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MANAGEMENT ISSUES**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE WORK PROGRAMME
FOR THE BIENNIUM 2008-2009****REPORT ON THE PROPOSAL PUT FORWARD BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
FOR IMPROVING THE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT DELIVERY OF THE
MANDATES OF DEVELOPMENT-RELATED ACTIVITIES AND REVISED
ESTIMATES RELATING TO THE PROGRAMME BUDGET
FOR THE BIENNIUM 2008-2009**

Conference room paper

Summary

This conference room paper informs the Commission about the proposal put forward by the Secretary-General for strengthening the United Nations development pillar, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/236, the proposal has programmatic and budgetary implications for ESCWA for the biennium 2008-2009. Accordingly, the document concerning proposed amendments to the work programme for the biennium 2008-2009 (E/ESCWA/25/6(Part II)), which is submitted to the twenty-fifth ESCWA session, incorporates additional outputs envisaged in that proposal. The General Assembly will take a decision on the Secretary-General's proposal at its sixty-third session, which will be held in New York in the fourth quarter of 2008.

The Commission is invited to take into account the information contained herein when considering the proposed amendment to the work programme for the biennium 2008-2009.

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Introduction

1. This conference room paper informs the Commission about the proposal put forward by the Secretary-General for strengthening the United Nations development pillar, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/236, the proposal has programmatic and budgetary implications for ESCWA for the biennium 2008-2009. Accordingly, the document concerning proposed amendments to the work programme for the biennium 2008-2009 (E/ESCWA/25/6(Part II)), which is submitted to the twenty-fifth ESCWA session, incorporates additional outputs envisaged in that proposal. The General Assembly will take a decision on the Secretary-General's proposal at its sixty-third session, which will be held in New York in the fourth quarter of 2008.
2. The Commission is invited to take into account the information contained herein when considering the proposed amendment to the work programme for the biennium 2008-2009.

I. OVERVIEW OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S PROPOSAL

3. In approving the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 at the sixty-second session, the General Assembly recognized the need to strengthen the development pillar of the United Nations Secretariat for responding effectively to the mandates emanating from the 2005 World Summit. In that regard, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to provide a comprehensive proposal for its consideration, with a view to improving the effective and efficient delivery of the mandates of the development-related activities of the Secretariat.
4. In January 2008, a proposal was developed by 10 United Nations departments and other offices, including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the regional commissions and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States. The proposal aimed to address the major shortfalls between the mandates given to those United Nations departments and other offices and the resources approved for their activities by the General Assembly at its sixty-second session.
5. The Secretary-General's proposal was issued in March 2008 in A/62/708. In accordance with the established procedure, it was reviewed by the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). Taking into account the recommendations of ACABQ, the General Assembly will consider the proposal before making a final decision at its sixty-third session.
6. The Secretary-General's proposal focuses on the areas where there are major shortfalls in the capacity of the Secretariat to undertake its mandated activities and respond to emerging and new issues and challenges. Those areas include efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); economic development, trade and finance; South-South economic cooperation and integration; gender and development; environment, climate change and sustainable development; regional dimensions of development; and supporting intergovernmental processes. The proposal requests a total amount of \$25,571,000, including the establishment of 150 posts, to supplement the resources already approved by the General Assembly for the biennium 2008-2009.

II. THE SECRETARY-GENERAL'S PROPOSAL IN RELATION TO ESCWA

7. ESCWA has exerted efforts to respond to emerging mandates and has realigned programme structure to that end by creating two new subprogrammes, one concerning the advancement of women in the biennium 2006-2007 and one on conflict mitigation and development in the biennium 2008-2009. Those subprogrammes were created by redeploying the limited resources allocated to ESCWA. The approach put constraints on the secretariat's capacity to intensify its core analytical activities in the areas of macroeconomic analysis, social development and statistics, which are central to monitoring and supporting member countries in meeting MDGs and other internationally-agreed development goals.

8. Emerging global and regional mandates and challenges also require the secretariat to increase activities for tackling climate change issues pertinent to the region; track the progress made in the regional implementation of the Monterrey Consensus; catalyse the transfer of technology for regional development; and develop a South-South cooperation framework for accelerating regional cooperation and integration.

9. In that regard, the Secretary-General's proposal includes a request for ESCWA of an additional \$1,666,600, including the establishment of eight new posts. That represents an increase of some 2.9 per cent of the total regular budget resources approved for the biennium 2008-2009.

10. The proposed distribution of posts between subprogrammes is set forth in the following table:

Subprogramme	Posts	Remarks
1. Integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development	One P-4	To intensify research and analysis on climate change issues pertinent to the region in close collaboration with the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Environment through the work of the Executive Secretariat of the ESCWA/United Nations Environment Programme/League of Arab States Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region
2. Integrated social policies	One P-4	To intensify analytical work and research aimed at strengthening linkages between the economic and social dimensions of development
3. Economic development and integration	One P-4 and one P-3	To enhance the role of ESCWA in coordinating MDG regional tracking
4. Information and communications technology for regional integration	One P-5, one National Officer (NO) and one Local-level (LL)	To provide strategic planning, formulate an action plan for, and support the administrative work of the ESCWA Technology Centre
5. Statistics for evidence-based policymaking	One P-3	To develop gender statistics
Total	Eight 8 posts (one P-5, three P-4, two P-3, one NO and one LL)	
