

E/2005/41
E/ESCWA/23/10

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION
FOR WESTERN ASIA**

REPORT ON THE TWENTY-THIRD SESSION
9-12 May 2005

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
OFFICIAL RECORDS: 2005

SUPPLEMENT No. 21



UNITED NATIONS
New York, 2005

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E/2005/41

E/ESCWA/23/10

ISSN: 1011-7008

05-0317

United Nations Publication

Summary

The twenty-third session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) was held in Damascus from 9 to 12 May 2005, pursuant to its resolutions 158 (XIV) of 5 April 1987 on holding the sessions of the Commission on a biennial basis, and 196 (XVII) of 31 May 1994 on the frequency of ministerial sessions of the Commission.

The Commission considered a number of issues on its agenda, including such priority issues in the Western Asia region as peace and security, and their impact on economic and social development; the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); and social policies in ESCWA member countries.

The Commission also considered activities that have been undertaken since the twenty-second session, which were presented to it in the report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission and which covered four sub-items, namely: the implementation of the 2004-2005 biennium regular budget activities; the financial and budgetary position; the technical cooperation programme and regional advisory services; and the recommendations of the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services on its audit of the regional commissions. The agenda also included items on the draft programme of work for the biennium 2006-2007 and cooperation between ESCWA and the League of Arab States.

During the session, eight member countries adopted and signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Maritime Transport in the Arab Mashreq.

At the end of its session, the Commission adopted the Damascus Declaration on the progress made towards realizing the Millennium Development Goals in Western Asia, which is to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council for action; and agreed to a number of resolutions to be brought to the attention of the Council. This report includes the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-third session and provides a brief overview of the main points raised during the discussions.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The twenty-third session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia was held pursuant to resolution 196 (XVII) of 31 May 1994 on the frequency of ministerial sessions of the Commission.
2. This report covers the work of the Commission at its twenty-third session, which convened in five plenary meetings in Damascus from 9 to 12 May 2005.

I. ISSUES CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

3. At its 5th plenary meeting, held on 12 May 2005, the Commission adopted the Damascus Declaration and decided to submit it to the Economic and Social Council for action. The text of the Declaration is set forth below:

The Damascus Declaration on the Realization of the Millennium Development Goals

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Guided by the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which was adopted by Heads of State and Government by General Assembly resolution 55/2 of 2000,

Recognizing the importance of meeting the major challenge currently facing the region, namely, making globalization a positive force that promotes the interests of the peoples of the region by creating a shared future based on the highest and most equitable humanitarian principles,

Noting that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the region is a national responsibility, both with respect to identifying national development goals and targets and to adopting the general policies necessary to ensure that those goals and targets are achieved by 2015,

Stressing the need for the developed countries to honour their commitments towards developing countries, which represent the second part of the development partnership equation, and further affirming the relationship between the liberalization of international trade, opportunities for developing countries to gain access to global markets, and MDGs, while emphasizing the importance of coordination between developing countries,

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

Commending the efforts exerted by the secretariat in that field, and the report on the progress made towards realizing MDGs in the ESCWA region,

1. *Affirms* the importance of increasing economic growth and with a view to realizing MDGs, linking that growth to the formulation of strategies for the eradication of poverty and unemployment and the achievement of social integration, including by adopting the general policies necessary in respect of labour, social security, the improvement of living conditions, particularly for vulnerable persons, the eradication of corruption and the strengthening of accountability;

2. *Urges* member countries to coordinate at the regional level and work together in order to formulate coordinated and unified Arab positions in advance of the meeting that will be held in New York in September 2005, five years after the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and to update MDG monitoring and follow-up systems;

3. *Calls upon* the United Nations institutions that are working in the ESCWA region to coordinate and work together in order to meet regional needs and to focus, in the meetings of the regional coordination group organized by ESCWA, on the progress of the region towards the realization of those goals;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to provide support to member countries in realizing MDGs, including by building national capacities to formulate policies, monitor the progress made, measure its impact and prepare regional reports;

5. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the progress made in this regard to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session.

5th plenary meeting
12 May 2005

II. ISSUES TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

4. At its 5th plenary meeting, held on 12 May 2005, the Commission adopted a number of resolutions and decided to bring them to the attention of the Economic and Social Council. The texts of the resolutions are set forth below:

254 (XXIII). The Establishment of the ESCWA Technology Centre

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Noting United Nations Security Council resolution 54/201 concerning the effect of science and technology on accelerating development and on their status as one of the priorities of the United Nations; the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the use of science and technology in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) contained in the Millennium Declaration (E/CN.16/2004/2); and Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/68 concerning the utilization of science and technology for the purposes of development,

Appreciating that the trend in the global economy is towards a knowledge-based economy that is built on science, technology and innovation as the foundation for competitiveness and the achievement of sustainable development goals at the national level; and the linkage between economic growth and the growth of the independent capacities of countries in fields relating to modern technology, and the transfer and adaptation of technology required for such growth,

Affirming that the generation of opportunities for employment and the reduction of poverty require high levels of economic growth and the diversification of sources of national revenue, which in turn require the provision of a solid basis of science, technology and technological innovation,

Taking into consideration the ESCWA initiative to activate the role of science, technology and technological innovation in achieving MDGs, which was adopted by the twenty-second session, and for the ideal accomplishment of which the establishment of a specialized institutional structure is required,

Noting that United Nations regional commissions have established special centres to assist member countries in their endeavours to build independent capacities in the fields of science and technology that have greatest priority for their sustainable development,

Appreciating the important role that must be assumed by a similar centre in the ESCWA region in assisting national efforts to build independent capacities in science and technology and to coordinate cooperation at the regional and international levels in building such capacities,

1. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to produce a detailed study, financed by extrabudgetary resources, on the establishment of a technology centre that would undertake activities aimed at building national technological capacities and harness those capacities in achieving MDGs and strengthening economic and social development and regional and international cooperation in technological fields;

2. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to submit that study to the ESCWA Consultative Committee on Scientific and Technological Development and Technological Innovation before submitting a report on the establishment of a technology centre to the twenty-fourth ESCWA session.

5th plenary meeting

12 May 2005

255 (XXIII). The Establishment of a Regional Mechanism for Building Capacities to Manage Shared Water Resources

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling the Declaration and Programme of Action issued by the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in September 2002,

Recalling the recommendations made by the Committee on Water Resources at its sixth session and, in particular, those relating to the building of capacities in the field of negotiations and the resolution of disputes over shared water resources,

Recalling also its resolution 244 (XXII) dated 17 April 2003 concerning cooperation between ESCWA member countries with respect to shared water resources and the Arab Network for the Integrated Management of Water Resources,

Recognizing the increasing importance of building capacities to manage shared water resources, with a view to maximizing member countries' benefit therefrom,

Appreciating the growing interest that ESCWA is according to water resource-related activities, with a view to strengthening member country endeavours to achieve sustainable development,

1. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to prepare a feasibility study on the establishment of a regional mechanism for building member countries' capacities to manage shared water resources. The study, to be financed by extrabudgetary resources, should be submitted for consideration to the ESCWA Committee on Water Resources;
2. *Calls upon* the Executive Secretary to continue her efforts to support activities and programmes relevant to the aims of the proposed mechanism;
3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the progress achieved with respect to this issue to the twenty-fourth ESCWA session.

5th plenary meeting
12 May 2005

256 (XXIII). Adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Maritime Transport in the Arab Mashreq

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Convinced of the need to facilitate transport and trade in order to achieve regional integration,

Emphasizing the importance of strengthening cooperation and coordination in the field of maritime transport,

Recalling the Declaration on the Adoption of an Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq which was issued by the first session of the Committee on Transport, held on 9 and 10 February 1999, and adopted by ESCWA at its twentieth session, held in Beirut on 27 and 28 May 1999,

Recalling also the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq¹ which was adopted by resolution 235 (XXI) of 11 May 2001, and to the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq² which was adopted by the Commission by its resolution 243 (XXII) of 17 April 2003,

Noting that the sixth session of the Committee on Transport adopted the final draft of the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Maritime Transport in the Arab Mashreq,

1. *Decides to adopt* the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Maritime Transport in the Arab Mashreq annexed hereto;
2. *Urges* member countries to sign and ratify the Memorandum of Understanding as soon as possible;
3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to follow-up implementation of this resolution and report to the twenty-fourth session of the Commission.

5th plenary meeting
12 May 2005

257 (XXIII). Selection of the Routes to be given priority in Implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling the adoption of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq on 11 May 2001 by means of resolution 235 (XXI) dated 11 May 2001 and the entry into force of the Agreement on 19 October 2003,

Recalling also the plan of action for the implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq that was adopted by the Committee on Transport at its fifth session, held from 2 to 4 March 2004, the text of which appeared in E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/1/Rev.1,

Recalling further the major steps that have been taken by some member countries to implement the Agreement in accordance with the plan of action, with particular reference to the manufacture and positioning of international road signs on routes that are part of the Agreement,

Affirming that it is important to identify the routes to be given priority, in order to accelerate implementation of the Agreement and achieve maximum benefit therefrom in the majority of member countries,

¹ Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, *Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq*, 18 May 2001 (E/ESCWA/TRANS/2001/3).

² Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, *Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq*, 5 March 2003 (E/ESCWA/TRANS/2002/1/Rev.2).

Recognizing that, for that purpose, countries must prepare a detailed plan of action of the projects necessary to establish those priority routes,

1. *Adopts* Agreement routes M40 and M45 as priority routes, for the reasons given in the annex to this resolution;
2. *Requests* member countries through whose territories the aforementioned routes pass to accelerate preparation of a detailed plan of action for the projects that must be carried out in respect of those routes, complete that plan by 30 September 2007 at the latest, and begin taking the measures necessary to develop the routes to the standard required under the Agreement as soon as possible;
3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to provide technical assistance in the preparation of the plans of action relating to those routes and follow up their implementation;
4. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report on this issue to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session.

5th plenary meeting
12 May 2005

Annex

**JUSTIFICATIONS FOR THE SELECTION OF THE ROUTES TO BE GIVEN PRIORITY
IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON INTERNATIONAL ROADS
IN THE ARAB MASHREQ**

Within the framework of the plan of action for the implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq,¹ the following five steps were specified:

1. Public information issues.
2. International road signs.
3. Identification of routes and their characteristics.
4. Route signs and signals.
5. Technical specifications of routes.

Moreover, in order to select the routes to be given priority until such time as the technical specifications set forth in the Agreement can be applied to all routes, the following standards were adopted:

1. An international road should pass through the greatest number of member countries, with special consideration being given to those countries that have ratified or signed the Agreement.
2. An international road should provide a linkage with other regions. Specifically, the beginning or end of a route should be outside the ESCWA region.
3. No parts of an international road should be in need of major works to complete or upgrade it that would involve a great deal of time or effort.
4. Work should already have begun on installing the international road signs, raising standards and changing signals to comply with Agreement requirements.
5. One international road should be oriented from north to south and the other from east to west.

The following two routes met the above-mentioned requirements:

(a) *The north-south route:*

M45: Syrian Arab Republic - Jordan - Saudi Arabia - Yemen (3,713 kilometres)
Bab Al Hawa (Syrian Arab Republic - Turkey) - Aleppo - Homs - Damascus - Nasib (Syrian Arab Republic/Jordan) - Jaber (Jordan/Syrian Arab Republic) - Amman - Ma'an - Al Mudawara (Jordan/Saudi Arabia) - Halat Ammar (Saudi Arabia/Jordan) - Tabuk - Qalibah - Medina - Mecca - Abha-Elb (Saudi Arabia/Yemen) - Baqim (Yemen/Saudi Arabia) - Sana'a - Ta'izz.

(b) *The east-west route:*

M40: Iraq - Jordan - Occupied Palestinian Territory - Mediterranean Southern Coast (2,228 kilometres)
Munthareya (Iraq/Iran) - Khanaqin - Baghdad - Ramadi - Al Rutbah - Tarabil (Iraq/Jordan) - Karamah (Jordan/Iraq) - Al Azraq - Amman - King Hussein Bridge - (Jordan/Occupied Palestinian Territory) - Jerusalem - Gaza - Rafah (Egypt/Occupied Palestinian Territory) Arish - Kantara Bridge - Port Said - Alexandria - Salum (Egypt/Libyan Arab Jamahiriya).

¹ E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/1/Rev.1.

258 (XXIII). Strengthening Technical Cooperation in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling its resolution 249 (XXII) of 17 April 2003 concerning strengthening consultancy services and technical cooperation activities in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Acknowledging the role played by consultancy services and regional technical cooperation services in the economic and social development of the region,

Affirming the importance of field activities to meet the development needs of member countries,

Having considered the Executive Secretary's report on technical cooperation activities,

Appreciating the important contributions made by the secretariat in supporting national capacity building in the region,

Acknowledging the efforts exerted by the secretariat in order to improve the delivery of and reporting on its technical cooperation services and their effectiveness by drawing up a strategy aimed at identifying areas where ESCWA could excel and deliver more effective results,

1. *Appreciates* the role played by the secretariat in increasing technical cooperation activities to meet the demands of member countries in priority areas of the region;
2. *Approves* the ESCWA Technical Cooperation Strategy that has been formulated for the purpose;
3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to take all necessary measures to implement the ESCWA Technical Cooperation Strategy;
4. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to establish a technical cooperation information and knowledge-sharing network with member countries, with a view to strengthening and coordinating technical cooperation activities;
5. *Further requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session on the progress achieved in the implementation of the ESCWA Technical Cooperation Strategy and to inform it of any amendments made thereto.

5th plenary meeting
12 May 2005

259 (XXIII). Social Policies

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Noting that developments in the field of social policy in member countries are not keeping pace with the speed of economic and technological developments at the global level,

Noting also that the disparity between social progress and progress made in other fields causes many problems, including social problems,

Recalling the recommendations of the World Summit on Social Development and the Millennium Development Goals,

Taking into consideration the fact that social policies deal with many social issues that fall within the remit of several ministries and institutions,

Noting also the need for the countries in Western Asia to adopt integrated social policies and the planning, implementation, coordination and follow-up necessary in order to prepare integrated social policies that are consonant with regional circumstances,

Recognizing the importance of the documents and reports that have been presented by the secretariat in developing the concept of social policies and supporting their implementation in an integrated fashion,

Appreciating the progress that has been made in implementing the integrated social policies in the Arab region project for which the secretariat is responsible,

1. *Requests* member countries to appoint permanent focal points to participate in discussion of the integrated social policies programme and adopt appropriate measures for its implementation and follow-up;

2. *Calls upon* member countries to cooperate with the secretariat in implementing the next stage of the integrated social policies programme, which requires coordination at the national level in order to find the best ways of formulating social policies that are appropriate to each country and its particularities;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to present the national reports on social policies that are being prepared by the Commission to member countries for adoption with the proviso that those reports should be updated and submitted in their amended form to the Committee on Social Development at one of its subsequent sessions;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the progress made in this field to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session.

5th plenary meeting
12 May 2005

260 (XXIII). Development and Regional Cooperation under Unstable Conditions

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling its resolutions 241 (XXII) concerning the impact of the lack of stability in the Arab region on economic and social development and 252 (XXII) concerning rehabilitation and economic and social reconstruction in Palestine, both of which are dated 17 April 2003,

Referring to the lack of stability that has plagued the region for decades as the result of successive wars and, in particular, those that are the outcome of the Israeli occupation of Arab territories, and to the economic and social impact of that continuing situation,

Referring with extreme concern to the consequences of continued instability in the Arab region to integrated economic and social development,

Commending secretariat initiatives to support rehabilitation and economic and social development in Palestine, Iraq and South Lebanon,

1. *Urges* the Executive Secretary to provide early warning of the potential dangers posed by lack of security in the region to economic and social development and regional integration;
2. *Urges* member countries to produce policies that will strengthen regional cooperation and integration at the economic and social levels, because of the positive impact they will have on the development process;
3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to intensify her endeavours to build capacities and provide the requisite support for the countries of the region that have suffered and continue to suffer from lack of stability, including analytical activities in sustainable economic and social development fields;
4. *Appeals* to member countries and donor bodies, including Governments, institutions and civil society, to contribute to the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the countries of the region that have suffered or continue to suffer from lack of stability;
5. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the progress made in this regard to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session.

5th plenary meeting
12 May 2005

**261 (XXIII). Strengthening the Cooperation Between ESCWA and the League of Arab States
in the Field of Economic and Social Development**

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 56/40 of 7 December 2001, 57/46 of 21 November 2002 and 59/9 of 22 October 2004 on cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States,

Noting the recommendation of the general meeting on cooperation between the United Nations system and the League of Arab States, held in Cairo from 10 to 12 February 2004, to the effect that cooperation between ESCWA and the League of Arab States should be continued and further strengthened in pursuance of economic and social development goals,

Noting also the recommendation of the same meeting that the model of cooperation between the League of Arab States Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Environment, the United Nations Environment Programme Regional Office for West Asia and ESCWA in the preparations of the Arab region for the World Summit on Sustainable Development should be applied in other areas in which the League of Arab States and the United Nations system are engaged,

Taking into account the Report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change (A/59/565) and, in particular, Part two, chapter III, in which economic and social threats, including poverty, infectious diseases and environmental degradation are identified as one of the six clusters of threats with which the world must be concerned now and in the decades ahead,

Taking into account also the report of the Secretary-General, entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all", which emphasized the need for the United Nations and

regional organizations to play complementary roles in facing challenges to international peace and security, and expressed the intention to use memorandums of understanding between the United Nations and individual regional organizations to govern the sharing of information, expertise and resources, as appropriate in each case,

Further taking into account the existing cooperation between ESCWA and the League of Arab States, and confident that the forms and levels of understanding between the United Nations and the League of Arab States can be developed, particularly in the fields of economic and social development,

Having considered the Executive Secretary's report on cooperation between ESCWA and the League of Arab States (E/ESCWA/23/8),

1. *Expresses its appreciation* to the Executive Secretary of ESCWA and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States for their efforts to strengthen channels of communication between the two organizations as part of their joint work in the service of member countries;
2. *Calls for* a strategic partnership to be forged between ESCWA and the League of Arab States based on the comparative advantages enjoyed by each organization;
3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit to the League of Arab States her views on means of developing their cooperation in all economic and social sectors, in order to confront the emerging challenges in those sectors, whether at the general policy or technical level;
4. *Urges* Governments and donor agencies, international financial institutions, members of the United Nations system and the private sector to support joint projects between ESCWA and the League of Arab States in the economic and social development fields;
5. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a copy of her proposals with a report to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session on the progress of the cooperation arrangements between ESCWA and the League of Arab States.

5th plenary meeting
12 May 2005

**262 (XXIII). Support for the Capacities of Member Countries in the Field of Statistics
and the International Comparison Programme**

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Affirming the need to monitor progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and in conformity with the United Nations Millennium Declaration adopted by the General Assembly in 2000 in its resolution 55/2,

Noting the progress made in respect of the International Comparison Programme (ICP) in the Western Asia region and the importance of that Programme in relation to MDGs and, in particular, the measurement of poverty levels and trade and investment indicators,

Pursuant to the recommendations made by the ESCWA Statistical Committee at its sixth session and the outcomes of the thirty-sixth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2005,

Recalling its resolution 247 (XXII) dated 17 April 2003 concerning the development of statistical work in the ESCWA region,

Cognizant of the efforts exerted by the secretariat to develop the capacities of national statistical bodies and update mechanisms and methods of collecting, analysing and disseminating economic and social statistics and indicators,

Recognizing the importance of having access to reliable indicators and statistical data when formulating national policies for economic and social development and appropriate implementation strategies,

Affirming the part played by statistics as a fundamental tool in planning and achieving development,

1. *Calls upon* member countries to adopt national statistical strategies aimed at providing the data and indicators necessary to measure progress made towards economic and social development goals and, in particular, towards MDGs, by carrying out censuses and household surveys, including surveys on the work force and family income and expenditure, and by periodically and regularly updating administrative records and providing the financial resources necessary to implement those strategies;

2. *Expresses its support* for the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses, which aims to adopt advanced international methods, concepts and classifications that will assist in the carrying out of successful population censuses in the shortest time and at the least expense possible, and to establish databases on the demographic, social and economic particularities of populations that may be used in international comparisons and serve the process of formulating development policies and programmes and participating in their activities;

3. *Also calls upon* member countries to issue, once every two years at least, a national statistical report that shows the progress made towards MDGs and provides economic and social indicators for that purpose, in order to assist ESCWA in updating its databases and making them available to end users, including decision and policy makers, with a view to monitoring the progress made by ESCWA member countries at the development level;

4. *Requests* member countries to mainstream ICP operations in their national statistical programmes and their organizational structures in the form of independent units or as part of units that produce price statistics, in order to formulate a purchasing power parity indicator and price comparison figures;

5. *Calls upon* member countries to strengthen the capacities of their statistical bodies to conduct the sectoral surveys necessary to apply the bases for the preparation of national accounts in accordance with the United Nations System of National Accounts 1993. Surveys should also be carried out on the unofficial sector;

6. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to provide consultancy services to member countries in the field of economic, social and environmental statistics;

7. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the progress made in implementing this resolution to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session.

263 (XXIII). Promoting Partnership and Resource Mobilization

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Conscious of its responsibility for achieving sustainable economic and social development in the region and promoting regional integration,

Conscious also of its role in monitoring and analysing the effects of political instability on socio-economic development in the region,

Recognizing that the ESCWA regular programme budget is limited and largely covers normative and analytical activities,

Reaffirming the importance of extrabudgetary resources in enabling the secretariat to expand its operational and capacity-building activities, and to address regional emerging issues in a timely and effective manner,

Recalling its resolutions 249 (XXII) and 253 (XXII) of 17 April 2003 on strengthening consultancy services and technical cooperation activities and the increase of donations to the Commission,

Commending the efforts of the secretariat to mobilize resources from all parties, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, and in the preparation of a consolidated list of projects for resource mobilization,

Having considered the Commission's technical cooperation programme and the financial status of Commission programmes,

1. *Hopes* that member countries will provide all possible financial support to the ESCWA Trust Fund for Regional Activities, with a view to enabling the secretariat to increase its operational activities;
2. *Requests* donors at the national, regional and international levels to increase their financial support for ESCWA activities, including technical cooperation activities;
3. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to identify, establish and develop strategic partnerships and undertake collaborative initiatives with regional and international donors in the priority areas of work;
4. *Further requests* the Executive Secretary to prepare a multi-year funding plan and submit it to the twenty-fourth-session of the Commission.

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12 May 2005

264 (XXIII). Implementation of the Beirut Declaration On Arab Women Ten Years After Beijing: Call For Peace

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women, that was held in Beijing in September 1995; the document issued by the twenty-third special session of the United Nations General Assembly, held in New York in June 2000; the declaration issued by

the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, held in New York in March 2005; the recommendations and final report issued by the Arab Regional Conference Ten Years after Beijing: Call for Peace, which was held in Beirut from 8 to 10 July 2004; the third of the Millennium Development Goals, relating to the empowerment of women and gender equality; and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,

Noting that the Commission on the Status of Women, at its forty-ninth session, confirmed the import of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and decided to concentrate work at its fiftieth session, which is scheduled to be held in New York in March 2006, on following up implementation of the Platform for Action, requesting the United Nations regional commissions to coordinate between member countries in order to standardize positions and enable the women-related national mechanisms to accelerate the implementation of the Beijing recommendations and all related follow-up,

Recalling its resolution 240 (XXII) dated 17 April 2003 concerning the establishment within the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia of a Committee on Women and the establishment within the secretariat of a women's centre with the responsibility for acting as the secretariat of the Committee on Women,

Taking into consideration the recommendation made by the Committee on Women at its second session, which was held in Beirut in July 2004, to the effect that the ESCWA Women's Centre should undertake a pivotal role in unifying efforts aimed at greater cooperation, integration and exchange of expertise between member countries, and in providing the support necessary to build the institutional and human capacities of women-related national mechanisms, in cooperation and coordination with the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the League of Arab States, the Arab Women Organization and the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research,

1. *Requests* member countries to adopt policies that take into consideration gender issues and to put in place national strategies for the empowerment of women and the institutional frameworks for their implementation, with a view to mainstreaming women's issues into activities, policies and programmes, in keeping with the relevant Arab and international agreements, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;

2. *Calls upon* member countries to intensify efforts aimed at implementing the Beirut Declaration on Arab Women Ten Years After Beijing: Call for Peace and following up implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, the outcomes of the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women and those of the comprehensive review and evaluation of the Beijing Platform for Action, and to take the measures necessary to prepare national reports on the progress made and obstacles faced in that regard;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the progress made in implementing this resolution to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session.

5th plenary meeting
12 May 2005

265 (XXIII). Regional Cooperation in the Field of Road Traffic Safety

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling United Nations General Assembly resolution 58/9 dated 19 November 2003 concerning the global road safety crisis,

Recognizing that the lack of safety on the roads is responsible for a huge number of dead and injured persons at the global level, and that this problem is ever-increasing in the developing countries, bringing social consequences and direct economic costs,

Affirming the importance of the endeavours exerted by the relevant United Nations agencies, particularly at the regional level, with a view to improving road safety,

Recognizing the importance of the agreement concluded between the United Nations regional commissions and the World Health Organization at a meeting held in March 2005, respecting the five priorities for action in the field of road safety, namely, safety belts; helmets for motor cyclists; reduced speed; not driving while under the influence of alcohol; and good road infrastructure,

Believing that it is important to carry out technical studies on road traffic safety issues, in the light of which priorities can be established for work in that field in the ESCWA region, which may differ from the priorities set forth above,

Welcoming the alacrity with which the Executive Secretary of ESCWA responded to requests for road traffic safety in member countries to be improved, by adding new activities to the Commission's programme of work for the 2004-2005 biennium and proposing related activities in the programme of work for the 2006-2007 biennium,

1. *Calls upon* member countries to link the issue of road safety to their development programmes, with a view to increasing awareness of traffic safety measures through the audio-visual and written media, educational curriculums, especially for children and youth, cooperation with relevant regional and international institutions and allocating the budgets necessary to promote the needs of road traffic safety;

2. *Also calls upon* member countries to participate in the activities that ESCWA will undertake, including the preparation of studies, regional workshops on good traffic safety practices and preparations for the international traffic week that is scheduled for 2007;

3. *Expresses* its appreciation to the ESCWA secretariat for the speed of its response to the need to improve road safety in member countries;

4. *Hopes* that member countries will provide the material and moral support to the ESCWA secretariat that will enable it to implement activities in support of national efforts to achieve components of road traffic safety;

5. *Adjures* member countries to participate effectively in any General Assembly discussions on this issue that may be held in September 2005;

6. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the implementation of this resolution to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session.

5th plenary meeting
12 May 2005

266 (XXIII). Adoption of the Draft Programme of Work for the 2006-2007 Biennium

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling the draft programme budget for the 2006-2007 biennium,

Bearing in mind that the draft programme budget is liable to be amended when discussed by the relevant committees and the United Nations General Assembly,

Noting that the draft programme budget has adopted the priorities of the member countries with respect to economic and social development,

1. *Adopts* the draft programme budget for the 2006-2007 biennium;
2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to distribute the programme budget to member countries after it has been adopted by the General Assembly;
3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report to the Commission at its twenty-fourth session on the progress made in implementing the programme of work and to inform it of any amendments made thereto.

5th plenary meeting
12 May 2005

**267 (XXIII). Adoption of the Amendments made to the Programme of Work
for the 2004-2005 Biennium**

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Cognizant of the progress made in 2004 in implementing the programme of work for the 2004-2005 biennium,

Cognizant also of the amendments made to that programme of work,

Expressing satisfaction with the progress made,

Satisfied that the arrangements made concerning the amendments to the programme of work maintained its flexibility,

1. *Adopts* the amendments made to the programme of work for the 2004-2005 biennium;
2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to follow up implementation of the programme of work and, if necessary, include activities to address any changes that may take place in the ESCWA region;
3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to include information on any further amendments that may be made to the programme of work in the report on progress made in implementing the programme of work for the 2004-2005 biennium that will be distributed to member countries.

5th plenary meeting
12 May 2005

**268 (XXIII). Adoption of the Final Reports of the Subsidiary Bodies of the Economic
and Social Commission for Western Asia**

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Affirming the importance of the role played by its subsidiary bodies in formulating, coordinating and following-up work in their respective specializations, in order to promote the best interests of member countries,

Recognizing that implementation of the recommendations made by those bodies enables ESCWA to undertake its duties in the special areas that fall within the remit of its subsidiary bodies,

Having considered the recommendations contained in the following reports: the report of the Committee on Women on its first session (E/ESCWA/WOM/2003/IG.1/9); the report of the Committee on Transport on its fifth session (E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/IG.1/7); the report of the Committee on Women on its second session (E/ESCWA/WOM/2004/IG.1/6); the report of the Statistical Committee on its sixth session (E/ESCWA/SCU/2004/IG.1/6); the report of the Committee on Energy on its fifth session (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2004/IG.1/7); the report of the Committee on Water Resources on its sixth session (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2004/IG.2/6); the report of the Technical Committee on the Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region on its fourth session (E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.2/5); the report of the Committee on Transport on its sixth session (E/ESCWA/GRID/2005/IG.1/5); and the report of the Committee on Social Development on its fifth session (E/ESCWA/SDD/2004/IG.1/12),

1. *Adopts* the recommendations contained in those reports, unless the Commission decides anything to the contrary in the course of this session, and the recommendations relating to the convening of subcommittee meetings in the 2006-2007 biennium;

2. *Calls upon* member countries to cooperate with ESCWA in taking and activating measures to ensure that those recommendations are implemented.

5th plenary meeting
12 May 2005

III. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION AND DISCUSSION

A. REQUESTS BY STATES MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND/OR ITS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES THAT ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA (ESCWA) TO PARTICIPATE AS OBSERVERS IN THE TWENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE COMMISSION
(Agenda item 5)

5. Five States Members of the United Nations that are not members of ESCWA requested to participate as observers in the work of the twenty-third session, namely, China, Morocco, Russian Federation, Sudan and Tunisia. The Commission agreed to invite these States to participate as observers in the work of the session. Furthermore, it consented to grant observer status to Sudan at all meetings held by ESCWA.

B. PRIORITY ISSUES IN THE WESTERN ASIA REGION
(Agenda item 6)

6. The Commission considered this agenda item as set forth in document E/ESCWA/23/4. This item comprised three sub-items, which are reviewed below:

1. *Peace and security and their impact on economic and social development*

7. A round-table discussion was held under this agenda item to discuss peace and security and their impact on economic and social development. The round table, in which Messrs. Mahmoud Abdel Fadhil, Ma'n Bashour and Nabil Sukkar participated, was chaired by Taleb Rifai, Regional Director of the International Labour Organization.

8. The Executive Secretary opened the discussion by presenting the Secretary-General's report, entitled "In Larger Freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all", which will be considered by the General Assembly at its next session in September 2005. The Secretary-General's report defines a number of priorities in the areas of development, security and human rights; and addresses the issue of international organizations, particularly the United Nations, and the role they are expected to play in addressing these priorities. The report is based on the belief that there can be no security without development and no development without security, and that neither of the two can be achieved without respect for human rights and the rule of law. The Executive Secretary explained that the reform of the United Nations is aimed firmly at establishing its principles through the commitment of States Members to its charter, and emphasized the need to implement the declaration of human rights and to enable the Economic and Social Council to carry out its duties effectively.

9. The Executive Secretary stressed that the purpose of holding such a round-table discussion was to facilitate public debate on this issue in ESCWA member countries and to prepare for the active participation of ESCWA member countries in the General Assembly debate on the issue so as to reflect the specific situation in the region.

10. The above-mentioned participants raised the following threats and challenges in their discussion:

(a) Hard and soft threats facing the region, particularly military occupation; border disputes; conflicts over natural resources of strategic value, including oil and water; civil wars; and unemployment, especially among the educated youth;

(b) The challenges facing the region, particularly weak infrastructure, absence of smooth transition of power, lack of prospects for peaceful democratic change, unequal distribution of income and wealth, poverty, widespread corruption and weak institutions;

(c) The “organized chaos” advocated by some leaders in the West, which is aimed at disintegrating the Arab region and at creating unsupported links in a cultural context between Arab sub-regions and non-Arab regions. This results from and can lead to pre-emptive wars;

(d) The Israeli settlements, which are at the centre of discord in the Arab-Israeli conflict;

(e) External aggression and internal tensions as a result of marginalization, misuse of resources and despotism;

(f) Both random and organized acts of violence, which lead to wars and represent a main source of misery in the region;

(g) The direct and indirect cost of the wars in the Arab region, including the brain drain, the state of religious and ethnic disarray and the cost of armament;

(h) Political instability that instigates capital and investment flight, particularly long-term investment;

(i) The limited size of the market and its fragmented state, as well as the low rate of intraregional trade.

11. The main solutions proposed to meet the above challenges were as follows:

(a) Establishing national, food and knowledge security;

(b) Promoting a new social contract that is based on mutual understanding between the various social categories, thereby leading to strong social immunity by providing a new set of social policies and social networks that guarantee a minimum standard of living;

(c) Extending the scope of democratic practices;

(d) Establishing an early warning system by building statistical capacities that help the region prepare for various scenarios and adopt adequate pre-emptive policies;

(e) Coordinating collective negotiation policies among Arab countries and strengthening Arab intergovernmental organizations in order to limit the negative impact of globalization;

(f) Adopting a long-term concept of national security based on self-sufficiency and capacity building in all fields, particularly information;

(g) Narrowing the gap between personal and public interests;

(h) Building economic coalitions with other regions in order to guarantee fairness in trade and to coordinate WTO related policies:

(i) Promoting accountability, immediate institutional reform and the rotation of power;

(j) Activating the independent role of the United Nations as a balancing factor;

(k) Directing national wealth towards local productive projects and encouraging these initiatives by supporting private investment and providing it with guarantees.

2. Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in ESCWA member countries

12. A round-table discussion was held under this agenda item to discuss the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in ESCWA member countries. The round table, in which Ms. Heba Nassar, Mr. Adeeb Nehmeh and ESCWA's coordinator in charge of MDGs participated, was chaired by His Excellency Jubara Bin Eid Al-Suraiseri, the Minister of Transport in Saudi Arabia.

13. The Executive Secretary opened the discussion by presenting the Goals that were adopted by 189 States Members of the United Nations who committed to achieving the following: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development. The Executive Secretary stressed that these Goals were the result of the various international conferences that were held by the United Nations. She stated that ESCWA, like other regional commissions, was monitoring the achievement of these Goals and assessing whether the region would be able to fulfill them by 2015, as expected. Moreover, ESCWA was working in cooperation with all United Nations agencies and organizations in the region on a comprehensive regional report on MDGs in preparation for the follow-up and assessment of the efforts made to implement these Goals, which will be carried out by the General Assembly in September 2005. The Executive Secretary hoped that the countries of the region would be able to achieve the majority of the Millennium Development Goals despite the difficulties and challenges facing them.

14. Within the framework of MDGs, the Executive Secretary stated that Official Development Assistance (ODA) provided for under Goal 8 requires political will from the rich countries in order to fulfill the target of 0.07 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). This target has not been met in the past 25 years, with the notable exception of a number of developed countries, particularly the Nordic countries that have attained 1 per cent of GDP. She noted that ODA provided by two Arab countries, namely, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, exceeded the set target to reach 1 per cent of GDP.

15. During the discussion, the panelists raised the following points:

(a) Estimates published in international reports of the number of poor in Arab countries tend to reduce this number and minimize the gravity of the problem. Consequently, combating poverty is not considered a priority issue for the development of Arab countries;

(b) Measuring poverty by the benchmark of one American dollar a day is not valid for assessing poverty in the majority of the Arab countries, which have a high or intermediate level of development and income. Therefore, poverty should be measured by using the national poverty line;

(c) The misunderstandings related to national poverty lines are the result of the difference in definitions of poverty from one country to another, as well as different approaches, measurement methods and research techniques. This, in addition to the gaps in available data, makes it difficult to compare countries;

(d) Far from improving, the issue of poverty is worsening and is being exacerbated by prevailing circumstances;

(e) The ability to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in member countries varies from one country to another;

(f) Educational systems must be updated in response to the changes in technology, the economy and the needs of the labour market;

(g) Efforts need to be made to expand education horizontally in order to face the challenges of the growing population and demographic changes;

(h) The need to focus on training and providing qualified teachers as well as the need to plan for market requirements;

(i) Emphasis must be placed on vocational and technical training, particularly for women, thereby facilitating their needs to reconcile economic with social roles;

(j) Social traditions that hamper the effective participation of women in political and parliamentary life need to be reconsidered.

16. The discussion raised a number of challenges facing the countries of the region in their efforts to achieve the MDGs, including the following:

(a) Political obstacles resulting from the continuing occupation of Arab territories, as well as from political instability and lack of security;

(b) Slow economic growth affecting most countries of the region;

(c) Poor planning of development policies aimed at overcoming the difficulties facing the countries of the region, as well as lack of commitment to and mismanagement of such policies;

(d) Conflicts arising between the needs of a growing population and the requirements of structural economic reform;

(e) Absence of a clear definition of the standards that need to be achieved by 2015 with regard to Goal 8 concerning global partnership for development;

(f) National disparities between urban and rural areas, between the various population groups and between men and women;

(g) Imbalance between the resources and capabilities of the region and the population growth, which represents a challenge for achieving the MDGs.

17. The round-table discussion concluded with the following recommendations:

(a) To adopt policies that address educational issues at the regional level;

(b) To adhere to good governance, efficient management and public accountability, and to combat corruption;

(c) To increase the assistance provided to developing countries, cancel their debts and open the markets to their products;

(d) To confirm the commitment of developing countries aimed at structural economic reforms;

(e) To encourage interregional trade, improve institutional capacities in ESCWA member countries and update their monitoring, follow-up and statistical systems;

- (f) To establish a time frame for achieving Goal 8, while taking into consideration various partnership projects;
- (g) To coordinate and unify Arab positions at meetings related to MDGs;
- (h) To address the reasons for the relapse in some of the indicators, including the increased mortality rate that cannot be sufficiently justified by the adverse security situation;
- (i) To study and redress the obstacles to the achievement of MDGs;
- (j) To protect vulnerable and marginalized population groups;
- (k) To adopt accurate measurement criteria and indicators that reflect the reality of the situation in member countries;
- (l) To give special attention to children's issues, particularly child labour and trade in children;
- (m) To link development indicators with the International Comparison Programme (ICP) in view of the close connection between the Programme and the Millennium indicators, particularly given that ICP provides actual measurements through the Purchasing Power Parity.

3. Social policies in ESCWA member countries

18. A round-table discussion was held under this agenda item to discuss social policies in ESCWA member countries. The round table, in which Mr. Kareem Farman and the Chief of the Social Development Division in ESCWA participated, was chaired by Ms. Fatima Al-Balooshi, head of the delegation of Bahrain.

19. The Executive Secretary opened the discussion by stating that the aim of this round table was to seek the opinion of specialists in the member countries with regard to the social policies project being implemented by ESCWA. She explained that ESCWA members were often subject to external criticism for issues related to their social policies, and added that the Commission was working to help its members in this field by spreading knowledge of the concept of integrated social policies; clarifying the difference between social policies and social services; and studying the reasons and criteria of success of social policies in other countries. The Executive Secretary stated that this project would initially be implemented in Bahrain and Palestine upon their request.

20. The presentation of this agenda item by the ESCWA secretariat included the five stages of the project, namely: (a) studying success stories and defining success indicators, criteria and means for supporting social policies; (b) preparing national reports about member countries, including an analysis of the principal sectors, and providing indicators and monitoring progress made; (c) preparing a regional report covering all the issues related to this field; (d) promoting cooperation between ESCWA and its member countries to define national indicators and measure their effectiveness; and (e) organizing information campaigns to raise awareness among decision-makers of the importance of adopting social policies backed by the proper political support.

21. During the discussion the following points were raised:

- (a) The relationship between social and economic issues, and the importance of adopting sound social policies tailored to the stage of national economic development;

(b) The correlation between increasing productivity and formulating social policies, which must be taken into consideration in order to avoid potential conflicts between the two;

(c) Political will and political power and their role in encouraging the political participation of women;

(d) The role of education, particularly education of women, and the need to project the image of active and productive women in society, thereby moving away from the traditional image that still exists in educational curricula;

(e) The role of the infrastructure, particularly political and social legislation, in guaranteeing the success of social development as can be drawn from the experiences of the Republic of Korea and Malaysia;

(f) The fact that social policies are much larger in scope than gender issues, given that they encompass such groups and areas as the disabled, the marginalized, the elderly, education and health;

(g) The availability of accurate data and statistics, particularly gender statistics, their importance in defining weaknesses and failures, and the need to take those into consideration;

(h) The importance of emphasizing the role of women in the decision-making process not only at the political level, but also at the economic level.

22. The round table concluded with the following recommendations:

(a) To coordinate social and political issues, while keeping in mind that sustainable development is the ultimate goal and that all policies must lead to its achievement;

(b) To draw up a clear policy defining the role of Arab women in the economic and political spheres;

(c) To seek to activate the participation of women in the political field by encouraging them to run in elections and join constitutional bodies;

(d) To conduct a study on the obstacles that prevent women from participating in productive economic activities;

(e) To study failed experiences in social policies and the reasons for their failure, and not just success stories;

(f) To organize an information campaign through the media at large in all Arab countries aimed at changing the perception of the role of women;

(g) To continue the dialogue on the importance of integrated social policies and their impact on improving economic performance;

(h) To study the impact of technological development in terms of meeting the social needs of individuals and societies in general;

(i) To give due importance to social work focusing on individuals as a valuable endeavour on its own merit.

C. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION
(Agenda item 7)

23. The Commission considered this agenda item as set forth in document E/ESCWA/23/5. This item comprised four sub-items, which are reviewed below.

1. Implementation of the regular budget activities for the 2004-2005 biennium

24. The Executive Secretary presented this item by providing a general overview of the activities of the Commission, based on document E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I). She pointed out that the activities of ESCWA were related to the prevailing situation in its member countries, and to their needs and to those of their formal and informal institutions and civil society organizations. ESCWA gives particular attention to circumstances arising as a result of the ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Palestine. Within the context of the latter, it convened the Arab-International Forum for Rehabilitation and Development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Towards an Independent State, which encouraged many Arab and foreign parties to discuss the actual needs of the Palestinian people. Moreover, a number of studies were presented, which revealed technical, scientific and legal aspects that had not been covered by the media. Consequently, ESCWA has initiated the process of addressing the needs of the Palestinian people and has developed both a medium- and a long-term programme to meet those needs. Additionally, the Commission has successfully built a partnership between the United Nations and the civil society in Palestine and the Palestinian Authority. This practical approach has characterized the work of ESCWA in the six subprogrammes that constitute its activities.

25. The secretariat gave PowerPoint presentations of the activities undertaken by the six subprogrammes under the programme of work as detailed in document E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.1.

2. The financial and budgetary position

26. The Commission considered this agenda item, which was introduced with a PowerPoint presentation, as set forth in document E/ESCWA/23/5(Part II).

27. During the discussion, it was pointed out that the security and safety budget was close to the budget allocated to technical cooperation activities, which translated into a need for additional resources. It was added that civil society institutions and donor countries do not provide the resources needed to implement ESCWA activities and projects; and given that priority issues require more resources for addressing regional challenges, member countries needed, therefore, to respond to requests by ESCWA to participate in financing its projects.

28. It was mentioned that the information contained in the report on the financial and budgetary position of the Commission represented only a statement of the items of expenditure and was not intended to provide information on the principles guiding the establishment of the budget or on the results of the activities financed by this budget.

29. The secretariat clarified that the document presented under this agenda item was limited to financial matters and showed the status of available resources. In addition, ESCWA budget is a results-based budget, and reports are available on the expenditure and the performance of the Commission's activities during the biennium 2002-2003. Moreover, given that each activity undertaken by the Commission has specific goals

and results, ESCWA is set to issue a report on the implementation of its activities by the end of the current biennium, which will cover the achievements of each substantive division.

30. The Executive Secretary added that the United Nations has recently adopted the results-based budgeting whereby the Programme Planning and Coordination Division monitors the performance of the various activities and assesses their benefits. She pointed out that a questionnaire would be distributed to the delegations that needed to be filled out carefully and objectively in order to assist ESCWA in determining the usefulness of its activities and addressing the shortcomings. Furthermore, she stressed that taking the results into consideration already at the planning stage was not an easy task.

3. The technical cooperation programme and regional advisory services

31. The Commission considered this item, which was introduced with a PowerPoint presentation on the technical cooperation strategy of ESCWA, as set forth in document E/ESCWA/23/5(Part III)/Add.1; on the technical cooperation activities financed from extrabudgetary resources, as set forth in document E/ESCWA/23/5(Part III)/Add.2; and on the technical cooperation implemented by ESCWA within the scope of the regular programme of technical cooperation for the 2002-2003 biennium, as set forth in document E/ESCWA/23/5(Part III)/Add.3.

32. During the discussion, the delegates commended ESCWA's technical cooperation strategy and highlighted a number of its important aspects. It was noted that ESCWA experts take into consideration the specific situation of each member country in which they deliver their services. It was also noted that the party receiving technical assistance from ESCWA is partly responsible for the success of such assistance by clearly defining its needs and effectively planning its requests. This was considered of special importance given that it complemented the efforts made by ESCWA and helped effectively to build national capacities. Additionally, the delegates commended the activities undertaken by the regional advisors in a number of specialized and technical fields.

33. The Executive Secretary stated that, while ESCWA members were pleased with the technical cooperation activities undertaken by ESCWA as could be inferred from the number of letters of thanks from members countries for the services provided by ESCWA and its regional experts, ministries and governmental bodies were not fully aware of the services offered by ESCWA in this field. She hoped that there would be enhanced communication between the parties receiving technical assistance from ESCWA and the political parties responsible for communication with the United Nations.

4. Recommendations of the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services on its audit of the regional commissions

34. The Commission considered this item, which was introduced with a PowerPoint presentation of the report on the recommendations of the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on its audit of the regional commissions, as set forth in document E/ESCWA/23/5(Part IV).

35. In response to an inquiry with regard to one of the recommendations of the OIOS relating to the issue of statistics, the Executive Secretary clarified that the Statistics Division worked previously without coordination with the rest of the substantive divisions at ESCWA, thereby resulting in some disparities between the statistics published by the various substantive divisions and those by the Statistics Division. To remedy this situation, the secretariat redeployed its statisticians to the substantive divisions and established a coordination unit for them, while preserving all the human and financial resources of the Statistical Division without any modification. The OIOS recommended that ESCWA assess its statistical activities in view of these changes. In accordance with this recommendation, ESCWA sought the views of the chiefs of

substantive division and, following their recommendations, maintained the statisticians redeployed to the various divisions and working in close cooperation with them, thereby guaranteeing the accuracy of the statistics published by the Commission. The financial resources of the statistical activities were pooled into a separate account for the statistics programme, which is subprogramme 6. All statistical activities were placed under the supervision of the senior statistician of the Commission in charge of the Statistical Coordination Unit.

36. The Commission took note of these explanations given by the secretariat.

D. GENERAL DEBATE: ISSUES OF WHICH THE TWENTY-THIRD SESSION IS SEIZED
(Agenda item 8)

37. The delegation of Saudi Arabia gave a PowerPoint presentation, under this item, of the development in the international roads network of the Arab Mashreq within its territory. The presentation included details of the roads, their specifications and their length, which represents 40 per cent of the total length of the region's network.

38. The following main points were raised in the general debate:

(a) The continuing political instability and its impact on economic growth and on reaching solutions for many of the problems of poverty and unemployment, and the need to take such issues into consideration;

(b) The need to continue to monitor and assess the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and to enable the region to achieve the majority of these Goals by 2015;

(c) The importance of social policies and of close cooperation with Governments in order to improve social conditions;

(d) The importance of statistics and the need to give special attention to the statistics programme;

(e) The importance of regional cooperation, which is reflected in the integrated transport system in the Arab Mashreq, comprising roads, railways and maritime lines;

(f) The appreciation of the programmes undertaken by ESCWA to serve the region in the economic and social fields, and the attention given to countries emerging from armed conflicts, making special mention of the report on Palestine and of the Arab-International Forum for Rehabilitation and Development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Towards an Independent State.

E. ADOPTION OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON COOPERATION IN THE FIELD
OF MARITIME TRANSPORT IN THE ARAB MASHREQ
(Agenda item 9)

39. The Commission considered this item as set forth in document E/ESCWA/23/6. The secretariat stated that the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Maritime Transport was the third initiative undertaken by ESCWA in the field of transport and complements transport coordination efforts in the ESCWA region, which now cover transport by road, railways and maritime transport. It was also stated that the aim of this Memorandum of Understanding was to develop and implement harmonized maritime policies, thereby leading to the sustainable development of the commercial fleets of member countries and enhancing cooperation among them at regional and sub-regional levels, and with other regions of the world.

40. The Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Maritime Transport in the Arab Mashreq was adopted after adding to its preamble a mention of relevant issues that emanated from the Arab Summit held in Algiers in March 2005.

41. The Memorandum was signed during the official signing ceremony, which was held in the presence of the legal advisor of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, by the following members: Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

F. DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE 2006-2007 BIENNIUM
(Agenda item 10)

42. The Commission considered this item as set forth in document E/ESCWA/23/7. The Executive Secretary explained that the strategic framework for 2006-2007 has replaced the medium-term plan that was the basis of the work of the United Nations. The aim of the strategic framework is to plan for two years instead of five years in order to keep up with the pace of change in member countries and the world in general.

43. The member countries approved the programme of work for the 2006-2007 biennium as set forth in document E/ESCWA/23/7. The discussion focused on population policies, the importance of new technologies in various fields and not limited to communication, and the need to coordinate with the European Union in the area of transport agreements.

G. COOPERATION BETWEEN ESCWA AND THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES
(Agenda item 11)

44. The Commission considered this item as set forth in document E/ESCWA/23/8. The Executive Secretary stated that cooperation between ESCWA and the League of Arab States (LAS) existed in all fields and that ESCWA was represented at a number of meetings of the Ministerial Councils of the LAS, including the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment. She highlighted the comparative advantages of LAS, particularly in the political field, and the advantages of ESCWA, especially in its technical fields of specialization; and mentioned that combining the advantages of the two organizations would be greatly beneficial to member countries and would strengthen their cooperation. Coordination between the two could serve the interests of all Arab countries, particularly through the official representation of ESCWA at the meetings of the League's bodies that could facilitate cooperation. She added that a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by both organizations a few years ago and that it could be useful to revise its content in order to enhance the effectiveness of both organizations in serving their respective members.

45. The representative of LAS explained that there was a certain mechanism for attending the meetings of the Economic and Social Council of the League, and that ESCWA would be welcome to attend these meetings if the secretariat presented the required request. Moreover, LAS welcomed any suggestions by ESCWA aimed at strengthening cooperation between the two organizations, and would give these suggestions due consideration within its related bodies given that they could serve the interests of its member countries.

46. During the discussion, a number of issues were raised, including the need to use the resources of ESCWA and LAS to serve their members. It was stressed that the comparative advantage of each of the two organizations represented their real value and that, moreover, ESCWA needed to take into consideration those Arab countries that are not members of the Commission given that a wider political scope strengthens the commitment of the countries of the region towards achieving integration.

47. The Executive Secretary affirmed that it should not be implied that cooperation between ESCWA and LAS was being questioned. Cooperation between the two organizations has been continuous for a number of years. Within the framework of a United Nations resolution that calls for periodic meetings between the United Nations and LAS to enhance cooperation, such a meeting was planned in Beirut in May 2005. However, this meeting was rescheduled given the prevailing circumstances. The Executive Secretary emphasized that the relationship between ESCWA and LAS is strong and that there was complete understanding between the Secretary-General of LAS and the Executive Secretary of ESCWA. She hoped that the two organizations would be able to reach an ideal formula for effective cooperation and coordination.

H. DATE AND VENUE OF THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION (Agenda item 12)

48. The Commission considered this item as set forth in document E/ESCWA/23/9. The secretariat stated that ESCWA holds its sessions normally every other year in odd years. The seven subsidiary bodies of ESCWA also hold their sessions every other year, with the exception for the Committee on Transport that holds its session every year. However, given that the strategic framework is being adopted in even years, it was suggested that ESCWA hold its session in even years to be in harmony with the submission and approval of the strategic framework. This will necessitate holding a session in 2006 to align ESCWA's sessions with the schedule of the strategic framework. Consequently, the Commission suggested that the next session of ESCWA be held in April 2006 in Beirut, unless it received an invitation to hold it in another venue.

49. The Commission approved the suggestion made by the secretariat as set forth in document E/ESCWA/23/9.

I. OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 13)

50. The participants decided to address a telegram to His Excellency the President of the Syrian Arab Republic, Doctor Bashar Assad, to thank him for sponsoring the session and for the gracious hospitality that was extended to the participating delegations.

IV. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON ITS TWENTY-THIRD SESSION

51. The Commission adopted the draft report of the twenty-third session as set forth in document E/ESCWA/23/10 at its plenary closing session held on 12 May 2005.

V. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. DATE AND VENUE

52. The Commission held its twenty-third session in Damascus from 9 to 12 May 2005. The Commission convened five plenary meetings during which it discussed the items listed on its agenda.

B. OPENING OF THE SESSION

53. The opening session was held under the patronage of His Excellency the President of the Syrian Arab Republic, Doctor Bashar Assad, who was represented by the Minister of Finance in the Syrian Arab Republic, Mr. Mohammad Hussein.

54. The representative of Egypt, Mr. Essam Sharaf, opened the session in his capacity as chairman of the twenty-second session. In his opening statement he said that Egypt commended the work of ESCWA during the period it chaired the session, particularly its achievements in the field of transport, building the capacity of member countries in dealing with globalization, increasing their negotiation capabilities, intensifying training programmes and increasing the technical support given to its members. He added that member countries are in need of the services provided by ESCWA in the economic and social fields, while ESCWA is in need of the financial and moral support of its members, in Arab and international forums and especially in the General Assembly. He concluded his statement by saying that he was pleased to hand over the chairmanship of the session to the host country.

55. The Executive Secretary of ESCWA delivered a statement in which she welcomed the participants and thanked the Syrian Arab Republic for hosting the twenty-third session of ESCWA. She said that most of the countries of the region were experiencing difficult times, especially in view of the wars and conflicts. However, ESCWA managed to make notable progress in some areas. Among the positive developments in the region, she mentioned the improved overall economic performance during 2003 and 2004, increased oil revenues, relative stability of the exchange rates, limited inflation and improved external trade. Among the challenges still facing the region, she mentioned rising unemployment rates, low levels of domestic and foreign investment, low numbers of tourists visiting the Arab region, low rates of interregional trade, continued high illiteracy rates despite the improvements achieved in that field, lack of integrated social policies that define the citizens rights and duties, and various population issues.

56. The Executive Secretary stressed the need to intensify efforts made to achieve regional integration; increase cooperation between the countries of the region; strengthen collective action by institutions, the private sector and the civil society in the Arab world; and direct a fair share of investments towards productive activities.

57. The Executive Secretary read out a message addressed by the Secretary-General to the twenty-third session of the Commission. In that statement, the Secretary-General greeted the participants and referred to the political tension in the region, which had not deterred its people from spreading freedom, achieving progress and implementing reform. He also stated that there could be no security without development and no development without security, and that neither could be achieved without respect for human rights and the rule of law.

58. The Minister of Finance in the Syrian Arab Republic, Mr. Mohammad Hussein, delivered a statement in his capacity as representative of the patron of the session, during which he welcomed the participants and confirmed his country's conviction in the balanced and sustainable approaches of the United Nations towards economic and social development, as well as its strong belief in the role of the United Nations for promoting international cooperation, and for bringing peace to the world and especially to the Arab world. He stated that the Syrian Arab Republic, by hosting the twenty-third session of ESCWA, expressed its continued and pervasive interest in enhancing regional cooperation, integration and coordination. He gave a brief presentation of his country's achievements in this respect and concluded his statement by wishing the participants success in their deliberations and in reaching important results and recommendations serving the interests of the region.

C. PARTICIPATION

59. The session was attended by representatives of the 13 members of ESCWA, as well as representatives of other States Members of the United Nations that are not members of ESCWA who participated as observers. Other observers included representatives of United Nations programmes, bodies and institutions; representatives of international organizations, non-governmental organizations and other organizations; and a number of experts. The list of participants in the session is provided in annex I.

D. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

60. During its 1st meeting held on 9 May 2005, the Commission elected Mr. Abdallah Al-Dardari, Director of the State Planning Commission in the Syrian Arab Republic, as chairman of the twenty-third session; and Messrs. Saad Eddine Kharmah, head of the delegation of Palestine, and Jubara Al-Suraiseri, head of the delegation of Saudi Arabia, as vice-chairmen. Mr. Abdullatif Bin Hamad, head of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, was elected as rapporteur.

E. CREDENTIALS

61. In accordance with rule 11 of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Commission, the credentials of the representatives as submitted to the Executive Secretary were examined by the officers and found to be in order.

F. AGENDA

62. At its 1st meeting, the Commission adopted the agenda of the session as set forth in document E/ESCWA/23/1. The agenda adopted was as follows:

1. Opening of the twenty-third session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Proposed organization of work.
5. Invitation to States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia to participate as observers in the twenty-third session of the Commission.
6. Priority issues in the Western Asia region:
 - (a) Peace and security and their impact on economic and social development;
 - (b) Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in ESCWA member countries;
 - (c) Social policies in ESCWA member countries.
7. Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission:
 - (a) Implementation of 2004-2005 biennium regular budget activities;
 - (b) The financial and budgetary position;

- (c) The technical cooperation programme and regional advisory services;
 - (d) Recommendations of the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services on its audit of the regional commissions.
8. General debate: issues of which the twenty-third session is seized.
 9. Adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Maritime Transport in the Arab Mashreq.
 10. Draft programme of work for the 2006-2007 biennium.
 11. Cooperation between ESCWA and the League of Arab States.
 12. Time and venue of the twenty-fourth session of the Commission.
 13. Other business.
 14. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its twenty-third session.
63. At the same meeting, the Commission adopted the proposed organization of work for its twenty-third session as set forth in document E/ESCWA/23/L.2.

G. DOCUMENTS

64. A list of documents presented during the session is provided in annex II.
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Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

A. ESCWA MEMBERS

Bahrain

H.E. Fatima Mohamed Al-Balooshi
Minister of Social Affairs

H.E. Waheed Moubarak Syar
Ambassador of Bahrain to the Syrian Arab
Republic

Ms. Badriya Yousef Al-Jaib
Director of Local Community Development
Ministry of Social Affairs

Ms. Jameela Abdallah Al-Kahwaji
Director of the Office of the Minister
Ministry of Social Affairs

Egypt

H.E. Mr. Essam Sharaf
Minister of Transport

H.E. Mr. Hani Abd el-Monem Khallaf
Assistant Minister of Arab and Middle East
Foreign Affairs
Delegate of the League of Arab States

H.E. Mr. Hazem Ahdi Khayrat
Ambassador of Egypt to the Syrian Arab Republic

Mr. Mohammed Amin
Advisor to Minister of Egyptian Transport

Mr. Ashraf Al-Deeb
Second Secretary
Embassy of Egypt in the Syrian Arab Republic

Ms. Amira Abdel-Rahim
Third Secretary
Embassy of Egypt in Lebanon

Iraq

H.E. Mr. Salam Awda Al-Maleki
Minister of Transport

H.E. Mr. Ajwad El-Sheikh Taha Hamad
Minister Plenipotentiary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Tahseen 'Aalwan 'Aayna
Chargé d'affaires
Embassy of Iraq in Lebanon

Mr. Sami Matta Boulos
Under-Secretary
Ministry of Planning and Development
Cooperation

Mr. Ghassan Mohammad Saeed Al-Aabtan
Counsellor
Ministry of Planning and Development
Cooperation

Mr. Kazem Taher Hashem
Associate Director General
General Corporation for Maritime Transport

Mr. Abd el-Razak Kate'h Hassan
Advisor to the Minister of Transport

Mr. Sabah Ajeyl Kazem
Office of the Minister of Transport

Mr. Mohammad Ali Nassif
General Director of Administrative Department
Ministry of Transport Bureau

Ms. Souheir Ali Sharhan
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Abd el-Hakeem Abbas Mohammad
Branch Director
Syrian-Iraqi Land Transport Company
Ministry of Transport

Iraq (continued)

Mr. Mohammad Ziban
Ministry of Transport

Jordan

H.E. Mr. Shaker Abd el Hamid Arabiat
Ambassador of Jordan to the Syrian Arab
Republic

Kuwait

Ms. Sarah Ahmad Al-Dowaisan
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Planning

Mr. Hamad Mounawer Habib Mounawer
Al-Mousaylem
Assistant Deputy Minister

Mr. Ali Suleiman Al-Saeed
Ambassador of Kuwait to Lebanon

Mr. Badr Abd el-Rahman Al-Rifa'ii
Administration Director
Office of Deputy Minister of Planning

Mr. Aziz Raheem Al-Dihani
Chargé d'affaires
Embassy of Kuwait in the Syrian Arab Republic

Mr. Sami Al-Zamanan
Second Secretary
Economic Affairs Officer
Embassy of Kuwait in the Syrian Arab Republic

Lebanon

H.E. Mr. Adel Hamiyah
Minister of Public Works and Transport

Mr. Abdel Hafeez Al-Kayssi
Director General of Land and Maritime Transport
Ministry of Public Works and Transport

Mr. Malek Awadah Aassi
Director of Foreign Trade Council
Ministry of Trade and Economy

Oman

H.E. Sheikh Hilal Bin Salem Al-Siyabi
Ambassador of Oman to the Syrian Arab
Republic

Mr. Mabrouk Bin Moubarak Bin Masoud Al-
Hinai
First Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Palestine

H.E. Mr. Saad Eddine Kharma
Minister of Transport and Communications

Mr. Abdullah Mohammad Ibrahim Abdullah
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Ali Abd El-Hamid Ali Shaat
Deputy Minister of Transport and
Communications
Director of Ports Authority

Mr. Mohammed Mustafa Mohammed Ghudeyah
Director General
Ministry of Planning

Mr. Abd el-Hafeez Shaaban Nawfal
Deputy Assistant
Ministry of National Economy

Qatar

Mr. Mohammad Talmees Saeed Alhajri
Director General
Customs and Ports General Authority

Mr. Ahmad Yousef Almas
Director
Department of Maritime Affairs and Land
Transport
Customs and Ports General Authority

Mr. Rashed Taleb Al-Marri
Transport Affairs Expert
Customs and Ports General Authority

Mr. Ahmad Mohammad Al-Sheebani
Researcher
Performance evaluation and follow-up
Planning Council

Saudi Arabia

H.E. Mr. Jubara Bin Eid Al-Suraiseri
Minister of Transport

H.E. Mr. Abd Aziz Mohyedine Khawja
Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Lebanon

Mr. Awad Al-Radadi
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Social Affairs

Mr. Abd el-Aziz Bin Abd el-Rahman Al-Awhali
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Saud Abdulaziz Aljabri
Minister Plenipotentiary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Hazem Mohammad Karakotly
Minister Plenipotentiary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Saeed Abdulwahab Mushayt
Economist
Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Mr. Mohammed Ibrahim Al-Haizan
Economic Advisor
Ministry of Finance

Mr. Mohammed Zafer Al-Shahry
Planning Researcher
Ministry of Economy and Planning

Mr. Ali Bin Jabra Ghabban
Counsellor
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Mohammad Al-Suwaiket
General Director of Maintenance Department
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Mohammad Abdulatif Abdulla Gari
Advisor
General Authority of Saudi Sea Ports

Mr. Wajde Bary
Secretary to the Minister of Transport
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Faysal Mohammad Al-Zawawi
First Secretary
Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Lebanon

Mr. Saud Abdulla Kateb
Chargé d'affaires
Embassy of Saudi Arabia in the Syrian Arab
Republic

Syrian Arab Republic

H.E. Mr. Abdallah Al-Dardari
Director of State Planning Commission

Mr. Mohammad Bassam Al-Siba'i
Assistant Director
State Planning Commission

Mr. Nader Sheikh Ali
Director General
Department of International Cooperation
State Planning Commission

Mr. Refaat Hijazi
Director of Cooperation with International
Organizations
State Planning Commission

Mr. Mohammad Ghassan Al-Habsh
Deputy Minister of Economy and Trade

Mr. Suleiman Al-Khatib
Deputy Minister of Education

Ms. Maysoun Ahmed Owaity
Associate Director of Cooperation with
International Organizations
ESCWA Issues Officer
State Planning Commission

Mr. Maher Al-Rez
Director of Department of Human Development
and Regional Planning
State Planning Commission

Mr. Abd Al-Mawli Al-Nakri
Director of International Organizations
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ms. Doha Khaddam
Director of Empowerment of Women
State Planning Commission

Syrian Arab Republic (*continued*)

Mr. Joum'a Hijazi
Expert
State Planning Commission

Ms. Manal Ain Melk
Director of International Organizations
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Dr. Talal Bakfalouni
Director
Centre for Strategic Health Studies
Ministry of Health

General Ibrahim Nassar Al-Nassar
Director of Department Administration and
Management
Ministry of Interior

Ms. Rihab Khaled Sheikh Ibrahim
Advisor
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Mr. Maher Abd el Hamid Rizk
Director of Rural Development
Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

Mr. Abd Al-Salam Salama
Director of Planning and Statistics
Ministry of Education

Ms. Ihab Mawalidi
Director of Planning and International Relations
Ministry of Transport
General Corporation of Communications and
Transport

Mr. Ahmad Suleiman Al-Farhan
Ministry of Interior

Mr. Mahmoud Al-Haffar
Director of Environmental Affairs and Studies
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Assem Al-Kassar
Ministry of Industry

United Arab Emirates

Mr. Abdullatif Mohammad Bin Hamad
Head of delegation
Under-Secretary
Ministry of Economy and Planning

Mr. Haj Abdulla Aljabri
Director of External Cooperation Department
Ministry of Economy and Planning

Mr. 'Ayesh Mohammad Jabr
Media Researcher
Embassy of the United Arab Emirates in the
Syrian Arab Republic

Yemen

Mr. Mohammad Salem Abdulla
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Transport and Maritime Affairs Ports
Sector

Mr. Ali Mohamed Mutaafy
Deputy Minister
Ministry of Air and Land Transport

Mr. Marwan Mohammed Al-Shami
Diplomatic Attaché
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Abood Ahmad Abood Bahjaj
General Director
Office of the Minister of Transport

Mr. Ali Thabet Harmal
Director of the Department of International
Organizations and Islamic Conference
Ministry of Planning and International
Cooperation

B. STATES MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS NOT MEMBERS OF ESCWA

Russian Federation

Mr. Igor Balyaev
Counsellor
Embassy of Russia in the Syrian Arab Republic

Germany

Mr. Roland Seeger
Embassy of Germany in the Syrian Arab Republic

Tunisia

H.E. Mr. Al-Hadi Bin Nasr
Ambassador of Tunisia to the Syrian Arab
Republic

Mr. Moundher Mohammad Dhraief
Counsellor
Embassy of Tunisia in the Syrian Arab Republic

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya

H.E. Mr. Joun'aa Al-Mohdi Al-Ghazani
Ambassador of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the
Syrian Arab Republic

Mr. Khaled Salem Saaban
Economic Unit
Embassy of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to the
Syrian Arab Republic

Romania

Mr. Paul Ewgen Finantu
Diplomatic Counsellor
Embassy of Romania in the Syrian Arab Republic

Sudan

H.E. Mr. Nagib al-Khair Abdelwahab
Minister of State
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

H.E. Mr. Abdelhafiz Ibrahim Mohamed
Ambassador of Sudan to the Syrian Arab
Republic

H.E. Mr. Ahmed Al-Bkheit
Ambassador of Sudan to Lebanon

Ms. Sittelnafar Mahgoub Badi
General Secretary
National Population Council

Mr. Khaled Alkhair Daffualla
Third Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

China

Mr. Cui Bin
Attaché
Embassy of China in the Syrian Arab Republic

Mr. Zhang Xianghua
Third Secretary
Embassy of China in the Syrian Arab Republic

Ms. Sun Xiaodan
Embassy of China in the Syrian Arab Republic

Mr. Xie Zhongmei
Commercial Counsellor
Embassy of China in the Syrian Arab Republic

France

Ms. Annie Alphonse
Commercial Attaché
Embassy of France in the Syrian Arab Republic

Republic of Korea

Mr. Yongchol Jong
Counsellor
Embassy of the Republic of Korea in the Syrian
Arab Republic

Morocco

H.E. Mr. Abdelouahab Bellouki
Ambassador of Morocco to the Syrian Arab
Republic

Morocco (continued)

Mr. Mohammed Derouich
Economic Consultant
Embassy of Morocco in the Syrian Arab Republic

Japan

Mr. Kazuhide Nagasawa
Resident Representative
Japan International Cooperation Agency

C. OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Office of the Special Representative of the
Secretary General for Southern Lebanon
(OPRSG)

Mr. Georges Nasr
Political Affairs Officer

United Nations Office - Legal Affairs

Mr. Bradford Smith
Legal Officer/Treaty Section
United Nations Headquarters
New York

Regional Commissions Office – New York

Ms. Sulafa Al-Bassam
Chief, Regional Commissions
United Nations Headquarters
New York

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
(UNODC)

Ms. Renée Sabbagh
Officer-in-charge
Beirut, Lebanon

D. UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMMES AND AGENCIES

United Nations Development Programme
(UNDP)

Mr. Ali Al-Za'tari
United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNDP Resident Representative
Syrian Arab Republic

Ms. Fumiko Fukuoka
Deputy of Resident Representative
UNDP Resident Representative
Syrian Arab Republic

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Refugees (UNHCR)

Mr. Abdelhamid El Ouali
Representative

Office of the High Commissioner for Human
Rights (OHCHR)

Mr. Frej Fenniche
Regional Representative in the Arab Region
Beirut, Lebanon

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Mr. Kiari Liman-Tingui
UNICEF Representative
Syrian Arab Republic

Mr. Krishna Belbase
Regional Programme Officer
Monitoring and Evaluation
Regional Office for Middle East and North Africa
Amman, Jordan

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for
Palestine Refugees in the Near East
(UNRWA)

Mr. Richard Cook
Director of UNRWA Affairs
Beirut, Lebanon

Ms. Patricia McPhillips
Deputy Director of UNRWA Affairs
Syrian Arab Republic

World Food Programme (WFP)

Mr. Mohamed El-Kouhene
WFP Representative
Country Director for the United Nations Food
Programme
Syrian Arab Republic

Mr. Bashar Akkad
Programme Assistant
World Food Programme Country Office
Syrian Arab Republic

E. UNITED NATIONS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

International Labour Organization (ILO)

Mr. Taleb Al-Rifai
ILO Regional Director
Beirut, Lebanon

Ms. Shaza Al-Jundi
ILO Regional Programming Services
Beirut, Lebanon

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Mr. Ciro Fiorillo
FAO Representative a.i.
Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Mr. Mohammad Jamil Saleh Abdulrazzak
Regional Director of UNESCO Office
Cairo, Egypt

Mr. Sulieman Sulieman
Programme specialist
Representative of UNESCO Office
Beirut, Lebanon

World Health Organization (WHO)

Dr. Fouad Hamid Mojallid
Representative
Syrian Arab Republic

F. INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND RELATED BODIES

League of Arab States

Ms. Mawaheb Abdel Monem Khallaf
Director
Tourism, Transport and Electricity Department

Mr. Abdel Aziz Salah el Din Bassiouny
Maritime Transport Expert

Arab Labour Organization

Mr. Samer Fouad Saoud
Specialist
Arab Institute for Occupational Health and Safety

Arab Organization for Agricultural Development

Mr. Rafik Saleh
Regional Office Chairman

Arab Towns Organization

Mr. Khaled Ibrahim Al-Bedawi
Foreign Affairs Manager
Kuwait

Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries

Mr. Mohammad Mokhtar Lababidi
Director
Technical Affairs Department
Kuwait

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

Mr. Mohammad Ali Al-Rashid
Director General
Department of Organization and Regional
Cooperation

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) (continued)

Mr. Hassan Abdulla Al-Mahmoud
Director
Department for Relations with International
Organizations
Political Affairs Sector

Council of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs
in Gulf Cooperation States

Mr. Mahmood Ali Hafed
Social Affairs Manager
Manama, Bahrain

European Commission (EC)

Ms. Sara Zennaro
Third Secretary
EC Delegation to the Syrian Arab Republic

Federation of GCC Chambers

Mr. Mohammad Abdulla Al-Mawli
General Secretary
Saudi Arabia

Arab Federation for Food Industries

Mr. Haitham Al-Jafan
Chairman
Iraq

Mr. Khalil Jawad
Regional Director
Syrian Arab Republic

G. GOVERNMENTAL AND NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

International Center for Agricultural Research in
the Dry Areas

Mr. Ahmed Mazid
Agricultural Economist
Syrian Arab Republic

Islamic Corporation for the Development of the
Private Sector

Mr. Ali Abd Al-Aziz Suleiman
Executive Director
Saudi Arabia

Mr. Ismail Ismail

Ms. Salma Al-Jundi
Secretary

Ms. Nisreen Zaki
Assistant

Mr. Abd Al Raheem Alzayed

Mr. Jack Danou
Director
Coordinator Office
United States of America

Arab Planning Institute

Mr. Issa Mohammad Issa Al-Ghazali
Director General
Kuwait

Saudi Fund for Development

Mr. Yahya Bin Kazem Barradah
Senior Advisor
Saudi Arabia

Mr. Abdel Aziz Bin Abd Allah Al-Hadlak
Senior Expert
Department of Research and Economic Studies

Arab Thought Forum

Mr. Wissam Al-Zahawie
General Secretary
Jordan

National Council for Family Affairs

Ms. Rowaida Al-Moaitah
General Secretary
Jordan

Jordan Forum for Business and Professional Women

Ms. Rabha Anwar Al-Safadi
Member of the Board of Directors
Jordan

Care International

Ms. Alia Mustafa Khalifeh
Programme Coordinator
Jordan

High Council for Women

Ms. Dawiya Al-Sayyed Sharaf Al-Alawi
Associate General Secretary
National Strategy Follow-up Affairs of
the Bahraini Woman
Assistant Deputy Minister
Bahrain

Arab Lawyers Union

Mr. Nizar Al-Skaif
Secretary of Lawyers' Union
Representative of the General Secretary
Syrian Arab Republic

Arab Center for Strategic Studies

Mr. Mounir Al-Hamsh
Director General
Syrian Arab Republic

Arab Union of Chemical and Petrochemical Industries

Mr. Jamal Nasser Al-Azawi
Advisor
Syrian Arab Republic

Damascus University

Ms. Maha Abd el Latif
Professor

Institute of Planning

Mr. Nabil Al-Khoury
Dean
Syrian Arab Republic

Institute of Economic and Social Planning

Mr. Abd el Nasser Nasser
Syrian Arab Republic

Damascus Chamber of Commerce

Ms. Sonya Khanji
Member of the Board of Directors

Mr. Mohammad Abou Al-Hida Al-Laham

Damascus Chamber of Industry

Mr. Siyah Al-Bikaai
Industrialist

Damascus Rif Governorate Chamber of Commerce

Mr. Adnan Al-Nan
Chamber Chairman

Syrian-Iraqi Joint Maritime Company

Mr. Ghassan Abdel Razzak Al-Aani
Director General
Tartous, Syrian Arab Republic

Agency for Combating Unemployment

Mr. Mohammad Saeed Al-Halbi
Agency Advisor
Syrian Arab Republic

Syrian Commission for Family Affairs

Ms. Sawsan Zakak
Gender and Development Expert
Syrian Arab Republic

General Union of Women

Ms. Souad Bakour
Chairman
People's Assembly Deputy

Ms. Raghda Al-Ahmad
Deputy Chairman
President of the Office of Media and Publishing

Syrian Environment Association

Ms. Warka Barmada
President
Syrian Arab Republic

Scientific Studies and Research Center

Mr. Amro Al-Armanazi
Director General
Syrian Arab Republic

General Union of Palestinian Women

Ms. Wadad Saeed Moussa Aabed
Member of the General Secretariat
Economic Committee Officer
Ramallah, Palestine

Women's Association of Deir Al-Ahmar

Ms. Dunia Baroud Al-Khoury
Founder and President of the Association
Lebanon

Women's Affairs Committee

Ms. Souad Mohammad Rafi' Maarfi
Deputy Officer of Environment
Scientist and Specialist in Research
Air Biology Section in Al-Rashed Allergy
Center
Kuwait

Ms. Myriam Abd Al-Salam Sh'aib
Member
Women's Committee of Kuwait

Islamic World Council on Disability and
Rehabilitation

Mr. Mohammad Hammoud Salman
Al-Tariki
General Supervisor
HRH Prince Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz Social
Welfare Campaign
Saudi Arabia

Ms. Zaafaran Ali Ahmad Al-Mhana
Yemen Office Representative
Saudi Arabia

Mr. Nasser Hammoud Al-Tariki
Advisor

Mr. Khaled Abd el Mon'em Kamal Hassan
Secretary of President

General Union of Chambers of Commerce,
Industry and Agriculture for Arab Countries

Ms. Nahed Al-Zein Naamani
Economic Researcher
Lebanon

Union of Arab Banks

Mr. Babker Mohieddine Ibrahim
Assistant General Secretary
Lebanon

Mr. Imad Shahab
Director of Studies

Mr. Bashir Abou Al-Shamat
Director of Financial and Administrative Affairs

Al-Mabarrat Charity Association

Mr. Farouk Mohammad Rizk
Director of Media Department
Lebanon

Mr. Jaafar Saleh Akil
Director of Public Relations

Imam Al-Sadr Foundation

Mr. Hasan Al-Hakeem
Lebanon

Lebanese Red Cross

General Salim Sarkis Layoun
President
Lebanon

National Association for the Lebanese Child

Ms. Imelda Yousef
Secretary
Lebanon

Palestinian Arab Women League

Ms. Samia Al-Ayoubi Khartabil
President
Lebanon

Ms. Anbara Mohammad Sinno Kibbi
Vice President
Lebanon

Order of Engineers

Mr. Mustafa Ismail Fawaz
Member of the Order
Lebanon

“Mafhoum” Company

Mr. Samir Al-Aita
General Manager
France

Egyptian AIDS Society

Ms. Sawsan El-Sheikh
President
Programme Officer
Egypt

Women National Committee

Ms. Hana’ Abdelrahman Howaidi
Director General of Development
Yemen

Fraternité Notre Dame

Sœur Marie Sabine Legrand
France

Sœur Marie Myriam Guilbert
France

H. EXPERTS

Mr. Issam El-Zaim
Chairman of Board of Directors
Economic Studies Association
Syrian Arab Republic

Mr. Mahmoud Abd Al-Fadil
Economy Professor
Cairo University

Ms. Heba Nassar
Delegate
Faculty of Economy and Political Science
Cairo University

Mr. Maen Bashour
General Secretary
Arab National Convention

Mr. Nabil Sukkar
Managing Director
Syrian Consulting Bureau for Development and
Investment

Mr. Kareem Farman
Chairman of the Board of Directors
Director General
Center of Studies on Arab Women’s Participation

Mr. Adeeb Nehmeh
Political Advisor for Poverty Reduction
UNDP

Annex II

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED TO THE COMMISSION AT ITS
 TWENTY-SECOND SESSION**

Symbol	Item	Title
E/ESCWA/23/1	3	Provisional agenda
E/ESCWA/23/1/Add.1	3	Annotated provisional agenda
E/ESCWA/23/2	4	Proposed organization of work
E/ESCWA/23/3	5	Consideration of requests by States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) to participate as observers in the twenty-third session of the Commission
E/ESCWA/23/4	6	Priority issues in the Western Asia region
E/ESCWA/23/4(Part I)	6 (a)	Peace and security and their impact on economic and social development
E/ESCWA/23/4(Part II)	6 (b)	Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in ESCWA member countries
E/ESCWA/23/4(Part III)	6 (c)	Social policies in ESCWA member countries
E/ESCWA/23/5	7	Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)	7 (a)	Implementation of 2004-2005 biennium regular budget activities
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.1	7 (a-i)	Progress made during 2004
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2	7 (a-ii)	Follow-up to Implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-second session
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.1		Consideration of the establishment within the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia of a United Nations Arabic Language Centre: resolution 239 (XXII)
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.2		The establishment within the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia of a committee on women: resolution 240 (XXII)
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.3		The impact of the lack of stability in the Arab region on economic and social development: resolution 241 (XXII)

Symbol	Item	Title
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.4		The amendments made to the revised programme of work for the biennium 2002-2003: resolution 242 (XXII)
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.5		Adoption of the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq: resolution 243 (XXII)
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.6		Cooperation between ESCWA member countries with respect to shared water resources and the Arab network for the integrated management of water resources: resolution 244 (XXII)
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.7		The ESCWA initiative for activating the role of science, technology and technological innovation in achieving the Millennium Goals: resolution 245 (XXII)
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.8		The formulation of a regional plan of action for an information society: resolution 246 (XXII)
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.9		The development of statistical work in the ESCWA region: resolution 247 (XXII)
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.10		The participation of ESCWA member countries in the International Comparison Programme: resolution 248 (XXII)
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.11		Strengthening consultancy services and technical cooperation activities in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia: resolution 249 (XXII)
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.12		Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005: resolution 251 (XXII)
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.2/Supp.13		Rehabilitation and economic and social reconstruction in Palestine: resolution 252 (XXII)
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.3	7 (a-iii)	Follow-up action at regional level to United Nations international conferences
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part I)/Add.4	7 (a-iv)	Reports of the sessions of Commission subcommittees
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part II)	7 (b)	The financial and budgetary position
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part III)	7 (c)	The technical cooperation programme and regional advisory services
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part III)/Add.1	7 (c-i)	Technical cooperation strategy
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part III)/Add.2	7 (c-ii)	Technical cooperation activities

Symbol	Item	Title
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part III)/Add.3	7 (c-iii)	Regular programme of technical cooperation
E/ESCWA/23/5(Part IV)	7 (d)	Recommendations of the United Nations Office of Internal Oversight Services on its audit of the regional commissions
E/ESCWA/23/6	9	Adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of maritime transport in the Arab Mashreq
E/ESCWA/23/7	10	Draft programme of work for the biennium 2006-2007
E/ESCWA/23/8	11	Cooperation between ESCWA and the League of Arab States
E/ESCWA/23/9	12	Date and venue of the twenty-fourth session of the Commission
E/ESCWA/23/10	14	Draft report of the Commission on its twenty-third session
E/ESCWA/23/INF.1		List of twenty-third session documents
E/ESCWA/23/INF.2		List of publications and documents issued by the Commission since its twenty-second session
E/ESCWA/23/INF.3		Information for participants
E/ESCWA/23/INF.4		Proposed Technical Cooperation Projects 2005-2007
