growing demands of NSOs for specialized training and technology transfer.

9.7 Re-align the ESCWA Budget system to the new Evaluation Methodology for ESCWA Sub-programmes to link budgets to activities and outputs to provide one single overview facilitating the gauging of implementation rates to available resources and expected outputs and results.

Institutional Issues

9.8 Encourage the Statistics Division to adopt a practice of determining and regularly re-checking the specific needs of member states to ensure that ESCWA delivers its services based on demand and not supply driven through consistent engagement and coordination mechanisms by increasing the frequency of Informal virtual meetings between statistical committees.

9.10 The Statistics Division must collaborate with other divisions in order to address the multiple calls for services. To accomplish this ESCWA must determine the needs of its members before attempting to meet their demand for services.

Priority Programmatic Areas

9.11 Support the Technical Cooperation Section and Statistics Subprogrammes to strengthen quality assurances in the delivery of ESCWA's service to member states through designing and establishing a screening system for monitoring and gauging the technical assistance that the Subprogramme provides to the NSOs.

9.12 Utilize the high priority assigned to gender in the Subprogramme's work to bring to full development a number of gender-specific projects underway in collaboration with the Gender Statistics.

Coordination and Partnership

9.13 The Statistics Subprogramme needs to strengthen further its working and professional relationship with its national clients and regional and international partners by taking initiatives in encouraging and coordinating them to assume leading proactive roles on behalf of their respective groups, in emerging areas of statistics taking into account their comparative advantages and special strengths.

ANNEXES

Annex I: Map of ESCWA Region



Annex II: Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

Pilot of ESCWA's Evaluation of Subprogramme of Work 2006-2009

Background

Within the context of the ongoing reform processes of the UN, the Secretary General has promoted evaluation as a corporate responsibility, founded upon the core pillars of learning and accountability UN system wide.

ESCWA has initiated a series of improvements to evaluation of its planning and programme performance. External evaluations, notably by the UN's Office for Internal Oversight (OIOS), have made a number of recommendations to strengthen ESCWA's evaluation capacity.

ESCWA promulgated an Evaluation Policy in 2008, the full thrust of which, due to the high vacancy of professional officers in the PPCTD, has yet to be fully realized. In particular, measures to enhance the objectivity of evaluations of ESCWA's programmatic achievements remain an area which requires additional attention with the revitalized capacity now in place.

There are three categories of evaluations within the UN Secretariat, to which ESCWA is required to adhere:

1. External Independent Assessment
2. Mandatory Self Assessment
3. Discretionary Self Assessment

External independent assessments are initiated and conducted by OIOS and/or other UN oversight bodies. A series of recommendations has been made from OIOS's review of ESCWA, to which ESCWA is working to integrate and improve. ESCWA reports regularly to OIOS on progress made (each 6 months).

Mandatory self assessment is completed on a biennial basis (every 2 years), and is measured against ESCWA's Strategic Framework for the respective biennium period. The assessment is the Programme Performance Review (PPR) which is developed by subprogrammes based upon the expected accomplishments and indicators which are identified during the development of the biennium workplans. This is generated from data in a standardized electronic system of the Secretariat (IMDIS).

Discretionary self assessments are encouraged as a tool to improve overall programme performance and to ensure that ESCWA's work programme is aligned to the priorities of member states. By OIOS's definition, discretionary self assessments are internal, and have thus far been managed by the programme managers in ESCWA. Both the area to be identified and the consultant hired to design and implement the evaluation have been identified by the programme manager. In general, the process of contracting of evaluators by the respective subprogrammes has been disproportionately weighted to consultants with technical expertise of the area of evaluation, over substantive evaluation experience and knowledge of UN policies and guidelines.

For the purpose of this exercise, the consultancy will focus on undertaking **discretionary self assessments** of ESCWA's substantive subprogrammes, as an extra tier to the established and mandated assessment tools, and provide an opportunity for review in between the biennial period. These evaluations will be conducted with a view to greater objectivity of evaluations and developing recommendations for corrective measures.

PPTCD has been tasked to revise ESCWA's Evaluation Policy and to develop an approach which contributes to an improvement in ESCWA's overall performance. In particular, identifying a standard level of evaluation expertise to review ESCWA's programme of work, with an emphasis on technical capacity within the UN's overall evaluation methodology has been prioritized for the current Biennium (2010-11). In addition, the area/topic to be evaluated has been broadened in scope to include the overall subprogramme area.

For this purpose, ESCWA is seeking the services of a consultant to undertake evaluations of two (2) thematic areas/subprogrammes in the calendar year 2010.

Objective of Consultancy

The objective of the consultancy is twofold:

1. To develop a robust process of review of ESCWA's programme performance by increasing the objectivity of ESCWA's discretionary self evaluations, and through the standardization of evaluation tools and expertise to develop baselines for recommendations for calibrating programme activities and relevant processes to increase ESCWA's programmatic delivery to its member states. The evaluations will also review the extent to which ESCWA programmes are in line with latest global trends on thematic areas, through review of the work of ESCWA and the ECOSOC committees, and other regional commissions.
2. Conduct evaluations of three ESCWA subprogrammes producing:
 - viii. An assessment on the effectiveness of the subprogramme in achieving its objectives and expected accomplishments outlined in ESCWA's Strategic Framework for 2006-07 and 2008-09.
 - ix. An assessment on the process of planning undertaken to develop the workplan and budget for 2010-11, and the Strategic Framework for 2012-13.
 - x. An assessment of the efficiency with which the subprogramme utilized the financial and human resources available in achieving these results;
 - xi. A measure of the satisfaction of ESCWA's member states on the prioritization of these expected accomplishments as serving their interests and needs;
 - xii. Areas of good practice and lessons learned to feed into the broader work of ESCWA and future programme planning processes;
 - xiii. A review of the programme's coordination with external relevant actors (eg UN agencies, LAS, World Bank etc) and extent to which the programme is open to such collaboration; and
 - xiv. Recommendations/Actions on how the subprogramme performance could be improved, including programmatic areas which are relevant in global practice but have not been included in the subprogramme's focus of work.

Scope of the Consultancy

In line with a revision of ESCWA's evaluation approach, 5 of the 7 subprogrammes will be evaluated in the 2010-11 in order to feed in lessons learned to the planning of the next

Biennium's Strategic Framework (2014-15) which will begin from July 2011. These will be split between 2010 and 2011 years for budgetary reasons.

Two self evaluations which were to be conducted in the 2008-09 Biennium workprogramme were not completed as of 31 December 2009. Of these evaluations, Statistics Division and SDPD will be completed in 2010, and will be prioritized in the programme of work of the evaluation consultancy.

Therefore the **2010 programme of work for the evaluation consultancy** will be:

- Subprogramme 1: **Sustainable Development and Productivity**
- Subprogramme 5: **Statistics**

In advance of these evaluations, the consultant will develop the methodology and tools to evaluate the performance of ESCWA's subprogrammes. This methodology will be used to evaluate the remaining subprogrammes which will follow in the second half of the Biennium (2011) to maintain consistency, and form a pillar of ESCWA's revised Evaluation Policy.

Proposed Schedule for ESCWA Discretionary Self Evaluations 2010

2010 Timeframe	Activity	Last Completed
3 rd Quarter	Development of Methodology and Evaluation Tools	
3 rd - 4 th Quarter	Evaluation of Subprogramme 5 - Statistics	Carried over from 2010
4 th Quarter	Evaluation of Subprogramme 1 - SDPD	Carried over from 2010

Evaluation Methodology

Objective 1 To develop a robust process of review of ESCWA's programme performance by increasing the objectivity of ESCWA's discretionary self evaluations, and through the standardization of evaluation tools and expertise to develop baselines for recommendations for calibrating programme activities and relevant processes to increase ESCWA's programmatic delivery to its member states.

Estimated time required: **1 month**

- The consultant will review material and information regarding the development of ESCWA’s Strategic Framework, and programme of work. The consultant will become familiar with the various programme planning, monitoring and evaluation tools of ESCWA, and develop a draft methodology for the evaluation of ESCWA subprogrammes for review with the ESCWA evaluation focal point (PPTCD).
- Following approval by ESCWA, the consultant will finalize the methodology and commence the second phase of the consultancy, which will evaluate the specific subprogrammes as outlined above.

Objective 2 Conduct evaluations of two ESCWA subprogrammes producing:

- An assessment on the effectiveness of the subprogramme in achieving its objectives and expected accomplishments outlined in ESCWA’s Strategic Framework for 2006-7 and 2008-09.
- Assessment on the process of planning undertaken to develop the work plan and budget for 2010-11, and the Strategic Framework for 2012-13.
- Assessment of the efficiency with which the subprogramme utilized the financial and human resources available in achieving these results;
- A measure of the satisfaction of ESCWA’s member states on the prioritization of these expected accomplishments as serving their interests and needs;
- Areas of good practice and lessons learned to feed into the broader work of ESCWA and future programme planning processes; and
- Recommendations/Actions on how the subprogramme performance could be improved, including programmatic areas which are relevant in global practice but have not been included in the subprogramme’s focus of work.

Estimated time required: **Total of 3 months**

Subprogramme 5 (Statistics) 1 months

Subprogramme 1 (SDPD) 1 months

The consultant will work with PPTCD and the relevant subprogramme Chief at the outset of the evaluation period to elicit the Chief’s priorities and areas for specific attention, so as to tailor the generic approach where possible to deliver responses on some key areas. At the same time, this tailoring will not compromise the evaluation across the subprogrammes based on a standard full subprogramme wide approach.

For each of these subprogrammes, the consultant will review existing information available:
:

1. The planned programme of work and review the achievements of the subprogrammes as provided in IMDIS with the relevant subprogramme’s **Programme Performance**

Review (PPR) for 2006-07 and 2008-09. This will also include the planning process undertaken by the subprogramme in formulating the **Workplan and Budget for the 2010-11 Biennium, and the Strategic Framework for 2012-13.**

2. The expenditure by the subprogramme of its budget allocation, against the PPR (including project terminations/reformulations/not started) vis-à-vis the reported achievements of the subprogramme.
3. Evaluations and feedback provided by ESCWA member states in various forms – Technical Committee, specialized technical committee meetings (relevant to the respective subprogramme).
4. Relevant component of the Strategic Frameworks of other regional commissions in comparison to ESCWA, and the outcomes of relevant thematic commission meetings in UN Secretariat HQ, to assess the extent to which ESCWA’s programmatic agenda is in line/up to date with global practice and trends.

In addition to the existing information available, the consultant will undertake new information gathering and assessment, specifically developed in the methodology in the first phase of the consultancy. By way of example, the following tools may contribute to this process:

- A written questionnaire to obtain feedback from all member States
- Face-to-face interviews with representatives of selected member States of ESCWA as well as with a variety of key stakeholders and partners, other United Nations entities and international organizations and non-governmental organizations utilizing a master interview guide.
- Interview with Chief of Subprogramme and relevant staff in the Division
- Interview with PPTCD (Subprogramme focal point in PPC, Chief of PPC, Chief of TC)
- Interview with Executive Office.
- Interview/questionnaires with focal points in other Regional Commissions (ECLAC, ECA, ECE, ESCAP), and thematic focal points in the UN Secretariat HQ.
- The consultant will prepare a draft methodology for the approval of ESCWA. The consultant will ensure that the evaluation and report complies with the UNEG’s Norms and Standards. For this purpose, the consultant is referred to the homepage of the UN Evaluation Group at

http://www.unevaluation.org/normsandstandards/index.jsp?doc_cat_source_id=4

Deliverables

	Deliverable	Timeframe
1	Schedule for the 2010 evaluation programme prepared and submitted to ESCWA ^{xiv}	30 August 2010
2	Draft methodology and final tools submitted to ESCWA ^{xv}	30 September 2010

^{xiv} Depending on the commencement of the consultant contract, ideally within 2 weeks of agreement of terms

3	Draft Evaluation of Statistics Subprogramme	30 October 2010 ^{xvi}
4	Draft Evaluation of SCPD Subprogramme	30 December 2010

Payment Terms

The consultant will be paid in two installments, upon successful completion of deliverables 3 and 4.

Profile of the Consultant

The successful consultant will have:

- Previous experience of programme design, programme implementation, and monitoring and evaluations of programmes in the UN environment
- Good technical knowledge of the evaluation components, including evaluation design, data collection, data analysis and reporting
- Excellent oral and written communication skills and the ability to effectively convey complex information in a clear and concise manner to both governmental and UN audiences.
- A high level of expertise in the distilling, communication and reporting of findings, recommendations, best practices and lessons learned, particularly within a politically sensitive environment.
- English and French are the working languages of the UN Secretariat. Fluency in English is required for this consultancy. Fluency in written and verbal Arabic is an advantage.

Annex III: List of Stakeholders Consulted

List of Interviewees for the Evaluation of ESCWA’s Statistics Subprogramme 2006-2009

^{xv} Depending on the commencement of the consultant contract, ideally within 3-4 weeks of agreement of

^{xvi} Final dates to be agreed with consultant upon agreement of terms and based on the scheduling of the evaluations within the specified quarter of 2010

Mr. Diez De Medina	ILO Statistical Office	Other	Geneva
Ms. Lidia Bratanova	Director, Statistics UN ECE	UN and Other RCs	Geneva
Mr. Chafik Arbach Other	Central Bureau Statistics, Syria Damascus	NSO	Damascus
Mr. Amin Mohieeddine	Yemen Statistical Office	NSO	Yemen
Mr. Ahmed Hussein	Former Director of ESCWA Statistics Division	UN and Other RCs	
Mr. Nabil Shams	Bahrain Statistics	NSO	Manama
Sheikh Hamad Ben Jaber AlThani	Qatar Statistics	NSO	Qatar
Mr. Luis Beccaria	Director Statistics, ECLAC	UN and Other RCs	Santiago
Ms. Haishan Fu	Director of Statistics, UN ESCAP	UN and Other RCs	Bangkok
Mr. Dmitri Sanga	UN ECA Director of Statistics	UN and Other RCs	Addis Abbaba
Mr. Mario Tuason	UN ESCWA, Chief, Budget and Finance	UN ESCWA	Beirut
Mr. Abdullah Zoubi	UNFPA-Regional	UN and Other RCs	Beirut
Mr. David Iyamah	UN ESCWA, Director of Administration	UN ESCWA	Beirut
Anhar Hegazi	UN ESCWA, Deputy Exec. Secretary	UN ESCWA	Beirut
Mr. Jean Francois Klein, Chief Programme and Ms. Laetitia Weibel,	ILO-Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Programme officers	UN and Other RCs	Beirut
Ms. Abdalla	Egypt National Statistics	NSO	Cairo
Ms. Thanaa Salman	Iraq	NSO	Baghdad
Mr. Amr Nour	RCNYO	UN and other RCs	NY
Dr. Fraihat	Jordan Statistics	NSO	Amman
Dr. Ola Awad	Palestine	NSO	Palestine
Mr. Juraj Riecan	Director, Statistics, UNESCWA	UN ESCWA	Beirut

Mr. Youssef Nusseir	Director Information Communication and Technology Division	UN ESCWA	Beirut
Mr. Tarik Alami	OIC EDGD	UN ESCWA	Beirut
Mr. Frederico Neto	Director Social Development Division	UN ESCWA	Beirut
Mr. Albagir Adam	Secretary of the Commission, OES	UN ESCWA	Beirut
Mr. Roberto Laurenti	Director, PPTCD	UN ESCWA	Beirut
Mr, Giovanni Savio	Senior Statistics Officer	UN ESCWA	Beirut
Mr. Marwan Khawaja	Senior Statistics Officer	UN ESCWA	Beirut
Ms. Ramla Khalidi	Chief, Technical Cooperation	UN ESCWA	Beirut
Mr. Ahmad Dik	Programme Officer, Technical Cooperation	UN ESCWA	Beirut
Ms. Gisela Nauk	Social Affairs Officer	UN ESCWA	Beirut
Ms. Sukaina Al-Nasrawi	ICT Officer	UN ESCWA	Beirut
Mr. Rami Zadari	ICT Officer	UN ESCWA	Beirut
Ms. Afaf Omer	Director, ECW	UN ESCWA	Beirut
Ms. Kendra Knoebl	Gender Affairs Officer	UN ESCWA	Beirut
Mr. Vito Intini	OIC, ECRI	UN ESCWA	Beirut
Ms. Carol Chouchani Churfane	Chief, Water Section	UN ESCWA	Beirut
Mr. Tarek Sadek	Chief, Climate Change	UN ESCWA	Beirut

Annex IV: List of Documents Reviewed

List of Documents for ESCWA Statistics Subprogramme Evaluation

1. E/ESCWA/24/6(Part I)/Add.2: Management issues Streamlining the work of the Commission
2. E/ESCWA/25/6(Part I)/Add.1: Management issues Streamlining the work of the Commission
3. E/ESCWA/25/6(Part I)/Add.2: Management issues Streamlining the work of the Commission
4. Twenty-third Session of the Commission, Damascus, 9-12 May 2005:Assessment of the Feedback from Delegations

5. Twenty-fourth Session of the Commission, Beirut, 8-11 May 2006:Assessment of the Feedback from Delegations
6. Twenty-Fifth ESCWA Commission Session, Sana'a, 26-29 May 2008: Assessment of the Feedback from Heads of Delegations
7. Tenth Session of the Committee on Transport, Beirut, 31 March- 2 April 2009:Assessment of the Feedback from Heads of Delegations
8. Assessment of the Feedback from the Heads of Delegations Attending the Arab Regional Conference Ten Years after Beijing: Call for Peace, Beirut, 8-10 July, 2004
9. Third Committee on Women, Abu Dhabi, 14-15 March 2007:Assessment of the Feedback from Heads of Delegations
10. Fourth Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA region, Beirut, 7-8 March 2005
11. Assessment of the Feedback from the Heads of Delegations Attending the Fifth Session of the Committee on Energy, Beirut, 11-12 October 2004
12. Fifth Committee on Social Development, Beirut, 29-31 March 2005:Assessment of the Feedback from Delegations
13. Assessment of the Feedback from the Heads of Delegations Attending the Fifth Session of the Committee on Transport, Beirut, 2-4 March 2004
14. Fifth Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region ,Beirut, 24-26 April 2007:Assessment of the Feedback from Delegations
15. Feedback and Lessons Learned from the Sixth Session of the Committee on Energy Doha, 4-5 February 2007
16. Sixth Committee on Social Development, Amman, 5-7 March 2007:Assessment of the Feedback from Heads of Delegations
17. Assessment of the Feedback from the Heads of Delegations Attending the Sixth Session of the Statistical Committee, Beirut, 6-8 October 2004
18. Assessment of the Feedback from the Heads of Delegations Attending the Sixth Session of the Committee on Water Resources, Beirut, 2-4 December 2004
19. Feedback and Lessons Learnt from the Statistical Committee Seventh Session Beirut, 7 – 9 November 2006
20. Seventh Committee on Transport, Beirut, 17-19 March 2006:Assessment of the Feedback from Heads of Delegations
21. Seventh Committee on Water Resources, Muscat, 20-22 March 2007 Assessment of the Feedback from Heads of Delegations
22. Eighth Session of the Statistical Committee, Beirut, 14 – 16 October 2008 Assessment of the Feedback from Heads of Delegations
23. Eighth Committee on Transport, Beirut, 27-29 March 2007: Assessment of the Feedback from Heads of Delegations
24. Eighth Committee on Water Resources, Beirut, 17-19 December 2009: Assessment of the Feedback from Heads of Delegations
25. Ninth Committee on Transport, Beirut, 26-28 February 2008:Assessment of the Feedback from Heads of Delegations

26. Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011*Part V" Regional cooperation for development: Section 19 Economic development in Europe A/64/6 (Sect. 19)
27. Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011*Part V" Regional cooperation for development: Section 20 Economic and social development in Latin America and the Caribbean A/64/6 (Sect. 20)
28. Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011*Part V" Regional cooperation for development: Section 17 Economic and social development in Africa A/64/6 (Sect. 17)
29. Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2010-2011*Part V" Regional cooperation for development: Section 21 Economic and social development in Western Asia A/64/6 (Sect. 21)
30. ESCWA Performance Report 2006-2007 (Extract from IMDIS)
31. ESCWA Performance Report 2008-2009 (Extract from IMDIS)
32. ESCWA Implementation Rates 2006-2007 (Extract from IMDIS)
33. ESCWA Implementation Rates 2008-2009 (Extract from IMDIS)
34. Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the inspection of the programme and administrative management of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia A/61/61
35. Assessment of the statistical publication:"External Trade Bulletin of the ESCWA Region"
36. Programme performance report of the United Nations for the biennium 2008-2009, Report of the Secretary-General A/65/70
37. 29 Aug 08-Las -Department of Environment Housing Development-Report
38. Report of the EGM on compilation and analysis of energy statistics and indicators, Beirut 3-5 March 2009 E/ESCWA/2009/W.G 1/4
39. Report of the Training Session on the System of Environmental Economic Accounting for Water (SEEAW) for the Arab Gulf Countries Beirut, Lebanon, 25-28 August 2008
40. Mou between ESCWA and OECD 27 Oct 2009
41. Report of the Joint Sub-Regional Training Session on the System of Integrated Environmental-Economic Accounting for Water Resources Amman, 10-13 March 2008 E/ESCWA/SCU/2008/1
42. ESCWA Policy on Gender Mainstreaming
43. Recommendations for activating an up-dated strategy for mainstreaming gender at the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Beirut, October 2009
44. Towards an accountability system in the United nations secretariat: Report of the Secretary general A/64/640
45. Statistical Committee, Eighth Session, Beirut 14-16 October 2008 E/ESCWA/2008/I.G 1/L.1
46. Follow up on recommendations. of 7th session of Stats Committee, Sept 2008
47. Regional Implications of 39th Session of the Stats Committee
48. Report of the Statistical Committee 4th session
49. Report of the Statistical Committee. April 2001
50. Report of the Statistical Committee. January 2009 E/ESCWA/SD/2008/IG/1/9
51. Report of the Regional Working Group of the ESCWA Statistical Committee E/ESCWA/2009/2

52. Report of the Statistical Committee 7th session, E/ESCWA/SCU/2006/IG.1/12
53. Review of the Statistical Work carried out since the 7th session of the Statistical Committee, E/ESCWA/2008/IG.1/3
54. Proposed budget for the biennium 2006-2007 A/60/6 (Sect.21)
55. Proposed budget for the biennium 2008-2009 A/62/6 (Sect.21)
56. Proposed budget for the biennium 2010-2011 A/64/6 (Sect.21)
57. Proposed strategic framework 2006-2007 A/59/6 (Prog.18)
58. Proposed strategic framework 2008-2009 A/61/6 (Prog.18)
59. Proposed strategic framework 2010-2011 A/63/6 (Prog.18)
60. Statistics Activities 2009 at UNESCWA
61. Report of the Executive Secretary on the Activities of the Commission E/ESCWA/25/5
62. Report of the Executive Secretary on the Activities of the Commission E/ESCWA/26/5

Annex V: Questionnaires Conducted

Standard Questions for ESCWA Evaluation Interviews of Partners (Heads of National Statistics Offices and other Senior National Officials)

1. What is your organization's working relationship with ESCWA as a regional organization and with its various subprogrammes in general and the Statistics Subprogramme in particular? Give examples.
2. What services and technical assistance have you received from ESCWA's Statistics Subprogramme in particular? How would you rate the quality of these technical services?
3. Has your organization made specific requests, suggestions and recommendations to ESCWA Statistics Subprogrammes to adjust the planning, implementation and monitoring of their policies and programmes? Give examples.
4. Describe your work with ESCWA's Statistics Subprogramme. What do you appreciate most in this working relationship and how have you benefitted from it? Have you encountered any problems and if so what are they? Have you assisted and supported the Subprogramme? Please elaborate.
5. In what ways is the Statistics Subprogramme relating to and working with national statistics institutions in monitoring and disseminating data information on MDGs and other vital global programmes?
6. In what ways has the Statistics Subprogramme contributed to the capacity development of your institution and in introducing new technologies and methodologies in your work ?

7. In what ways can the Statistics Subprogramme enhance its capacity to serve ESCWA and the member states more?
8. What changes would you like to see introduced in the way the Statistics Subprogrammes plans, implements and monitors its work?
9. What are the things that ESCWA's Statistics programme should do that it is not doing now?
10. What particular areas of statistical focus can you provide expertise/knowledge to other NSOs in the region?

Standard Questions for ESCWA Evaluation Interviews of Partners (Regional Commissions and other UN Headquarters Entities)

1. What in your view are the Regional Commission's greatest contributions to the socio-economic development and well-being of their respective regions
2. Describe the collaboration between the UN Regional Commissions and identify the most beneficial elements of this collaboration. How can the collaboration and synergy between the Commissions be strengthened further?
3. What are your common challenges of the RCs when furthering the work of statistics coordination? (eg with DESA, UN SD, member countries etc)
4. What is your organization's relationship and experiences in working with ESCWA as a regional organization and with the Statistics Subprogramme in particular? Give examples.
5. Describe your work with ESCWA's Statistics Subprogramme. What do you appreciate most in this working relationship and how have you benefitted from it? What in your view has the Subprogramme appreciated most in this working relationship? Have you encountered any problems and if so what are they? Have you assisted and supported the Subprogramme technically and professionally? Please elaborate.
6. What are your organization's specific unique strengths and practices that ESCWA in general and its Statistics Subprogramme in particular could benefit from? What in your view are the unique policies and practices of ESCWA and its Statistics Subprogramme that other Commissions and UN entities could learn from?
7. What changes would you like to see introduced in the way the Statistics Subprogrammes plans, implements and monitors its work?

8. In what ways can the Statistics Subprogramme enhance its capacity to serve ESCWA and the member states more?
9. What are the things that ESCWA should do that it is not doing now in the statistics programme
10. Any general suggestions and recommendations for ESCWA?

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10. Any general suggestions and recommendations for ESCWA?

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9. What are the things that ESCWA's Statistics programme should do that it is not doing now?
10. Any general suggestions and recommendations for ESCWA

كما تعلمون، لقد عيّنت الإسكوا "مجموعة بيسيوني" لإجراء تقييم معياري لبرنامج الإحصاء. جانب هام لهذا التقييم هو إجراء مقابلات هاتفية مع جميع المكاتب الإحصائية الوطنية في البلدان الأعضاء في الإسكوا ومع شركاء في مكاتب ووكالات الأمم المتحدة، عبر استبيانات معدة. مع الدعم المقدم من شعبة تخطيط البرامج والتعاون الفني، لقد بذلت جهوداً مستمرة للوصول إلى تحديد مواعيد مع مكاتبكم لإجراء المقابلة الهاتفية، لكن دون نجاح. إننا في سباق مع الزمن

لإستكمال التقييم في أواخر نيسان/ أبريل. إن نظرتكم وآراءكم خاصة في ما يتعلق بعملكم المشترك وتعاونكم مع الإسكوا، هي مهمة وقيمة لعملية التقييم.

وبالتالي، فأنتم مدعوون للتفضل بتكريس بعض من وقتكم القيم لإستكمال الاستبيان المرفق (العربية والإنجليزية) وإعادته لي قبل يوم الاثنين 11 نيسان/ ابريل 2011. في حال الحاجة لأي توضيح، يرجى الاتصال بي عبر البريد الإلكتروني أو عبر الهاتف على الرقم 9608505 (212).

نتطلع إلى تلقي الاستبيانات المكتملة قبل الموعد النهائي في 11 نيسان/ أبريل. مع أطيب التمنيات

أسئلة لإجراء مقابلات حول تقييم الإسكوا مع الشركاء (رؤساء المكاتب الإحصائية الوطنية وغيره من كبار المسؤولين)

1. ما هي علاقة العمل بين مؤسستكم والإسكوا كمنظمة إقليمية، ومع مختلف البرامج الفرعية بشكل عام وبرنامج الإحصاء بشكل خاص؟ يرجى إعطاء أمثلة.

2. ما هي الخدمات والمساعدة الفنية التي تلقيتها من برنامج الإحصاء في الإسكوا بشكل خاص؟ كيف تقيم نوعية هذه الخدمات الفنية؟

3. هل سبق لمؤسستكم أن تقدمت بطلبات واقتراحات وتوصيات محددة لبرنامج الإحصاء في الإسكوا لتعديل طريقة تخطيط وتنفيذ ورصد سياساته وبرامجه؟ يرجى إعطاء أمثلة.

4. يرجى وصف عملك مع برنامج الإحصاء في الإسكوا. ما الذي تقيمه أكثر في علاقة العمل هذه وكيف استفدت منها؟ هل واجهتكم أي مشاكل؟ وإذا كان الأمر كذلك فما هي؟ هل قدمتم المساعدة والدعم للبرنامج الفرعي؟ يرجى التوضيح.

5. ما هي طرق عمل برنامج الإحصاء في الإسكوا مع مؤسسات الإحصاء الوطنية لرصد ونشر البيانات والمعلومات المتعلقة بالأهداف الإنمائية للألفية وغيرها من البرامج العالمية الحيوية؟

6. بأية طرق ساهم برنامج الإحصاء في الإسكوا في تنمية قدرة مؤسستكم وفي إدخال تكنولوجيات ومنهجيات جديدة في عملك؟

7. كيف يمكن لبرنامج الإحصاء في الإسكوا أن يحسن من قدرته على خدمة الإسكوا وبلدانها الأعضاء أكثر؟

8. ما هي التغييرات التي ترغب أن تحدث في طريقة التخطيط والتنفيذ والرصد التي يتبعها البرنامج الفرعي لعمله؟

9. في أية مجالات إحصائية يمكنكم تقديم الخبرة والمعرفة للمكاتب الإحصائية الوطنية الأخرى في المنطقة؟ في أية مجالات خاصة بالخبرة الإحصائية تريدون الاستفادة من المكاتب الإحصائية الوطنية الأخرى في المنطقة؟

10. ما الذي على برنامج الإحصاء في الإسكوا فعله، ولكنه لا يفعله حالياً؟

11. هل لديك أي اقتراحات أو توصيات للإسكوا؟

Annex VI: Commission Resolution 297 (XXVI)

Arab MDG monitor for societal progress

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Noting with deep concern that the lack of requisite data and information in some member countries on development indicators, including those related to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly the goals of promoting the gender equality and empowering women, and the situation of youth, and the impact of that lack on official statistics, thereby hindering the planning and implementation of evidence-based policies, and undermining the ability of countries to monitor their national development indicators,

Recognizing the fundamental importance of national statistical capacity in producing reliable and timely indicators of societal progress,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/6 of 24 July 2006, which expressed deep concern for the lack of adequate data to assess national trends in the context of monitoring progress towards the realization of all internationally agreed development goals, including MDGs, and the lack of capacity at the national level to use existing data to inform and monitor the implementation of national development policies and strategies,

Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolution 2000/27 of 28 July 2000, in which the Council reaffirmed the importance of national efforts to build statistical capacity in all countries, including through statistical training, and of effective international support in that regard for developing countries and countries emerging from conflict,

Affirming the importance of intensifying cooperation between the countries of the region in order to realize MDGs by 2015,

Commending the efforts exerted by the secretariat in following up the realization of MDGs, in particular reports on the progress made towards realizing MDGs in the ESCWA region,

1. Calls upon all member countries to enhance coordination between national statistical offices and implement national strategies for statistical development, with a view to improving the coverage and transparency of indicators and methods of reporting on them and disseminating

effective methods of monitoring nationally and internationally agreed development goals, including MDGs, by:

- (a) Defining priorities and developing a strategy to provide data for all indicators;
- (b) Identifying ways, including through capacity-building to improve monitoring and reporting on development indicators, including indicators relating to MDGs;
- (c) Ensuring that the supporting metadata comply with standard guidelines;

2. Requests the secretariat to develop an MDG monitor for societal progress towards realization of MDGs, including gender equality and youth empowerment by:

- (a) Supporting member countries, according to their needs and requirements, in realizing MDGs through capacity-building in compiling and disseminating statistics, integration of MDGs into development plans, monitoring the progress made and measuring its impact, and preparing national and regional reports in coordination with relevant parties;
- (b) Assessing the quality of national data and development indicators, including MDGs, and providing adequate resources to improve data quality and convergence with international standards.

3. Requests the Executive Secretary to submit to the Commission at its twenty-seventh session a report on the progress made in the implementation of the present resolution, including on improving gender and youth statistics at the regional level, and the achievements of ESCWA in that regard.

ANNEX VII: EVALUATION ASSESSMENT MATRIX^{xvii}

Subprogramme 6: Statistics for Evidence-based Decision-Making^{xviii}

Objective: To improve the production and use of harmonized and comparable economic, social and sectoral statistics, including gender-disaggregated statistics.

Expected Output	Indicators/Tar gets	Outputs	Activities	Resour ces Work months P/C ^{xix}	Assessment & Findings

^{xvii} Matrix to be completed for 2006-2007 and 2008-2009.

^{xviii} The objective, the Expected Accomplishments and the Indicators of Achievement as approved by the Commission at its 25th Session (Sana'a, 26-29 May 2008) and endorsed by the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its 48th session (New York)

^{xix} P/C = Professional staff / Consultants

Increased output of ESCWA member states to produce macroeconomic international trade & sectoral statistic	a) Increased capacity of ESCWA member States to produce harmonized macroeconomic, international trade and sectoral statistics Indicator(s) of achievement	(a) Servicing of inter-governmental & expert bodies:	7 th session of the Statistical Committee (7-9 November 2006)	5/0	The activities planned to achieve this expected output devoting staff time to participating in meetings conducting and facilitating workshops and preparing various reports. The share of staff time on preparing recurrent publications, monitoring programmes and covering routine working group and specialized committee meetings far outstripped time given to engaging with and building national statistics capacity. The targets for producing the recurrent publications were met with
		(i) Statistical Committee	Regional Working Group of ESCWA Statistical Committee (3 September 2007)	0.5/0	
		a. Substantive servicing of six meetings of the 7 th session of the Statistical Committee	Second meeting of the statistical committee bureau (8-11 May 2006)	2/0	
		(i) Increased number of countries implementing international standards in the production of trade and transport statistics, sectoral statistics and the 1993 System of National Accounts Performance Measures 2003-2004 : 9 reports Target : 2006-2007 :13 countries	b.Parliamentary documentation:3 reports to the Statistical Committee: five-year review of MDGs; strategy of economic & sectoral;& strategy of social statistics in the ESCWA region	E/ESCWA/SCU/2006/I G.1/6 Millennium Development Goals and statistical literacy	
			E/ESCWA/SCU/2006/I G.1/7 Needs Assessment for capacity building of national statistical offices in the ESCWA region	1.5/0	
			E/ESCWA/SCU/2006/I G.1/12 Report of the seventh session of the Statistical Committee	1.5/0	
			E/ESCWA/SCU/2006/I G.1/8 Conceptual Framework for Official Statistics: Strategies for economic and social statistics	1.5/0	
	(ii) Increased utilization of				

<p><i>sectoral statistics and indicators, especially with regard to regional integration among member States and indicators and statistics in new areas</i></p> <p><i>Performance Measures 2003-2004 :18 indicators</i></p> <p><i>Target : 2006-2007 :20 indicators</i></p> <p><i>(b) (i) Increased number of national reports containing gender-disaggregated social statistics & indicators in other specialized areas</i></p> <p><i>Performance Measures 2002-2003 : 3 reports</i></p> <p><i>2003-2004 : 5 reports</i></p> <p><i>Target : 2006-</i></p>	<p><i>(ii) Two ad hoc expert group meetings on new techniques in conducting population & housing census; and production of statistics on natural resources & environment</i></p>	<p><i>Production of statistics on natural resources and environment 22-23 May 2006</i></p> <p><i>New techniques in conducting population and housing censuses 5-7 June 2007</i></p>	<p><i>3.5/0</i></p> <p><i>2/0</i></p>	<p><i>9 major reports issued in 2006-2007.</i></p> <p><i>The overall expected output was partially met.</i></p> <p><i>No major shortfall in funding was reported.</i></p> <p><i>The existing Statistics</i></p>
	<p><i>(b) Other Substantive Activities) (regular budget)</i></p>	<p><i>Compendium of Social Statistics and Indicators 2007</i></p> <p><i>External Trade Bulletin of the ESCWA Region 2006 & 2007</i></p> <p><i>National Accounts Studies of the ESCWA Region 2006 & 2007</i></p> <p><i>Bulletin on Population and Vital Statistics 2006 & 2007</i></p> <p><i>Statistical Abstract of the ESCWA Region 2006 & 2007</i></p>	<p><i>2.5/2.5</i></p> <p><i>5/0</i></p> <p><i>4/0</i></p> <p><i>6/0</i></p> <p><i>8/0</i></p>	<p><i>Division staff complemented by consultants managed to undertake the major tasks planned with mixed results.</i></p> <p><i>The member states met the expected output partially.</i></p> <p><i>A better distribution and balance of work to staff and a greater investment of their time and energy to direct support to NSOs will contribute</i></p>
	<p><i>(i) Recurrent publications of ESCWA bulletins & compendium</i></p>	<p><i>Compendium of environment statistics in the ESCWA region 2006 & 2007</i></p>	<p><i>6.25/0</i></p>	<p><i>6.25/0</i></p>
	<p><i>Non-recurrent publications</i> <small>xx</small></p>	<p><i>MDGs and gender: Status and trends in the ESCWA region</i></p>	<p><i>3/0</i></p>	<p><i>3/0</i></p>

^{xx} Not in the programme fascicle (additional)

<p>2007 : 9 reports</p> <p>(ii) Increased number of national statistical offices that provide data for measuring progress towards achieving MDGs & for monitoring the implementation of the outcomes of major global conferences</p> <p>Performance Measures</p> <p>2002-2003 : 4 statistical offices 2003-2004 : 9 Statistical offices Estimated 2006-2007 Target:13 statistical offices</p>		<p>2006</p> <p>MDGs and health: Status and trends in the ESCWA region 2007</p> <p>Pamphlet on women and men in public life and leadership in the Arab countries (carried forward) 2006 & 2007</p>	<p>3/0</p> <p>0.5/1.5</p>	<p>towards greater national capacity development for statistics at the country levels.</p> <p>The ratio between the use of regular staff to consultants was about 4:1. This is viewed as a reflection of maximizing staff use but not necessarily towards meeting ESCWA's most important mandate—extending technical service to its member states.</p> <p>From the information available it is not possible to determine and conclude on impact of the expected</p>	
	(iii) Technical materials & maintenance of ESCWA Statistical Information System modules	<p>Development and maintenance of ESCWA Statistical Information System (ESIS)modules 2006 & 2007</p> <p>Maintenance of ESCWA homepage on statistics on the World-Wide Web 2006 & 2007</p>	<p>5/0</p> <p>4/0</p>		
	(b) Technical Cooperation	<p>Promotion of dialogue between users and producers on harmonized and comparable statistics for informed policy decision-making 2006/07</p> <p>Advisory services on building repositories of statistical data 2006/07</p>	<p>2/0.5</p> <p>0.5/0.2 5</p>		
	(i) Advisory services ^{xxi}				
		(ii) Three field projects	<p>The International Comparison</p>	<p>8/2</p>	

^{xxi} Additional services were undertaken under Section 22 that is reported separately, but to which both Regional Advisers and the core staff of the Statistics Division participate.

		<p><i>on development of disability statistics^{xxii}</i></p>	<p><i>Programme [ICP]</i></p> <p><i>Development of national gender statistics programmes in Arab countries 2006/07</i></p> <p><i>Preparations for the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Program in Western Asia 2006/07</i></p> <p><i>National Statistical Systems: Assessment of statistical needs for capacity building for the national statistical offices in the ESCWA region 2006/07</i></p> <p><i>Interregional cooperation on the measurement of the informal sector and informal employment 2006/07</i></p> <p><i>Statistical Literacy for MDG Monitoring at the Country Level 2006/07</i></p> <p><i>Strengthening the Development of international merchandize trade statistics and the compilation of e-</i></p>	<p><i>6/0</i></p> <p><i>4/1</i></p> <p><i>3.5/0</i></p> <p><i>1.5/0</i></p> <p><i>4/1.5</i></p> <p><i>5/0</i></p>	<p><i>output at the country level. Besides, impact analysis/evaluation is still an emerging practice within the UN.</i></p>
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^{xxii} Additional projects were executed in 2006/07

			commerce in member countries of ESCWA 2006/07		
Expected Output	Indicators/Targets	Outputs	Activities	Resources Work months P/C^{xxiii}	Assessment & Findings
To enhance the capacity of member countries to produce and disseminate timely, accurate and comparable socio-economic statistics and indicators to be used by national and international decision makers and civil society for evidence-based policymaking	(a) Strengthened capacity of member countries to improve the national institutional framework for official statistics (i) Increased number of member countries taking measures to improve their national institutional framework for official statistics Performance measures: Baseline: 31 Dec 2007 2 countries Target: 31 Dec 2009 4 countries Interim	(a) Servicing of inter-governmental & expert bodies: (i) Statistical Committee a. Substantive servicing of six meetings of the 8 th session of the Statistical Committee	8 th session of the Statistical Committee (14-16 October 2008) Meeting of the Bureau of the Statistical Committee (10 February 2009)	6/0 5/0	Six regular sessions and meetings were organized and 13 regular recurrent publications and 26 non-recurrent publications were produced in the Biennium. Only 5 of the large number of the recurrent publications were produced at the country level. Here again staff time complemented by consultants was consumed entirely on producing publications and meetings and none on the training and capacity
		b. Parliamentary documentation	E/ESCWA/SCU/2008/I G.1/9 Report of the eighth session of the Statistical Committee E/2008/41 E/ESCWA/25/5(Part II)/Supp.2) Report on strengthening the role of statistical systems at the national level in line with the Principles of Official Statistics	1/0 2.5/0 1.5/0	
				2/0	

^{xxiii} P/C = Professional staff / Consultants

<p>measurement 1: 31 Dec 2008 2 countries Final: 31 Dec 2009 4 countries</p> <p>(ii) Increased number of member countries committing to implement the United Nations Statistical Commission's Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics Performance measures: Baseline: 31 Dec 2007 0 countries Target: 31 Dec 2009 6 countries Interim measurement 1: 31 Dec 2009 1 countries Final: 31 Dec 2009 6 countries</p> <p>(b) Strengthened capacity of member countries to</p>		<p><i>E/ESCWA/SD/2008/IG .1/5 Needs assessment for capacity-building of the national statistical offices in the ESCWA region: progress achieved towards strengthening the national statistical capacities</i></p>		<p><i>development of NSOs.</i></p> <p><i>The issue of a better organization and use of staff more in direct technical support to countries became glaringly clear. The ratio between the uses of regular staff to consultants was about 5:1. This is viewed as a reflection of maximizing staff time use but not necessarily towards meeting ESCWA's most important mandate—extending technical service to its member states.</i></p> <p><i>From the information available it is not possible to determine and conclude the</i></p>
	(ii) Ad hoc expert group meetings	<p><i>1993 System of National Accounts, 12-14 May 2009</i></p> <p><i>1st Meeting of the Taskforce on Gender Statistics in the Arab Countries, 15-16 Oct 2009</i></p> <p><i>Compilation and analysis of energy statistics and indicators, 3-5 Mar 2009</i></p> <p><i>Measurement of poverty indices, 28-29 Apr 2009</i></p> <p><i>Working group of heads of national statistical offices in the ESCWA region, 10 Feb 2009</i></p> <p><i>Second Arab IAEGM on Gender Statistics, 12-14 Oct 2009</i></p> <p><i>Taskforce meeting on</i></p>	<p><i>4/0</i></p> <p><i>3.5/0</i></p> <p><i>3/0</i></p> <p><i>2.5/0</i></p> <p><i>2.5/0</i></p> <p><i>2.5/0</i></p> <p><i>3.5/0</i></p> <p><i>3/0</i></p>	

<p><i>participate effectively in the 2010 round of population censuses, household surveys and other surveys as a statistical requisite for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015</i></p> <p><i>(i) Increased number of member countries taking concrete measures with ESCWA assistance to participate effectively in the 2010 round Performance measures: Baseline: 31 Dec 2007 3 countries Target: 31 Dec 2009 13 countries Interim measurement 1: 31 Dec</i></p>		<p><i>2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses, 23-24 Mar 2009</i></p> <p><i>Taskforce meeting on 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses, 1-3 Dec 2009</i></p>		<p><i>impact of the expected output at the country level. Besides impact analysis/evaluation is still an emerging practice within the UN.</i></p>	
	<p><i>(b) Other Substantive Activities) (regular budget)</i></p> <p><i>(i) Recurrent publications of ESCWA bulletins & compendium</i></p>		<p><i>Compendium of Social Statistics and Indicators 2009</i></p>	3.5/0	
			<p><i>External Trade Bulletin of the ESCWA Region 2008 & 2009</i></p>	4.5/0	
			<p><i>Bulletin on National Accounts in the ESCWA Region 2008 & 2009</i></p>	4.5/0	
			<p><i>Population and Vital Statistics Bulletin 2008 & 2009</i></p>	3.5/0	
			<p><i>Statistical Abstract of the ESCWA Region 2008 & 2009</i></p>	10	
			<p><i>Compendium of Environment Statistics 2009</i></p>	6	
			<p><i>Study on national accounts in the ESCWA region: sources and methods 2009</i></p>	6/0	
		<p><i>A framework for</i></p>	4.5/4		

^{xxiv} Not in the programme fascicle (additional)

	<p>2008 5 countries</p> <p>(ii) Increased number of member countries that provide the ESCWA repository of data with at least 60 per cent of the core set of development indicators, including the Millennium Development Goals and gender dimension Performance measures: Baseline: 31 Dec 2007 5 countries</p>		<p>environmental – economic accounting in the ESCWA region: energy accounts 2009</p> <p>Study on international trade: sources, methods, and conceptual framework in the ESCWA region 2009</p> <p>Regional handbook on poverty measurement, including best practices, in the ESCWA region 2009</p> <p>Study on integrated household surveys in the ESCWA region, to enhance the production of indicators for monitoring MDGs 2008</p>	<p>4/3</p> <p>3.5/3</p> <p>4/0</p>	
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	<p>Target: 31 Dec 2009 7 countries Interim measurement 1: 31 Dec 2008 6 countries</p>	(iii) Booklets, fact sheets & charts	Maintenance and updating of ESCWA Homepage on Statistics 2008/09	2/0	
		(iv) Technical materials & maintenance of ESCWA Statistical Information System modules	Monitoring the MDGs: A statistical report 2008	3/0	
			The Statistical systems in the ESCWA region 2008/09	3/0	
			Information kits on the work of ESCWA in the statistical field, including one for the Statistical Committee 2008/09	2/0	
			Maintenance and updating of ESCWA Statistical Information System (ESIS) 2008/09	3/5	
			Development and refinement of Arabic terminology in the field of statistics 2008/09	8/3	
			Maintenance of the International Merchandise Trade Statistical Data Base 2008/09	3/2	
			Seminar on knowledge sharing for the development of gender statistics 2008/09	2/2	
				2/0	
				3/0	
	3/0				

			<i>Glossary of Gender Statistical Terms 2009</i>	3/0	
			<i>Maintenance of the YouthInfo Statistical Database for the UN-ESCWA region 2008/09</i>	2/0	
			<i>Census Net Forum 2008/09</i>		
			<i>Maintenance and update of Arab GenInfo 2009</i>		
			<i>Maintenance and update of the Arab DevInfo Training Team (ADITT) Net 2009</i>		

		<p><i>(b) Technical Cooperation</i> <i>(i) Advisory services^{xxv}</i></p>	<p><i>Harmonization of economic statistics and implementing SNA93, international trade and environment statistics and indicators 2008/09</i></p> <p><i>Population and housing censuses, household surveys, social and gender statistics and indicators 2008/09</i></p>	<p>7/0</p> <p>2/0</p>	
		<p><i>(ii) Field projects</i></p>	<p><i>Strengthening the development of international merchandise trade statistics and the compilation of e-commerce 2008/09</i></p> <p><i>Development of national gender statistics in Iraq, in collaboration with UNDG 2008</i></p> <p><i>Strengthening the use of statistical information in support of progress towards IADGs in the ESCWA region 2008/09</i></p> <p><i>Strengthening National Capacities in Environment</i></p>	<p>6/3</p> <p>4/2</p> <p>5/0</p> <p>7/4</p>	

^{xxv} Additional services were undertaken under Section 22 that is reported separately, but to which both Regional Advisers and the core staff of the Statistics Division participate.

			<p><i>Statistics, Indicators and Accounts in support of progress toward achieving the internationally agreed development goals in the ESCWA and ECLAC Regions.[Results of project were presented in the World Water Forum in MArch 2009. Session on data dissemination in coordination with MEDSTAT and UNSD] 2008/09</i></p> <p><i>Measuring Progress of Societies 2008/09</i></p>	3/0	
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UNITED NATIONS
Economic and Social Commission
for Western Asia
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM



NATIONS UNIES
Commission économique et sociale
pour l'Asie occidentale
MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

26 April 2010
File No.:

To: Directors of All Divisions/Centres/Units

From: Bader Omar AlDafa
Executive Secretary

Subject: *Streamlining ESCWA's Statistical Information Systems*

Within the context of our discussions in the development of the Strategic Framework for 2012-13, you may recall the decision of the Cabinet Meeting on 15 January 2010 to promote cross-fertilization amongst divisions, fostering better coordination, and a horizontal work approach of carrying out ESCWA's mandate.

I draw your attention to the need for a coherent approach to the collection, processing and dissemination of statistics in ESCWA. In this regard, this memorandum calls for improved coordination of ESCWA's statistical capacity, which recalls discussions from the meeting of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) in November 2009 about the need of strengthening ESCWA's role as centre of knowledge on information and statistics for an optimal use not only within ESCWA but also by our clients; Member Countries, UN Agencies, etc.

The objective is to ensure that ESCWA's statistics represents a solid information hub with credible, reliable, accessible and high quality data for regional partners and other stakeholders in developing evidence based policy making in member countries through promoting statistical coordination at the national level.

Effective 1 May 2010:

- (1) All future statistical data collection activities, whether standalone or being part of a broader project shall utilize only the common statistical data repository. The Statistics Division is the custodian of the statistical content of this repository.
- (2) Since ESCWA has invested in building, populating, maintaining, and disseminating its bilingual Statistical Information System (ESIS), the newly revised version of ESIS should be used and populated with the aim to become the repository of choice, and a statistical reference for data in ESCWA member countries.
- (3) Statistical Focal Points in each division shall ensure coordination of the statistical work, under the Leadership of the Director Statistics Division, in particular ensuring that statistical needs of the ESCWA divisions are satisfied. Directors are requested to nominate Statistical Focal Points prior to 1 May 2010.
- (4) In undertaking its statistical activity, ESCWA shall be guided by Principles Governing International Statistical Activities, and the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

(5) For specialized areas, or where the need arises, substantive divisions may contact and/or collect data directly from selected public agencies, especially when such data is not available at NSOs. In such a case, Statistical Focal Points (SFP) in each division should make sure to collaborate with the Statistics Division.

(6) For efforts which includes identifying and defining new indicators and benchmarks of progress, or refining current indicators in specialized areas, substantive divisions may collaborate directly with national and international agencies or organizations as long as they keep the Statistics Division informed in order to ensure coherence of indicators and their definitions.

(7) Due regard shall be paid to data sources and reduction of the response burden. To this end all new data requests shall be consulted, sufficiently in advance, by the divisional Statistical Focal Points and the Director of the Statistics Division. Whenever possible, data of a good quality already collected at the UN or by partner organizations shall be used.

(8) Due regard shall be paid to promoting statistical coordination at the national level. To this end each request for data from national sources shall be notified to national statistical offices by the Statistics Division.

(9) All existing data sets available on the ESCWA website shall be reviewed and revised where necessary, and only sets comprising quality data shall be retained on the public website. This review shall be completed prior to the World Statistics Day on 20 October 2010. Periodic reviews shall take place thereafter.

(10) Due regard shall be paid to securing sufficient resources for each statistical activity, including the initial data load and a sustainability of regular updates.

As custodian, the Statistics Division will be assisted by the Information and Communication Technology for Development Division which will oversee methodological aspects of technical solutions used for the ESCWA statistical database(s).

I count on your cooperation in ensuring that this process and division of responsibility is implemented, and these amendments to be shared with the staff at all levels within your area.

