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Item 12 of the provisional agenda

**DESIGNATING THE SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION AS THE FORUM FOR
A BIENNIAL PLEDGING CONFERENCE: RESOLUTION 236 (XXI)**

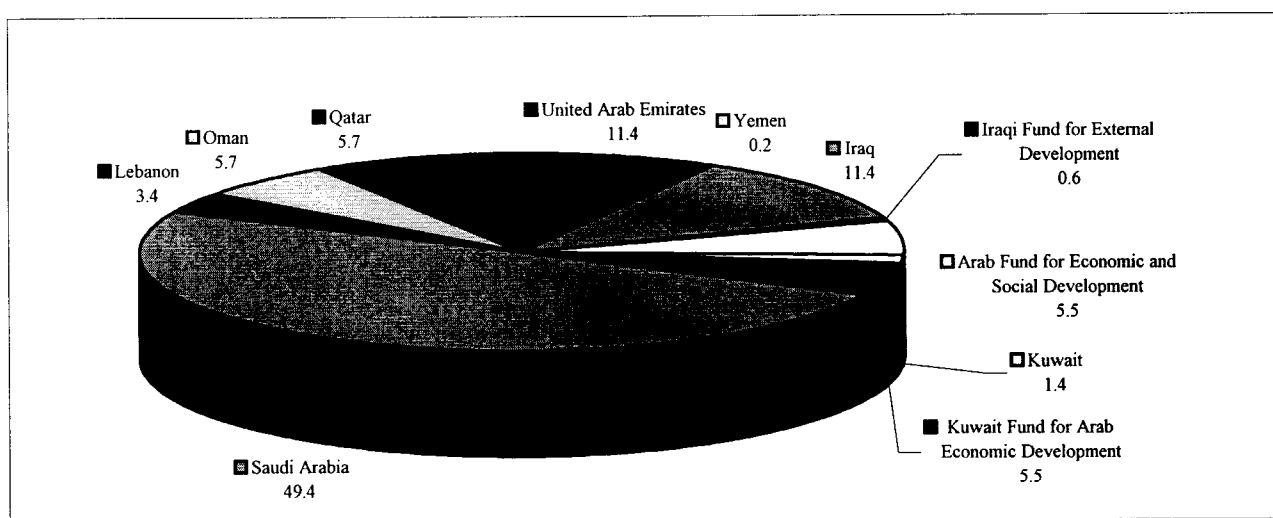
FIRST PLEDGING CONFERENCE OF ESCWA

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Pursuant to resolution 236 (XXI) of 11 May 2001 on designating the sessions of the Commission as the forum for a biennial pledging conference, in which the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) urged member States to increase contributions in order to finance the extrabudgetary activities of the Commission, member States are invited to join efforts to foster comprehensive, integrated equitable and sustainable economic and social development, at the national and regional levels. The aim of this is to ensure that member States are able to cope effectively with the rapidly changing economic world environment and to improve the quality of life of all people.

2. The status of contributions to the Trust Fund for ESCWA Regional Activities from 1975 to 2003 is presented below (see figure I and table 1). Total contributions amounted to some US\$ 2.6 million.

**Figure I. Contributions to the Trust Fund for ESCWA
Regional Activities since 1975
(Percentage)**



Source: ESCWA, compiled from various sources.

TABLE 1. STATUS OF CONTRIBUTIONS, 1975-2003

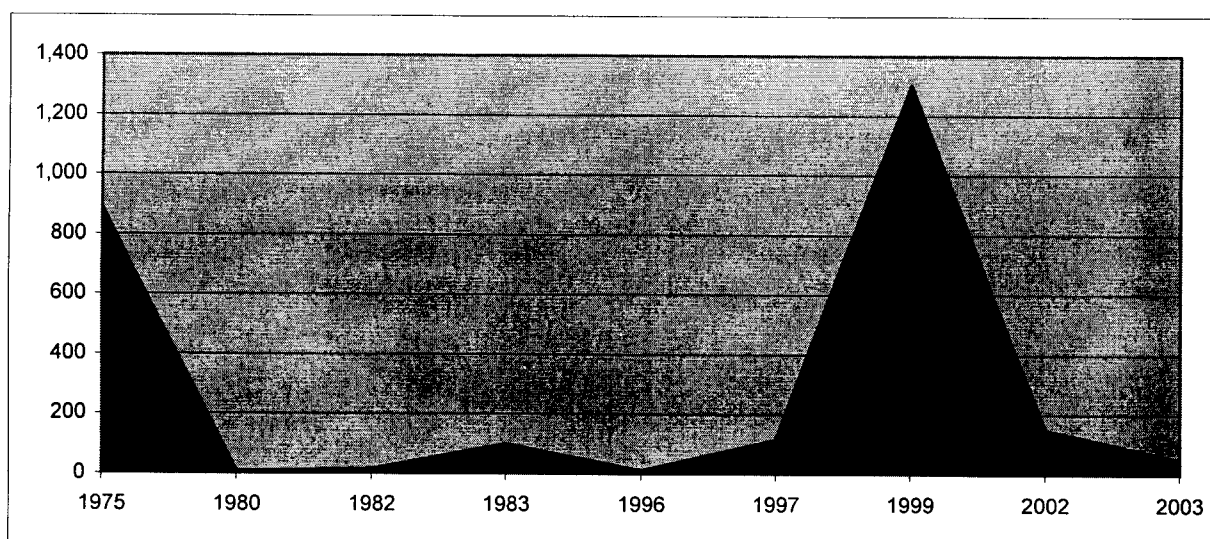
Donor	Year of contribution	Amount contributed (United States dollar equivalent)
Government of Iraq	1975	300 000
Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development	1975	144 000
Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development	1975	144 000
Government of Saudi Arabia	1975	300 000
Government of Yemen	1980	5 864
Iraqi Fund for External Development	1982	15 000
Government of Qatar	1983	100 000
Government of Lebanon	1996	10 000
Government of Lebanon	1997	78 446
Government of Kuwait	1997	36 175
Government of Saudi Arabia	1999	1 000 000
Government of United Arab Emirates	1999	300 000
Government of Oman	2002	150 000
Government of Qatar	2003	50 000
Total contributions received since 1975		2 633 485

Source: ESCWA, compiled from various sources.

B. EVOLUTION OF CONTRIBUTIONS

3. Since the establishment of the Trust Fund for ESCWA Regional Activities, with the exceptions of 1975 and 1999, contributions to the Commission have been meagre. During the 1980s, ESCWA secured additional contributions from Governments of non-member States, namely, France and the Netherlands, in addition to other funding sources from outside the region. This ensured that the level of assistance provided to member States was maintained. However, given that the majority of ESCWA member countries are considered to be wealthy oil-producers, such contributions have diminished considerably or ceased. Contributions from other sources within the ESCWA region have also decreased (see figure II).

Figure II. Frequency of contributions to the Trust Fund for ESCWA Regional Activities, 1975-2003



Source: ESCWA, compiled from various sources.

C. COMPARISON AMONG REGIONAL COMMISSIONS

4. Table 2 compares the regular budget and extrabudgetary contributions of the five regional Commissions. The last row presents the contribution of the Trust Fund for ESCWA Regional Activities as a percentage of the total regular budget. The table highlights the fact that extrabudgetary contributions within ESCWA are extremely low in comparison with other regional commissions, particularly the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Europe.

TABLE 2. EXTRABUDGETARY, REGULAR BUDGET AND TRUST FUND FOR
ESCWA REGIONAL ACTIVITIES CONTRIBUTIONS
(Thousands of US dollars)

	1998-1999			2000-2001			2002-2003		
	XB ^{a/}	RB ^{b/}	Percentage XB/RB	XB	RB	Percentage XB/RB	XB	RB	Percentage XB/RB
ECA ^{c/}	11 694.5	76 213.4	15.34	10 520	79 405.5	13.25	22 764.3	83 090.6	27.4
ESCAP ^{d/}	23 870.4	54 356.2	43.91	23 251.3	54 411.2	42.73	22 409.3	56 029.1	40
ECE ^{e/}	11 224	42 545.2	26.38	13 706.5	37 414.6	36.63	11 937.4	38 351.3	31.13
ECLAC ^{f/}	17 546.5	78 463.0	22.36	21 898.3	75 584.1	28.97	16 896.5	81 115.8	20.83
ESCWA	3 823.2	41 973.6	9.11	3 731	48 581.4	7.68	2 356.7	50 669.5	4.65
ETF/RB ^{g/}	-	374.9	0.89	-	229.2	0.47	-	598.1	1.18

Source: ESCWA, compiled from various sources.

Note: A hyphen (-) indicates that the amount is not applicable.

a/ Extrabudgetary.

b/ Regular budget.

c/ Economic Commission for Africa.

d/ Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific.

e/ Economic Commission for Europe.

f/ Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

g/ Trust Fund for ESCWA Regional Activities.

D. MAIN ACTIVITIES DURING THE PERIOD 1998-2003

5. Since its relocation to Beirut in 1997, ESCWA has dramatically increased its provision of technical assistance at the national and regional levels. This has been in the form of workshops, seminars, forums, analytical research and operational and field projects in the economic and social sectors. Despite the meagre resources of the Trust Fund, ESCWA was able to finance, fully or partially, technical assistance activities in the areas of environment and environmental policies; sustainable renewable energy; oil and market stability; the World Trade Organization; employment and poverty alleviation; information and communications technology-based education systems; integrated social policies including gender, family, youth and the disabled; post-conflict reconstruction in Lebanon and Palestine; urban development and housing policies; and integrated transport systems.
