



**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COUNCIL**

Distr.
LIMITED
E/ESCWA/28/7(Part VI)
26 August 2014
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Twenty-eighth session
Tunis, 15-18 September 2014

Item 10 (f) of the provisional agenda

MANAGEMENT ISSUES

**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE
AND RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE ECONOMIC
AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA**

Summary

The present document contains two proposals: the first on redesignating the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) as the Economic and Social Commission for Arab States and the second on redesignating the Technical Committee as the Executive Committee and amending its terms of reference. It also sets out two draft resolutions in that regard for consideration and adoption by the Commission at its twenty-eighth session.

Introduction

1. The present document contains two proposals: the first on redesignating the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) as the Economic and Social Commission for Arab States and the second is redesignating the Technical Committee as the Executive Committee and amending its terms of reference. It also sets out two draft resolutions in that regard for consideration and adoption by the Commission at its twenty-eighth session.

I. REDESIGNATING THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA AS THE “ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ARAB STATES”

2. The United Nations Economic and Social Council approved, in its resolution 2012/1, the admission of Libya, Morocco and Tunisia to membership in the Commission and requested the Executive Secretary of the Commission to take the measures necessary for the implementation of that resolution. The Council had adopted resolution 2012/1 upon the recommendation of the Commission in its resolution 302 (XXVII), adopted on 10 May 2012 at its twenty-seventh session.

3. With regard to implementing the third operative paragraph of resolution 302 (XXVII) on inviting all other Arab countries to become members of ESCWA and coordinating with relevant United Nations entities and the League of Arab States on the redesignation of ESCWA to become the Economic and Social Commission for Arab States, the ESCWA secretariat carried out the following:

(a) Officially notified the Secretary General of the League of Arab States of the terms of resolution 302 (XXVII), which he welcomed. He also urged the ESCWA secretariat to invite the remaining members of the League of Arab States to join ESCWA;

(b) Contacted the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs to enquire about the necessary operational steps for implementing the third operative paragraph of resolution 302 (XXVII). The Office of Legal Affairs recommended that ESCWA member States identify the Arab countries referred to in the resolution so as to enable the ESCWA secretariat to determine the countries it should invite.

4. The ESCWA Technical Committee, at its seventh meeting (Amman, 18-19 March 2013), recommended to limit the Arab countries referred to in the third operative paragraph of resolution 302 (XXVII) to members of the League of Arab States. It also recommended drafting a resolution to redesignate ESCWA as the Economic and Social Commission for Arab States and called upon ESCWA member States, especially those that are members of the Economic and Social Council, to support the redesignation process. It requested the secretariat to draft a resolution on the subject to be submitted to the Commission at its ministerial session.

5. At the eighth meeting of the Technical Committee (Amman, 10-12 December 2013), member States reaffirmed the recommendations made at its seventh meeting concerning the redesignation of ESCWA as the Economic and Social Commission for Arab States and requested the secretariat to present a draft resolution on the subject to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session.

6. Following is the draft resolution on redesignating ESCWA.

Draft resolution

Redesignating the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia as the “Economic and Social Commission for Arab States”

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to Economic and Social Council resolution 1818 (LV) of 9 August 1973, in which the Council established the Economic Commission for Western Asia and set out its terms of reference,

Referring also to the Council resolution 1985/69 of 26 July 1985, in which the Council decided to change the name of the Economic Commission for Western Asia to the “Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia” and to amend its terms of reference to reflect the new name,

Recalling its resolution 302 (XXVII) of 10 May 2012, in which it requested the secretariat to coordinate with the relevant United Nations entities and the League of Arab States the redesignation of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia to become the “Economic and Social Commission for Arab States”,

Having considered the recommendations of the Technical Committee at its seventh¹ and eighth² meetings concerning the redesignation of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia as the Economic and Social Commission for Arab States,

Bearing in mind the mandate of the Commission to address economic and social challenges in member States and its unique role in promoting regional integration among them,

1. *Recommends* the Economic and Social Council:

(a) To redesignate the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia as the “Economic and Social Commission for Arab States”;

(b) To amend the terms of reference of the Commission as set forth in its resolution 1985/69 of 26 July 1985, in line with the new designation;

2. *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-ninth session.

II. REDESIGNATING THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE AS THE “EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE” AND AMENDING ITS TERMS OF REFERENCE

7. At the twenty-fourth ESCWA ministerial session, held in 2006, representatives of member States called for the establishment of a technical committee comprising the focal points of member States, which would meet once every six months to follow up on the implementation of the ESCWA programme of work and assist in requesting extrabudgetary funding for proposed projects. The secretariat welcomed the suggestion that a technical committee be established, on condition that member States bear the cost of its meetings; and the secretariat would undertake the technical and logistical preparations.

¹ ESCWA, *Report of the Technical Committee on its seventh meeting*, 18-19 March 2013, E/ESCWA/2012/C.7/8/Report, paras. 6 (a) and (b).

² ESCWA, *Report of the Technical Committee on its eighth meeting*, 10-12 December 2013, E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/10/Report, para. 6 (b).

8. At the seventh meeting of the Technical Committee, member States requested the secretariat to revise the Terms of Reference of the Committee to enable it to conduct its work more effectively; to reconsider the frequency of ESCWA ministerial sessions and how this affects the ability of the Committee in responding to international and regional developments; and to bring these observations to the attention of the Committee at its eighth meeting for discussion before presenting them at the twenty-eighth ministerial session for further consideration.

9. At the eighth meeting of the Technical Committee, member States reaffirmed the need to revise the Terms of Reference of the Committee so that it may play a greater role in steering and coordinating all ESCWA activities and to enhance its decision-making capacity during intersessional periods. They also recommended redesignating the Committee as the Executive Committee to better reflect the nature of its functions and requested the secretariat to submit a proposal on the new terms of reference to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session for consideration and adoption.

10. Based on the recommendations made by member States at the seventh and eighth meetings of the Technical Committee, the secretariat proposed redesignating the Committee as the Executive Committee, which shall steer the ESCWA programme of work, while taking into account the legislative mandates of the United Nations and its regulations. It shall hold three meetings during every biennium, and a fourth meeting if necessary following consultations between the Chair of the Committee and the secretariat. Its membership shall comprise senior member State officials. The term of its Chair shall coincide with that of the Chair of the ministerial session. Committee members shall bear the costs of participating in its work.

11. The Executive Committee shall carry out preparations for the ministerial sessions; review the work programmes of the ESCWA intergovernmental subsidiary bodies, including multidisciplinary activities, in accordance with standards developed by the Committee that are consistent with ESCWA objectives, in complete collaboration and coordination with all subprogrammes; adopt recommendations made by the intergovernmental subsidiary bodies during intersessional periods, so as to prepare reports summarizing those recommendations for presentation at the ministerial sessions; make decisions on the activities undertaken by ESCWA during intersessional periods, including the preparation of reports on the ESCWA programme of work and draft resolutions for submission to the Economic and Social Council.

12. Following is the draft resolution on redesignating the Technical Committee and amending its terms of reference.

Draft resolution

Redesignating the Technical Committee as the “Executive Committee” and amending its terms of reference

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to its decision made on 11 May 2006 during its twenty-fourth session concerning the establishment of a technical committee which should meet once every six months to follow up the implementation of the programme of work,³

Referring also to the terms of reference of the Technical Committee as revised at its fifth meeting, held on 6 and 7 April 2011, which stipulate that the Technical Committee shall hold three meetings per biennium, in support of the ministerial session of the Commission, to advise and assist the secretariat in planning and implementing the programme of work and to take action on any other matters,

³ ESCWA, *Report on the twenty-fourth session*, 8-11 May 2006, E/ESCWA/24/10, para. 49.

Having considered the recommendation of the Technical Committee at its seventh meeting to amend the mandate of the Technical Committee in order to facilitate its work and strengthen its ability in taking decisions and responding to regional and international developments,⁴

Having also considered the recommendation of the Technical Committee at its eighth meeting to redesignate the Technical Committee as the “Executive Committee” and amend its terms of reference, so that it may play a greater role in steering and coordinating the activities of the Commission,⁵

Noting the increasing global challenges and the need to develop swift regional responses to them,

Underscoring the importance of strengthening the intergovernmental engagement of member States in the decision-making processes of the Commission, in particular to ensure an integrated approach to the work of the Commission,

1. *Decides* to revise the role of the Technical Committee and its terms of reference, with immediate effect, as set out in the new terms of reference annexed to the present resolution;

2. *Also decides* to redesignate the Technical Committee as the “Executive Committee”;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to follow up on the implementation of the present resolution and report thereon to the Commission at its twenty-ninth session.

Annex

Terms of reference of the Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee, acting in accordance with United Nations policies, shall implement the guidance set by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

2. Between the biennial sessions of the Commission, the Executive Committee shall act on behalf of the Commission in all matters related to the activities of the Commission, including submitting resolutions and reporting to the Economic and Social Council.

3. The Executive Committee shall undertake the following:

(a) Organize the sessions of the Commission;

(b) Review the programme of work of the subsidiary committees, particularly intersectoral activities, on the basis of criteria defined by the Executive Committee, in accordance with the overall objectives of the Commission and its subprogrammes;

(c) Ensure consistency between subprogrammes;

(d) Deal with all matters related to programme planning.

4. The Executive Committee shall submit a report on its activities to the Commission at its sessions.

⁴ ESCWA, *Report of the Technical Committee on its seventh meeting*, 18-19 March 2013, E/ESCWA/2012/C.7/8/Report, para. 7 (q).

⁵ ESCWA, *Report of the Technical Committee on its eighth meeting*, 10-12 December 2013, E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/10/Report, para. 6 (g).

5. The membership of the Executive Committee shall mirror that of the Commission.
6. The chairs or vice-chairs of the subsidiary committees of the Commission can be invited to the meetings of the Executive Committee.
7. The Executive Committee may propose amendments to its terms of reference, which shall be considered for adoption by the Commission.
8. The Executive Committee shall be chaired by a representative of the country chairing the Commission.
