

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION
FOR WESTERN ASIA**

**REPORT ON THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION
7-10 May 2012**

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
OFFICIAL RECORDS: 2012**

SUPPLEMENT No. 21



United Nations
New York, 2012

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Summary

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), 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 sessions of the Commission, held its twenty-seventh session at the United Nations House in Beirut from 7 to 10 May 2012.

Session meetings were held in two segments, one for senior officials and the other for ministers. At the senior officials' segment, consideration was given to the report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission, management issues, and the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015. Consideration was also given to the requests of Libya, Morocco and Tunisia for membership in the Commission.

During the session, three round tables were held at the ministerial level on three topics of pressing importance to the region and its countries: (1) the role of participation and social justice in achieving sustainable and balanced development; (2) preparations for Rio+20 Conference in the Arab region; and (3) the current situation and future prospects for inclusive financing in the ESCWA region. Each round table produced recommendations touching on various technical, political and procedural aspects of the topic covered.

The session concluded with the adoption of recommendations made by the senior officials' segment and resolutions to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council for action or brought to the attention of the Council. This report presents the recommendations and resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-seventh session, and a summary of the main points that were raised in the discussions of each agenda item.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its twenty-seventh session 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 sessions of the Commission.
2. This report covers the proceedings of the twenty-seventh session of the Commission, which consisted of seven plenary meetings, including four senior officials meetings and three ministerial round tables, and four closed meetings. The session was held in Beirut from 7 to 10 May 2012.

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

3. At its plenary meeting of 10 May 2012, the Commission adopted one resolution to be submitted for a decision to the Economic and Social Council, the text of which is set forth below.

302 (XXVII). Requests from Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia to become members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Noting that Libya, Morocco and Tunisia have consistently participated, in the capacity of observers and through representatives, in all sessions of ESCWA since 2005 and in ESCWA meetings and activities,

Noting also that such participation has enhanced cooperation and strengthened the relationship between Libya, Morocco and Tunisia and ESCWA secretariat and member countries,

Taking note of the letters dated 7 February and 2 March 2012 addressed to the secretariat by the Embassy of Tunisia in Beirut, affirming the desire of Tunisia to increase cooperation with ESCWA and its member countries, and requesting to become a member of the Commission,

Taking note also of the request of Libya presented on 7 May 2012 and the request of Morocco presented on 8 May 2012 to become members of the Commission,

Referring to paragraph 2 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1818 (LV) of 9 August 1973, on the establishment of the Economic Commission for Western Asia, which stipulates that the members of the Commission shall consist of the States Members of the United Nations situated in Western Asia which (at that time) called on the services of the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut, and that future applications for membership by Member States shall be decided on by the Council upon the recommendation of the Commission,

Recalling that the Terms of Reference of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia as stipulated in Economic and Social Council resolution 1818 (LV) do not limit the geographical location of countries which may become members thereof or proscribe a member of one regional commission from being at the same time a member of another regional commission,

Noting that the other regional commissions have member countries that are not located in the region that they serve,

Noting also that some countries are members of more than one regional commission,

1. *Welcomes* the requests made by Libya, Morocco and Tunisia to become members of the Commission;

2. *Requests* the secretariat to submit a recommendation to the Economic and Social Council that the requests of Libya, Morocco and Tunisia be approved;

3. *Also requests* the secretariat to invite all other Arab countries to become members of ESCWA and to coordinate with the relevant United Nations entities and the League of Arab States the re-designation of ESCWA to become the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for the Arab Region.

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

4. At its plenary meeting of 10 May 2012, the Commission adopted a number of resolutions to be brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council, the texts of which are set forth below.

303 (XXVII). Towards enhancing the macroeconomic policy in ESCWA member countries

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to General Assembly resolution 65/167 of 15 March 2011 on a new international economic order,

Referring also to the United Nations Millennium Declaration,¹ the 2005 World Summit Outcome,² the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development³ and the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development,⁴ all of which support and promote the concept of partnership in the development process,

Stressing the crucial role of sound macroeconomic policies, as well as monetary, fiscal, taxation and trade policies, in support of achieving balanced and sustained growth and development and realizing the Millennium Development Goals,

Recognizing that inadequate macroeconomic policies have strong adverse effects on regional, national and human development, on equitable economic growth and on social and personal welfare, which in turn undermine development efforts and prevent the countries of the region from realizing their full development potential,

Realizing that macroeconomic policy decisions have significant impact beyond national borders and affect regional integration initiatives, and that innovative solutions are needed to improve the performance, structure and decision-making framework of the existing macroeconomic policy in order to benefit all people in the region,

Realizing also that the impacts of the global economic crisis and the challenges of the recent developments in the region necessitate governmental review of the legislative, regulatory and procedural environment for macroeconomic policy decisions,

Mindful of the complexity and uncertainty of the global economy which require macroeconomic policymakers to have updated information on the global economy and innovative thinking in order to adopt new approaches to macroeconomic management,

Conscious of the need to create an environment conducive to sharing knowledge, expertise and best practice related to effective macroeconomic policy frameworks and their implementation,

1. *Requests* the secretariat to form an expert group to discuss macroeconomic policies in the region, facilitate the exchange of good practice between countries, and provide assistance in finding solutions to key macroeconomic issues;

¹ General Assembly resolution 55/2.

² General Assembly resolution 60/1.

³ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development*, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August – 4 September 2002 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

⁴ *Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development*, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

2. *Also requests* the secretariat to provide specialized advisory and training services in the economic field, to disseminate information and to coordinate regional multi-stakeholders meetings;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to follow up on the implementation of this resolution and submit a report on the progress achieved in that regard to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session.

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304 (XXVII). The role of participation and social justice in achieving sustainable development

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Keeping in mind General Assembly resolution 65/312 of 26 July 2011 in which it adopted the outcome document of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding,

Affirming its commitment to General Assembly resolution 65/186 of 21 December 2010 on realizing the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities towards 2015 and beyond,

Also affirming its commitment to General Assembly resolution 65/182 of 21 December 2010 concerning the follow-up to the Second World Assembly on Ageing,

Guided by the 2005 World Summit Outcome¹ and the Millennium Development Goals,²

Referring to the ten commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, in particular: promoting social integration based on the promotion and protection of all human rights; promoting full employment as a fundamental public policy goal and to achieve equality and equity between women and men; and creating an economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment that will enable people to achieve social development,³

Recalling its resolution 285 (XXV) of 29 May 2008 concerning integrated social policy, in which it encouraged member countries to adopt and institutionalize integrated social policy and seek harmony and balance between economic priorities and social outcomes,

Taking note of the recommendation made by the Committee on Social Development at its eighth session, which was held on 24 and 25 March 2011 that the capacity of member countries to design and implement social policies and institutional mechanisms to achieve equal and inclusive social development, should be enhanced,⁴

Reaffirming that ESCWA can contribute to the exchange of views and the sharing of information on good policies and practice for mainstreaming social inclusion into social and economic policies at the national, regional and international levels aimed at achieving equity, equality and social protection and cohesion,

¹ General Assembly resolution 60/1.

² General Assembly resolution 55/2.

³ *Report of the World Summit for Social Development*, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution 1, annex I.

⁴ ESCWA, *Report of the Social Committee on its eighth session*, E/ESCWA/SDD/2011/IG.1/6/Report.

Considering the continuous need of member countries to strengthen their capacity to develop rights-based social policy that promotes social integration, social protection, the provision of adequate social services and employment generation, using a participatory approach with national stakeholders,

1. *Calls upon* member countries to:

(a) Explore the possibility of expanding contributory social security systems to cover all social groups and to establish a social protection floor for all groups that cannot be included quickly into contributory social security schemes;

(b) Encourage the representation and participation of youth, women and all social groups in national committees, parliaments and other elected bodies responsible for shaping public policy at local and national levels;

(c) Strengthen participatory dialogue and social partnerships, ensure free and fair elections and implement, monitor and assess the implementation of the international human rights instruments and social development initiatives;

(d) Intensify their efforts to mainstream social justice and the concerns of all social groups into sustainable development strategies including economic strategies aimed at reducing poverty, generating employment and addressing environmental issues making efforts to ensure an equitable geographic balance;

(e) Enhance transparency and accountability in the provision of social services and adopt a participatory approach that delineates clear distribution of responsibilities between the State, the private sector, and civil society;

2. *Requests* the secretariat to:

(a) Assist member countries in developing employment strategies that are integrated with economic, education and social protection policies while paying special attention to informal sector workers and youth unemployment;

(b) Strengthen the capacity of member countries to mainstream the concerns of older persons, youth and persons with disabilities into national development plans and engage them in the formulation and implementation of those plans;

(c) Assist member countries in exploring adequate instruments for expanding social security coverage, including insurance and social protection;

(d) Support member countries in strengthening participatory social dialogue and building public, private and civic partnerships aimed at enhancing the delivery and accessibility of social services with a focus on accountability and transparency;

(e) Strengthen cooperation with member countries to collect data on all social groups, and disseminate good practice and exchange experience in designing policies and programmes aimed at promoting social inclusion and providing equal opportunities in all aspects of life;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to follow up on the implementation of this resolution and to submit a report on the progress achieved in that regard to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session.

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305 (XXVII). Sustainable development in the region and follow-up and implementation of the decisions of the Rio+20 Conference

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to General Assembly resolutions 66/220 concerning agricultural development and food security, 66/201 concerning implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification Particularly in Africa, 66/199 concerning the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, and 66/197 concerning the Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development dated 22 December 2011; resolutions 65/154 on the International Year of Water Cooperation, 2013, and 65/151 on the International Year for Sustainable Energy for All dated 20 December 2010; and other relevant resolutions,

Referring also to Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/50 concerning the Damascus Declaration and the role of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in achieving the internationally-agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration,

Recalling ESCWA resolutions 281 (XXV) of 29 May 2008 concerning addressing climate change issues in the Arab region and 269 (XXIV) of 11 May 2006 concerning the role of ESCWA in the light of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document and the subsequent change process;

Noting the global and regional challenges, including the financial crisis and food crisis, the impact of climate change, the problems in the supply of energy and water, and the current circumstances in the region and their implications,

Welcoming the ministerial statements and declarations issued by countries of the region over the past decade concerning the achievement of sustainable development, in particular the decisions of the Arab Economic and Social Development Summit which was held in Kuwait on 19 and 20 January 2009 and the Arab Ministerial Water Council concerning the adoption of a mechanism to follow up progress in the achievement of water and sanitation targets, and those issued by the Arab Ministerial Council for Electricity and the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment,

Noting efforts made by Arab countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, and the progress achieved,

Referring to the Arab Declaration issued by the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment on 19 April 2012 which was based on the outcome of the Arab Regional Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development which was held in Cairo, on 16 and 17 October 2011, in cooperation with the League of Arab States and the United Nations Environment Programme/Regional Office for West Asia, and ESCWA, in particular the provisions stipulating that the concept of green economy shall not be used as a pretext to create trade barriers and environmental standards, as a precondition for providing financial support and aid to recipient countries, or as a means to restrict the right of developing countries to utilize their natural resources according to their own development priorities,

Expressing its appreciation for the efforts of the ESCWA secretariat in analysing, monitoring and following up sustainable development issues, carrying out a significant role in the preparations for the Rio+20 Conference, and involving stakeholders and different sectors in identifying the priorities and challenges in the Arab region,

Commending the efforts of member countries to reach a common position in preparation for the Rio+20 Conference,

1. *Calls upon* member countries to adopt the Arab Declaration issued by the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment on 19 April 2012 as a reference for the negotiations concerning the outcome document of the Rio+20 Conference;

2. *Also calls upon* member countries to take an active part in the upcoming preparatory meetings to be held in New York from 29 May to 2 June 2012, which will be an important stage in the development of the negotiations, and to participate actively in the Rio+20 Conference;

3. *Urges* member countries to review policies, strategies and national frameworks with a view to making them more responsive to the requirements of sustainable development, to promote implementation of ministerial statements and declarations issued in that regard, and to review institutional frameworks with a view to integrating the three economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development;

4. *Requests* the secretariat to prepare a report on the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference that includes proposals regarding matters of concern to the region, and to assist member countries in building their capacity to address those outcomes;

5. *Also requests* the secretariat to continue to coordinate and cooperate with Arab Governments, United Nations organizations, and the League of Arab States and its specialized committees to take measures to achieve sustainable development, and in particular to provide support to the energy, water and environmental sectors on climate change issues and to promote regional institutional frameworks for sustainable development;

6. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session on measures taken to implement this resolution.

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306 (XXVII). Development of the Arab Internet Governance Forum process and sustaining efforts in the Arabic domain names field

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to General Assembly resolution 60/252 of 27 April 2006 concerning the World Summit on the Information Society, in which it called for the establishment of a global Internet Governance Forum (IGF);

Also referring to paragraphs 35-37 and 69-72 of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, concerning Internet governance issues and the need for enhanced cooperation between governments in international public policy issues pertaining to the Internet,¹

Further referring to General Assembly resolution 65/141 of 20 December 2010 concerning the information and communications technologies for development, in which it decided to extend the mandate of the Internet Governance Forum for a further five years, from 2010 to 2015,

Emphasizing the importance of the Internet Governance Forum and its mandate to foster multi-stakeholder dialogue on public policy issues related to Internet governance and to promote the sustainability, robustness, security, stability and development of the Internet,

¹ United Nations, World Summit on the Information Society, Tunis, 16-18 November 2005, Tunis Agenda for the Information Society, WSIS-II/TUNIS/DOC/6(Rev.1)-E.

Recognizing the importance of regional Internet Governance Forums established from 2008 to 2012 in Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa, and the need for a similar forum in the Arab region,

Recognizing also the importance of the joint initiative of ESCWA and the League of Arab States concerning the Arab Dialogue on Internet Governance, and its two strategic outputs,² which were adopted by the Arab Telecommunications and Information Council of Ministers at its fifteenth session,

Noting the achievements of ESCWA at the regional and international levels in the field of Internationalized Domain Names and Arab Generic Top-Level Domains and its substantive and strategic efforts aiming at the acquisition by the League of Arab States of the Top-Level Domains “.arab” and “.عرب”, and at the establishment of the ecosystem for managing and operating their respective global registry,

Noting the outcomes of the Conference and Public Consultations to Establish the Arab Internet Governance Forum held in Beirut, on 31 January and 1 February 2012, which stressed the need for an Arab Internet Governance Forum and set the scene for launching the multi-stakeholder process of establishing and developing the Forum; and noting also the endorsement of those outcomes by the Executive Bureau of the Arab Telecommunications and Information Council of Ministers at its thirty-first session,

1. *Encourages* Governments of member countries to actively participate in completing the process of establishing the Arab Internet Governance Forum in coordination with the League of Arab States;
2. *Requests* the secretariat to facilitate the establishment of the Arab Internet Governance Forum in partnership with the League of Arab States and in cooperation with the relevant international and regional organizations and the United Nations regional commissions;
3. *Also requests* the secretariat to support policies and directions aiming at the implementation of the subprogrammes of the Arab Regional Road Map for Internet Governance under the umbrella of the Arab Internet Governance Forum process and to sustain efforts in the Arabic domain names field;
4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session on the progress achieved in the implementation of this resolution.

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307 (XXVII). Support for the Palestinian people

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to General Assembly resolutions 66/118 of 15 December 2011 concerning assistance to the Palestinian people, 66/146 of 19 December 2011 concerning the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, and 66/15 concerning a division for Palestinian rights of the Secretariat and 66/16 concerning the special information programme on the question of Palestine in the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat dated 20 November 2011,

Referring also to Economic and Social Council resolution 2011/41 of 28 July 2011 concerning the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan,

² ESCWA and the League of Arab States, Expert group meeting on the Arab Regional Road Map for Internet Governance, Beirut, 26 October 2010, *The Call of Arab Stakeholders: Towards Promoting Arab Cooperation for Internet Governance Regionally and Internationally*; and *The Arab Regional Road Map for Internet Governance: Framework, Principles and Objectives*.

Recalling its resolutions 260 (XXIII) of 12 May 2005 concerning development and regional cooperation under unstable conditions, 271 (XXIV) of 11 May 2006 concerning strengthening the role of ESCWA in addressing the impact of conflict and instability within the context of social and economic development, 282 (XXV) of 29 May 2008 concerning mitigating the impact on development of conflict, occupation and instability in ESCWA member countries, and 292 (XXVI) of 19 May 2010 concerning upgrading the Section for Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues to the level of a division, all of which stress the inalienability of Palestinian rights and support the efforts of the Palestinian people and its leadership towards the establishment of an independent State on the basis of United Nations resolutions,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations prepared by ESCWA on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan,*

Noting with appreciation the efforts of the secretariat to support the Palestinian people, build its institutions, and raise awareness of Palestinian rights as guaranteed by numerous international resolutions, charters and conventions,

Noting the upgrading of the Section for Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues to the level of a division, and the enhancement of its capacity and resources for promoting the activities of ESCWA in support of the Palestinian people,

1. *Welcomes* Palestine's full membership of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization;

2. *Calls upon* member countries to:

(a) Raise the level of their support for the Palestinian people in their struggle to obtain their full rights and establish an independent Palestinian State in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions;

(b) Support Palestine's efforts to obtain full membership in international forums, organizations and bodies;

(c) Redouble efforts and support to reinforce the resilience of the Palestinian people and ensure their continued existence on their land, and to mitigate the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation and its policies;

3. *Requests* the secretariat to continue to support the Palestinian people and their institutions in accordance with the priorities and needs defined by the Palestinian people and their institutions, through the following:

(a) Raising awareness of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and disseminating information on Israeli violations of those rights;

(b) Monitoring and documenting the practices of the Israeli occupation and their negative economic, social and environmental repercussions, and submitting periodic reports on the subject to the ministerial sessions of the Commission;

(c) Increasing cooperation between ESCWA and regional and international bodies, including the League of Arab States and the United Nations organizations involved in assisting and supporting the Palestinian people, to build and reinforce Palestinian institutions;

* A/66/78-E/2011/13.

(d) Supporting the efforts of Palestine to obtain full membership in international forums, organizations and bodies;

(e) Developing and implementing initiatives and projects to support the Palestinian people and mitigate the impact of the Israeli occupation on living conditions;

(f) Mobilizing resources and building regional and international partnerships for the implementation of projects, programmes and initiatives to support the Palestinian people in their struggle for their full rights;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to follow up the implementation of this resolution and report on progress made in that regard to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session.

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308 (XXVII). The regional dimension of development

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recognizing the importance of the regional dimension of development for an effective and coordinated response to an ever-growing number of transboundary challenges and issues and the increasing importance of regional measures as a buffer against global shocks and crises,

Emphasizing that measures taken at the regional level constitute essential pillars of the world order, as they provide a link between the global and national levels, especially in the context of the ongoing discussions concerning an integrated approach to sustainable development and the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda,

Stressing the important role played by the regional commissions as part of the institutional landscape through norm-setting and dissemination, undertaking analytical functions, articulating regional perspectives on global issues and coordinating countries' positions in each region,

Referring to General Assembly resolution 62/208 of 19 December 2007 concerning the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, in which it encouraged the United Nations development system to strengthen collaboration with regional and subregional intergovernmental organizations and regional banks, as appropriate and consistent with their respective mandates, and requested the regional commissions to further develop their analytical capacities to support country-level development initiatives at the request of member countries, and to support measures for more intensive inter-agency collaboration at the regional and subregional levels,

Referring also to Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46 of 31 July 1998 in which it noted that the leadership role of the regional commissions calls for their holding regular inter-agency meetings in each region with a view to improving coordination among the work programmes of the United Nations organizations in that region,

Noting the independent study on the regional dimension of development and the United Nations system^{*} sponsored by the regional commissions,

^{*} See the executive summary of the study prepared by ESCWA in document E/ESCWA/27/CRP.3, which was submitted to the Commission at its twenty-seventh session.

1. *Welcomes* the recommendations of the independent study on the regional dimension of development and the United Nations system, and invites the United Nations bodies working at the global and regional levels to support their implementation;

2. *Requests* the secretariat, in consultation with regional and subregional organizations and with the Regional Coordination Mechanism where appropriate, to ensure implementation of those recommendations, so that the engagement of the United Nations system with regional and subregional organizations is coherent and coordinated, contributes to the realization of strategic goals and fits into a larger comprehensive approach in support of regional integration efforts;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session on the implementation of this resolution.

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309 (XXVII). Adoption of the amendments introduced to the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Taking note of the progress made in 2012 in implementing the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013,

Taking note also of the amendments introduced to the programme of work,

Expressing satisfaction with the achievements made,

Noting that the proposed amendments to the programme of work are justified in order to give it sufficient flexibility in addressing current changes and emerging developments,

1. *Adopts* the amendments introduced to the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013;*

2. *Requests* the secretariat to follow up the implementation of the programme of work and, if necessary, include activities to address any challenge that emerges in the ESCWA region;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to convey to member countries information on further amendments that may be introduced to the programme of work, in the report on progress made in implementing the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013 that will be distributed to member countries.

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310 (XXVII). Adoption of the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Having considered the revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015,*

Bearing in mind that the draft strategic framework was amended following the discussion of subprogrammes during the sessions of the specialized intergovernmental committees as well as the sixth meeting of the Technical Committee,

* E/ESCWA/27/6(Part II).

* E/ESCWA/27/7.

Noting that the draft strategic framework was based on the economic and social development priorities of member countries,

1. *Adopts* the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015;
2. *Requests* the secretariat to distribute the strategic framework in the form adopted by member countries;
3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session on the progress made in implementing the strategic framework as well as the amendments introduced thereto.

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311 (XXVII). Adoption of session 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 designing, coordinating and following-up the work of ESCWA in their respective domains, and for upholding the best interests of member countries,

Recognizing the importance of implementing the recommendations made by those bodies to enable ESCWA to undertake its duties in the competencies falling within the remit of its subsidiary bodies,

Having considered the recommendations contained in the reports of the subsidiary bodies on their sessions held in the period between the twenty-sixth and the twenty-seventh sessions of the Commission, namely: Report of the Statistical Committee on its ninth session;¹ Report of the Committee on Energy on its eighth session;² Report of the Committee on Social Development on its eighth session;³ Report of the Committee on Women on its fifth session;⁴ Report of the Technical Committee on its fifth meeting;⁵ Report of the Committee on Water Resources on its ninth session;⁶ Report of the Committee on Transport on its twelfth session;⁷ Report of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization and Financing for Development in the Countries of the ESCWA Region on its seventh session;⁸ Report of the Technical Committee on its sixth meeting;⁹ and Report of the Committee on Transport on its thirteenth session,¹⁰

¹ E/ESCWA/SD/2010/IG.1/10/Rev.1.

² E/ESCWA/SDPD/2010/IG.1/6.

³ E/ESCWA/SDD/2011/IG.1/6/Report.

⁴ E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/7/Report.

⁵ E/ESCWA/2011/C.5/8/Report.

⁶ E/ESCWA/SDPD/2011/IG.1/8/Report.

⁷ E/ESCWA/EDGD/2011/IG.1/7/Report.

⁸ E/ESCWA/EDGD/2011/IG.2/7/Report.

⁹ E/ESCWA/2011/C.6/7/Report.

¹⁰ E/ESCWA/EDGD/2012/IG.1/8/Report.

1. *Adopts* the recommendations contained in the reports of the subsidiary bodies as submitted to the Commission at its twenty-seventh session;
2. *Calls upon* member countries to cooperate with ESCWA in initiating and implementing measures to ensure that those recommendations are put into effect.

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312 (XXVII). Evaluation of the work of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recognizing the need to fully implement General Assembly resolution 59/250 of 22 December 2004 concerning the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, in which it recognized the need to optimize the linking of evaluation to performance in the achievement of development goals, and encouraged the United Nations development system to strengthen its evaluation activities, with particular focus on development results, the systematic use of monitoring and evaluation approaches at the system-wide level and the promotion of collaborative approaches to evaluation, including joint evaluations, and further encouraged the United Nations Evaluation Group to make progress in system-wide collaboration on evaluation, in particular harmonization and simplification of methodologies, norms, standards and cycles of evaluation,

Referring to Economic and Social Council resolution 1998/46 of 31 July 1998 concerning further measures for the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields,

Referring also to the report of the twenty-sixth session of the Commission held in Beirut from 17 to 20 May 2010,¹

Referring further to the report on the lessons learned from the evaluation of the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies presented to the Commission at its twenty-sixth session,²

Taking note with satisfaction of the report on the Evaluation of the Work of ESCWA presented to the Commission at its twenty-seventh session,³

Recognizing that the evaluation policy of ESCWA is in line with the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group,

Recognizing also that the evaluation policy of ESCWA is also in line with the Secretary-General's Bulletin on Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation,⁴

Commending the ongoing efforts of the Executive Secretary to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the secretariat through subprogramme evaluations, technical cooperation activities and job audits of various aspects of the Commission,

¹ E/2010/41-E/ESCWA/26/9/Report.

² E/ESCWA/26/6(Part I)/A.

³ E/ESCWA/27/6(Part I).

⁴ ST/SGB/2000/8.

1. *Endorses* the recommendations contained in the report on the evaluation of the work of the Commission⁵ and requests that they be implemented;
2. *Calls upon* the Executive Secretary to continue efforts to improve the performance of the secretariat through, inter alia, evaluation of the work of the secretariat and review of its internal structure to achieve the highest standards of effectiveness and efficiency;
3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session on the progress made in implementing this resolution.

7th plenary meeting
10 May 2012

313 (XXVII). Frequency of sessions of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development in the Countries of the ESCWA Region

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Mindful of its resolution 290 (XXV) of 29 May 2008 concerning the follow-up on the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus in member countries,

Recalling its resolution 219 (XX) of 27 May 1999 concerning the frequency of sessions of the subsidiary bodies of ESCWA, stipulating that the sessions of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development in the Countries of the ESCWA Region shall be held biennially,

Recalling also its resolution 214 (XIX) of 7 May 1997, which provided for the establishment of a technical committee on liberalization of foreign trade and economic globalization in the countries of the ESCWA region, whose meetings are held annually,

Aware of the role of foreign trade and financing for development in promoting economic growth and strengthening regional integration,

Decides that the ESCWA Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development shall hold its sessions annually rather than biennially, taking effect in 2013.

7th plenary meeting
10 May 2012

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Representatives of member countries participating in the senior officials segment of the ESCWA twenty-seventh session discussed agenda items including, notably, the report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission; management issues; and the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015. They also considered the requests of Libya, Morocco and Tunisia for membership in the Commission. The senior officials expressed their gratitude to Jordan, which had occupied the Chair of the twenty-sixth session of the Commission, and their wishes for success to the United Arab Emirates, which

⁵ E/ESCWA/27/6(Part I).

assumed the Chair of the current session. Discussions concluded with a number of recommendations, as follows:

(1) Stress the importance of ESCWA's commitment to a results- and achievement-based management approach to assess the effectiveness of each of the seven subprogrammes on the basis of precisely defined indicators and benchmarks that focus on quality rather than quantity of services, using a methodology that identifies impacts, outcomes, shortcomings and potential future improvements;

(2) Stress the importance of coordination with official sources when gathering statistical data, with a view to avoiding inconsistency by standardizing definitions adopted by various sources, and creating a series of accurate, up-to-date and high-quality data based on official records that can be used for comparative purposes as a reliable tool to measure performance;

(3) Stress the principle of shared responsibility between member countries and the secretariat for following up the implementation of resolutions, since resolutions included commitments on the part of both the secretariat and member countries, therefore requiring the involvement of both parties in following up the implementation;

(4) Submit a recommendation to the Economic and Social Council that the requests of Libya, Morocco and Tunisia for membership in ESCWA be approved;

(5) Draft reports on the Commission programme performance in a concise format that includes indicators of achievement that allow member countries to form a clear picture of the outcomes and impacts of projects;

(6) Enhance coordination with focal points in each country and provide them with regular updates on all activities being conducted by ESCWA in their countries;

(7) Enhance cooperation between ESCWA and international and regional organizations, and academic and private-sector institutions in implementing specialized programmes in order to facilitate exchange of experiences in various areas with the relevant organization or institution, with focal points being kept fully informed of all developments;

(8) Supplement recommendations that address issues of common concern with recommendations that address the particular situations and economic and social development priorities of individual countries, to serve as practical guidelines for designing actionable general and sectoral policies;

(9) Submit justifications for amendments proposed to the programme of work after its approval, including those based on emerging needs and developments in the countries of the region, and identify the criteria on the basis of which particular activities and programmes are reformulated, amended or added;

(10) Emphasize the role of ESCWA in achieving development in the region, while recognizing that the nature and orientation of that role is affected by emerging political conditions that have an impact on the course of economic and social development in all sectors;

(11) Submit member country comments on the draft strategic framework in written form for consideration and action by the secretariat, notably the recommendation that the strategic framework should include a section for each subprogramme identifying sources of information and mechanisms to verify fulfilment of indicators of achievement.

IV. 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-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION
(Agenda item 4)

6. Article 63 of the Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for West Asia states that the Commission may invite any State Member of the United Nations or of a specialized agency that is not a member of the Commission to participate in its deliberations on any matter which the Commission considers to be of particular concern to that State. A State thus invited shall not have the right to vote, but may submit proposals which may be put to the vote at the request of any member of the Commission.

7. In accordance with that article, the secretariat informed the Commission, meeting in its twenty-seventh session, of such requests received for consideration and action. Requests to participate as observers in the twenty-seventh session were received from States Members of the United Nations that are not members of ESCWA, namely Algeria, Australia, Brazil, Comoros, Japan, Morocco, Romania, Tunisia and Ukraine. The Commission approved those requests. It should be noted that Morocco has permanent observer status at all ESCWA sessions. Similar requests were received from a number of United Nations organizations and bodies.

B. POLICY ISSUES IN THE ESCWA REGION
(Agenda item 5)

8. The Commission held three round tables on the following topics: (1) The role of participation and social justice in achieving sustainable and balanced development; (2) The preparations for Rio+20 in the Arab region; and (3) Inclusive financing for small and medium-sized enterprises and creating job opportunities.

*1. The role of participation and social justice in achieving sustainable
and balanced development*

9. A round table was held on the topic of the role of participation and social justice in achieving sustainable and balanced development, which had been selected as the main theme of the session following the endorsement of the Technical Committee at its sixth meeting (Beirut, December 2011) of the proposals made by the secretariat with respect to the theme for the twenty-seventh session of the Commission.

10. Mr. Yousef Abu Safieh, Chairman of Environment Quality Authority, Palestine, moderator of the round table, said that the major components of sustainable development were education; health care; participation of all social groups in decision-making; decent work opportunities for all especially women; social justice, which meant equitable distribution of resources; fairness for all social groups; and environment protection.

11. A representative of the secretariat, referring to document E/ESCWA/27/4(Part I) made a presentation on the role of participation and social justice in achieving sustainable and balanced development, focusing on the principal areas in which participation could be increased and on the major challenges facing governments in achieving sustainable and balanced development for the benefit of future generations. A measurement methodology was needed that took into account all three of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development.

12. Ms. Hooria Mashhur, Minister of Human Rights, Yemen, panelist, said that social imbalances, especially unequal treatment of rural areas and women, were the main causes of the youth and popular

movements in her country. Lack of access to education, a high maternal mortality rate, low education levels among girls, exclusion of women in economic activities, and the large number of workers in the informal sector whose contributions did not show up in national accounts were all problems that needed to be addressed. Potential remedies included domestic and foreign investment to increase work opportunities, involvement of the private sector in rebuilding the economy, and practical steps to rebuild the State, of which the most significant was a law on transitional justice and a national dialogue that would be inclusive of all groups, especially young people and women, in addition to an initiative undertaken by the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council to lead a political settlement.

13. Mr. Sharbel Nahhas, Former Minister of Labour, Lebanon, panelist, said that he had noted a new language in the discourse of international organizations that sought to translate ideas into actions. Social justice was crucial to development, but it was difficult to define that concept in the absence of clearly defined indicators. Well-being required a balance among three equally important factors: the family, the State and the market. When the State was weak, the family component could become sectarian and tribal. The high level of unease in the Arab region which was attributable to both domestic factors and fear of outside forces directed the priorities towards steering clear of conflict instead of achieving prosperity and rights. The scramble for quick solutions could hinder efforts to achieve sustainability in development.

14. In the ensuing discussion, delegates suggested that developed countries could increase their support for sustainable development efforts in developing countries by removing burdensome trade conditions, controlling food prices, relieving external debt, and refraining from the use of economic sanctions for political purposes. There was a reciprocal relationship between sustainable development and social justice. Justice could be achieved only by ending corruption, enabling the people to participate in the decision-making, formulating, implementing and monitoring development policies, and promoting more active participation by all social groups, especially women and young people.

15. Participants drew attention to the need to provide more up-to-date and accurate statistical data in cooperation with national statistical offices, to rely on official government sources for statistics as they best reflected the reality, and to verify figures with member countries before publishing them. The same statistical categories should not be used for all countries, but should vary depending on the level of development reached by each country. It was proposed that an urbanization indicator be developed along with mechanisms for monitoring poverty in urban areas and social disparities between urban and rural areas.

16. Member country representatives stressed the importance of promoting participation and social justice in achieving development and sustainability. Those components became even more pressing with the political and social changes taking shape in the region. People have clearly expressed their aspirations for exercising their right to participate in and harness the benefits of development. Decision makers should bear in mind the aspirations and needs of the people, especially marginalized groups, in the planning process which directs all development achievements and outcomes.

17. They also stressed that social justice and participation were enshrined in international covenants and charters and national constitutions and laws. They constituted pillars of good governance and social coherence which continued to play a significant role in addressing the challenges faced by the region.

18. The representative of the secretariat said that there should be ongoing dialogue between ESCWA and member countries in order to ensure accurate and up-to-date statistical data. International as well as national sources should be used to facilitate comparison with other countries.

19. Participants concluded that document E/ESCWA/27/4(Part I) contained inaccurate statistics and inadequate interpretations and needed to be revised in the light of the comments of participants before being finalized. The representative of the secretariat welcomed the comments and asked participants to provide updated data and statistics for inclusion in the document.

2. The preparations for Rio+20 in the Arab region

20. A round table was held on the topic of preparations in the Arab region for the Rio+20 Conference, with a focus on a number of questions of particular relevance to the Arab region that had risen from the anticipated outcomes of the Conference: how a green economy could contribute to job creation, especially for youth; how it could be financed; what technologies would have to be acquired; how it could support a water-energy-food nexus approach; and what institutional framework would best support sustainable development objectives in the Arab region.

21. Ms. Wafaa Dikah Hamzé, consultant for the project to establish a National Observatory for Women in Agriculture and Rural Areas and Former Minister of State, Lebanon, moderator of the round table, emphasized the importance of the Arab preparations for the Rio+20 Conference. She summarized the themes of the Conference and stressed the importance of that global event and the impact it would have on the course of sustainable development.

22. A representative of the secretariat, referring to document E/ESCWA/27/4(Part II), gave a presentation on preparations in the Arab region for the Rio+20 Conference, highlighting the Arab countries' position concerning the themes and objectives of the Conference as set out in the Arab Declaration on the Rio+20 Conference issued by the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment. The expected outcomes of the Conference were presented as well as issues of special importance to the Arab region. The presentation highlighted the post-Rio+20 Conference expected action and offered recommendations to help member countries bring to the Conference a consensus that would serve their interests and those of the region at that important event.

23. Mr. Srinivas Tata, Deputy Director, Regional Commissions New York Office, panelist, spoke about the negotiations on the outcome document of the Conference which took place during April and May 2012 in New York with the participation of representatives of governments and political groups who discussed the Zero Draft and the various positions towards it.

24. Mr. Yousef Abu Safieh, panelist, tackled the issue of achieving sustainable development under occupation and with significant disparities in resource distribution. Sustainable development is an unrealistic goal under occupation, where merely precursors of development could be mentioned. Development meant freedom, security, human and environmental health, economic and social development, and a better quality of life for present and future generations. Under occupation, people were deprived of their basic needs. Even where the political will for sustainable development existed, and even where it had been incorporated into legislation, the occupation made it impossible to implement for a variety of reasons, including lack of geographic continuity between regions, limited control over land and resources, land confiscation, and impediments to the exercise of national sovereignty over natural resources as recognized under international law.

25. Ms. Mémia Benna Zayani, Minister of Environment, Tunisia, panelist, endorsed the principles of the Arab Declaration on the Rio+20 Conference, and stressed the importance of adhering to the principles of the Earth Summit and enhancing the political commitment to achieving sustainable development in the region. The green economy was a qualitative step forward and a challenge for the future. A standard, precise, internationally agreed definition of the green economy was needed for the purpose of building a new international development partnership that embraced the concept as a cornerstone of sustainable development adopting an integrated approach while remaining mindful of social and cultural specificities. A modern economy was unimaginable in isolation from an environmental economy that took into account the unique natural characteristics of each geographic region, achieved integration among them and increased their competitiveness. Implementing a green economy would require assigning an economic value to natural capital, both renewable and non-renewable, as well as possessing the capacity to acquire knowledge and technological innovation, create green jobs, and combat poverty. The environmental degradation and

resource depletion that had already occurred were impetus enough to push forward with the consensus on the need to rethink current national models of development.

26. Mr. Najib Saab, Secretary-General, Arab Forum for Environment and Development, Lebanon, panelist, said that the green economy was not an end itself, but should be discussed in the light of its potential to promote sustainable development. The green economy should be part of the economic pillar of development which is one of three pillars including social and environmental pillars. The term “green economy” emerged in the wake of the global economic and financial collapse in 2008, when it was hoped that the shock of that crisis could be exploited to rebuild the global economy on a more balanced basis that gave due weight to the environment. One of the main demands that the citizens of Arab cities were taking to the street was decent work opportunities. It had been shown that the change to a green economy would create millions of decent and secure job opportunities, and would also promote better management of resources to protect the rights of future generations.

27. He added that development strategies in the Arab region were based on the export of raw materials, which led to depletion of resources and did not generate many jobs, just as unemployment in certain countries was climbing to extremely high levels, especially among the young. The question was the extent to which the green economy could help solve that problem by using such sustainable agricultural methods as more efficient water consumption, and the development of organic farming through regional cooperation and appropriate technology. Many Arab countries had already taken promising steps towards sustainable development.

28. In the ensuing discussion, participants touched on the capacity of the green economy to solve such problems as indebtedness, poverty, ignorance, and the conflicts that afflicted developing and least developed countries. They also addressed the costs, funding mechanisms and implementation tools that would be involved in the move towards a green economy; the capacity of the green economy to create jobs in labour-intensive sectors such as agriculture, as opposed to sectors that depended on capital consumption; the nature and distribution of those jobs as well as their added value to the economy. The green economy needed to be discussed with an eye on the labour supply and demand in all countries of the region and the difficulties involved in transferring and nationalizing technology in the Arab countries given the long standing technological edge of the developed countries.

29. Participants indicated that numerous measures had been taken in the spirit of the green economy and sustainable development. However, the drive to promote the green economy without an agreed-upon definition continued to be a source of debate and disagreement, with some countries embracing the concept while others continued to regard it as vague and in need of clarification. There was no rejection of the concept but a need to elucidate its ambiguity and clarify its consequences on the various economic and social sectors, especially whether jobs created by the green economy would be at the expense of certain sectors, or at the expense of some countries for the benefit of others.

30. Cooperation for technology transfer remained limited, and increasing it would require considerable support to developing countries from developed countries, which would have to stand by their commitments and guarantee resources not only to transfer technology but to enable Arab countries to develop and produce technology locally with a view to moving towards technological parity given the long standing technological edge of the developed countries.

31. Participants indicated that a set of solutions and issues should be defined, on which developing countries needed to reach agreement and that could serve as the basis of an international moral commitment for the new century. That commitment should be founded on the principles of shared but differentiated responsibility, to ensure equity to countries suffering from such perennial problems as occupation, conflict, and non-development-friendly exploitation of resources, guarantee sustainable development and narrow the gap between the envisioned future and reality as currently experienced.

32. Discussions concluded with the agreement that the green economy, rather than being a substitute for sustainable development, was a part of its economic dimension. The Arab countries needed to agree on a common definition of the green economy that converged with the Arab Declaration on the Rio+20 Conference and with their priorities, specificities, development needs and resource reserves, in order to participate in the Rio+20 Conference with a harmonized position ensuring that their interests would not be excluded from any new global commitment.

3. Inclusive financing for small and medium-sized enterprises and creating job opportunities

33. This round table was moderated by Mr. Mohamed Saleh Shelwah, Assistant Under-Secretary for Economic Policies Affairs, Ministry of Economy, United Arab Emirates. He said that lack of inclusive financing was one of the major obstacles in the Arab region. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) received a very small share of total lending. The main reason was lack of appropriate strategies and organized management for that sector, as SME projects were proposed without feasibility studies. Plans to encourage innovation and creativity among young people and increase the chances of SMEs being implemented should be adopted.

34. A representative of the secretariat noted the links between inclusive financing, sustainable development and social justice, and stressed the need for agreement between member countries and experts on definitions of new concepts. Ms. Rima Turk Ariss, Associate Professor of Finance School of Business, Lebanese American University and ESCWA consultant, referring to document E/ESCWA/27/4(Part III), said that inclusive financing was a development tool that could help reduce income inequality and poverty, and remove price and non-price barriers to financial services, in order to help borrowers who could not meet the conditions for high-cost financial services, could not save, or pay their dues, or afford insurance premiums, retirement plans or currency transfer fees.

35. In the Arab region, financial systems lagged behind the level of advancement achieved in other regions. Capital markets were incomplete and were not deep enough to encourage capital formation. SMEs had trouble accessing long-term financing despite their potential to contribute to job creation and sustainable growth, and their share of total lending remained minimal. Among the document's recommendations for promoting SMEs were the following: committing to national strategies on inclusive finance, expanding financial infrastructure development, increasing competition in the provision of financial services, designing public policies for the development of SME financing, ensuring sustainability in SME access to finance, ensuring regular collection of data on SME financing, and deepening financial markets.

36. Mr. Maher Khalil Al-Hajj Al-Hassan, First Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Jordan, panelist, said that Jordan's approach to SME financing was based on a strategic vision that aimed to guarantee citizens access to a bundle of high-quality financial services to help them improve their economic well-being and quality of life. The main principles underlying the vision were increasing the role of the private sector as the main provider of financial services, adopting market-based finance and lending policies designed to gradually replace financial aid, and promoting greater involvement of the private sector even as the public sector retained management and monitoring duties.

37. The Bank's priorities for the upcoming period included developing a regulatory framework for financing small-sized enterprises, establishing guidelines for internal regulation, enhancing infrastructure by establishing consumer protection mechanisms, promoting studies of obstacles to the effectiveness of initiatives, monitoring performance, and exchanging information and expertise.

38. Mr. Richard Chitwood, SME Manager, Aga Khan Agency for Microfinance, Switzerland, panelist, said that in his agency's experience, the main challenges facing SME financing in West Asia were the lack of appropriate legislation; the increasing numbers of SMEs outside the formal sector; the lack of training, credit agencies, credit records, human resources and mortgage guarantees; and failure to differentiate between the needs of individuals and companies.

39. He offered recommendations for expanding the financial sector in the region, including the following: establish an SME licensing authority, simplify tax law, set up training centres for human and institutional capacity-building, assess the needs of institutions to increase their accessibility to financing, increase financial incentives, offer risk management assistance, create new financial products, and develop rural and agricultural projects.

40. In the ensuing discussion, representatives of various member countries described their successful experiences and initiatives in enacting laws, establishing funds, laying out controls, and devising technical and financial incentives to promote SME financing, particularly in Kuwait and Qatar. Participants stressed the need for specialized technical institutions to assist SMEs to meet financing conditions and to use financing to ensure sustainability, durability and success. Without such support, many SMEs would fail.

41. It was important to create a culture that encouraged innovation and SMEs initiatives in the Arab countries. Such a culture would enhance the success already achieved by some initiatives undertaken in the region and contributes to reducing obstacles faced by SMEs and financing institutions.

42. Participants agreed on the importance of the private sector. However, the public sector would remain important to SMEs as a source of funding that targeted social objectives such as relieving poverty and raising living standards.

43. Various obstacles prevented individuals and enterprises from deriving full benefit from existing initiatives. Those obstacles needed to be addressed in a comprehensive fashion by creating a climate in which SMEs could flourish and expand, providing training for financing providers and recipients, securing guarantees, enacting suitable legislation, conducting marketing campaigns, promoting the involvement of government sponsor institutions, and integrating the SME sector with other sectors.

44. Participants proposed that a study be conducted of SME financing to explore its potential to create jobs and reinvigorate other sectors of the economy. Different kinds of SMEs would have to be defined and categorized, and real-life experiences analysed. Inclusive financing was a strategic issue with social objectives such as reducing unemployment and poverty.

45. Participants recommended that Arab-wide cooperation should be enhanced and that Arab development funds should contribute to the promotion of SMEs, with a focus on knowledge-based enterprises.

46. Following the discussion, the representative of the secretariat said that the valuable recommendations offered by the participants would be incorporated into the next phase of the inclusive financing agenda. The role of ESCWA would be to develop training materials based on normative studies of practical needs, provide capacity-building, and facilitate dialogue for the purpose of exchanging successful experiences that could be reproduced in other countries.

47. The proposals would be followed up on at the upcoming session of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development in the Countries of the ESCWA Region.

C. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION (Agenda item 6)

48. The Commission considered the Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission, as contained in document E/ESCWA/27/5, which consisted of five parts.

1. *Programme performance report for the biennium 2010-2011*

49. A representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the performance of the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011, based on document E/ESCWA/27/5(Part I). The secretariat was determined to apply a results-based approach to evaluating activities that had already been implemented and those that were still in the implementation or follow-up stages. That meant measuring results against the indicators of achievement that were set for each subprogramme during the design and preparation of the programme of work. Accordingly, the programme performance report covered achievements in each of the seven subprogrammes. It addressed measures taken within the context of general direction and management, and obstacles to the implementation of planned activities due to changing circumstances and emerging developments. The report presented several observations that might be of use for future programme planning.

50. During the ensuing discussion, delegates stressed the importance of adopting a scientific approach to evaluation based on indicators of achievement and defined benchmarks for each activity.

51. They agreed on the need to adopt common definitions of new concepts in the run-up to the Rio+20 Conference, and in particular the concept of the green economy, which would be the central focus of that Conference. Green economy needed to be defined within the context of the region's economic and social priorities, such as reducing unemployment, creating jobs for young people and reinforcing competitive capacities.

52. It was important to take into consideration all social groups and issues when integrating economic and social policies. The benefits of economic growth should be extended to all individuals in society, and social protection should be available to all groups during periods of crisis and external shocks to the economy.

53. Given the constant stream of developments in information and communications technology (ICT), delegates called for the creation of a group within ESCWA to support the transition from traditional government services to e-government in member countries. That transition would produce gains in efficiency in the provision of public services and various other productive economic and social sectors.

54. Delegates called for more accurate, timely and higher-quality statistical data to be made available to economic and social researchers. Measurements of progress should be done on the basis of accurate data from official sources.

55. Delegates believed that ESCWA meetings, in addition to issuing recommendations on general issues of common concern, should also issue recommendations relating to the specific economic and social conditions and priorities of individual countries to serve as a guide for the formulation and implementation of general and sectoral policies.

56. Programme performance reports should be concise and objective, with performance evaluations based on defined indicators of achievement and benchmarks for each project. Such reports could then serve as a source for accurate statistical data as a result of consultations between implementing parties and the relevant countries, with objective opinions of both participants and beneficiaries and their effective contribution in evaluating the impact of any given project within their countries.

57. The representative of the secretariat said that the points raised during the discussion would be taken into consideration. The secretariat worked hard to apply a results-based approach to evaluating its programmes and activities. When it came to the market economy, ESCWA was determined to design inclusive policies that were pro-growth and ensured that economic benefits would be used in the service of society and the environment in order to achieve the ultimate goal of sustainable development.

58. The representative of the secretariat noted that there was still no common agreed-upon definition of the concept of the green economy. There continued to be wide variation of positions and levels of progress in

that regard among countries. ESCWA was working for the formation of an Arab regional consensus on the green economy. It was also planning to hold a side event on generating youth employment opportunities on the margins of the Rio+20 Conference.

59. The secretariat was determined to coordinate with member countries to improve the quality of statistical data, and called for greater cooperation and consultation in that field. The best means to avoid contradictory data consisted of enhancing coordination and cooperation in collecting and updating data and identifying the sources.

*2. Implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission
at its twenty-sixth session*

60. The Commission was presented with document E/ESCWA/27/5(Part II). The directors of the ESCWA divisions summarized the activities undertaken by ESCWA to implement the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-sixth session (Beirut, 17-20 May 2010). Delegates from member countries took note of the completed activities and those still being undertaken. The resolutions were as follows:

(a) 292 (XXVI) Upgrading the Section for Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues to the level of a division and establishing a governmental committee on emerging issues and development in conflict settings;

(b) 293 (XXVI) Upgrading the ESCWA Centre for Women to the level of a division and follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the Arab countries after fifteen years: Beijing+15;

(c) 294 (XXVI) Establishment of the ESCWA technology centre;

(d) 295 (XXVI) Guiding Declaration of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on giving greater attention to Youth Policies: An Opportunity for Development;

(e) 296 (XXVI) Enhancing public sector institutions and resources to attain national development goals;

(f) 297 (XXVI) Arab MDG monitor for societal progress;

(g) 298 (XXVI) Social development;

(h) 299 (XXVI) Adoption of the amendments introduced to the programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011;

(i) 301 (XXVI) Adoption of the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013.

61. A delegate said that the commitments contained in the resolutions were a joint undertaking between the secretariat and member countries, both of which were responsible for follow-up. Monitoring of progress should be done through cooperation and coordination between both sides.

62. Another delegate stressed the need for a rational approach to following up the implementation of resolutions based on tables that identified unfulfilled commitments, proposed steps to achieve them, and impact of activities implemented pursuant to those resolutions.

63. The secretariat commended those suggestions, provided that an objective mechanism containing precise indicators could be designed that would allow member countries to take part in the follow-up process, given that some of the measures called for by the resolutions were their responsibility.

3. *Technical cooperation programme and regional advisory services*

64. A representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on technical cooperation activities and regional advisory services undertaken by ESCWA with funding from the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC) and those funded by the United Nations Development Account and through extrabudgetary resources.

65. The Commission considered document E/ESCWA/27/5(Part III), which gave a detailed overview of technical cooperation activities implemented under the RPTC, aimed to contribute to building capacities of member countries through training activities, advisory services, and technical consultation for the formulation of public policies, strategies and action plans relating to all specializations. The Commission took note of achievements in implementing regional projects funded by the United Nations Development Account and through extrabudgetary resources. Progress in each technical cooperation project was measured on the basis of specified expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement for each of the seven subprogrammes. The Commission looked at the areas in which ESCWA could offer assistance that would be of benefit to member countries in each subprogramme. Activities were categorized by country and by area with focus on preparations for the Rio+20 Conference, the system of national accounts, and accelerating progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, as well as on capacity-building to improve the quality of statistical data and South-South cooperation through the exchange of experiences and successful methodologies.

66. A representative of the secretariat said that owing to its efforts during the recent period there had been an increase in extrabudgetary resources, but that ESCWA's share of such resources continued to lag behind that of other regional commissions.

67. During the discussion, participants touched on the proportion of activities organized in cooperation with regional organizations to increase coordination and efficiency in the use of resources and derive maximum impact from implemented activities.

68. Member countries needed to be consulted in order to ensure that programme objectives were consistent with country priorities and that implementation mechanisms took into account country needs and unique characteristics. Delegates called for partnership and consultation to be extended to include proposed extrabudgetary projects all the way from the early design stages through the implementation and evaluation phases, in order to ensure responsiveness to country needs and priorities.

69. Delegates also called for strengthening relations between the Programme Planning and Technical Cooperation Division and member country focal points, stressing the joint responsibility to give that relationship an institutional framework and enhance the role of focal points as an official reference in the technical cooperation process.

70. In response to the points brought up during the discussion, the secretariat stressed the importance of partnership in determining the nature and design of technical cooperation projects. Depending on the nature of the project, the secretariat tried to include other regional actors such as the United Nations organizations, the League of Arab States and its specialized organs, and civil society organizations.

71. A large number of projects were implemented in conjunction with the League of Arab States in areas such as climate change, joint water resource management, and the formulation of regional consensus to present at international conferences. Such projects were part of regular budget programmes and were designed in consultation with member countries through the ESCWA intergovernmental mechanism. Some were designed based on proposals from the League of Arab States or the countries themselves. Cooperation with the League of Arab States and its specialized organs was a continuing joint endeavour between the two organizations carried out in accordance with decisions made at the highest ministerial level depending on the

nature of the cooperation in question. The League of Arab States was an essential partner in all the activities of the Commission.

72. In order to integrate general issues with country priorities, technical cooperation mechanisms should be established taking into account the unique characteristics of each country and rely on best practices.

73. A delegate commended the substantial improvement in the cooperation mechanism between United Nations organizations in a number of areas, including climate change, water resources management, and monitoring progress towards the Millennium Development Goals, and expressed confidence that improvements would continue in the future.

4. Financial status of the Commission

74. A representative of the secretariat presented a review of all financial aspects of the programmes of the Commission, which included allocation of funds under the regular budget, the United Nations Development Account and extrabudgetary resources. The presentation covered the distribution of funds by programme, their allocation in accordance with needs as proposed by ESCWA's technical divisions, and comments expressed by member countries through ESCWA's intergovernmental mechanism and at United Nations headquarters.

75. The presentation concluded by stressing the importance of supplementing the regular budget used for analytical and normative projects with extrabudgetary resources aimed to add projects of an applied nature to respond to the increasing number of requests from member countries for technical cooperation and advisory services in economic and social areas of priority to the countries and the region.

5. Reports of the subsidiary bodies on their sessions

76. The Commission was presented with the reports of the seven subprogrammes on sessions held in the interim between the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh sessions, in addition to the reports of the Technical Committee on its meetings held during that same period. Those reports, which included recommendations, topics of discussion, organizational information, lists of participants and lists of documents, are listed below:

- (a) Report of the Statistical Committee on its ninth session (E/ESCWA/SD/2010/IG.1/10/Rev.1);
- (b) Report of the Committee on Energy on its eighth session (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2010/IG.1/6);
- (c) Report of the Committee on Social Development on its eighth session (E/ESCWA/SDD/2011/IG.1/6/Report);
- (d) Report of the Committee on Women on its fifth session (E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/7/Report);
- (e) Report of the Technical Committee on its fifth meeting (E/ESCWA/2011/C.5/8/Report);
- (f) Report of the Committee on Water Resources on its ninth session (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2011/IG.1/8/Report);
- (g) Report of the Committee on Transport on its twelfth session (E/ESCWA/EDGD/2011/IG.1/7/Report);
- (h) Report of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development in the Countries of the ESCWA Region on its seventh session (E/ESCWA/EDGD/2011/IG.2/7/Report);
- (i) Report of the Technical Committee on its sixth meeting (E/ESCWA/2011/C.6/7/Report);
- (j) Report of the Committee on Transport on its thirteenth session (E/ESCWA/EDGD/2012/IG.1/8/Report).

77. The Commission endorsed the recommendations and took note of the items contained in those reports.

D. MANAGEMENT ISSUES
(Agenda item 7)

78. The Commission considered document E/ESCWA/27/6, which consisted of two parts, namely: evaluation of the work of the Commission, and proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013.

1. Evaluation of the work of the Commission

79. Participants were informed about staff training programmes being conducted in the various divisions and sections on monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, including workshops on project planning and results-based management, designed to help devise indicators of achievement and identify expected accomplishments and impacts while drafting the strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015.

80. ESCWA had been using a new standardized approach to evaluating the subprogramme on statistics. The evaluation concluded with recommendations in the four areas of strategic vision, management issues, institutional and priority issues in the programme of work, and coordination and partnership. In 2012, the secretariat would apply the standardized evaluation methodology to the subprogrammes on social development and ICT.

81. The evaluation undertaken by the secretariat would also include all projects being implemented through the United Nations Development Account and the intergovernmental mechanism in accordance with the priorities of the programme of work as determined by member countries and the United Nations reform plan. The secretariat would conduct a job audit with a view to ensuring maximum use of available human resources.

82. During the ensuing discussion, participants expressed the hope that the secretariat would take into account comments submitted by member countries in the preparation of the reports.

83. The secretariat was in the process of enhancing the new approach with a view to giving the evaluation process even more objectivity and credibility.

2. Proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013

84. A representative of the secretariat presented document E/ESCWA/27/6(Part II), which contained proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013. The amendments were made pursuant to new mandates entrusted to ESCWA by the General Assembly at its sixty-fifth session, and in response to global and regional needs and challenges that had emanated since the Commission had adopted the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013 at its twenty-sixth session.

85. Delegates took note of the amendments and expressed their understanding of the operational need for them, provided that the reasons behind them would be further clarified and a clear distinction would be made between activities that were being amended and those that were being fundamentally changed, with a clear basis for categorizing activities as either additional or reformulated.

86. Stressing that the role of ESCWA is in the economic and social realms rather than political, participants wondered about the extent of the connection between amendments to the programme of work and political changes in some countries of the region, and also about the reason for the cancellation of the activities relating to the youth under subprogramme 7 despite the growing importance of youth in the Arab region.

87. Participants called for cooperation to be expanded to include not only the League of Arab States but also other United Nations organizations, non-governmental organizations and academic institutions. Reports should include implementation programmes designed to transform recommendations into actionable policies.

88. In response to comments made by participants, the representative of the secretariat noted that ESCWA remained fully seized of the changes happening in the region, because the political situation represented a verdict on economic and social conditions, and because those changes were posing new economic and social challenges to member countries and ESCWA. Youth was very much at the heart of the economic and social projects of ESCWA, but the proposed activity in question had been cancelled to avoid duplication of work, since there was a similar activity in another subprogramme.

E. REVISED DRAFT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2014-2015 (Agenda item 8)

89. A representative of the secretariat presented document E/ESCWA/27/7, which contained the revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015, and gave an overview of the orientation, focus areas, objective and expected accomplishments for each of the seven subprogrammes.

90. During the ensuing discussion, delegates pointed out the need to develop a logical scope for the strategic framework. It should contain a component identifying the sources of information on the basis of which achievements were assessed, and verification mechanisms to further improve the performance evaluation process. Precise indicators of achievement focusing on quality of outputs should be adopted in order to avoid any ambiguity in measuring performance.

91. Delegates also proposed adding a component on secure and productive investment to the subprogramme on integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development; expanding the regional integration project in the subprogramme on economic development and integration to include such areas as digital content and e-services; placing focus on the environmental accounts system in the subprogramme on statistics for evidence-based policymaking; and devoting due attention to training and decent work for young people in the subprogramme on conflict mitigation and development, given that rising unemployment among youth was a major contributing factor to conflicts. An appropriate performance indicator for the latter might be the responsiveness of member country labour markets to the needs and aspirations of young people. Delegates also requested further clarification of the role of ESCWA in support of member countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

92. In response to the points raised by delegates, the representative of the secretariat pointed out that the new evaluation mechanism was based on indicators that measure quality rather than just quantity of services. The integration question was at the heart of the development programme. Supporting countries in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals was a joint effort by all the international organizations, each within its particular area of competence. ESCWA was active on the national level in support of member countries achieving progress toward those Goals within the relevant timeframes.

93. The Commission endorsed the revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015. The secretariat requested member countries to submit their comments in writing and to maintain regular channels of communication on any particular proposal or project.

F. CONSIDERATION OF THE REQUESTS OF LIBYA, MOROCCO AND TUNISIA FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE COMMISSION (Agenda item 9)

94. The Commission decided to submit a recommendation to the Economic and Social Council that the requests of Libya, Morocco and Tunisia for membership in ESCWA be approved.

G. DATE AND VENUE OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION
(Agenda item 10)

95. It was decided that the Commission would hold its twenty-eighth session in May 2014. Iraq offered to host the twenty-eighth session. A decision in that regard would be made after consultations.

H. OTHER MATTERS
(Agenda item 11)

96. No proposals were received under this agenda item.

**V. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION
ON ITS TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION**

97. At its plenary closing session, held on 10 May 2012, the Commission adopted the draft report on its twenty-seventh session, with the resolutions and recommendations included in the report, on the understanding that the agreed amendments would be incorporated therein.

VI. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. DATE AND VENUE

98. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia held its twenty-seventh session at the United Nations House in Beirut from 7 to 10 May 2012. It convened seven plenary meetings, during which it discussed its agenda items which covered issues of concern to member countries.

99. Stressing the cultural aspect of its development mission, the Commission inaugurated the ministerial segment with a concert by the Orchestra of the Lebanese National Higher Conservatory of Music. The Commission chose to highlight music as it is a fine art that all nations value in their civilization and cultural heritage.

100. The session also marked the launch of ESCWA's cyberlegislation guidelines.

B. OPENING OF THE SESSION

101. The session was opened in two stages. The senior officials segment was opened on the morning of Monday 7 May 2012, while the ministerial segment was opened on the morning of Wednesday 9 May 2012.

1. *Senior officials segment*

102. At the opening of the senior officials segment, Ms. Zeina Toukan, Director of the Department of International Cooperation in the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Jordan, which had occupied the Chair of the twenty-sixth session of the Commission, made an opening address in which she commended the outstanding efforts of ESCWA that had ensured the overall success of its programmes during the biennium 2010-2011. Despite difficult conditions in the region, ESCWA managed to achieve significant successes in promoting economic and social development, enhancing regional cooperation, and providing technical and advisory assistance to member countries, notably in the areas of ICT, sustainable development, energy, and gender equality. Those successes were a sign of the important role played by ESCWA in supporting member countries and the need to enhance that role as envisioned in the strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015 in accordance with emerging priorities and ongoing developments.

103. Mr. Nadim Khouri, Deputy of the Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Commission, gave an address in which he stressed the need for joint efforts to realize the aspirations of the countries of the region. Exceptional circumstances being undergone by the Arab countries required

a redoubling of efforts to move forward the economic and social development process. The twenty-seventh session, with the important programmatic, administrative and organizational issues on its agenda, would be an opportunity for discussions that would contribute to orienting the work of ESCWA during the coming period in accordance with the priorities of member countries.

2. Ministerial segment

104. Mr. Saleh al-Kharabsheh, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Jordan, representing the Chair of the twenty-sixth session of the Commission, opened the ministerial segment with an address in which he affirmed the role played by ESCWA in promoting economic and social development processes. Achievements of the twenty-sixth session had included providing technical assistance to member countries in the areas of water, energy, and food security, and helping confront the aftermath of the global financial crisis, threats to food and energy security, population growth, and increases in the poverty and unemployment rates that were among the major causes of growing instability in the region. He called for the development of democracy and good governance programmes that involved society in the formulation of its own political and economic future, and for a focus on comprehensive education that in its fullest meaning had direct bearing on economic and social development.

105. His Excellency Mr. Sultan bin Said al-Mansouri, Minister of Economy, the United Arab Emirates, in his capacity as Chair of the twenty-seventh session, delivered an address in which he reviewed the major challenges facing comprehensive and sustainable development in the light of security and political changes occurring in the region, along with perennial problems such as youth unemployment, rising poverty rates, food insecurity, and unsustainable patterns of resource consumption. Such difficult times called for the Arab countries to adopt a new and integrated approach to development that allowed for all groups of society to participate in political and economic life. He noted his country's experience with comprehensive development, especially its efforts to transform from a petroleum-based economy to a more diversified economy. He closed by proposing the establishment of a regional innovation centre in cooperation with ESCWA whose goal would be the translation of creative new ideas into successful practical projects.

106. Mr. Derek Plumbly, United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, delivered a message from Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Secretary-General noted the popular movements being witnessed by the region, through which citizens were demanding democracy, dignity and social justice, and expressing their sense of frustration at the prevailing inequality, corruption, repression and lack of decent employment opportunities. It was imperative to take the difficult decisions needed to answer these legitimate calls for greater rights and freedoms. He commended the decision of ESCWA to focus its current session on the correlation between social justice and sustainable development as a positive contribution to preparations for the Rio+20 Conference, which would provide an opportunity to take bold action to address the interrelated problems of poverty, environmental degradation and scarcity of natural resources.

107. Ms. Rima Khalaf, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of ESCWA, delivered an address in which she recalled the circumstances under which the previous session had been held, when the global economic crisis in the West was threatening to undermine achievements that had been decades in the making. The situation was now reversed, with the Arab region producing the newspapers headlines and witnessing promising changes. The countries of the region were recalibrating their economic and social policies towards greater justice, equality of opportunities, and popular participation in decision-making. She cautioned that optimism did not mean that the region was out of danger. The lapse into violence in some countries remained a cause of grave concern, while the oppressive Israeli occupation of Palestine and other Arab lands persisted in violating international law and continued to constitute a perennial threat to the security of all of the countries in the region and their development efforts. She called for swift reforms, and the realization of comprehensive human development rooted in right, justice and the primacy of knowledge.

108. His Excellency Mr. Najib Mikati, the President of the Council of Ministers, Lebanon, under whose auspices the session was being held, delivered an address in which he expressed his gratitude to ESCWA for playing an active role in supporting development in Arab countries, and for launching a regional consultation process to create an Arab consensus in the run-up to the Rio+20 Conference. The fundamental transformations being undergone by the Arab countries were a historic crossroads that was both rife with hope and beset by challenges, and which offered fresh evidence of the link between social justice and sustainable development. He called on the Arab countries to promote collaboration for the benefit of the peoples of the region and for the sake of peace, democracy and social justice, and called on the United Nations to be more even-handed in implementing its resolutions.

C. PARTICIPANTS

109. The session was attended by representatives of the 14 ESCWA member countries. It was also attended by Algeria, Australia, Brazil, Comoros, Japan, Morocco, Romania, Tunisia and Ukraine in the capacity of observers. Other observers included representatives of United Nations programmes, agencies and institutions; international and non-governmental organizations, and other organizations; and a number of experts. The list of participants is contained in annex I to this report.

D. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. *Senior officials segment*

110. Rule 12 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission provides that member countries shall assume the Chair of the sessions of the Commission on a rotating basis, in Arabic alphabetical order. It also provides that the Commission shall, at the beginning of each session, elect from among the representatives of its members two Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur, who shall remain in office until such time as their successors shall be elected, and shall be eligible for re-election.

111. Accordingly, Mr. Mohamed Saleh Shelwah, Assistant Under-secretary for Economic Policies Affairs at the Ministry of Economy of the United Arab Emirates, assumed the Chair of the senior officials segment. Representatives of Jordan and Bahrain assumed the posts of Vice-Chair, and the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic assumed the post of Rapporteur.

2. *Ministerial segment*

112. His Excellency Mr. Sultan bin Said al-Mansouri, Minister of Economy of the United Arab Emirates, chaired the ministerial meetings; Mr. Saleh al-Kharabsheh, representative of Jordan and Ms. Huda Salman Hasan Awad representative of Bahrain assumed the positions of Vice-Chairs, while Mr. Bashar Mohamad Assaad, representative of the Syrian Arab Republic assumed the position of Rapporteur.

E. CREDENTIALS

113. In accordance with Rule 11 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission, the credentials of the representatives of member countries participating in the twenty-seventh session were submitted to the Executive Secretary.

F. AGENDA

114. At its first meeting, the Commission adopted the agenda as presented in document E/ESCWA/27/L.1, after amending agenda item 9 to include the requests of Libya and Morocco for membership in the Commission. The agenda was adopted as follows:

1. Opening of the twenty-seventh session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
4. Consideration of requests by States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of ESCWA to participate as observers in the twenty-seventh session of the Commission.
5. Policy issues in the ESCWA region:
 - (a) The role of participation and social justice in achieving sustainable and balanced development;
 - (b) The preparations for Rio+20 in the Arab region;
 - (c) Inclusive financing for small and medium-sized enterprises and creating job opportunities.
6. Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission:
 - (a) Programme performance report for the biennium 2010-2011;
 - (b) Implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-sixth session;
 - (c) Technical cooperation programme and regional advisory services;
 - (d) Financial status of the Commission;
 - (e) Reports of the subsidiary bodies on their sessions.
7. Management issues:
 - (a) Evaluation of the work of the Commission;
 - (b) Proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013.
8. Revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015.
9. Consideration of the requests of Libya, Morocco and Tunisia for membership in the Commission.
10. Date and venue of the twenty-eighth session of the Commission.
11. Other matters.
12. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its twenty-seventh session.

115. At the same meeting, the Commission adopted the proposed organization of work for its twenty-seventh session, presented in document E/ESCWA/27/L.2.

G. DOCUMENTS

116. The list of documents submitted to the Commission at its twenty-seventh session is contained in annex II to this report.

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

A. ESCWA MEMBER COUNTRIES

Bahrain

Ms. Huda Salman Hasan Awad
Director
Media and Public Relations Department
Supreme Council for Women

Mr. Fuad Sadiq Al-Baharna
Counsellor
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ms. Deena Rashed Al-Khalifa
Head of Bilateral Relations Department
Supreme Council for Women

Egypt

H.E. Ms. Somaya Saad
Ambassador
Assistant Foreign Minister for Multilateral
Economic Relations and International
Cooperation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

H.E. Mr. Mohammed Toufic
Ambassador
Embassy of Egypt in Lebanon

Mr. Mohamed Mamdouh
Second Secretary
Embassy of Egypt in Lebanon

Iraq

H.E. Mr. Ali Youssef Al-Shukri
Minister of Planning

Ms. Noor Al-Hashemi
Attaché
Embassy of Iraq in Lebanon

Mr. Sohaib Jihad Sadeq
Secretary of the Minister
Ministry of Planning

Ms. Nada Abdul Razaq
Secretary of the Minister
Ministry of Planning

Jordan

Mr. Saleh Al-Kharabsheh
Secretary-General
Ministry of Planning and International
Cooperation

Ms. Zeina Zeid Toukan
Director
International Cooperation Department
Ministry of Planning and International
Cooperation

Ms. Hazar Ibrahim Badran
Head of World Bank and United Nations
Agencies Division
International Cooperation Department
Ministry of Planning and International
Cooperation

Kuwait

Mr. Adel Abdalla Al-Wugayan
Secretary-General
Supreme Council for Planning and Development

Mr. Bader Sayed Abdel Rahman Al-Rifai
Director
Office of the Secretary-General
General Secretariat
Supreme Council for Planning and Development

Mr. Meshal M. Al-Ardhi
Controller, International Organizations
International Economic Co-operation Department
Ministry of Finance

Ms. Zeinab Jasser Abdullah Alenzi
Head of Technical Cooperation and International
Affairs Sections
Foreign Relations Department
Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour

Kuwait (continued)

Ms. Shorouq Ali Al-Khalil
Foreign Affairs Researcher
Ministry of Finance

Mr. Ali Mansour Hassan Almahmeed
Novice Researcher Media Relations
Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour

Mr. Jasem Al-Najem
Counsellor
Deputy Head of Mission
Embassy of Kuwait in Lebanon

Lebanon

H.E. Mr. Freij Sabounjian
Minister of Industry

Mr. Toufic Jaber
Counsellor
Acting Director of International Organizations,
Conferences and Cultural Relations
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants

Ms. Rola Hamdan
Diplomat
Economic Affairs Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants

Ms. Rafif Kobeissi Berro
Head of Trade Information Center
Director of Trade Point Beirut
Ministry of Economy and Trade

Ms. Manal Moussallem
Ministry of Environment

Oman

Mr. Abdulmalik A. Alhinai
Adviser in Ministry of Finance
Charged with Ministry of National Economy

Mr. Hamed Bin Jabr Bin Saud Al-Mahrooqi
Director-General for Services Sectors
Development
Ministry of National Economy

Ms. Amina Bint Hamdan Bin Abdalla Al-Hamdan
Director of Human Resources Development
Division
Ministry of National Economy

Ms. Suad Mohammed Bin Youssef
Al-Fadhel
Director of Technical Cooperation Department
Economic Affairs
Ministry of National Economy

Mr. Khalfan Bin Harib Bin Saif Al-Jabri
Director-General of Planning and Studies
Ministry of Social Development

Palestine

H.E. Mr. Yousef Abu Safieh
Minister
Chairman of Environment Quality Authority

Mr. Mahmoud Abed Mahmoud Ataya
Acting Director-General
General Directorate of Social Sector Planning
Ministry of Planning and Administrative
Development

Mr. Zaghloul Samhan
Director-General
Policies and Planning Directorate
Environment Quality Authority

Qatar

Mr. Hamad Bin Mohammed Al Fahid Al-Hajri
Acting Secretary-General
Supreme Council of Family Affairs

Mr. Ghanim Mubarak Ali Omran Al Kuwari
Director
Department of the Elderly and Persons with
Disabilities
Ministry of Social Affairs

Ms. Lulua Abdallah Mohamed Al-Attayah
Head of Small and Medium-sized Projects Section
Ministry of Business and Trade

Mr. Afan Ahmed Salmin Al Shamlan
Assistant Director
Policy Planning and Social Programs Department
Ministry of Social Affairs

Mr. Abdullah Al Mohamed Ahmad Hasan
Al-Ibrahim
Chemistry Researcher
Ministry of Environment

Qatar (continued)

Mr. Mohamed Hamed Abdalla Al Mulla
Economic Advisor
Ministry of Business and Trade

Saudi Arabia

H.E. Mr. Ahmed Bin Ibrahim Al-Hakami
Deputy Minister of Economy and Planning

Mr. Bandar Bin Abdel Aziz Al-Waily
Deputy Minister for Planning Affairs
Ministry of Economy and Planning

Mr. Abdullah Ali Al-Marwani
Director of Research and Studies Department
Supervisor of Regional Planning Department
Ministry of Economy and Planning

Mr. Waleed Bin Hamad Alorainan
Advisor to the Minister of Labour
Ministry of Labour

Mr. Jamal Ali Said Bamaileh
Director of Regional and International
Organizations Department
Presidency of Meteorology and Environment

Mr. Khaled Saleh Al-Chamri
Manager of Private Charities Associations
Ministry of Social Affairs

Mr. Majid Bin Ramsey Atteyah
First Secretary
Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Lebanon

Mr. Haitham Bin Ibrahim Al Abdullatif
Advisor to the Minister
Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Mr. Mohammad Bin Sleiman Al Farraj
Statistics Advisor
Central Department of Statistics and Information
Ministry of Economy and Planning

The Sudan

H.E. Mr. Othman Omer Al-Sharif
Minister of Trade

H.E. Mr. Elhadi Siddig Ali Numirey
Counsellor
Deputy Head of Mission
Embassy of the Sudan in Lebanon

Mr. Abdel Aziz Mohamed Mabrouk
Director-General of Foreign Trade
Ministry of Trade

Ms. Shaza Othman Omer Al-Sharif
Advisor to the Minister
Ministry of Trade

Syrian Arab Republic

Mr. Bashar Mohamad Asaad
Second Secretary
Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic in Lebanon

United Arab Emirates

H.E. Mr. Sultan Bin Said El-Mansouri
Minister of Economy

H.E. Mr. Mohamed Saleh Shelwah
Assistant Undersecretary for Economic Policies
Affairs
Ministry of Economy

Mr. Nizar Faysal El-Mashaal
Director
Department of Cooperation and Economic
Agreements
Ministry of Economy

Mr. Ali Obeid Al-Ghazal Al-Shamsi
Director
Planning and Decision Support Department
Ministry of Economy

Mr. Saif Salem Al Humrani
Administrator
Office of the Minister
Ministry of Economy

Mr. Arif Fadhel Ahmed Jasim
Institutional Excellence Department
Ministry of Social Affairs

Yemen

H.E. Mr. Mohamed Saed Al-Sadi
Minister of Planning and International
Cooperation

Mr. Mohammed Ahmed Al-Hawri
Deputy Minister for Economic Studies and
Forecasts
Ministry of Planning and International
Cooperation

H.E. Ms. Hooria Mashhour
Minister of Human Rights

Mr. Ibrahim Abdelrahman Sharaffuddin
Director-General
Department for International Organizations
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Mr. Sultan Al-Dubei
General Director of Protocols
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Ms. Amani Mohammed Abdallah Zabara
Acting Director-General
International Economic Studies Department
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Mr. Nabil Ali Abdulkader
Counsellor – Chargé d'Affaires
Embassy of Yemen in Lebanon

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

Algeria

H.E. Mr. Benaouda Ibrahim Haci
Ambassador
Embassy of Algeria in Lebanon

Mr. Laoudj Lounes
Ministre Plenipotentiaire
Embassy of Algeria in Lebanon

Australia

H.E. Mr. Lex Bartlem
Ambassador
Embassy of Australia in Lebanon

Comoros

Mr. Said Hassan Elanrif
Counsellor
Embassy of Comoros in France

Japan

Mr. Mikihiro Arakawa
Counsellor
Embassy of Japan in Lebanon

Morocco

H.E. Mr. Mohammed Najib Boulif
Minister of General Affairs and Governance

Ukraine

Mr. Shablü Serhii
First Secretary
Economic, Political, Media and Information
Affairs
Embassy of Ukraine in Lebanon

Romania

Mr. Marian Taranu
Second Secretary
Political Affairs
Embassy of Romania in Lebanon

Tunisia

H.E. Ms. Mémia Benna Zayani
Minister of Environment

Ms. Monia Brahem Al-Yousfy
Director of Environmental Economic Studies and
Analysis and Planning
Ministry of Environment

C. UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) -
Ethiopia

Mr. Demba Diarra
Secretary to the Commission
Office of the Executive Secretary

Regional Commissions New York Office
(RCNYO)

Mr. Srinivas Tata
Deputy Director

Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator
for Lebanon (UNSCOL) - Lebanon

Mr. Derek Plumbly
United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon

Mr. Alexander Costy
Senior Advisor for Coordination

United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
(UNIFIL) - Lebanon

Mr. Carlo Di Pinto
Force Commander Representative

D. UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMMES AND AGENCIES

United Nations Development Programme
(UNDP)/Regional Centre for Arab States -
Egypt

Mr. Paolo Lembo
Director

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) –
Lebanon Country Office

Ms. Annamaria Laurini
Representative

Ms. Nadine Aboukhaled
Social Policy Specialist

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
(UNDOC) - Lebanon

Ms. Renée Sabbagh
Programme Officer

United Nations Environment Programme/
Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP/ROWA)
- Bahrain

Ms. Melanie Hutchinson
Programme Officer

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Arab
States Regional Office - Egypt

Mr. Hafedh Chekir
Regional Director

Association of Former International Civil
Servants (AFICS) - Lebanon

Ms. Thoukaa Al-Khalidi
Advisor

Mr. Christian De Clerk

Mr. Hassan El-Sharif

Mr. Antoine Haddad

E. UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

United Nations Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization (UNESCO) - Regional
Bureau, Lebanon

Ms. Seiko Sugita
Programme Specialist
Social and Human Sciences

United Nations Industrial Development
Organization (UNIDO) - Lebanon

Ms. Nada Sabra
National Programme Coordinator of Montreal
Protocol Activities and Environment Matters in
Jordan, Lebanon and Syria

Delegation for Palestine by the United Nations
Department of Political Affairs (DPA)

Mr. Omar Abdel Rahman Awadallah
Advisor, United Nations
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ms. Kahramana Jihad Radwan Zeid Al-Kilani
Jarrar
Director
United Nations and International Organizations
Department
Ministry of Planning

Mr. Rabii Al-Hantouli
First Secretary
Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the
United Nations
New York

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United
Nations (FAO) - Lebanon

Ms. Solange Matta Saade
Assistant FAO Representative

United Nations Truce Supervision Organization
(UNTSO)

Mr. Yann Droumaguet
Deputy Chief Liaison Office
Lebanon

F. INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND RELATED BODIES

League of Arab States - Egypt

Mr. Tarek Nabil El-Nabulsi
Head of Social Policies Department
Technical Secretariat of the Arab Social
Ministerial Council

League of Arab States-Arab Organization for
Agricultural Development - Sudan

Mr. Ali Mohamad Yassine
Acting Director-General
Ministry of Agriculture
Lebanon

League of Arab States-Arab Center for the Studies
of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) -
Syrian Arab Republic

Mr. Fathi Al-Sadik Beeram
Assistant Director-General

Council of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs
of the GCC - Bahrain

Mr. Akil Ahmad El-Jasem
Director-General
Executive Bureau

Mr. Mahmood Ali Hafud
Social Affairs Director
Executive Bureau

International Center for Agricultural Research in
the Dry Areas (ICARDA) - Lebanon

Mr. Hassan Machlab
Country Manager
Beirut Office and Turbol Research Station

Arab Towns Organization - Kuwait

Mr. Ghassan Samman
Head of Media and International Relations Sector

Mr. Ahmad Mohamad Saleh Al-Adsani
Assistant Secretary-General

Mr. Abdulrahman Abdallah Alduaij
Director of Technical Office

G. GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Office of the Minister of State for Administrative Reform (OMSAR) - Lebanon

Mr. Charbel Sarkis
Senior Legal Advisor

Arab Planning Institute - Kuwait

Mr. Bader Osman Malallah
Director-General

Mr. Karim Adel Darwiche
External Relations Manager

Central Bank of Lebanon

Mr. Saad Andary
Vice-Governor

Mr. Youssef El-Khalil
Manager of Financial Transactions

Byblos Bank - Lebanon

Ms. Georgina Eid Dinar
Head of Group Consumer, Kafalat and Small Business Loans Unit

Caisse Nationale de la Sécurité Sociale (CNSS) - Lebanon

Mr. Ahmad Omar El-Turk
Former Director of Finance

International Association of Educators for World Peace (IAEWP) - Lebanon

Mr. Varant Zareh Seropian
Representative

Al-Shouf Cedar Society - Lebanon

Ms. Noura Joumblat
Member of the Board

National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) - Lebanon

Ms. Turkiieh Faika Turkiieh
Chair
Committee on Health and the Environment

United Nations Association of Lebanon

Mr. Samir Michel El Daher
President

Ms. Randa Bou Saleh

Mr. Pierre Alfred Al-Khal
Appeal lawyer/International arbitrator

Arab Thought Forum - Jordan

Mr. El-Sadig El-Faqih
Secretary-General

Centre for Arab Unity Studies - Lebanon

Mr. Kheir Eddine Hassib
Chair
Executive Committee

The Saudi Fund for Development

Mr. Saleh Bin Abdallah Al-Addad
Director-General
Marketing and Information Department
Saudi Export Program

Mr. Saoud Bin Abdelrahman Al-Abdulhadi
Senior Specialist
Research and Economic Studies Department

Arab Lawyers Union

Mr. Omar Mohammad Zein
Secretary-General
Egypt

Mr. Abdalrazzak Dabliz
President of the Bar Association
Lebanon

Safadi Foundation - Lebanon

Ms. Mona Fahmi Safadi
President

Association for Charity and Culture - Lebanon

Mr. Ibrahim Shamseddine
President

Arab Institute for Training and Research in
Statistics - Jordan

Ms. Mayssa Mohamad Fadel Al-Yazigi
Acting Director-General

Imam Sadr Foundation - Lebanon

Mr. Mohammad Bassam

EMKAN for Microfinance and Sustainable
Community Development - Lebanon

Mr. Abdo Jaroush
Microfinance Program Manager

The Lebanese Association for Development
(Al-Majmoua)

Mr. Youssef Fawaz
Executive Director

Arab Finance House - Lebanon

Ms. Ghinwa Muhamad Jomaa
Senior Credit Manager

Ms. Manal Machaka
Marketing and Product Development Manager

Kafalat - Lebanon

Ms. Yolla A. Serieddine
Manager
Credit Department

Aie Serve Organization - Lebanon

Ms. Farah Ballout
Grant Coordinator

Ameen Financing for a Better World - Lebanon

Mr. Ziad Halaby
General Manager

Mentor Arabia - Libya

Ms. Farida El-Allaky
Executive Director

Arab Center for the Development of the Rule of
Law and Integrity (ACRLI) - Lebanon

Ms. Roula Zayat
Database Officer
Information Services Department

Makhzoumi Foundation - Lebanon

Mr. Vartkes Keutelian
Operation Manager

Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA)
- Lebanon

Mr. Imad Youssef Hoballah
Chair and CEO

H. EXPERTS

Mr. Richard Chitwood
SME Manager
The Agha Khan Agency for Microfinance
Switzerland

Ms. Rima Turk Ariss
Associate Professor of Finance
Lebanese American University
Lebanon

H.E. Mr. Sharbel Nahhas
Former Minister of Labour
Lebanon

Mr. Maher Al-Hajj Hassan
First Deputy Governor
Central Bank
Jordan

Mr. Najib Saab
Secretary-General
Arab Forum for Environment and Development
(AFED)
Lebanon

Ms. Wafaa Dikah Hamzé
Consultant, Former State Minister
Lebanon

I. ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS

Lebanese University

Mr. Mohammad Salim Wehbe
Professor
Faculty of Economics and Business
Administration

Saint Joseph University (USJ) - Lebanon

Mr. Joseph Gemayel
Dean of Faculty of Economics

Lebanese American University (LAU) - Lebanon

Mr. Said Elfakhani
Dean and professor
School of Business

Haigazian University - Lebanon

Ms. Annie Tortian
Assistant Professor of Business Administration

Beirut Arab University – Center For
Entrepreneurship

Ms. Leila Abboud
Director
Professor in Economics
Faculty of Commerce and Business
Administration

American University of Science and Technology
(AUST) - Lebanon

Mr. Bassam Charif Hamdar
Chair
Department of Economics

Annex II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Symbol	Item	Title
E/ESCWA/27/1	3	Agenda and annotations
E/ESCWA/27/2	3	Organization of work
E/ESCWA/27/3	4	Consideration of requests by States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of ESCWA to participate as observers in the twenty-seventh session of the Commission
E/ESCWA/27/4	5	Policy issues in the ESCWA region
E/ESCWA/27/4(Part I)	5 (a)	The role of participation and social justice in achieving sustainable and balanced development
E/ESCWA/27/4(Part II)	5 (b)	The preparations for Rio+20 in the Arab region
E/ESCWA/27/4(Part III)	5 (c)	Inclusive financing for small and medium-sized enterprises and creating job opportunities
E/ESCWA/27/5	6	Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission
E/ESCWA/27/5(Part I)	6 (a)	Programme performance report for the biennium 2010-2011
E/ESCWA/27/5(Part II)	6 (b)	Implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-sixth session
E/ESCWA/27/5(Part III)	6 (c)	Technical cooperation programme and regional advisory services
E/ESCWA/27/5(Part IV)	6 (d)	Financial Status of the Commission
E/ESCWA/27/5(Part V)	6 (e)	Reports of the subsidiary bodies on their sessions
E/ESCWA/27/6	7	Management issues
E/ESCWA/27/6(Part I)	7 (a)	Evaluation of the work of the Commission
E/ESCWA/27/6(Part II)	7 (b)	Proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013
E/ESCWA/27/7	8	Revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015

Symbol	Item	Title
E/ESCWA/27/8	9	Consideration of the request of Tunisia for membership in the Commission
E/ESCWA/27/9/Report	12	Report of the Commission on its twenty-seventh session
E/ESCWA/27/CRP.1		Report on the ESCWA Technology Centre
E/ESCWA/27/CRP.2		The impact of conflict and political crisis on development in the ESCWA region
E/ESCWA/27/CRP.4		Report on the implementation of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society
E/ESCWA/27/INF.1		Information for participants
E/ESCWA/27/INF.2		List of documents
