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**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

Committee on Trade Policies in the States Members of the Economic  
and Social Commission for Western Asia  
Second session  
Online, 15-16 September 2021



Item 3 of the provisional agenda

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## **Annotations**

1. Opening of the session

The Committee on Trade Policies in the States Members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia was established pursuant to ESCWA resolution 332 (XXX) of 28 June 2018 on developing the work of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development, which split the Technical Committee into two committees. The United Nations Economic and Social Council approved the splitting in its resolution 2019/30 of 23 July 2019 and the newly created Committee on Trade Policies in the States Members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia held its first session in Amman, on 8 and 9 December 2019. Held virtually, the second session will open at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 15 September 2021.

2. Election of officers

Rule 18 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia states: "Member States shall chair the sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on a rotating basis, in the Arabic alphabetical order employed by the United Nations. Unless the Commission decides otherwise, those bodies shall elect all their other officers".\*

3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Rule 8 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, which apply to subsidiary bodies, states: "At the beginning of each session, once the Chair has assumed his/her duties in accordance with rule 12, the Committee shall adopt the agenda for that session on the basis of the provisional agenda". Pursuant to that rule, the Committee shall adopt the agenda and the organization of work as submitted in documents E/ESCWA/C.6/2021/L.1 and E/ESCWA/C.6/2021/L.2, respectively, or in amended forms.

## **Follow-up issues**

4. Implementation of trade policy activities under the ESCWA programme plan for 2020-2021 (E/ESCWA/C.6/2021/3)

The Committee will review activities undertaken in the field of trade policies under the ESCWA programme plan for 2020-2021. These activities include holding meetings, issuing publications and developing tools to support evidence-based policymaking.

The Committee is invited to take note of those activities and make comments and recommendations thereon.

5. Technical cooperation activities (E/ESCWA/C.6/2021/4)

The Committee will consider technical cooperation activities carried out by the ESCWA secretariat in response to requests from member States for support in the field of trade policies. Those activities include advisory services, training workshops and field projects. This is a standing agenda item for all ESCWA committees aimed at ensuring follow-up on technical cooperation requests made by member States and informing of developments in technical cooperation work methods.

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\* ESCWA member States in the Arabic alphabetical order are as follows: Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Tunisia, Algeria, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Sudan, Somalia, Iraq, Oman, the State of Palestine, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Mauritania and Yemen.

The Committee is invited to take note of those activities and discuss technical cooperation priorities and needs.

6. Implementation of recommendations made by the Committee at its first session  
(E/ESCWA/C.6/2021/5)

The Committee will review activities undertaken by the ESCWA secretariat pursuant to the recommendations made at its first session. The Committee is invited to take note of those activities and make comments thereon. The Committee is also invited to present actions taken at the national level to implement the recommendations addressed to member States.

### **Trade tools and analyses for 2030 Agenda implementation**

7. Arab Economy-wide Trade Simulator Interface (E/ESCWA/C.6/2021/6)

The Committee will examine a trade simulator interface, developed by ESCWA based on a tailored computable general equilibrium (CGE) model. The interface allows non-technical users to perform a large set of dynamic simulations on tariffs and other trade costs on goods by partner, sector and year. It covers 18 Arab countries individually and their major economic partners in the world.

The Committee is invited to provide comments on further developing the interface.

8. Arab customs union negotiations helpdesk: a demo version (E/ESCWA/C.6/2021/7)

The Committee will review a demo version of the Arab customs union (ACU) helpdesk, designed as a reliable and secure application that enables trade negotiators and stakeholders from ESCWA member States to engage and communicate on all issues related to ACU negotiations. The final version of the helpdesk will be developed by ESCWA based on feedback from member States.

The Committee is invited to provide feedback on the demo helpdesk.

9. Global survey on trade facilitation measures (E/ESCWA/C.6/2021/8)

The Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation provides information on the level of implementation of trade facilitation measures, particularly paperless trade, in addition to best practices during times of crisis and pandemic. The outcomes of the Survey will feed into a regional report on “Digital and sustainable trade facilitation implementation in the Arab region”.

The Committee is invited to review preliminary survey results and discuss means to further facilitate trade in the Arab region.

10. Index Simulator for Policymakers in the Arab Region (E/ESCWA/C.6/2021/9)

The Index Simulator for Policymakers in the Arab Region (ISPAR) developed by ESCWA is aimed at supporting policymakers and stakeholders, such as the private sector, civil society and academia, in Arab countries in testing the potential impact of specific policies on national rankings in selected international indicators.

The Committee is invited to examine ISPAR and make comments thereon.

## **Programmatic issues**

11. Round-table discussion: regional priorities for the coming years in the field of trade  
(E/ESCWA/C.6/2021/CRP.1)

The Committee will hold a round-table discussion on regional priorities in the field of trade, which will guide the work of the ESCWA secretariat in the period 2021-2026.

Member State representatives are invited to present their views on these priorities and participate actively in the discussion.

12. Date and venue of the third session of the Committee

The Committee will agree on the date and venue of its third session.

13. Other matters

This item shall cover any other matters that the Committee may wish to raise and discuss.

14. Adoption of recommendations made by the Committee at its second session

The Committee will consider the draft recommendations for discussion and adoption.

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