

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

Committee on Women
Tenth session
Beirut, 16–17 November 2021



Item 4 of the provisional agenda

**Implementation of activities on women's issues under the ESCWA
programme plan and of recommendations made
by the Committee at its ninth session****Summary**

The present document reviews the activities undertaken by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) as part of its programme plan on women's advancement and in implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on Women at its ninth session.

The Committee on Women held its ninth session in Amman on 26–27 November 2019, where it discussed issues related to gender equality, combating violence against women and removing obstacles to their full participation in the public sphere in the Arab region. At the end of its session, the Committee adopted a set of recommendations, some addressed to Member States and others to the ESCWA Executive Secretariat, which included issuing publications and studies, conducting research, organizing conferences and expert meetings, holding training sessions, publishing information materials and strengthening partnerships with relevant international and regional organizations.

The Committee on Women, at its tenth session, is invited to take note of what has been implemented and give opinions and provide feedback.

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Introduction

1. At the end of its ninth session in Amman, on 26 and 27 November 2019, the Committee on Women of ESCWA issued a series of recommendations, some addressed to Member States and others to the ESCWA Executive Secretariat.
2. This document presents the actions taken by the Executive Secretariat to implement the recommendations addressed to it, from December 2019 to September 2021, as well as its activities in implementing the ESCWA programme of work on the advancement of women, which included publishing studies, conducting research, organizing conferences and expert meetings, holding training courses and issuing informational materials. In addition, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and its repercussions, ESCWA has studied national response mechanisms and organized several activities to strengthen mechanisms to support women and mitigate the effects of the pandemic on women in the Arab region.
3. The ESCWA programme of work on the advancement of women aims to reduce gender disparity and promote women's empowerment in line with international conventions and conferences. It addresses various themes: (a) gender justice and equality; (b) combating violence against women; (c) supporting the Women, Peace and Security Agenda; (d) women's economic empowerment; (e) incorporating concepts of gender equality and assisting States to implement the goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
4. In implementation of the recommendations of the Women's Committee at its ninth session, ESCWA has expanded its partnerships with United Nations agencies, regional organizations, civil society organizations and academia to ensure that efforts are consolidated at the regional level, and has carried out many of its activities within the framework of these partnerships. Examples of such partnerships include close work with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Other partnerships are with regional institutions such as the League of Arab States, the Arab Women's Organization, the Association of Arab Banks and relevant international and regional organizations, research centres and civil society organizations such as Save the Children, the Arab Institute for Women at the Lebanese American University, the Peace Research Institute Oslo and the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security.

I. Support for Arab States to address the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on women and gender equality

5. ESCWA worked to support the Arab States in addressing the social and economic repercussions of COVID-19, particularly those affecting women and gender equality, by analysing the consequences of the pandemic, drawing future expectations of its effects and making practical recommendations to assist States in addressing them. Within this framework, a series of regional and national publications have been issued.
6. At the regional level, ESCWA issued a policy brief titled "[COVID-19: Economic Cost to the Arab Region](#)" to analyse the social and economic impact of COVID-19 and make policy recommendations. According to the brief, the losses suffered by Arab economies in 2020, given the sharp economic contractions, were estimated at \$42 billion. The importance of the brief in the context of this document is that it has contributed to understanding the macroeconomic situation, which women are an essential part of, both contributing to it and being affected by losses.
7. ESCWA issued two policy briefs on the impact of the pandemic on gender equality which provided a framework for discussing successful experiences and mechanisms for their dissemination during a series of virtual meetings with national mechanisms concerned with the advancement of the status of women:

(a) The first brief, titled “[The Impact of COVID-19 on Gender Equality in the Arab Region](#)”, was prepared in partnership with UN-Women, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO and WFP. It highlighted the effects of the pandemic on domestic violence in the Arab region as a result of lockdowns and forced proximity, and increased tensions in households because of [food insecurity](#) and fears of exposure to the virus. The brief also noted the effects of the pandemic on women’s reduced access to health services and the increased burden on them for home care. It also provided some estimates of the losses women might suffer as a result of the pandemic, such as the loss of 700,000 jobs, and policy proposals to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on women;

(b) The second brief, “Violence against Women and Girls and the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Arab Region”, was prepared in partnership with United Nations organizations working in the Arab region. It provided an assessment of violence against women in light of the pandemic and the services provided to survivors of violence in Arab countries, highlighting good experiences and identifying the gaps that need to be addressed to ensure that survivors have access to quality services.

8. The first policy brief and the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and girls were presented at an [extraordinary meeting of the Committee on Women](#) held by ESCWA virtually in partnership with UNFPA, UN-Women and UNDP on 23 April 2020. Arab States made presentations on the measures they had taken to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on women, so as to facilitate the learning process and identify successful experiences.

9. ESCWA also issued a policy brief on “[The Impact of COVID-19 on Young People in the Arab Region](#)”, which assessed the economic, social and psychological impact of the pandemic on young men and women, and proposed solutions to help Governments protect them at this critical stage and beyond, particularly from poverty, especially those living in rural areas, persons with disabilities and girls.

10. ESCWA designed the [COVID-19 Stimulus Tracker](#), a global tracker of social protection measures and economic policies adopted by 194 States, including Arab States, to respond to the pandemic and its health, economic and social impacts. ESCWA classified these measures by whether they consider a gender equality perspective and the economic aspect of unpaid care in particular.

11. At the national level, ESCWA and UN-Women prepared three studies in each of Iraq and Yemen on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures implemented at the national level to enhance women’s social protection and their economic and political participation in the countries. The study on the “[Impact of COVID-19 on Women’s Economic Participation in Iraq](#)” indicated that the pandemic had disrupted the country’s economic growth since 2017, and that current global tracking tools showed that the Government had not taken any measures related to women’s economic security or unpaid care work and only responded to social assistance and some measures to address the health situation and violence against women.

12. The study on “[The Impact of Conflict and COVID-19 on Iraqi Women’s Political Participation and Engagement in Peace Negotiations and Peacebuilding](#)” showed that intensive and organized women’s activism aimed at securing women’s rights is an important enabling factor, but that their representation in successive Governments remains limited. Finally, the study on the “[Impact of Social Protection Policies Responding to COVID-19 on Gender Equality in Iraq](#)” presented the measures implemented by the Iraqi Government to provide social protection for women such as granting paid leave and reducing working days to a minimum, developing a crisis response strategy and involving women and women’s organizations in their development, identifying response measures and transforming unfair and unpaid care work into new comprehensive economic care programmes.

13. The studies on Yemen, which will be published in late 2021, reached the same main conclusions. The study on “[The Impact of COVID-19 on Women’s Economic Participation in Yemen](#)” pointed out that limited access to markets in areas where curfews were imposed had a significant impact on women, especially on their work in the private sector, and women who own private schools have suffered from the fact that parents have stopped paying tuition fees. The study on “[The Impact of Conflict and COVID-19 on Yemeni Women’s Political Participation and Engagement in Peace Negotiations and Peacebuilding](#)” noted several threats to

women's livelihoods and survival, the loss of democratic mechanisms to ensure their participation in the political sphere and the changing social attitude towards them working outside the home. The study on the "The Impact of Social Protection Policies Responding to COVID-19 on Gender Equality in Yemen" showed some positive actions such as reduced working hours in the civil service, female employees receiving paid leave and pregnant women having the option of not going to work. Negative outcomes included women being at increased risk as the first to be laid off in many workplaces, increasingly being burdened by domestic cleaning and disinfection work and having increased responsibilities to manage the domestic and economic affairs of their families.

14. The studies on Iraq were launched virtually on 21 May 2021 in collaboration with the Women's Empowerment Department at the Iraqi Prime Minister's Office and with the participation of a number of policymakers, representatives of United Nations bodies, non-governmental organizations, experts on women's empowerment and civil society organizations. Speakers pointed out the importance of studies aimed at supporting the Iraqi Government to increase the effectiveness of its efforts to achieve gender equality during and after the pandemic.

II. Progress on gender equality and combating violence against women

15. ESCWA, in partnership with UNICEF and other organizations, published a study on the "Status of Women and Girls in the Middle East", which will be published in late 2021. It aims to provide a comprehensive picture on the life path of girls and women in the region to identify the main aspects of inequality they experience throughout its various stages, as well as gaps in data on gender equality issues. The analysis is based on the following four pillars: health and well-being; education and livelihood; violence against women and their rights and access to justice; and participation and leadership. The study process included a series of virtual meetings organized by ESCWA in April 2020 in partnership with relevant organizations to discuss preliminary results, initially launched in October 2019.

16. ESCWA prepared a paper titled "[Estimating the Cost of Child Marriage in the Arab Region: Background Paper on the Feasibility of Undertaking a Costing Study](#)", since such marriage constitutes a violation of human rights and a form of violence against women and girls and leads to many negative consequences for the development of children. This paper provides an overview of child marriage and its extent, motives and consequences in the Arab region. It also shows the importance of estimating the economic cost of child marriage and considers the possibility of conducting such a study, the availability of data and the appropriate framework for addressing child marriage in the Arab region. Accordingly, an economic model based on international expertise in this area was developed to identify the impact of child marriage on key demographic indicators such as education, fertility, health and economic participation and participation in decision-making based on data collected from four States: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Tunisia. This model will contribute to the development of a regional model.

17. ESCWA prepared a report on the "[Impact of Conflict on Child Marriage and Adolescent Fertility](#)", which reviews the increasing difficulties faced by women and girls in conflict-affected Arab countries and notes that younger girls are more vulnerable to deprivation than ever before because of their growing insecurities and exposure to violence in their communities, including child marriage. Child marriage also contributes to the transmission of deprivation across generations. This report adds another dimension to the understanding of the link between violent conflict and marriage and fertility behaviours of young women and the role of public policies in mitigating such practices. Its findings help develop an understanding of how demographic changes are linked to the dynamics of social exclusion, which engenders a cycle of poverty that is difficult to escape and weakens women and girls in the long term.

18. ESCWA published the "[Arab Gender Lens 2019 pocketbook](#)", the second edition of the publication, which provides a statistical picture of gender equality in 18 Arab countries by presenting key indicators on population, disability, education, health, empowerment and work, and identifying the situation of women and

girls compared to men and boys. The pocketbook makes data accessible to policymakers, researchers and civil society.

19. ESCWA launched the [Arab SDG Monitor](#), a database on gender equality statistics with 137 indicators over 10 themes and 92,655 reports. The database is a comprehensive source of gender equality statistics and information on various dimensions of gender inequality that aims to highlight differences and inequalities and can be used as a reliable source for decision-making, policy formulation and monitoring equalities for the benefit of women and men. The database contains consistent, comparable and regularly updated national data from across the Arab region, collected from various household surveys conducted by national statistical offices.

20. In the context of ESCWA's support to Arab States in estimating the economic cost of violence against women, a study titled "Estimating the Cost of the Economic Impact of Violence against Women" was published in partnership with the Ministry of Women's Affairs in the State of Palestine and the National University of Ireland, Galway. The study highlighted that one in four women had lost \$184 of their own money, equivalent to 12% of yearly non-food expenditures. In general, in 2018, the State of Palestine lost an estimated \$36 million to \$45 million. Violence against women caused survivors to lose 260,000 days of unpaid care work, while spouses lost 42,600 days and children lost more than 125,000 school days. Women missed nearly 173,000 days of paid work and their husbands missed 128,000 days because of incidents of violence. The study confirmed the possibility of increasing women's wages by between 41% and 52% by increasing their decision-making power and reducing marital violence.

21. ESCWA continued to monitor the economic and social conditions of Palestinian women and girls and issued its periodic report, "[Social and Economic Situation of Palestinian Women and Girls: July 2018–June 2020](#)", which is the 10th report in a series that ESCWA has prepared since 2003 to document progress in gender equality, empower Palestinian women and contribute to understanding developments in the legal, political, development and humanitarian sectors in the State of Palestine under Israeli occupation. The report was launched on the sidelines of the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women held virtually from 15 to 26 March 2021, at a virtual side event held in partnership with the Ministry of Women's Affairs in the State of Palestine on 18 March 2021. The event highlighted the reality of Palestinian women under Israeli occupation and raised awareness about policies needed to achieve gender equality and empower Palestinian women and girls.

22. Also on the sidelines of the sixty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, ESCWA, in partnership with India, Qatar, Sweden and Tanzania, organized a virtual event on 15 March 2021 on promoting women's political participation to achieve the sustainable development goals and improved redevelopment, during which ESCWA's efforts to support Member States in promoting women's political participation and access to public office, chronic and emerging barriers under the COVID-19 pandemic and public policies on incentive measures were discussed.

23. ESCWA, in partnership with the Jordanian National Commission for Women, the Ministry of Women's Affairs in the State of Palestine, UN-Women and the national mechanism for the advancement of the status of women in Pakistan, organized another virtual side event during the sixty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women on 15 March 2021 to discuss the process of implementing national strategies to combat violence against women and ensure the advancement of their rights and the effectiveness of these strategies. Good practices in developing national strategies for the advancement of women based on participatory efforts and providing a comprehensive national vision were presented and discussed during this event.

24. ESCWA collaborated with Saudi Arabia to hold a fourth virtual side event on 22 March 2021 on "Women's Economic Empowerment" to highlight the importance of considering women's empowerment in all areas to achieve economic progress and to create the right environment for women's progress. Related topics were also highlighted, such as women's access to economic opportunities and financial institutions,

social protection, equal pay, unpaid care work, informal work and women's entrepreneurship and small and medium-sized enterprises.

25. Ahead of the sixty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (New York, 9–20 March 2020), ESCWA sent the Arab Declaration on Progress in the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action after 25 Years, issued by Arab States at the [High-Level Conference on Progress Made in the Implementation of Beijing after Twenty-Five Years](#) held in Amman on 28 November 2019, to the permanent missions of Arab States to the United Nations in New York to be presented at the Commission's official meeting and included in its outputs to convey the voice of the region to this global platform.

26. During the [Arab Forum for Sustainable Development](#), held virtually from 29 to 31 March 2021, ESCWA presented a background paper titled "[Goal 5: Gender Equality – Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls](#)", prepared in partnership with UN-Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, the United Nations Environment Programme and UN-Habitat, and presented the most important challenges to the implementation of the goal in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures taken by Arab States to address them, and a series of recommendations were made in this regard.

27. Also, within the work of the forum, ESCWA, in partnership with UN-Women, UNDP, UNFPA and the Arab Women's Organization (AWO), held a dedicated session to discuss the Gender Justice and Law Initiative, highlighting national experiences and contributing to bridging legal gaps to address gender inequality in the Arab region.

28. As part of the work on estimating the economic cost of the Sustainable Development Goals, ESCWA held a meeting on "[Methodologies for estimating the costs of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5](#)", on 26 and 27 July 2021, bringing together international and regional experts to discuss the first draft of its report and the preliminary findings on methods and methodologies for estimating the cost of Goal 5. The meeting considered a number of methodologies, particularly to calculate the cost of implementing target 5.1 on eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and girls everywhere, and target 5.2 on eliminating all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including human trafficking, sexual exploitation and other forms of exploitation, as well as target 5.4 on recognizing unpaid care and domestic work, estimating the cost of providing public services and infrastructure, developing social protection policies and promoting shared responsibility within the household and family, as appropriate at the national level.

29. In an effort to keep pace with global women's activities, and to mobilize support for the rights of women and girls and promote women's political and economic participation in the Arab region, ESCWA organized several activities on International Women's Day, which is celebrated on 8 March each year, and in partnership with the UN-Women Regional Office for Arab States and Save the Children International, launched in 2020 the [International Women's Day 2020](#) website: "I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights" and a social media campaign to amplify the voices of girls from Lebanon, the State of Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic and encourage individuals to make commitments for girls. In 2021, ESCWA organized a virtual symposium titled [Women's Leadership in the Arab Region](#), which hosted six Arab women who reviewed their successful experiences in the economic, social and sports fields and shared their experiences in reaching their current positions.

30. On the occasion of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence for the year 2020 and in collaboration with the Arab Institute for Women at the Lebanese American University in Beirut (LAU), ESCWA launched a social media campaign and a [regional youth arts competition with the theme of "Life in Times of Emergency"](#), in light of the many emergencies in the Arab region, including the COVID-19 pandemic, conflicts, chronic occupation, natural disasters and toxic explosions. On the same occasion, on 9 December 2020, ESCWA, in collaboration with UNDP and the National Family Safety Program of Saudi Arabia, held a symposium on violence against women, which addressed the definition of violence against women, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

on violence against women. The symposium allowed the exchange of good practices in providing a full-fledged, multi-disciplinary response to violence against women.

31. On 25 February 2020, ESCWA, in collaboration with UN-Women and LAU, organized a panel discussion titled Women's Representation in Lebanon and the Arab Region: Elections and Women in Politics and the Judiciary, during which the main findings of ESCWA's study on [Women in the Judiciary in the Arab States: Removing Barriers, Increasing Numbers](#) were presented and discussed together with key recommendations to decision-makers on how to achieve fair representation of women in the judiciary and ways to enhance women's representation in the public sphere in Lebanon.

32. ESCWA, in partnership with UN-Women and WHO, organized a meeting to strengthen the implementation of a survey on the prevalence of violence against women in the Arab region, which was held in Egypt from 15 to 17 October 2019. The aim of the meeting was to: (a) deepen knowledge among national statistical offices, national women's affairs mechanisms and stakeholders on measuring violence against women in line with universally agreed methodological and ethical standards; (b) strengthen links between global, regional and national efforts to improve data on violence against women and activate programmes and policies; (c) identify challenges in measuring violence against women in the Arab region; and (d) share good practices and lessons learned in conducting violence against women surveys.

33. ESCWA organized four national training workshops in Egypt, in partnership with the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), to build capacity on gender equality statistics and how to use the [ESCWA e-learning platform](#), which was launched in 2018. The first workshop was held from 18 to 21 March 2019 and was attended by 22 participants; the second from 4 to 11 February 2020 and was attended by 12 trainees and statistic producers from CAPMAS; the third from 9 to 12 March 2020, in partnership with the National Council for Women and in coordination with UNFPA, attended by 23 trainees; and the fourth from 15 to 18 November 2020, attended by 15 participants.

III. Progress in the implementation of the women, peace and Security agenda

34. Based on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which gave rise to the women, peace and security agenda and which recognizes the unique impact of conflict on women and girls and the essential role that women and girls can play in conflict prevention and resolution, and based on the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism, ESCWA, through the production of knowledge materials, has sought to inform Member States of the importance of developing national action plans to prevent violent extremism, including:

(a) The [policy brief on "A Gender-Informed Approach to the Prevention of Violent Extremism in the Arab Region"](#) which provides key ideas for policymakers and various stakeholders to integrate gender equality issues into strategies dedicated to preventing violent extremism at the national level, and outlines the challenges that need to be addressed when integrating a gender equality perspective. In this context, the brief addresses four key elements: recognizing the discriminatory nature of violent extremism; acknowledging that women themselves may be parties to violent extremism; identifying the different roles women can play in preventing violent extremism; and ensuring that strategies to prevent violent extremism do not violate women's rights. The policy brief presents the programmes and strategies adopted to prevent violent extremism in four Arab countries, namely Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia, which are selected to provide examples of multiple approaches to the development of this type of strategy;

(b) The policy brief on ["Engaging Religious Leaders in Advancing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda"](#), which was prepared in collaboration with the League of Arab States and addressed relevant policymakers concerned with implementing this plan in the region;

(c) The policy brief on ["Linkages between United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and Other International Frameworks and Mechanisms for the Advancement of](#)

[Women's Rights](#)", which presents substantive and procedural linkages between the resolution and international frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and urges States in the region to adopt an integrative approach to protecting and promoting women's rights;

(d) A regional report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 after 20 years, which will be published in early 2022 and provides a review of the interaction of Arab States with the resolution, whether through the preparation of national plans that consider the mechanisms for its implementation at the national level or through other policies that contribute to the implementation of the resolution at several levels. In this context, national briefs were also prepared and included in the report dealing with the relevant legislation and the standard indicator for the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda;

(e) Finally, the policy brief on "[Employing a gendered approach to transitional justice in the Arab region: Potential role of national women's machineries](#)" looks into how transitional justice processes in Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen have addressed gender equality. It further recommends an increased role of national women's machineries in such processes to ensure that the interests and needs of women and girls are adequately addressed throughout the recovery and reconstruction phases, particularly in efforts to strengthen social cohesion.

35. ESCWA organized a number of events on the subject of women, peace and security. On 15 December 2020, a virtual panel discussion on Member States' interaction with the women, peace and security agenda was held in partnership with the League of Arab States, focusing on the ESCWA policy briefs, the first on adopting a gender-informed approach to prevent violent extremism in the Arab region, and the second on engaging religious leaders in advancing the women, peace and security agenda, where participants provided an analysis of the regional and international situation in relevant fields.

36. On the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, ESCWA organized a [high-level virtual regional meeting](#) on 4 November 2020, in collaboration with UN-Women, the League of Arab States and the Arab Institute for Women at LAU, to consider the efforts of States in the Arab region to advance the women, peace and security agenda, launch regional deliberations on progress with regards to the Agenda and discuss the role of national agendas to implement it in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

IV. Progress on gender justice

37. ESCWA has worked with partners to develop the Gender Justice and the Law project, which it has been implementing for several years with UNDP, UN-Women and the UNFPA Regional Offices to include a greater number of legal issues and areas to promote and enforce women's civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Relevant national reports and workshops have been updated to confirm the results in 20 Arab countries.

38. The [website on "Gender Justice and the Law"](#) was launched in Arabic, on 10 December 2020, International Human Rights Day. The website provides national and regional Arab reports related to the initiative, which contributes to providing an opportunity to exchange experiences and learn about the legislation approved by States to promote justice and gender equality. United Nations organizations participating in the initiative rely on Arab States to provide legislative texts that are developed, amended and approved by legislative assemblies that serve justice and gender equality, and these are then studied and the different classifications of States are periodically reviewed based on the methodology previously adopted under the initiative.

39. To raise awareness of the initiative, ESCWA, in partnership with UN-Women, UNDP, UNFPA, the Ministry of Solidarity, Social Development, Equality and Family of Morocco and the Jordanian National Committee for Women's Affairs, organized a virtual side event during the sixty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women on 23 March 2021, during which ESCWA presented its developed tool with the three United Nations partner organizations and their working mechanisms to support States in

achieving gender equality and justice in the legislative framework and in strengthening their commitment to international frameworks and considering the implications of inequality before the law. The necessary short, medium and long-term strategies and interventions were discussed to accelerate the adoption of laws promoting women's rights and addressing gender inequality.

V. Progress on women's economic empowerment

40. From 28 to 30 July 2020, ESCWA, in partnership with ILO, organized a [virtual meeting of an expert group on women's economic empowerment in the Arab region](#) to discuss the proposed structure and the initial outline of a study prepared by ESCWA on the subject. Experts also discussed the dynamics of women's participation in the economy and how to support Member States to promote women's economic empowerment and move women from unpaid to paid work.

41. In the same context, with the aim of enriching the regional understanding of women's economic empowerment, ESCWA in partnership with ILO published a report titled "[Towards a productive and inclusive path: Job creation in the Arab region](#)". The report included a specific chapter on "Employment creation for women: Promising sectors do exist" and provided recommendations for decision makers, including the need to improve the functioning of the private sector to be gender inclusive, and to eliminate social biases.

42. ESCWA has prepared a study on "[Propelling Women into Entrepreneurship in the Arab Region: The Role of Information and Communication Technology \(ICT\)](#)" that looks at the extent of women's participation in entrepreneurship in the Arab region, the structural challenges facing entrepreneurs in general, the challenges facing women in particular in establishing and maintaining businesses and the role of ICT in mitigating these challenges. This study seeks to identify structural and individual obstacles to women's participation in entrepreneurship in the Arab region by collecting and analysing data to identify missed opportunities and make recommendations to policymakers.

VI. Progress in integrating a gender perspective into public institutions

43. Complementing ESCWA's leading role and achievements in implementing the Action Plan for Gender Equality in United Nations organizations internally, and as part of its ongoing efforts to support Member States in implementing the Action Plan in national institutions and women's machineries, the Executive Secretariat has issued a set of knowledge products that will keep pace and facilitate the implementation of the Action Plan. These products include a document titled "[Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment at the Level of National Mechanisms: Technical Notes on Performance Indicators](#)", which provides the necessary information and technical guidance on the use of performance indicators and how to lead, monitor and develop annual reports on progress in achieving these indicators, in order to support the efforts of national mechanisms for women's advancement in the context of reviewing the institutional structure and institutionalizing gender equality issues in various areas of management and programmes.

44. ESCWA issued a six-part guide titled "[Towards More Gender Inclusive National Institutions: Concepts and Guidelines](#)", on institutional policies and plans, gender-responsive job performance management for male and female staff, evaluation, institutional culture, resource tracking and capacity development. Each part addresses a plan performance indicator and provides clear instructions for achieving it.

45. In the same context, ESCWA developed a tool in 2021 to monitor the progress of national institutions in achieving performance indicators for the "[Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment within National Institutions](#)" and to prepare annual progress reports. This tool provides a unified and step-by-step measure that monitors progress in implementing indicators and aims to support institutions in following up their progress in achieving equality internally at the level of their work and identifying the necessary actions to stimulate progress. The tool also provides an electronic platform to ensure the confidentiality of information. It will enable decision-makers to standardize the concept of gender equality in a practical way, monitor progress and identify gaps at the level of the institution's work in the field of achieving gender equality.

VII. Implementation of recommendations made by the Committee at its ninth session

46. The ESCWA Executive Secretariat worked to implement a number of activities referred to in chapters II to VI of this document, in accordance with the recommendations addressed to it by the Committee on Women at its ninth session. The table below shows each of these recommendations and the materials published or the meetings held for their implementation. Paragraph numbers refer to the present document and are provided as a reference for more information on each activity.

Recommendations	Related activities
<p>(a) Continue to support Member States within the focus areas of the ESCWA Centre for Women, namely, violence against women, women, peace and security, and gender justice, integrate a gender equality perspective into public institutions, further develop knowledge related to the implementation of the SDGs in particular Goal 5 and the means and purposes of implementation and continue to support Member States in developing national strategies and action plans to implement their commitments and aspirations on issues relating to women's advancement.</p>	<p>The document E/ESCWA/C.7/2021/4 on technical cooperation activities submitted to the Committee at its tenth session can be reviewed under agenda item 5.</p> <p>A meeting on strengthening the implementation of prevalence surveys on violence against women in the Arab region was held in Egypt from 15 to 17 October 2019 (para. 32).</p> <p>Four national training workshops in Egypt to build capacity on gender equality statistics and how to use the ESCWA e-learning platform in this area (para. 33).</p> <p>Policy brief on “A Gender-Informed Approach to the Prevention of Violent Extremism in the Arab Region” (para. 34).</p> <p>Policy brief on “Engaging Religious Leaders in Advancing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda” (para. 34).</p> <p>Policy brief on “Linkages between United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and Other International Frameworks and Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women’s Rights” (para. 34).</p> <p>Policy Brief on “Employing a gendered approach to transitional justice in the Arab region: Potential role of national women’s machineries” (para. 34)</p> <p>Virtual panel discussion on “Member States’ interaction with the Women, Peace and Security Agenda” (para. 35).</p> <p>A high-level virtual regional meeting on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (para. 36).</p>

Recommendations	Related activities
	<p>Development of the “Gender Justice and the Law” initiative to include a greater number of legal issues and areas to promote and enforce women’s civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights (para. 36).</p> <p>Launch of the “Gender Justice and the Law” website (para. 38).</p> <p>A virtual event to present the tool developed by ESCWA and its working mechanisms to support States in achieving gender equality and justice in the legislative framework, in partnership with UN-Women, UNDP, UNFPA and the Ministry of Solidarity, Social Development, Equality and Family of Morocco and the Jordanian National Committee for Women’s Affairs (para. 38).</p>
<p>(b) “The Arab Declaration on Progress in the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action after 25 Years” has been widely published and distributed, particularly to those involved in the negotiations of the final document to be issued by the Commission on the Status of Women at its sixty-fourth session, to ensure that the outcome document reflects the priorities of Arab States.</p>	<p>Sending of the “The Arab Declaration on Progress in the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action after 25 Years” to the permanent missions of Arab States to the United Nations in New York to be presented as part of the official meeting of the Commission on the Status of Women at its 64th session and included in its outputs (para. 25).</p>
<p>(c) Expand studies on critical areas of interest in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Action Plan and the SDGs, including barriers to women’s economic participation and recognition of their role.</p>	<p>Study on “Status of Women and Girls in the Middle East” (para. 15).</p> <p>Study on “Towards a productive and inclusive path: Job creation in the Arab region” (para. 40).</p>
<p>(d) Provide the necessary technical support to launch the Action Plan to achieve gender equality in national institutions through the national mechanisms concerned with women’s affairs in the Arab States, and continue to work on building and strengthening the necessary capacities in this framework.</p>	<p>The document E/ESCWA/C.7/2021/4 on technical cooperation activities submitted to the Committee at its tenth session can be reviewed under agenda item 5.</p>
<p>(e) Continue to develop tools that contribute to defining aspects of inequality and discrimination, including issues related to combating violence against women, and services and mechanisms that provide quality services to survivors of violence.</p>	<p>A virtual side event to discuss the process of implementing national strategies to combat violence against women and ensure the advancement of their rights, and the effectiveness of these strategies, on the sidelines of the sixty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations (para. 23).</p>

Recommendations	Related activities
<p>(f) Support Member States in developing national systems for documenting cases of violence against women and girls, protection orders and access shelters, deepening knowledge of women's economic participation, and their participation in the ICT sector.</p>	<p>Study on “The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women’s Economic Participation in Iraq” (para. 12).</p> <p>Study on “The Impact of the Conflict and the COVID-19 Pandemic on Iraqi Women’s Political Participation and Engagement in Peace Negotiations and Peacebuilding” (para. 12).</p> <p>Study on “The impact of social protection policies responding to the COVID-19 pandemic on gender equality in Iraq” (para. 12).</p> <p>Study on “The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women’s Economic Participation in Yemen” (para. 13).</p> <p>Study on “The Impact of the Conflict and the COVID-19 Pandemic on Yemeni Women’s Political Participation and Engagement in Peace Negotiations and Peacebuilding” (para. 13).</p> <p>Study on “Impact of Social Protection Policies Responding to COVID-19 on Gender Equality in Iraq” (para. 13).</p> <p>Launch of the above studies during a virtual conference (para. 14).</p> <p>A virtual side event on “Women’s Economic Empowerment”, during the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (para. 24).</p>
<p>(g) Work with the national mechanisms concerned with women's affairs and other stakeholders to develop the competence of workers in the judiciary and integrate the concepts of international conventions and a gender equality perspective into their training programmes.</p>	<p>The document E/ESCWA/C.7/2021/4 on technical cooperation activities submitted to the Committee at its tenth session can be reviewed under agenda item 5.</p> <p>Panel discussion titled “Women’s Representation in Lebanon and the Arab Region: Elections and Women in Politics and the Judiciary” (para. 31).</p>
<p>(h) Continue to provide support to Member States in the field of combating violence against women, by developing national strategies to combat violence, reviewing their legislation and regulations, estimating the economic cost of violence against women and expanding the development of tools to account for other aspects of discrimination against women.</p>	<p>The document E/ESCWA/C.7/2021/4 on technical cooperation activities submitted to the Committee at its tenth session can be reviewed under agenda item 5.</p> <p>Working paper on “Estimating the Cost of Child Marriage in the Arab Region: Background Paper on the Feasibility of Undertaking a Costing Study” (para. 16).</p> <p>Report on “Impact of Conflict on Child Marriage and Adolescent Fertility” (para. 17).</p>

Recommendations	Related activities
	<p>National study titled “Estimating the Cost of the Economic Impact of Violence against Women” (para. 19).</p> <p>Meeting on “Estimating the economic cost of achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5” (para. 28).</p>
<p>(i) Continue to provide technical support and exchange of experiences to Member States in order to develop and support public institutions concerned with issues of gender equality and women’s empowerment, including national women’s machineries, in order to be effective and able to carry out their tasks, by supporting the development of policies and strategies.</p>	<p>The document E/ESCWA/C.7/2021/4 on technical cooperation activities submitted to the Committee at its tenth session can be reviewed under agenda item 5.</p>
<p>(j) Continue to monitor the economic and social conditions of Palestinian women and girls under occupation and use the occasion of the passage of ten years since the periodic report issued by ESCWA to document trends in the accumulated repercussions of the Israeli occupation and submit them to international mechanisms.</p>	<p>Periodic report on “Social and Economic Situation of Palestinian Women and Girls: July 2018–June 2020” (para. 21).</p>
<p>(k) Support the State of Palestine in promoting gender equality and empowering women within its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, building on available data to determine the economic cost of violence and ensuring the allocation of adequate financial and human resources to implement the national Action Plan relating to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).</p>	<p>The document E/ESCWA/C.7/2021/4 on technical cooperation activities submitted to the Committee at its tenth session can be reviewed under agenda item 5.</p> <p>National study titled “Estimating the Cost of the Economic Impact of Violence against Women” (para. 20).</p>
<p>(l) Continue providing technical support to the Subcommittee on Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals and provide the diverse knowledge and tools to assist Member States in accelerating the implementation of the Goals and their targets, especially those related to gender equality and extend an invitation to participate in the Subcommittee’s activities to the relevant national mechanisms mainly concerned with women’s affairs, with an open invitation to other</p>	<p>The document E/ESCWA/C.7/2021/4 on technical cooperation activities submitted to the Committee at its tenth session can be reviewed under agenda item 5.</p> <p>“Arab Gender Lens 2019 pocketbook” (para. 18).</p> <p>Launch of the Arab SDG Monitor. (para. 18)</p> <p>Background paper titled “Goal 5: Gender Equality – Achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls” (para. 26).</p>

Recommendations	Related activities
stakeholders, including the national statistical offices.	
(m) Undertake activities to support States in employing enabling technology, especially ICT, to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls.	Study on “ Propelling Women into Entrepreneurship in the Arab Region: The Role of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) ” (para. 42).
(n) Continue forging partnerships and strengthening cooperation between various stakeholders, including Governments, the private sector, academic institutions and civil society, and link them to national women’s machineries and national statistical offices to support regional and national efforts for the advancement of women in all areas.	Virtual symposium titled “ Women’s Leadership in the Arab Region ” (para. 29). The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence on Social Media and a regional youth arts competition with the theme of “Life in Times of Emergency ” (para. 30).
