



## Report

### Tenth session of the Committee on Women Beirut, 16-17 November 2021

#### Summary

The Committee on Women of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its tenth session in Beirut on 16 and 17 November 2021. Participants were also given the opportunity to attend the session virtually. The Committee on Women reviewed the measures taken by Arab countries and the ESCWA secretariat to implement the recommendations made by the Committee at its ninth session, and assessed progress made in implementing activities on women's issues under the ESCWA programme plan. The Committee was also briefed on ESCWA efforts to promote gender equality and support member States in fulfilling their national and international commitments. Moreover, the Committee reviewed ESCWA support to the Subcommittee on Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Committee focused on the topic of “recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and advancing gender equality”. It also held, as part of its tenth session, a workshop on an ESCWA toolkit to support States in designing national policies that mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment concerns.

At the close of its tenth session, the Committee adopted recommendations addressed to member States and to the ESCWA secretariat, for implementation in the next two years.

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## Introduction

1. The Committee on Women of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its tenth session in Beirut on 16 and 17 November 2021, pursuant to ESCWA resolution 240 (XXII) of 17 April 2003 adopted by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2003/9 of 18 July 2004 on the establishment within the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia of a committee on women, and pursuant to the recommendations made by the Committee at its ninth session, held in Amman on 26 and 27 November 2019. Given the current health crisis, participants were also given the opportunity to attend the session virtually.

2. The Committee on Women follows up on global and regional conferences related to women and on members States' participation therein, and coordinates the efforts of member States and regional organizations in implementing the resolutions and recommendations issued by those conferences. The present report sets out the recommendations made by the Committee at the close of its tenth session, addressed to ESCWA member States and to the ESCWA secretariat. The report also includes a summary of the discussions under each agenda item.

### I. Recommendations by the Committee on Women at its tenth session

3. At the close of its tenth session, the Committee on Women adopted recommendations addressed to member States and to the ESCWA secretariat.

#### A. Recommendations to ESCWA member States

4. At the close of its tenth session, the Committee on Women adopted the following recommendations addressed to member States:\*

(a) Welcome progress in implementing the recommendations made by the Committee on Women at its ninth session, and urge countries that have not yet submitted their implementation reports to the ESCWA secretariat to do so by 15 December 2021;

(b) Note the efforts made at the national level in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, commend the rapid response of the ESCWA secretariat to support countries in that regard, emphasize the importance of continuing to work on integrating gender equality to tackle similar crises in the future, focus on women's needs in national plans to recover from the effects of the pandemic, and continue monitoring and following up on national responses to the pandemic and its effects on women;

(c) Welcome the vision presented by the ESCWA secretariat on transforming the knowledge it produces to support decision makers in member States into interactive tools using online portals, which benefit decision makers through various applications in real time and according to their needs, especially those that support efforts to achieve gender equality;

(d) Continue working to protect and empower groups of women at risk by adopting appropriate policies and programmes, and building on the knowledge and tools developed by ESCWA;

(e) Continue reviewing and updating legislation and developing national policies and plans to ensure the achievement of gender equality, the provision of social protection for women, and the protection of survivors of violence, with a focus on including women's issues in mitigating the effects of climate change;

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\* Countries apply the terms contained in these recommendations in accordance with their national specificities.

(f) Continue the work of the ESCWA Subcommittee on Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals, and develop mechanisms for transferring its knowledge to the national level, so as to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and national priorities;

(g) Emphasize the importance of developing national statistical systems and producing data disaggregated by sex, and continue work on providing SDG indicators to strengthen national observatories on women's issues;

(h) Build partnerships with the private sector and activate its role in eliminating discrimination against women in the workplace, including with regard to equal employment opportunities, wages, promotions and access to decision-making positions;

(i) Take note of preparations for an international conference on the status of Palestinian women in the aftermath of the May 2021 military attacks; continue supporting the Palestinian people, especially women and girls; call for an end to the Israeli occupation and for justice and lasting peace for all Palestinians; and affirm the importance of issuing a resolution similar to Security Council resolution No. 1325 (2000) that takes into account the specificities of Palestinian women under Israeli occupation.

## **B. Recommendations to the ESCWA secretariat**

5. The Committee on Women adopted the following recommendations addressed to the ESCWA secretariat:

(a) Continue preparing studies and technical papers that contribute to the work of national women's machineries in the areas of competence of the ESCWA secretariat, especially combating violence against women, estimating the economic costs of various forms of violence, implementing the women, peace and security agenda, promoting gender justice, and protecting older women and women with disabilities;

(b) Support national observatories in their efforts to develop indicators for the advancement of women and gender equality based on international conventions and declarations and on country reports, and establish the necessary mechanisms to monitor and follow up on gender equality indicators;

(c) Provide technical support to countries, according to their needs, in various areas including the following:

- Developing national strategies and policies related to gender equality, economic empowerment, women's political participation, and their protection from violence.
- Preparing national plans to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the women, peace and security agenda, to evaluate them and to follow up on their implementation.
- Estimating the economic cost of different forms of violence against women and girls.
- Providing support in using the tools developed by the ESCWA secretariat in the field of women's empowerment.
- Providing support to countries affected by armed conflict, crisis or war, and to countries in post-conflict situations, while taking into account their special needs.
- Mainstreaming the concept of gender equality in public institutions.

(d) Continue organizing regional or subregional workshops and meetings to learn about the achievements of countries and to promote the exchange of experiences and expertise between countries with common priorities;

(e) Continue providing support to the Palestinian people in their struggle to obtain their rights as stipulated in international law, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; continue monitoring the economic and social conditions of Palestinian women and girls under occupation, and continue preparing the periodic report on the repercussions of the Israeli occupation for Palestinian women and girls;

(f) Continue issuing technical papers that contribute to developing knowledge and mechanisms, and formulating training programmes for members of the Subcommittee on Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals that include a focus on SDG 5 and other related Goals;

(g) Continue implementing the gender justice programme; provide a platform that allows countries to view the legislative achievements of others to facilitate learning and the transfer of experiences; and work with countries on annual periodic reports on legislative developments in the region, to be submitted to the ESCWA Committee on Women;

(h) Provide support to member States in areas such as preparing studies, developing analytical tools to identify differences in the needs of households headed by women and those headed by men, and formulating policy options to bridge the gap between them;

(i) Continue monitoring and evaluating the responses of member States in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on women and family stability;

(j) Continue expanding partnerships with international and regional organizations working in the field of gender equality to maximize benefits for member States.

## **II. Topics of discussion**

### **A. Follow-up issues**

#### *1. Implementation of activities on women's issues under the ESCWA programme plan and of recommendations made by the Committee at its ninth session* (Agenda item 4)

6. With reference to document [E/ESCWA/C.7/2021/3](#), the representative of the ESCWA secretariat made a presentation on progress in implementing the activities of the ESCWA programme plan since the ninth session of the Committee on Women and the recommendations emanating therefrom. She said that some changes had been made to the ESCWA work method over the past two years to keep pace with developments worldwide, and especially those in the Arab region. One of the changes was an internal restructuring of ESCWA divisions and sections. However, the ESCWA work mechanism remained based on generating knowledge through the issuance of studies and technical papers, and creating consensus through organizing meetings and providing technical support to member States. She added that ESCWA had recently accomplished a key achievement, which was the development of easy-to-use policy tools to help decision makers formulate various scenarios to choose the most appropriate among them, which helped member States make better use of their limited national resources.

7. With regard to the restructuring of ESCWA, she said that the Centre for Women still existed but it had been combined with 12 other files into one cluster, namely the Gender Justice, Population and Inclusive Development Cluster, which would enrich work on women's issues and gender equality, and introduce women's rights and needs in topics where they had not previously been addressed. She provided some examples of the work carried out by ESCWA, which combined women's issues with other topics, such as the rights of the displaced, better job opportunities and the rights of older persons. She said that ESCWA worked on those

issues in collaboration with a large number of partners, including the secretariat of the League of Arab States, other United Nations organizations, civil society organizations, research centres and universities.

8. She reviewed the activities implemented since the previous session of the Committee on Women, notably the considerable and varied support provided by ESCWA to member States in addressing the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on women's issues and gender equality at the regional and national levels. At the regional level, 12 policy briefs had been prepared, taking into account the themes of gender equality and women's empowerment. The COVID-19 Stimulus Tracker had also been established and presented to the Committee at a special session held in April 2021. The Tracker included actions taken by 194 countries to address the repercussions of the pandemic, categorized to reflect the extent to which they took into account the perspective of gender equality. At the national level, support had been provided to member States, such as Iraq and Yemen. Three studies had been prepared in each country on the effects of the pandemic on women's economic and political participation and the effects of COVID-19-responsive social protection policies on gender equality.

9. She highlighted key activities carried out in each of the main areas of work of the Centre for Women. In the field of gender equality and combating violence against women, she said that work had been done on the issue of a coordinated response to violence against women, and that the work that ESCWA had started several years ago on calculating the economic cost of marital violence against women had been expanded given its benefits for decision makers. The first study of its kind had been prepared in the region on calculating the economic cost of child marriage, and the cost of implementing SDG 5. The Centre for Women had also expanded in providing data from the perspective of gender equality, and had collaborated with the Statistics Division to develop a database classified by gender, providing 137 indicators distributed over 18 themes. As for progress in implementing the women, peace and security agenda, a new dimension had been introduced to examine ways to prevent religious extremism, and assess the opportunities available to involve religious leaders in the proposed solutions. ESCWA had also conducted a detailed regional study to analyse the achievements of countries 20 years after the issuance of Security Council resolution 1325. In the field of gender justice, she noted the regional initiative launched by ESCWA in partnership with other United Nations entities on gender justice and equality before the law, which would be covered in detail under another agenda item. She added that new topics in the field of women's economic empowerment had also been explored, including the issue of wages and the feminization of work sectors, and the issue of the care economy and its links to women's economic empowerment.

10. Regarding mainstreaming a gender equality perspective in public institutions, she referred to the work that ESCWA was doing internally in implementing the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (SWAP), and how that work had been translated several years ago into a project implemented in member States to support them in mainstreaming a gender equality perspective in their institutions, by providing performance indicators to ensure and monitor progress on gender equality at the institutional level. She added that six guides had been published, each dealing with a set of indicators; and an online tool had been developed to help countries submit reports and set a baseline to assess progress. Successful experiences in that field had been recorded in Jordan, Mauritania and Qatar.

## *2. Technical cooperation activities* (Agenda item 5)

11. With reference to document [E/ESCWA/C.7/2021/4](#), the representative of the ESCWA secretariat made a presentation on the technical support provided by ESCWA to member States, based on requests for bilateral cooperation that it received directly from them. She explained that the work methodology of technical cooperation was based on providing technical advice on public policy issues, organizing capacity-building workshops, and designing and implementing pilot field projects, using knowledge products and tools developed by ESCWA.

12. She presented key activities conducted by ESCWA in the field of technical support over the period 2020-2021, which revolved around the following topics: responding to the COVID-19 pandemic; combating violence against women; women, peace and security; gender justice; women's political participation; women's economic participation; member States' interaction with international mechanisms concerned with women's rights; and mainstreaming the concept of gender equality at all levels. She noted that the implemented activities included a large number of workshops and advisory services at the national and regional levels.

13. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Jordan thanked ESCWA for its efforts and continuous activity during the past two years despite the COVID-19 pandemic. She stressed the importance of the "clusters" that had resulted from the ESCWA restructuring process, and the need to consider how national mechanisms could benefit from such an experience. She noted the many difficulties faced by Jordanian national machineries in working on sectoral issues, such as poverty and older persons issues, owing to the reluctance of State institutions to involve them in those issues. She also thanked ESCWA for the institutional support it provided to the Jordanian National Commission for Women in mainstreaming gender equality, noting the importance of follow-up and the continual and institutional impact of that support. She added that the Jordanian National Commission for Women was applying what it had learned in the field of mainstreaming gender equality in governmental institutions.

14. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic thanked ESCWA for its continued efforts, despite the great challenges faced in the recent period. She stressed that her country, Government and people, was interested in all issues related to women and supporting gender equality. She therefore requested the representative of the ESCWA secretariat to provide more information on a women's research centre that ESCWA had established in Bahrain.

15. The representative of Iraq thanked the representative of the ESCWA secretariat for her valuable presentation, and commented on the three studies prepared by ESCWA on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Iraqi women, which included several social, economic and political issues. She requested that ESCWA share with them updated versions. She also requested that national experts be carefully selected in the future to reach solid results that decision makers could rely on, and that ESCWA provide the Directorate for the Empowerment of Iraqi Women with the studies it produced to contribute to their dissemination at the national level.

16. The representative of Egypt thanked ESCWA for hosting the current important meeting, and for its continuous work and efforts. He said that the COVID-19 pandemic had exhausted national and international efforts over the past two years, with significant repercussions for the status of women in all its aspects, including their civil and political rights and social and economic circumstances. He indicated the multiplicity of frameworks and areas of work at the regional and international levels to deal with those repercussions, noting that the focus on addressing the repercussions of the pandemic was a positive approach, but the emergence of several parallel frameworks and mechanisms was a negative factor, as it had led to fragmented efforts. He added that it was the responsibility of ESCWA to work on unifying the mechanisms and frameworks that had emerged over the past two years, and stressed the importance of such efforts for women's interests.

17. The representative of Bahrain expressed her country's enthusiasm for the project to establish a women's research centre, in collaboration with ESCWA. She said that the goal of having such a centre was not only the advancement of Bahraini women but also the generation of knowledge for the benefit of the entire region by providing services at the regional level. She also asked for a link to access key topics related to national machineries on the ESCWA website.

18. The representative of Yemen thanked ESCWA for its diligent follow-up of the Women's National Committee of Yemen, which had begun to recover and reactivate its operations after many years of civil war and the interruption of work on women's issues. She thanked the representative of the ESCWA secretariat for

the information on the support provided by ESCWA to Yemen through the studies prepared on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on Yemeni women, and for the development of a national action plan on women, peace and security. She expressed her hope that, with the return of the Women's National Committee to its work and it being the official national machinery for women's affairs, collaboration would again take place between ESCWA and the Committee to work on implementing the national plan and publishing studies.

19. In response, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat said that she was happy to hear about the success of mainstreaming gender equality in Jordan, noting that the ESCWA restructuring had been a positive experience. However, the topics mentioned, such as the feminization of poverty and older persons issues, rarely fell within the scope of work of national mechanisms, but rather came under the functions of relevant ministries. She added that ESCWA was developing tools to help national mechanisms approach relevant ministries with knowledge and lessons learned to encourage collaboration between them.

20. In response to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, she clarified that the main objective of the Bahrain centre was to generate knowledge in many areas. The Arab region's priorities were currently being identified through a survey on studies to develop a framework for the centre and fill knowledge gaps. A postgraduate programme would also be established to benefit from the information.

21. With regard to the studies prepared by ESCWA on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on women in Iraq, she said that the comments received from the Directorate for the Empowerment of Iraqi Women had been taken into consideration, and the revised versions were expected shortly. She also emphasized that ESCWA selected national advisors in collaboration and consultation with national mechanisms, and that one of the challenges was the frequent changes in administration. ESCWA had tried to respond to such changes as much as possible.

22. With regard to the national action plan for women, peace and security in Yemen, which had been previously formulated in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, she confirmed that ESCWA had no objection to reworking the strategy with the Women's National Committee given that it was now the official national women's machinery, noting that the main objective of ESCWA was to serve and support member States to meet their needs and to develop strategies that could be applied on the ground.

23. In response to the representative of Egypt, she said that diversity was an enrichment, especially regarding an important topic such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and that countries were free to review the various frameworks and choose what they saw fit. She agreed, however, that the multiplicity of frameworks sometimes led to some competitiveness and the fragmentation of efforts, and stressed that ESCWA was trying to reduce such competitiveness and work with countries. She provided some examples, such as the special session of the Committee on Women on government policies to protect women and girls from the repercussions of the pandemic, which ESCWA had convened in 2020 in collaboration with other United Nations organizations given the importance of the topic; the COVID-19 Stimulus Tracker developed by ESCWA in partnership with several other United Nations organizations to unite efforts in that field; and the COVID-19 response project launched with the United Nations globally and with other regional commissions.

### *3. Supporting the Subcommittee on Gender Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals* (Agenda item 6)

24. With reference to document [E/ESCWA/C.7/2021/5](#), the representative of the ESCWA secretariat made a presentation on support provided to the Subcommittee on Gender and the Sustainable Development Goals. The Subcommittee, composed of chairs and senior representatives of national women's machineries in member States, was established in 2016 pursuant to a recommendation by the Committee on Women at its seventh session. She said that the Subcommittee's responsibilities included following up on the implementation of gender equality in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and assisting member States in achieving the SDGs, especially Goal 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment. The Subcommittee specialized in building



capacity, providing tools and skills, exchanging knowledge, and coordinating efforts at the national and regional levels. ESCWA fulfilled the role of the Subcommittee's secretariat, and collaborated with UN-Women and the League of Arab States in implementing relevant activities.

25. At its eighth session held in 2017, the Committee on Women had recommended expanding the membership of the Subcommittee to include all interested Arab countries, in addition to involving statistical agencies in its work. It had also requested that the Committee on Women be provided with information on SDG 5 on an ongoing basis, and that capacity be built to provide information on indicators related to that Goal. At its ninth session held in 2019, the Committee on Women had recommended continuing to provide technical support, knowledge and tools to the Subcommittee, and inviting national mechanisms concerned with women's affairs to participate in the Subcommittee's activities, while remaining open to inviting other parties according to the topics raised.

26. She reviewed the activities organized during the period 2020-2021, including a regional workshop on gender justice and the law, held in December 2020 in collaboration with UN-Women, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, and the League of Arab States. The workshop aimed to exchange experiences between member States to develop and strengthen legislation that would ensure gender equality, and to consider mechanisms for implementing the gender justice and equality before the law in the Arab region. In September and October 2021, the ESCWA secretariat, in collaboration with UN-Women and the League of Arab States, had implemented a programme to strengthen national capacity on developing and reforming welfare and social protection policies and enhancing women's participation in the labour market. The programme consisted of a virtual seminar and two training workshops in which members of the Subcommittee participated, alongside representatives of labour ministries and national institutions for social protection.

27. She said that the ESCWA secretariat hoped to build more partnerships with Arab and international organizations and bodies, and expressed its continuous quest to secure funding to complete the work of the Subcommittee and achieve its goals.

28. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Lebanon thanked ESCWA for its continuous support, especially in preparing a national strategy to combat violence, preparing and implementing a national plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325, and conducting a survey and analysis of all policies and strategies on women's economic participation in Lebanon. She said that work was currently underway to update the national strategy on Lebanese women, and asked ESCWA to provide support in that area to develop a strategy that responded to the multiple crises the country was facing, especially the needs of marginalized and vulnerable groups such as women, children and people with special needs.

29. In response, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat affirmed the Commission's unwavering readiness to support member States.

4. *National action to implement the recommendations made by the Committee  
on Women at its ninth session*  
(Agenda item 7)

30. Under this item, representatives of Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen made presentations on the measures taken by their countries to implement the recommendations issued by the Committee on Women at its ninth session. The ESCWA secretariat requested that delegates submit their written contributions to be uploaded on the ESCWA website.

31. The representative of Morocco said that her country had taken several measures to implement the recommendations. She noted that the Government had developed a second version of the equality plan *Ikram*

for the period 2017-2021, which had resulted in important indicators and an achievement rate of 90 per cent, as 740,000 women had benefited from its programmes. She indicated the external evaluation track launched by the Ministry of Solidarity, Women, Family and Social Development, with technical support from the European Union, to assess progress, identify challenges and the impact of COVID-19 on *Ikram*, and set priorities for its third phase. She reviewed efforts related to combating violence against women, noting the existence of a comprehensive law on violence against women in Morocco, new procedures to criminalize sexual harassment, tougher penalties for some acts, new protective measures, and several mechanisms and cells to support women survivors of violence at both the central and local levels. She said that a public policy had also been developed to combat violence against women, and thanked ESCWA for the support it had provided in drawing up a budget for the policy, and for its support in implementing the policy. She added that Morocco organized annual awareness-raising campaigns on violence against women, and in 2021 the focus was on raising awareness in the educational and academic field to mobilize students.

32. The representative of the Sudan said that his country faced significant challenges in the field of women's issues, noting that the recommendations issued by the Committee on Women at its previous session had not been implemented owing to events that had occurred in the Sudan. However, he stressed that his country was determined to implement all the recommendations made at the current session of the Committee. The representative of the Sudanese Ministry of Social Development presented some of his country's efforts in the areas of women, peace and security, combating violence against women, and empowering Sudanese women, including setting an action plan for women, peace and security, updating the women's empowerment policy, and attending and participating in all international forums related to women and gender equality. He said that progress had been made in the field of legislation and laws, including amending the criminal law regarding female genital mutilation, and in the field of achieving gender equality and women's access to justice and their participation in political life. He requested that ESCWA continue supporting the Sudan in the areas of women's economic empowerment and political participation, especially in the upcoming elections, and in the development of national plans.

33. The representative of Jordan presented the efforts made by her country to implement the recommendations, focusing on topics related to framing and institutionalizing work towards implementing the women's agenda. In 2020, the Jordanian Government had approved a national strategy on women, which had been formulated through a participatory approach and included all governmental commitments at the national and international levels. An annex to the strategy had also been prepared, setting out priorities resulting from the pandemic and related activities and programmes to ensure implementation. She said that over the past two years, the National Commission for Women had played a key role in coordinating between the various authorities to link activities, respond to and benefit from them, and optimize efforts. She noted various challenges and priorities, including escalating hate speech against women's movements, an issue that was being tackled by updating the Jordanian national plan to operationalize Security Council resolution No. 1325. She said that the balance of power was not in favour of amending legislation, despite important amendments to many laws, stressing the need to focus on the younger generation in various governorates and communities to clarify the concept of equality from a national and Islamic standpoint. She noted the current focus on building a national mechanism to secure funding to implement the national strategy on women and avoid duplication, and to ensure that all governorates received equal attention. She expressed her hope that ESCWA would provide support to increase understanding of inclusive security, which was essential for women, especially given the impact of climate change on various aspects of life.

34. The representative of Egypt reviewed key developments related to women's issues in Egypt in recent years, and Government efforts in that regard, noting the unprecedented progress achieved by Egypt in protecting and promoting women's rights and empowering them in various fields. Such efforts were reflected in the launch of the National Strategy for the Empowerment of Egyptian Women 2030, the National Strategy for Combating Violence against Women 2020, and the National Human Rights Strategy 2021–2026, which devoted an entire theme to the protection and promotion of women's rights within the SDG framework. He said that an observatory for Egyptian women had also been established to ensure the implementation of the

strategy through careful monitoring and evaluation. The provisions of the constitution on supporting and empowering women had been implemented, and women's participation in politics and the judiciary had increased. Regarding combating violence against women, a package of measures had been adopted to protect women from violence, hot lines had been established, and the first national referral form had been prepared to report cases of violence against women. At the level of economic empowerment, the unemployment rate among women had decreased, allocations directly related to women in the State budget had doubled, and a programme had been launched to strengthen infrastructure to address women's needs. As for responding to women's needs during the COVID-19 pandemic, Egypt had been the first country worldwide to respond to the special needs of women during the pandemic by issuing a policy brief on rapid response that took into account gender differences, and by establishing a mechanism to monitor State actions in that area, and by launching the first initiative within the framework of the United Nations to put forward a draft resolution on strengthening national and international responses to the pandemic.

35. The representative of Saudi Arabia said that her country had made remarkable progress in the fields of women's empowerment and advancement at the national and international levels, including implementing an action plan to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment in national women's machineries and public institutions; preparing a national plan for women as part of the National Family Strategy; and launching initiatives to establish a family protection database, develop an integrated package of services for survivors of violence and launch awareness campaigns on that topic, increase the geographic coverage of family protection bodies, develop reporting mechanisms, and establish systems and procedures for shelters. The private sector had also been motivated to support the protection of women from violence by issuing regulations in 2019 to protect against inappropriate behaviour in the workplace, such as violence and harassment. To develop tools for collecting national data, the SDGs were included in all national strategies and plans, time use surveys were applied, and sex-disaggregated data were collected. The Ministry of Justice was also working to enhance the rights of beneficiary women by issuing decisions that covered many aspects of judicial dealings. A State initiative was launched to empower women in the field of cybersecurity and to create opportunities for their participation in the labour market, in addition to several other programmes launched to empower women in the fields of information technology. She stressed that Saudi Arabia was still aspiring to fully promote and protect women's rights, and enhance their status, equal opportunities and inclusive empowerment.

36. The representative of Iraq reviewed her country's key achievements on women's political participation as a result of Elections Law No. 9 of 2020, which guaranteed the participation of women at a rate of no less than 25 per cent, and the formation of a committee for women's political empowerment in elections, which had led to a significant increase in women's political participation in Iraq. Regarding women, peace and security, a national committee for women peace mediators had been established, and the second national plan for women, peace and security had been prepared. In the social field, the Ministry of Education had launched graduate study programmes on women's issues and gender equality, and a draft law had been formulated on violence against women. Moreover, services were being provided to women suffering from divorce procedures, and shelters were being offered to poor women. In the economic field, a number of studies had been prepared on financial inclusion and facilitating women's requests for loans and banking services, and a committee had been established to build women's capacity and develop medium and small projects in the southern regions to empower women. Furthermore, legislation and laws were being reviewed to facilitate women's participation in the economy, and plans and programmes were being formulated in the field of child care.

37. The representative of Yemen said that her country had witnessed a significant decline in the advancement of women owing to the civil war, so few achievements had been made in view of the situation. There were currently no female ministers in the Yemeni Government, and Yemeni women were feeling greatly frustrated. Most achievements related to responding to the pandemic through civil society work to raise awareness of the virus and the health measures necessary to combat it. She noted a study on the violations faced by women in Yemen, hoping that it would be expanded and its finding shared.

38. The representative of Algeria gave an overview of the achievements made by her country, such as amending the Penal Code to criminalize violence against women, adding a new article to the 2021 Constitution on the protection of women from all forms of violence, providing free services to women survivors of violence, and guaranteeing that shelters provide services to survivors of violence and reintegrate them into social and economic life. An administrative database on women survivors of violence and women in difficult social situations had also been developed. In the area of women's participation in the labour market, school curriculums had been updated and awareness-raising campaigns had been organized to abolish stereotypes and integrate women socially and economically. Regarding ensuring gender equality, women's access to judicial centres had been enhanced, and a training programme and workshop on gender indicators had been organized for media professionals to ensure media discourse free of stereotypes. In the political sphere, the principle of parity in nominations had been included in the new 2021 election law.

39. The representative of Bahrain noted the achievements made by her country, including the development of a national model for gender balance that served women's needs, one example of which was the obligation of each department to form an equal opportunities committee to ensure women's advancement within the institution and at the national level. She said that Bahrain had prepared a national report on gender balance that simulated international indicators in the field of women's advancement, which was an essential tool for analysing and measuring gender balance indicators at the institutional and national levels. In the field of protecting women from domestic violence, a special prosecution service for women and children had been established, and the law had been applied through an integrated strategy to protect women from domestic violence. All the work of institutions involved in women's issues had been digitized to ensure the sustainability of measures to protect women from violence during the pandemic. With regard to women's economic participation, Bahrain had realized the need to preserve past gains during the pandemic, so teleworking had been implemented, and the husbands of women working on the front lines were granted the right to telework. The National Gender Balance in Future Sciences Initiative had been launched and a committee for women in technology had been formed to follow up on the implementation of the initiative.

40. The representative of Oman noted the Oman Vision 2040 that placed women among its priorities, and the tenth Five-Year Development Plan (2021-2025) that focused on initiatives and programmes which enhanced women's participation at all levels of decision-making. She also indicated many national strategies, including a social work strategy and a gender mainstreaming strategy. She gave an overview of key achievements over the past two years in the field of legislation and laws, the protection of women from violence through a specialized tool for family and child issues, and the collaboration of all concerned parties in providing channels for survivor's to report violence and offering shelter and follow-up services. She also discussed achievements in the field of women's economic and political participation, and the collection of gender-disaggregated data.

41. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic noted the significant efforts that had been made during the past two years in her country, the remarkable presence of women in all fields, their active and increasing presence in civil society, and their entry as a result of the war into work sectors that had previously been the preserve of men. She said that key achievements included introducing a national case management system that dealt with women and children exposed to violence, enacting the 2021 Child Law, drafting a legislative instrument criminalizing domestic violence, providing a full package of services to women and children survivors of violence by the Family Protection Unit, launching the pilot phase of a hotline, amending the Personal Status Law to raise the marriage age to 18, and responding to COVID-19 by launching a platform for registering women affected by the pandemic. She affirmed the continuation of efforts to support women, and the State's aspiration for more collaboration with all member States, relevant entities and ESCWA.

42. The representative of the United Arab Emirates reviewed her country's efforts and key achievements in the field of women's empowerment with regard to various legislative frameworks, policies, mechanisms and procedures. She noted that the United Arab Emirates ranked high in global and regional indicators of gender equality in many areas. It had also recorded high rates of women's political and economic participation, and of

women's progress in the fields of education and health. She noted a 2002 strategy developed by the General Women's Union, which had been updated for the period 2015-2021, aimed at building on the achievements made in the field of empowering Emirati women and maintaining the sustainability of that progress. The national action plan for implementing resolution 1325 was launched in 2021, the first of its kind in a Gulf Cooperation Council country, to protect women and enhance their roles in maintaining peace and security. Women had also been supported during the pandemic at various levels, and working women had been allowed to telework to care for their children.

43. The representative of Kuwait noted the progress made by her country, including legislative efforts such as enacting a 2020 law on protection from domestic violence, and issuing several laws specific to women, such as the health guardianship law, which gave women the right to act in the absence of the children's father. She indicated the Government's work programme for the next four years, which was based on three main pillars: combating violence against women, women's economic and political empowerment, and gender equality. She expressed her country's need for technical advice from ESCWA to implement those programmes and initiatives. She also noted the establishment of a committee on women's empowerment and a committee on domestic violence, and reviewed the many efforts that had been made in the field of combating violence against women, facilitating the processing of cases of violence, and providing shelter and other services to survivors during the pandemic.

## **B. Recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic and advancing gender equality**

1. *Workshop: ESCWA toolkit to support States in designing national policies that mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment concerns*  
(Agenda item 8)

44. With reference to document [E/ESCWA/C.7/2021/6](#), the representative of the ESCWA secretariat said that ESCWA had developed a set of practical tools that would assist decision makers in designing national policies that integrated the perspectives of gender equality and women's empowerment in many areas. She added that those tools were effective, fast, easy to use and available to everyone.

45. The representative of the ESCWA secretariat made a presentation on eight e-tools that had been developed: the COVID-19 Stimulus Tracker; the Multidimensional Poverty Index Assist Tool; the Urban Economy Recovery and Resilience Diagnosis and Planning Tool; the ESCWA Job Monitor; the Index Simulator for Policymakers in the Arab Region; the Gender Justice and the Law tool; the Institutional Capacity Assessment Tool; and a mechanism for calculating the cost of violence against women. She said that the presentation did not include all the tools prepared by ESCWA, but was limited to eight tools only, and that work was still in progress on a large number of other tools. The representatives of the ESCWA secretariat gave an overview of some of the presented tools and of others that were not included in the presentation.

46. The representative of the secretariat said that ESCWA had developed the COVID-19 Stimulus Tracker: Global Observatory on Social Protection Policy Responses, aimed at providing policy makers with detailed information on responses to the pandemic and the social protection measures taken to mitigate its effects. The COVID-19 Stimulus Tracker included measures adopted by 193 countries, including Arab countries, to tackle the pandemic and respond to its health, economic and social effects. It also provided coordinated information according to the measures taken, the beneficiaries, and financial resources so as to facilitate regional and global comparisons. Moreover, it determined whether adopted policies targeted women and men equally, and if policies had been applied to serve gender equality issues. The tool had been praised by the Secretary-General of the United Nations as it covered most of the Member States of the United Nations.

47. The Multidimensional Poverty Index Assist Tool had been developed to assist decision makers in designing a national multidimensional poverty index with a high degree of transparency, in an advanced and participatory manner. The tool circumvented the lengthy design and consultation process for the development

of a multidimensional poverty index. It also enabled the analysis of the contributions of the various dimensions of poverty to the degree of poverty; calculated poverty by region; employed other demographic variables such as gender, age and geographic region; tracked the status of poverty and its growth or decline over time; and allowed comparisons between Arab countries. At a later stage, the tool would provide the possibility of calculating the impact of positive or negative shocks on the multidimensional poverty level. The representative of the ESCWA secretariat said that the tool was currently being used in Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon, and that Qatar would employ it soon. ESCWA would conduct a training session on the tool in the first week of December 2021, targeting statistical offices and ministries of social affairs.

48. The representative of the secretariat said that the Urban Economy Recovery and Resilience Diagnosis and Planning Tool was developed in partnership with UN Habitat, the United Nations Capital Development Fund and the other four United Nations regional commissions. The tool was considered the first of its kind at the global level, monitoring key and sub-indicators of a city both quantitatively and qualitatively, and disaggregated by gender. The monitoring process, highlighted a city's strengths and weaknesses, which formed the basis for building a comprehensive local recovery plan. The tool applied an inclusive approach to data monitoring by involving all stakeholders in the monitoring and planning process, including national and local governments and the private sector. Consequently, the tool took into account the principle of "leaving no one behind". Work was currently underway to implement the tool in three Arab countries: Kuwait (Kuwait City), Egypt (Alexandria), and Lebanon (Beirut), in close collaboration with relevant municipalities and ministries.

49. The ESCWA Job Monitor had been established as part of a project undertaken by ESCWA to assess skills and experiences and their compatibility with the Fourth Industrial Revolution, so as to keep pace with changes in the labour market. The tool helped tackle three basic challenges: lack of data, how to measure the gap between required skills and learning outcomes, and how to formulate policies in line with highly dynamic changes. The tool assisted Governments in building effective labour market policies in line with the times, and assisted educational institutions in building the expertise required in the labour market. It also helped individuals determine available jobs based on experience. The main objective of the tool was to bridge the gender gap in the labour market, create suitable jobs for all, and ensure job opportunities for young people. The tool would be launched at the beginning of 2022.

50. The Index Simulator for Policymakers in the Arab Region analyses the potential impact of specific policies on national rankings within 12 international indicators, including the Gender Gap Index. The tool facilitated access to key international indicators that have had the greatest impact on development outcomes, and enabled comparisons between countries or between a group of countries. The tool also provided an opportunity to simulate those indicators to identify the impact of planned and envisaged policies on the expected ranking of a country, and enhance the ability to make decisions about future policies, strategies and budgets to improve a country's performance and increase its ranking in those indicators. The ESCWA secretariat was currently developing and updating the tool to cover additional indicators.

51. The representative of the ESCWA secretariat said that the Gender Justice and the Law tool, which was developed in partnership with a group of United Nations organizations, set out national laws in Arab countries and analysed their compatibility with international standards and obligations so as to identify gaps and encourage countries to amend legislation in line with their obligations, on the one hand, and with the achievement of the SDGs, on the other, especially Goal 5. The tool comprised a descriptive table that visually determined the extent to which laws were in harmony with international standards using a simple four-colour system to compare laws. It also provided access to legal texts. The tool was based on information that had been reviewed and validated by national women's machineries in Arab countries, and would be updated annually.

52. The Social Justice Policy Gap Assessment Tool had been developed in response to a request from member States, and assessed the extent to which social justice principles were integrated into public policies and development programmes formulated and implemented by public institutions. The tool was used autonomously by countries, and contributed to the practical identification of gaps in knowledge and skills

required in designing, implementing, financing or evaluating social and economic policies, legislative and regulatory frameworks, institutional structures and internal mechanisms, and ensuring consensus among stakeholders on policy options. The tool also devised local solutions and reforms to address obstacles and overcome challenges that impeded the mainstreaming of social justice in policymaking processes.

53. The online platform of the Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment within National Institutions in the Arab Region facilitated tracking its progress, implementation and reporting. The Action Plan consisted of 15 performance indicators related to internal procedures, regulations and corporate strategies. It aimed to ensure the integration of gender equality in internal procedures, such as planning, follow-up and evaluation, institutional culture, and tracking and allocation of financial resources, which would then be reflected in the outputs of an institution or the services it provided. The Action Plan was flexible as it allowed each institution to define its priorities, and draw a road map commensurate with its resources and implementation capacity. The implementation of the Action Plan was preceded by an institutional audit of gender equality. The Action Plan was implemented through an annual self-evaluation for each of the indicators, according to relevant technical guidelines; and the development of remedial plans to improve performance on those indicators. Since 2017, ESCWA had worked to strengthen national capacity to implement the Action Plan, and had trained a group of facilitators from national women's machineries to prepare an institutional audit of gender equality in national women's machineries. Work on the Action Plan was launched in Jordan, Mauritania and Qatar.

54. The tool to calculate the economic cost of domestic violence aimed to guide countries in assessing the economic impact of domestic violence. The tool estimated the costs borne by families and by service-providing institutions.

55. In the ensuing discussion, representatives of member States discussed a mechanism to start implementing those tools. The representative of the Sudan said that some of the tools required updated data, and requested that ESCWA provide technical support in establishing national data observatories.

56. In response, the representative of the secretariat said that ESCWA was fully prepared to provide technical support to member States based on their official requests, especially presentations and training on the application of tools developed by ESCWA.

## *2. Building forward better after the COVID-19 pandemic* (Agenda item 9)

57. With reference to document [E/ESCWA/C.7/2019/7](#), the representative of the ESCWA secretariat said that the document provided an overview of the status of women in the period preceding the pandemic, and set out the consequences of the pandemic on women in three main areas: protecting women from violence, empowering them economically, and enhancing their presence in the public sphere. The document also presented recommendations to support countries to build forward better. Regarding the pre-pandemic period, it was observed that Arab countries over the past years, and even during the pandemic, had adopted various pieces of legislation that promoted gender equality, which had been clearly demonstrated in the legislation review conducted by ESCWA and its partners under the Gender Justice and the Law Initiative. Those pieces of legislations had led to the adoption of laws to combat violence against women and sexual harassment, and to achieve gender equality in remuneration for work of equal value. Three countries also endorsed national action plans on resolution 1325 and other strategies to bridge gender gaps and address discrimination against women. The document also highlighted the important role played by national women's machineries in that regard. However, despite those efforts, the region had not been able to change its performance in international indicators. The gender gap remained the largest in the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index. The Women, Peace and Security Index, published annually by Georgetown University, showed that 5 of the 10 worst performing countries were in the Arab region.

58. The document presented some indicators related to violence against women, economic participation, unemployment, and participation in elected parliaments. Those indicators highlighted societal rejection of the concepts of gender equality and non-discrimination, which were reflected at the levels of the family, society and institutions. The document also revealed the weakness of measures to prevent violence against women, including failure to invest in statistics to understand the nature and extent of violence and its forms, weak services and their unavailability for and inaccessibility to women, and weak accountability mechanisms. It also underscored that the labour market and its strategies in some countries neglected women's needs, and revealed the mismatch between the education system and the requirements of the labour market. Moreover, the document highlighted large disparities in wages, and the concentration of women in low-paid jobs and in the informal sector owing to notions claiming that providing for the family was a man's responsibility, and that women should undertake care work in the home. In addition, social protection programmes did not take into account women in most countries and focused on the male head of household, while the care economy was based on women who performed 80 to 90 per cent of all unpaid care work.

59. Regarding the pandemic and the policies taken by Governments to reduce its impact on families and society, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat said that countries had adopted many financial measures, but only a few were directed to protection from violence or reproductive health services. Moreover, some of the measures taken to support wages or change working hours did not apply to women owing to their presence in the informal sector. She noted that in total, about 829 measures had been implemented, including 83 measures that took into account gender equality, but only 30 measures had targeted care services. She presented some recommendations centred on investment, strengthening the capacity of national women's machineries, strengthening legal frameworks and policies to eliminate discrimination against women, and measures to enhance women's economic and political participation.

60. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of Bahrain stressed the need to update some indicators specific to Bahrain, which had been mentioned by ESCWA in a number of topics, including the issue of loans during the pandemic, noting that there was an entire portfolio dedicated to women in Bahrain, and an integrated campaign targeting women and families during the pandemic on the economic empowerment of women.

61. The representative of Egypt said that it was important to highlight the positives as well as the negatives, given the great achievements made by the Arab region during the pandemic. She asked about how the high rates of violence against women in the Arab region were determined in the absence of data on the subject.

62. The representative of Jordan said that the absence of women, to varying degrees between countries, from pandemic response planning frameworks was one of the biggest challenges being faced, stressing the importance of women's role in responding to various crises, not just wars and conflicts, and the need to integrate that issue in national plans on women, peace and security. She also noted the issue of women's quotas and the real change they could effect. She discussed how to transform women's political participation in the Arab region into deep-rooted and complex participation, and the transition from political will to real change on the ground.

63. The representative of Kuwait said that highlighting the negatives allowed countries to consider the gaps and areas that have been overlooked during the pandemic, and how to fix them.

64. In response, the representative of the ESCWA secretariat requested that countries provide ESCWA with updated indicators or information about new measures, to include them in the ESCWA COVID-19 Stimulus Tracker based on the classifications contained therein, stressing that the Tracker was a live platform that would be updated periodically based on information received from countries. She added that the Tracker only highlighted good practices, so it was necessary to highlight some facts and figures in another document to be able to build on them and move forward. With regard to rates of violence, she said that a limited number of Arab countries had comprehensive national questionnaires on the subject, and that the results of those questionnaires were used to determine global averages. Accordingly, ESCWA encouraged its member States



to prepare and implement comprehensive national surveys on the issue of violence against women. As for the topic of women's quotas, she said that the issue was complex and could be addressed in a separate workshop, noting the need to shed light on some good practices in that field, such as the experience of Egypt where the quota issue had been included in the constitution to ensure continuity.

65. Commenting on quotas, the representative of Egypt stressed that the issue was very complex, especially in a region like the Arab region, which had witnessed sharp disparities in country performance and in societal culture, and that enshrining quotas in the constitution as Egypt had done, although positive, was not sufficient. The real criterion was the extent to which society agreed with the quota system, and recognized the status of women in parliament and their important role in legislative processes, in addition to the quality of performance that women themselves provided in that field. He commended the idea of holding a special workshop on the topic, and suggested that it revolve around three dimensions: the legal dimension, the societal dimension, and the dimension related to capacity-building for women working in the field of legislation.

### **C. Date and venue of the eleventh session of the Committee on Women**

(Agenda item 10)

66. Participants agreed to hold the eleventh session of the Committee on Women at the United Nations House in Beirut in the first quarter of 2023, provided that no other member State requested to host the session, in accordance with United Nations established procedures and regulations.

### **D. Other matters**

(Agenda item 11)

67. No matters were discussed under this item.

### **E. Adoption of the recommendations made by the Committee on Women at its tenth session**

(Agenda item 12)

68. The recommendations made at the tenth session of the Committee on Women were presented to representatives of member States, and were reviewed and adopted as amended.

## **III. Organization of work**

### **A. Date and venue**

69. The Committee on Women held its tenth session at the United Nations House in Beirut, on 16 and 17 November 2021. In view of the current health conditions, participants were also offered the opportunity to attend virtually.

### **B. Opening**

70. The tenth session of the Committee on Women opened at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 16 November 2021. The opening statement was delivered by Mr. Turki Abdullah al-Mahmoud, Director of the Human Rights Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, who chaired the ninth session of the Committee. He said that Qatar was keen to empower women and provide them with a supportive environment, as reflected in the Qatar National Vision 2030, through national development strategies, legislation and laws to eliminate gender discrimination and achieve gender equality. He noted the many achievements made by Qatar in the field of empowering Qatari women at the political and economic levels, and strengthening the institutional structure related to women's rights, adding that the Ministry of Social Development and the Family had been established to fulfil the need for a higher government body concerned with the family, especially women. He

said that Qatar had also made efforts to strengthen women by establishing the National Committee on Women's Affairs, Children, the Elderly, and Persons with Disabilities, and stressed the country's willingness to implement its obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, highlighting its collaboration with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and other international and regional mechanisms. He indicated the active role played by Qatar at the international level in promoting women's rights and empowering them, as it had provided financial support for many initiatives in that field. He added that Qatar would continue its efforts to empower women at the national, regional and international levels, and thanked ESCWA for its constructive efforts to encourage collaborative work to improve the status of women.

71. Ms. Mehrinaz Elawadi, Leader of the ESCWA Gender Justice, Population and Inclusive Development Cluster, made a statement on behalf of the ESCWA secretariat. She noted the economic and social challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and their alarming repercussions, especially for women and girls in the Arab region, which had led to the rearrangement of development priorities in Arab countries. ESCWA had realized the need to adopt new development models capable of addressing gender inequality, which required the application of a new working methodology represented in restructuring ESCWA to better serve Arab countries. As a result, the Gender Justice, Population and Inclusive Development cluster had been created to ensure integration between several portfolios, including the Centre for Women, which still existed in its own right, and other portfolios that covered social justice; youth development; poverty reduction; social protection systems; the inclusion of persons with disabilities; the rights of older persons; migrant rights; improving employment opportunities; and urban development. She said that the new approach would broaden the scope of ESCWA work in the field of gender equality, and would ensure that women's rights and needs in issues related to poverty and social protection were taken into account. She noted the policy tools developed by ESCWA to help decision makers take quick and accurate action based on best practices, evidence and an inclusive development approach, which would be presented at the current session. She emphasized that the goal of ESCWA was not only to provide knowledge, but also to keep pace with and support countries in applying that knowledge to serve their interests and respect their specificities, by translating the results of ESCWA studies into training programmes and regional and national development projects. She thanked Qatar for its wise chairship of the Committee on Women over the past two years, and for its support in preparing for the current session.

72. Ms. Amal Hamad, Minister of Women's Affairs of the State of Palestine, made a statement in which she thanked ESCWA and praised its continual support for the State of Palestine in a number of areas, including a national strategy to combat violence against women, in preparing for an international conference to support Palestinian women, and in drafting periodic reports on the economic and social status of Palestinian women and girls. She reviewed the challenges facing Palestinian women, including the Israeli occupation and its continual violations, the societal culture regarding women's issues, the growth of extremist thought, the failure to develop and approve laws specific to women, and various other factors such as the fragmented efforts of feminist movements and the Palestinian divide. However, despite those challenges, the Ministry of Women's Affairs had been pushing to improve the status of women through legislative amendments. For example, the State of Palestine had passed a law on determining the age of marriage and raising the quota for women's participation in general elections, in addition to adopting several national strategies and plans, such as the second national plan for the implementation of resolution No. 1325 on women, peace and security, and updating the national strategy to achieve gender equality. She said that the State of Palestine had not stopped making efforts, even during the pandemic, which raised new problems that the State of Palestine had responded to through 12 measures. For example, a judge in each Sharia court had been assigned to ensure continuity of service, and female day labourers, kindergarten workers, and women survivors of violence in shelters had been included in the list of poor families.

### **C. Attendance**

73. The session was attended by representatives of national women's machineries, ministries, and women's councils and committees from 20 ESCWA member States. Representatives of United Nations specialized agencies and programmes and of regional, international and Arab organizations participated as observers.

### **D. Election of officers**

74. Pursuant to article 18 of the Rules of Procedure of ESCWA, which provides that member States shall chair the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on a rotating basis, in Arabic alphabetical order as established by the United Nations, Kuwait chaired the tenth session, succeeding Qatar, which had chaired the ninth session from 26 November 2019 to 16 November 2021. The Committee elected the representative of Qatar by consensus as First Vice-Chair and the representative of Lebanon as Second Vice-Chair. The representative of Egypt was elected as Rapporteur.

### **E. Adoption of the agenda and proposed organization of work**

75. At its first meeting, the Committee on Women adopted the provisional agenda as set out in document [E/ESCWA/C.7/2021/L.1](#).

76. The Committee also adopted the proposed organization of work, set out in document [E/ESCWAC.7/2021/L.2](#).

### **F. Documents**

77. Annex II to the present report lists the documents presented to the Committee on Women at its tenth session.

## Annex I

### List of participants

#### A. ESCWA member States

##### Algeria - online

Ms. Bahloul Karima  
Assistant Director of Women's Issues  
Ministry of National Solidarity, Family and  
Women's Affairs

##### Bahrain - online

Ms. Rania Ahmed al-Jarf  
Director of the Gender Balance Center  
Supreme Council for Women

Ms. Nora al-Rifai  
Head of Local and International Cooperation  
Supreme Council for Women

##### Egypt

Mr. Mahmoud Afifi  
Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for  
International, Social and Humanitarian Affairs

Ms. Nagla Al-Adly  
Director-General of External Communications and  
International Cooperation  
National Council for Women

##### Iraq

Ms. Yussra Kareem Mohsen  
Director-General of the Iraqi Women  
Empowerment Department  
General Secretariat for the Council of Ministers

Ms. Thaera Abdul Hussein Hassan  
Assistant-Director-General of the Iraqi Women  
Empowerment Department  
General Secretariat for the Council of Ministers

Ms. Sun Kol Ismail Bawa  
Responsible for the International Organizations  
File  
Embassy of Iraq

##### Jordan

Ms. Salma Nims  
Secretary-General  
National Commission for Women

Ms. Ola Sameh Dababneh  
National Commission for Women

##### Kuwait - online

Ms. Hana al-Hajri  
Assistant Undersecretary for Social Development  
Supreme Council for Family Affairs

Ms. Dalal al-Zamil  
Head of the Coordination and Follow-up  
Department in the General Secretariat  
Supreme Council for Family Affairs

Ms. Sheikha Hamad al-Kubaisi  
Third Secretary  
Human Rights Department  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ms. Najat Daham al-Abdullah  
Director of the Family Affairs Department

##### Lebanon

Ms. Claudine Aoun Roukoz  
President of the National Commission for  
Lebanese Women's Affairs  
National Commission for Lebanese Women

Ms. Cynthia Chidiac  
Legal Adviser  
National Commission for Lebanese Women

Ms. Micheline Massaad  
National Commission for Lebanese Women

Libya - online

Ms. Laila Ibrahim Maatouk al-Lafi  
Head of the Women's Support and Empowerment  
Unit of the Presidential Council

Mauritania - online

Mr. Sayed Sedki  
Secretary-General  
Ministry of Social Affairs, Childhood and Family

Ms. Link Sol  
Director of Family, Women and Gender  
Ministry of Social Affairs, Childhood and Family

Morocco - online

Ms. Fatima Berkane  
Manager of Women's Issues  
Ministry of Solidarity, Social Integration and  
Family

Ms. Amina Suleimani  
Head of the National Women's Observatory  
Department of the Women's Directorate  
Ministry of Solidarity, Social Integration and  
Family

Mr. Abdul Ilah Hamidouch  
Head of the Women's Empowerment Department  
of the Directorate of Women

Ms. Rukaiya Azayo  
Head of the Department of Documentation,  
Information and Foresight at the Directorate of  
Women

Ms. Leila Boukhait  
Framework of the Directorate of Women

Mr. Ali Rahawi  
Head of the National Observatory of Violence  
against Women in the Women's Directorate  
Mr. Youssef Al-Sathi  
Head of the Department for the Advancement of  
Women's Rights in the Directorate of Women

Ms. Fadwa Bouanan  
Framework of the Directorate of Women

Ms. Shadia al-Gharari  
Framework of the Directorate of Women

Ms. Amina al-Wadi  
Special writer of the Minister  
Ministry of Solidarity, Social Integration and  
Family

Oman - online

Ms. Maani bint Abdullah al-Busaidi  
Director-General of Family Development  
Ministry of Social Development

Ms. Jamila bint Salem Jadad  
Assistant-Director-General for Family  
Development  
Ministry of Social Development

Ms. Maysaa bint Zahran al Ruqaishiya  
Assistant Prosecutor  
Public Prosecution

Mr. Talib bin Mohammed al-Wahshi  
Head of the Statistics Department of Special  
Categories and Community Participation  
National Center for Statistics and Information

State of Palestine - online

Ms. Amal Hamad  
Minister of Women's Affairs  
Ministry of Women's Affairs  
Mr. Hanna Nakhle  
Adviser to the Minister for International Relations  
and Projects  
Ministry of Women's Affairs

Mr. Amin Assi  
Director-General of Planning and Policies  
Ministry of Women's Affairs

Qatar - online

Mr. Turki Abdulla Zaid al-Mahmoud  
Director of Human Rights Department  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Qatar – online (continued)

Ms. Huda Nasser al-Kuwari  
Legal Specialist - Secretary of the National  
Committee on the Affairs of Woman, Children,  
the Elderly and People with disabilities.

Ms. Sama al-Hajri

Saudi Arabia - online

Ms. Lana bin Hassan bin Saeed  
Head of the Women's Committee  
Family Affairs Council

Ms. Munira Bin Khalil al-Khalil  
Rapporteur of the Women's Committee  
Family Affairs Council

Ms. Alanoud Yousef al-Khathran  
International Affairs Officer  
Family Affairs Council

Somalia

Ms. Saadia Mohammed Ali  
Legal Adviser  
Ministry of Women and Human Rights  
Development

Sudan - online

Mr. Jamal al-Nil Abdullah al-Muqaliff  
Under-Secretary  
Ministry of Social Development

Ms. Sulaima Ishaq  
Head of the Violence Against Women and  
Children Unit

Ms. Omaira Qassem Mohammed  
Projects - General Directorate of Women  
General Directorate for Women and Family Affairs

Ms. Faiza Abdul Razak  
Peace and Development Unit  
General Directorate for Women and Family Affairs

Ms. Souad Dishol  
Director of the Women and Family Department

Ms. Maryam Ali Mohammed  
Legislation in the General Directorate for Women  
and Family Affairs

Mr. Makarem Mohamed Khalifa  
Director of Project Management - General  
Department of Welfare and Social Development  
Ministry of Social Development

Syrian Arab Republic

Ms. Samar Al-Sibai  
Head of the Syrian Commission for Family and  
Population Affairs

Ms. Rana Klifawi  
Director of Family Affairs  
Head of the Syrian Commission for Family and  
Population Affairs

Syrian Arab Republic - online

Ms. Elham Safi  
Ms. Rabia Al Ghazzawi  
Ms. Amira Ibrahim

Tunisia - online

Ms. Fadwa Darwish  
Director of International Cooperation and External  
Relations  
Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and  
Seniors

Ms. Hanan Benzarti Kahia  
Director of Family Planning  
Ministry of Women, Family, Childhood and  
Seniors

United Arab Emirates - online

Ms. Maryam Salam al-Mandhari  
Director of the Women's Support Office  
General Women's Union

Yemen

Ms. Shafika Saeed Abdo  
Chairwoman of the Women National Committee  
Women National Committee

Yemen (continued)

Ms. Kifah Ali Osman Ebadi  
Director-General of the General Directorate for  
Women's Development  
Ministry of Trade and Industry

Yemen - online

Ms. Ilham Jamil Hadi Awad  
Director-General of Partner Management  
Women National Committee

Ms. Ansam Salim Hussein Haidarah  
Director-General of Partner Management  
Women National Committee

Ms. Maida Abdullah Nasser Abbouda  
Director-General of Legal Affairs  
Women National Committee

Ms. Isar Abdullah Awad al-Jawassi  
Office Director of the Chairperson of the  
Committee  
Women National Committee

Ms. Maria Rashid Abdo Saif  
Director of the Media Department  
Women National Committee

**B. United Nations organizations**

UNESCO - online

Mr. Abdelaziz Zaki  
Acting Programme Specialist for Social and  
Human Sciences  
UNESCO

Ms. Heba Shama  
Programme Coordinator  
Social and Human Sciences Programmes

United Nations Population Fund - online

Ms. Hanan Rabbani  
Gender and Human Rights Regional Adviser  
United Nations Population Fund  
Regional Office of Arab States/Cairo

Food and Agriculture Organization - online

Ms. Valentina Franchi  
Regional Officer on Gender Equality Issues in  
North Africa and the Near East  
FAO

UN-Women - online

Ms. Simone Ellis Oluoch-Olunya  
Regional Policy Adviser  
Regional Office of Arab States/Cairo

**C. International and regional organizations**

Equality Now International - online

Ms. Dima Dabbous  
Regional representative  
Equality Now International

Arab Women Organization - online

Ms. Fadia Kiwan  
Director-General  
Arab Women Organization

Ms. Nora Osama  
Head of Planning and Programmes Unit  
Arab Women Organization

League of Arab States - online

Ms. Shaza Abdul Latif  
Women, Family and Childhood Department

Westminster Foundation for Democracy

Ms. Sophia Fernandes  
Senior Adviser, Political Inclusion  
Westminster Foundation for Democracy

## Annex II

### List of documents

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