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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

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Item 10 of the provisional agenda

**CONSIDERATION OF THE REQUEST FOR MEMBERSHIP
IN THE COMMISSION BY THE SUDAN**

Summary

Under this item, the Commission will consider a request which it has received from the Sudan to become a member of the Commission. Since 12 May 2005, the Sudan has enjoyed observer status at all meetings of the Commission, in accordance with a decision to grant it that status which was made at the twenty-third ESCWA session, that was held in Damascus from 9 to 12 May 2005.

The Commission is invited to consider the request made by the Sudan to be granted membership of ESCWA and to submit a recommendation as to whether the request should be accepted or refused to the Economic and Social Council for a decision.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its twenty-third session, which was held in Damascus from 9 to 12 May 2005, the Commission approved the request of the Sudan that it should be granted observer status at meetings of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).
2. Since 12 May 2005, the Sudan has participated with great interest and effectiveness in a number of ESCWA activities; its delegates have attended numerous meetings and it has taken part in technical activities implemented by the secretariat. Its experts have collaborated with the various technical divisions in a range of fields, thereby contributing to the consolidation of Sudan's relationship with the secretariat and member countries.

II. REVIEW

3. The secretariat received a letter dated 5 June 2007 from Mr. Lam Akul Ajawin, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan, in which he affirmed the desire of his country to strengthen and develop its cooperation with ESCWA and its member countries, and requested that it should be granted membership of ESCWA. On 17 September 2007, the letter was distributed to the embassies of member countries in Beirut, accompanied by a note from the secretariat. The secretariat also presented the subject to the ambassadors of member countries at two meetings of the Advisory Committee of Ambassadors, which were held on 16 May and 3 October 2007.
4. At its first meeting, which was held on 16 and 17 January 2008, the Technical Committee endorsed a proposal made by the secretariat to include an item in the agenda of its 25th session entitled "Consideration of the request made by the Sudan for membership of the Commission".
5. Economic and Social Council resolution 1818 (LV) dated 9 August 1973 regarding the terms of reference of ESCWA stipulates that "the members of the Commission* shall consist of the States Members of the United Nations situated in Western Asia which at present call on the services of the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut. Future applications for membership by Member States shall be decided on by the Council upon the recommendation of the Commission".
6. On the basis of the foregoing, a request for membership of the Commission requires the following:
 - (a) That the State in question should submit a membership request;
 - (b) That the request should be submitted to the ESCWA session for consideration and a recommendation to accept or refuse the request be made to the United Nations Economic and Social Council for its decision;
 - (c) That the Economic and Social Council should make a decision on the basis of the recommendation of the session.
7. The ESCWA Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure do not address the geographic location of States that are eligible for ESCWA membership, nor do they mention the possibility of a member country being a member of another regional commission. In fact, most regional commissions grant membership to States that are not geographically situated in the specific region that the commission serves: Germany and the Netherlands are members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Germany and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are members of the Economic

* The current members of ESCWA are Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and some States in Central Asia and the Commonwealth are members of both the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and ESCAP.

8. Since the establishment of the Commission in 1973, both Egypt and the Palestinian Liberation Organization have been granted ESCWA membership, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolutions 2088 (LXII) and 2089 (LXII) of 22 July 1977.

9. The request by a State for membership of a regional commission does not involve additional financial obligations, because United Nations member States make annual contributions to the regular budget of the United Nations secretariat, that includes the regional commissions. Similarly, the States members of regional commissions do not bear any additional financial burden as a result of the admittance of new members for membership.

III. REQUIRED ACTION

10. Consider the request made by the Sudan to be granted ESCWA membership and recommend to the Economic and Social Council whether the request should be accepted or refused.
