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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Twenty-fifth session
Sana'a, 26-29 May 2008

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

I. INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

The twenty-fifth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) will be held in Sana'a from 26 to 29 May 2008.

All the meetings of the session will be held at the Mövenpick Hotel, which may be contacted through the following website: <http://www.moevenpick-sanaa.com>. The opening ceremony of the senior official's segment will be held at 10 a.m. on Monday, 26 May 2008, and the opening ceremony of the ministerial segment will be held at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, 28 May 2008.

The session will be attended by representatives of ESCWA member countries, States Members of the United Nations invited as observers, relevant United Nations organs and specialized agencies, observers from interested regional and intergovernmental organizations, organizations and entities with standing invitations from the General Assembly, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

The Commission hopes that member countries will be represented at the ministerial level and that their delegations will include experts in economic, commercial and social fields. The session will consider several issues related to general policy in the ESCWA region, including financing for development and regional cooperation for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

Credentials

Official credentials duly signed by the appropriate authorities of Governments, agencies or organizations in accordance with the relevant provisions of the rules of procedure of ESCWA should, if possible, be submitted to the Secretary of the Commission no later than one week before the opening of the session, or to the ESCWA registration desk at the time of registration. The Secretary of the Commission may be contacted at the following address until 22 May 2005: phone number: +961-1-978844, fax: +961-1-981510, e-mail: abdelhamid@un.org.

The draft convention on international multimodal transport of goods in the Arab Mashreq will be adopted and signed during the twenty-fifth session. The Commission hopes that the ministers responsible for transport in the member countries will attend the session in order to sign the convention at the ceremony which will be organized for that purpose on 28 May 2008, following the opening of the ministerial segment of the session.

Officials who will sign that convention must present credentials issued by the Head of State, Prime Minister or Minister for Foreign Affairs. Credentials should state the name of the official authorized to sign the convention and the full title of the convention.

Focal point

The focal point will supervise all arrangements related to the meetings of the session. Mr. Mohammed Ahmed Al Hawri, Deputy Minister of the Department of Economic Studies and Projections and Chairman of the Technical Committee at the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, has been assigned by the Government of Yemen as the focal point for the session. He may be contacted by phone: +967-1-239675, fax: +967-1-239706, cellular phone: +967-711941100 and e-mail: malhawri@gmail.com.

Arrival in and departure from Yemen

The composition of delegations and expected dates and times of arrival should be communicated to the focal point of the Government of Yemen with a copy to the Secretary of the Commission in ESCWA (fax: +961-1-981510) at least one week before the session. All participants will have the right of entry into and exit from Yemen, and no impediment will be imposed on their transit to and from the session areas. They will be granted facilities to facilitate their travel. Visas will be granted on arrival at the airport to participants

from Gaza, where there is no Yemeni embassy, provided that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is informed of passport details and faxed copies of passports **at least five days before the arrival** of the delegate in question. Participants will be exempted from airport tax and visa fees.

Media coverage

The public meetings of the session will be open to representatives of the press and other information media accredited by the United Nations and approved by the Government of Yemen. Such representatives will be issued with the required passes and provided with the necessary facilities. All enquiries related to media coverage and public information should be directed to the United Nations Information Service (UNIS) at ESCWA, which may be reached at phone number: +961-1-978534 or fax: +961-1-970424 until 22 May 2008.

II. CONFERENCE SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The Yemeni Government, in cooperation with the ESCWA secretariat, will provide, for as long as is required for the session, including during the periods preceding and following the session, the necessary premises, including conference rooms, committee rooms, delegates' and interpreters' lounges, suitable office space with communications facilities, storage areas and related amenities.

Conference rooms will be equipped for simultaneous interpretation between the Arabic and English languages and will have facilities for sound recording in both languages.

The staff of the ESCWA Conference Services Section and the support team assigned by the host Government are responsible for registering delegates, issuing the necessary badges and providing provisional lists of delegations. They will also provide information on and support with regard to meetings services, including documents distribution, agendas and interpretation, as well as the editing, translation, reproduction and distribution of the final report of the twenty-fifth session.

Registration and identification

Participants will be requested to register with the secretariat at the registration desk located at the Mövenpick Hotel. Identity badges will be available from 6 p.m. on Sunday, 25 May 2008. Participants are kindly requested to wear those badges at all times.

Session documentation

During the session, documents will be available in limited quantities at the documents distribution desk in the conference area. Participants are requested, however, to bring with them the complete set of documents sent by ESCWA to their Governments or organizations. All session documents may be downloaded from the relevant page of the ESCWA website, available in both Arabic and English at: <http://www.escwa.un.org>.

Delegates wishing to submit documents for circulation should present them to the Secretary of the Commission or to the ESCWA meetings room officer. A minimum of 100 copies is required to ensure distribution to all delegations. In accordance with United Nations regulations for the control and limitation of documentation, the ESCWA secretariat cannot undertake to translate or reproduce documents or statements submitted by individual delegations unless the Commission takes a specific decision to that effect and approves the financial implications thereof. Participants may consult with the Secretary of the Commission on any matter pertaining to the issuance or distribution of documents during the session.

Only United Nations documents may be distributed during the session. Session documents will be distributed in conference rooms by a documents officer. Other ESCWA publications will be available outside the conference rooms.

III. FACILITIES AND SERVICES FOR PARTICIPANTS

Travel services

Travel assistance is available through the Travel Office of the Mövenpick Hotel, located in the lobby area. Participants are requested to communicate the expected date and time of their arrival and their flight numbers to the Secretary of the Commission (+961-1-978510) and the focal point assigned by the Government of Yemen. It is advisable to confirm return travel arrangements well in advance.

Dining room

The Mövenpick Hotel has several restaurants serving international and European cuisine. For additional information on these facilities you may visit the site: <http://www.moevenpick-sanaa.com>.

Information services

UNIS, Beirut, will provide the media, Government officials, NGOs and other entities with timely information on United Nations activities, documents, press releases and other information material. It also produces press releases, collaborates with local radio and television broadcasters and organizations, and participates in arranging media events to promote ESCWA and other United Nations activities. In order to seek the assistance of UNIS, Beirut, please contact Mr. Nabil Abu-Dargham, Information Officer, on +961-1-978534 or at dargham@un.org.

The ESCWA website provides up-to-date information on the structure and activities of the secretariat, as well as access to the library and other resources. Participants may access the site at <http://www.escwa.un.org>. A special page for the twenty-fifth session has been created within the ESCWA website.

Medical facilities

The Yemeni Government will provide emergency medical services to all session participants. Medical facilities in Yemen can provide appropriate medical care if needed.

In case of a medical emergency, the following contact numbers may be useful:

Medical doctor:

Dr. Thee Yazen Almoureesh

Phone: +967-733531871

Pharmacy:

Dr. Hilal Al-Awar

Phone: +967-711001111

IV. FACILITIES AND SERVICES IN YEMEN

Accommodation

The Mövenpick Hotel (located on Berlin Street, Dhahar Hemyer, phone: +967-1-546666, fax: +967-1-546000) has been assigned by Yemen as the venue for the meeting and an optional place of accommodation for participants in the twenty-fifth ESCWA session.

The Mövenpick Hotel has accorded session participants the following special rates:¹ deluxe room: \$148 (excluding breakfast), junior suite: \$350 and executive suite: \$450. The Mövenpick is a five-star hotel that will provide participants with all necessary amenities. For more information please visit the hotel website, available at: <http://www.moevenpick-sanaa.com>.

Should any delegation wish to be accommodated in another hotel, arrangements have been made with the Yemeni Government to give persons attending the session the following special rates: Sheraton Hotel² (single classic room: \$95, single club room: \$115) and Sheba Hotel³ (single room: \$90, double room: \$130, single suite: \$250 and double suite: \$350). However, participants will be responsible for their own transportation from those hotels to the conference meetings at Mövenpick Hotel.

For more information about the Sheraton Hotel, please visit the hotel website at: www.starwoodhotels.com/sheraton/property/overview/index.html?property_ID=491.

For more information about the Sheba Hotel, please visit the hotel website at: www.shebahotel.com/Default.htm.

Participants are requested to make reservations directly with the hotel of their choice, referring to their participation in the session. They are also requested to provide the Secretary of the Commission and the focal point of the Yemeni Government with a copy of their correspondence with the hotel, for follow-up.

Participants are requested to settle all costs related to their participation directly with the hotel.

Banking, currency and exchange rates

The unit of currency is the Yemeni rial (YRIs) which consists of 100 fils and is issued in bank notes and coins. Bank notes are available in denominations of YRIs 1,000, 500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 1. Coins come in denominations of 10, 5 and 1 fils.

The current rate of exchange for United Nations programmes is \$1.00 = YRIs199.45, while the exchange rate on the Yemeni market is \$1.00 = YRIs199.97.

In general, there are no restrictions in Yemen on the exchange of local and foreign currencies. Banks are open between 8 a.m. and 1 p.m., from Saturday to Wednesday, and between 8 a.m. and 12 noon on Thursdays.

Transportation

The Yemeni Government will provide free transportation to and from the city centre and Mövenpick Hotel. The shuttle services will be provided according to a schedule announced in the lobby of the Mövenpick Hotel. Many travel agencies in Sana'a have modern buses available for sightseeing and tourist trips to various areas in Yemen. In addition, there are numerous car rental and taxi offices. Please contact hotel reception for assistance and reservations.

Restaurants and shopping

There are many Yemeni, international and Middle Eastern restaurants in and around Sana'a, as well as a number of fast-food restaurants. More information about restaurants and shopping can be obtained from the hotel reception desk.

¹ Rates are subject to 10 per cent Government tax and 10 per cent service charge.

² Rates are inclusive of 20.25 per cent Government tax, service charge and full buffet breakfast.

³ Rates are subject to 22.5 per cent Government tax and inclusive of breakfast.

Sightseeing

The Mövenpick Hotel is situated 2,350 metres above sea level, overlooking the old city of Sana'a. The hotel is 7 minutes from the city centre and 20 minutes from the International Airport. Sights in the immediate vicinity include Bab El Yemen (old city) - 500 metres, Sana'a Museum - 500 metres, Wadi Dahr (scenic valley) - 14 kilometres, and Dar Al-Hajr Palace - 14 kilometres. The Ministry of Tourism or any of the numerous travel agencies in Sana'a may be contacted for further information on guided tours or other sites of touristic interest.

The Ministry of Tourism will organize a special sightseeing tour for session participants. For more information on the cost of the tour and other important details, the Ministry of Tourism may be contacted at the following address:

Tel: +967-1-251033

Fax: +967-1-251034

Website: <http://www.yementourism.com>

E-mail: ytpb@yementourism.com

Electrical current

Electrical current throughout the country is 110/220 volts (50-60 Hz).

Weather during the session

The weather in Yemen is generally moderate. The temperature is expected to range between 20° and 28° C.

Government office hours

Yemen time is 3 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time. Working hours in Government offices are from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., except on Thursdays, Fridays and official holidays. No official holidays coincide with the session.

PHONE NUMBERS AND CONTACT POINTS

A. ESCWA SECRETARIAT⁴ (Until 23 May 2008)

<i>Cabinet</i>		Direct number
Mr. Bader Omar Al Dafa	Executive Secretary	+961-1-978800
Mr. Khaled Galal AbdelHamid	Secretary of the Commission	+961-1-978845
<i>Chiefs of substantive divisions</i>		
Ms. Anhar Hegazi	Chief, Sustainable Development and Productivity Division (SDPD)	+961-1-978502
Mr. Mohamed Abdulrazzak	Chief, Programme Planning and Technical Cooperation Division (PPTCD)	+961-1-978818
Mr. Nabil Safwat	Officer in Charge, Economic Development and Globalization Division (EDGD)	+961-1-978342
Mr. Youssef Nuseir	Chief, Information and Communications Technology Division (ICTD)	+961-1-978549
Mr. Francois Farah	Chief, Social Development Division (SDD)	+961-1-978417
Mr. Giovanni Savio	Officer in Charge, Statistics Division (SD)	+961-1-978408
Ms. Suheir Azzouni	Chief, Centre for Women (ECW)	+961-1-978402
Mr. Tarik Alami	Chief, Conflict Mitigation and Development Division (CMDD)	+961-1-978442
<i>Administrative Services Division (ASD)</i>		
Mr. David Iyamah	Chief, Administrative Services Division (ASD)	+961-1-978316
Ms. Hilda Dunn	Officer in Charge, Conference Services Section (CSS)	+961-1-978106
Mr. Deeb Ibrahim	Officer in Charge, Support Services Section	+961-1-978133
Mr. Issa Toubbeh	Chief, Meetings, Publishing and Protocol	+961-1-978117
<i>Security and Safety Section</i>		
Mr. Elias Daoud	Chief, Security and Safety Section	+961-1-978003

⁴ Between 25 and 29 May 2008, the ESCWA secretariat may be reached at the Mövenpick Hotel in Sana'a.

B. GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES IN YEMEN

Ministry of Tourism	+967-1-251033
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	+967-1-202544/7
Ministry of Internal Affairs	+967-1-252701
Ministry of Immigration	+967-1-250761/3
Ministry of Communication	+967-1-325110/2/3

C. EMERGENCY NUMBERS IN YEMEN

Fire Brigade	119
Red Cross	+967-1-203131
Accident (traffic)	194
Yemenia (Yemen Airlines, Sana'a)	+967-1-400541/4/6
Telephone enquiries	118
Inter-city bus company	+967-1-262111
Radio station	+967-1-282061
TV station	+967-1-332001