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**PROPOSED ESCWA STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK
FOR THE BIENNIUM 2016-2017****Summary**

This document presents the proposed strategic framework for the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for the biennium 2016-2017. It contains the overall orientation of programme 19 relating to economic and social development in Western Asia of the United Nations proposed strategic framework for the period 2016-2017, and the strategy, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement for each of the seven subprogrammes of ESCWA.

At its eighth meeting, the ESCWA Technical Committee is invited to review the proposed strategic framework and offer clear recommendations if needed with a view to approving it. The proposed strategic framework will also be submitted to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session, which will be held in May 2014, for consideration and adoption.

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Overall orientation

19.1 The overall orientation of programme 19 of the United Nations proposed strategic framework for the period 2016-2017 is to foster comprehensive, equitable, integrated and sustainable development through effective economic and social cooperation in the region, and to maintain and strengthen economic relations between the member States of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and with other States, paying special consideration to the least developed and conflict-stricken countries. ESCWA is responsible for the implementation of the programme.

19.2 Policy direction for the programme is provided in Economic and Social Council resolutions 1818 (LV) of 9 August 1973 establishing ESCWA and 1985/69 amending its terms of reference in order to underscore the social functions of the Commission. In addition, in its resolution 269 (XXIV), the Commission requested its Executive Secretary to increase coherence and synergy with other regional United Nations organizations and, through the lead role of the Commission in the Regional Coordination Mechanism, foster partnerships and cooperation with those organizations.

19.3 More recently, the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled *The future we want*, emphasized that “regional and subregional organizations, including the United Nations regional commissions and their subregional offices, have a significant role to play in promoting a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in their respective regions”.

19.4 Furthermore, in its resolution 67/226 of 21 December 2012 concerning the Quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system, the general Assembly recognized “the contribution of the regional commissions as well as interregional, regional and subregional cooperation to addressing development challenges related to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals”. It also requested “the regional commissions to further develop their analytical capacities to support country-level development initiatives, at the request of the programme countries, and to support measures for more intensive inter-agency collaboration at the regional and subregional levels”. It urged “the regional commissions and their subregional offices to prioritize sustainable development initiatives at the country level through, inter alia, more efficient and effective capacity-building, development and implementation of regional agreements and arrangements addressing the regional and subregional dimensions of national development goals and the exchange of information, best practices and lessons learned”.

19.5 As the regional arm of the United Nations, ESCWA will continue to foster economic integration at the subregional and regional levels, to promote the regional implementation of internationally agreed development goals, including the results of the ongoing discussion on the post-2015 development agenda, and to support regional sustainable development by contributing to bridging economic, social and environmental policy gaps in its member States. To achieve these objectives, ESCWA, through its convening power, will continue to advance multilateral dialogue, knowledge-sharing and networking at the regional level, and will work together with the other regional commissions to promote intraregional and interregional cooperation, both between themselves and through collaboration with other subregional and regional organizations.

19.6 Since late 2010, the political landscape of the ESCWA region has experienced dramatic transformations amidst political and social upheaval. This evolving situation and resulting instability is likely to create particular operational risks and barriers to the implementation of ESCWA programme of work and will require a continuous adaptation and renewal to maximize delivery of its programme. ESCWA will play a crucial and unique role in facilitating the responses of Governments to the needs of their citizens by assisting member States in addressing current policy weaknesses and enhancing their capacities to reduce existing inequalities. ESCWA will use its convening power to provide a forum for member States to discuss and share views on economic, social and sustainable development issues in the region.

19.7 The proposed strategic framework for the period 2016-2017 takes into consideration the ongoing negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda. This requires from ESCWA to retain a measure of flexibility in planning and defining objectives and priorities, in order to ultimately respond to the mandates resulting from these negotiations which are expected to have a considerable impact on the work of ESCWA

19.8 To capitalize on the opportunities presented by the political and social changes in the region, , ESCWA engaged in an extensive process of internal consultations for this proposed strategic framework to ensure that the needs of member States and the citizens of the region are captured within its four-year vision (2015-2019).

19.9 The purpose of this exercise is to do the following: establish a medium-term plan (two to four years) taking into consideration the post-2015 development agenda; provide a framework for a more effective integration of the work of the Commission around three institutionally defined strategic pillars; streamline planning processes to ensure greater coherence between the objectives and strategies, and the activities, outputs and performance measures; and articulate how the work under each subprogramme will impact economic and social development challenges in the region. This will increase the impact of ESCWA activities and facilitate the evaluation and review of the results achieved.

19.10 ESCWA will focus on equitable and sustainable development in the region. The programme comprises seven interdependent subprogrammes that focus on three strategic pillars that serve as mainstays for work to be implemented on eight priority areas underpinned by three cross-cutting issues. Specifically, ESCWA is expanding its integrated planning approach so that several or all of the subprogrammes have a joint role in contributing to the impacts that ESCWA seeks to achieve in each of the three strategic pillars and that none of the strategic pillars is to be the sole purview of any single subprogramme. The strategic framework for the period 2016-2017 thus reflects the activities both of individual subprogrammes and of ESCWA as a fully integrated organization.

19.11 The three strategic pillars of ESCWA for the period 2016-2017 are: inclusive development; regional integration; and good governance and resilience.

19.12 Using these three strategic pillars, ESCWA has adopted a results-based management approach in developing fully integrated work plans for its subprogrammes. Throughout its work, ESCWA will achieve more than simply implementing the programmed outputs. It will target predetermined and measurable outcomes under each priority area, inviting member States to make changes in practice in line with the objectives of each subprogramme. To this end, ESCWA will shift the focus of its monitoring and implementation efforts from the individual outputs or workplans of each subprogramme to their overall contribution to the outcomes established for each priority area and strategic pillar.

19.13 Through its work on the first pillar, namely inclusive development, ESCWA will focus on the following three priority areas: social justice; knowledge economy and employment; and sustainable natural resources.

19.14 In the priority area of social justice, ESCWA will develop strategies for development and poverty eradication which are not only measured by growth in economic activity and income, but also by the implementation of the fundamental principles of guaranteeing decent employment commensurate with the skills, capacity and aspirations of the individuals and ensuring equal access to resources without jeopardizing the right of future generations to benefit from those resources. ESCWA will support member States in ensuring that social inclusion and integration guide policy and institutional development, making certain that there is equal access to decision-making processes, social protection and services, as well as to information and resources, including water, energy and food, and that income gains are equitable and provide equal opportunities for growth. Under knowledge economy and employment, ESCWA will pay special attention to promoting the transfer of technology, in particular in information and communication technology and emerging green sectors, to increase the competitiveness of economies in the region through value-added

industrial development, making effective and efficient use of human and natural resources. Concerning sustainable natural resources, ESCWA will focus its work on promoting integrated management of natural resources to optimize the efficiency and effectiveness of resource consumption through the use of new technologies and innovation, thus maximizing the impact that the use of these resources has on income generation and job creation.

19.15 Under the second strategic pillar, namely regional integration, ESCWA will focus on two priority areas: policy coherence; and agreements and strategies. Although Arab countries share elements of economic and cultural history, regional integration is still stumbling. The lack of integration is generally attributed to political and socioeconomic instability and the absence of political commitment to the integration project, and has contributed to asymmetrical economic and social development, evidenced by high rates of poverty and illiteracy, and low availability of resources, especially water. Other issues impacted by the lack of regional integration include the plight of millions of refugees and displaced persons, and the expanding income and wealth gap.

19.16 The secretariat will continue to work closely with the League of Arab States and regional partners to enhance the formulation of intraregional, interregional and international trade policies aimed at strengthening national capacity and increasing the competitiveness of domestic and regional markets. This shall be in line with the outcomes of high-level regional forums, mainly the Arab Economic and Social Summit and with regional agreements on the establishment of the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA), the Arab Customs Union and the Arab Common Market, among others. The secretariat will continue to assist member States in developing their capacity to engage in subregional, regional and multilateral negotiations on trade agreements designed to promote international and intraregional trade and increase their integration in the multilateral trading system.

19.17 The profound changes taking place in the Arab region and the expansion of global trade have increased the importance of integration. The opportunities and benefits of regional cooperation can positively impact the efforts to address the challenges and contribute to sustainable and balanced regional development.

19.18 Under the first priority area, namely policy coherence, ESCWA will aim to harmonize policies and improve cross-border infrastructural linkages. It will do so by encouraging member States to participate in efforts to formulate harmonized regional policies in order to take advantage of the added value of regional integration in economic, social and environmental areas. Under the second priority area, namely agreements and strategies, ESCWA will focus on integrated work programmes that invest in the synergies between Arab economies for the achievement of optimum benefits for the region as a whole. ESCWA will accentuate the role of integration as a driver towards a knowledge economy, while protecting the rights of people in the region to equal opportunities for development and an equitable share of the benefits of integration.

19.19 Under the third strategic pillar, namely good governance and resilience, ESCWA will focus on three priority areas: institutional development; participation and citizenship; and resilience to crises and occupation.

19.20 In the area of institutional development, ESCWA will work to reduce the governance deficit that has undermined the development efforts and resilience of member States, exacerbating political tensions and conflicts in some contexts, while obstructing democratic transitions in others. ESCWA will endeavor to enhance the capacity of member States to perform government functions and adopt citizen-based practices. In the area of participation and citizenship, ESCWA aims to promote accountability, transparency, public participation, social cohesion and political reform. It will work to enhance civil society engagement and empowerment and support inclusive participation and gender equality.

19.21 Under resilience to crises and occupation, ESCWA will identify the root causes and impacts of conflict and occupation, and work with member States to reduce the identified impacts. ESCWA will

enhance initiatives to support building peace and resilience, particularly in Arab least developed countries (LDCs). An important aspect of the programme of work will be to assist member States to enhance their resilience through the development of strategies for disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

19.22 The programme of work of ESCWA will be guided by three cross-cutting issues: partnerships, gender and statistics.

19.23 ESCWA will fulfill the objectives of its strategic pillars while operating in an increasingly complex development environment, marked by political and social instability and economic and environmental vulnerability. Having identified its areas of strength and comparative advantage, ESCWA will continue to expand its network of national, regional and international partners and will cooperate with intergovernmental bodies, United Nations organizations, donors, research institutions, civil society organizations, and the private sector to respond to the pressing needs and policy challenges of member States.

19.24 Building on its special relationship with the League of Arab States, ESCWA will support the articulation of regional positions on regional and global issues, and the formulation of a rights-based sustainable development agenda that is focused on social justice. It will also continue to convene the Regional Coordination Mechanism as a platform for United Nations entities working in the region to discuss regional policy priorities. New partnerships will be forged with a range of stakeholders engaged in evidence-based policy research, in addition to civil society actors who can inform research and policy debates.

19.25 Mobilizing additional financial and in-kind contributions will be important to ensure that ESCWA can disseminate and operationalize the findings and recommendations of its normative work and respond effectively to the requests of its member States. To do so, ESCWA will leverage the results and outputs of its regular programme of work, and the strategic partnerships it builds across the region.

19.26 ESCWA will place particular focus on promoting South-South cooperation between its member States and with other developing countries through other regional commissions and use such cooperation to improve capacity-development efforts and to identify opportunities for intraregional activities.

19.27 In the cross-cutting area of statistics, ESCWA has taken the lead in establishing partnerships with regional and national statistical organizations, and has pursued coordinated efforts towards improved statistical information. Its work in this area contributes to strengthening the capacity of member States to produce and disseminate quality statistics for evidence-based policies and achieve inclusive and sustainable development, regional integration and good governance.

19.28 The outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) asserted the need for comparable, reliable statistics on sustainable development. Member States and the relevant bodies of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates, have supported the regional commissions in collecting and compiling official statistics. Member States have also committed to mobilizing financial resources and building their capacity to produce statistical data related to the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals.

19.29 As a leader of the Statistics Coordination Taskforce of the Regional Coordination Mechanism, ESCWA will promote coordination of statistical activities among national statistical offices and international organizations active in the region. ESCWA has put in place an internal coordination mechanism to harmonize statistical information used in its publications and studies.

19.30 Gender and women's issues cut across all the subprogrammes of ESCWA. Promoting gender equality and the rights of women is a core element in meeting development objectives. It requires a systematic and comprehensive focus on the different needs of men and women, their power relations and

equal access to resources throughout all processes. ESCWA tackles the various dimensions of gender equality and women's empowerment at two levels.

19.31 First, ESCWA will assist member States in eliminating gender inequality in all policies, strategies, legislations and programmes. Through the provision of technical and advisory services, ESCWA will support national and regional efforts to overcome all forms of discrimination against women, to achieve the advancement of women, and to secure their equal access to resources and participation in decision-making.

19.32 Second, ESCWA is committed to mainstreaming a gender perspective in its entire programme of work. Among United Nations entities, ESCWA will continue to lead the implementation of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan (SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, which was endorsed by the Chief Executives Board for Coordination in October 2006.

19.33 In addition to its analytical and normative work, ESCWA will provide technical cooperation support in line with the articulated needs of its member States. It will act as a facilitator for the exchange of knowledge and information by providing a forum for networking and multilateral dialogue on regional and global development issues. Lessons derived from evaluation exercises will be consolidated to improve the design and performance of programmes, in view of the commitment of the United Nations to encourage and support evaluation practices to enhance learning and accountability.

19.34 It is anticipated that the consultations which have taken place among the thematic clusters of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs will contribute to enhanced coordination and increased collaboration in major common work areas of the United Nations Secretariat dealing with economic and social development.

19.35 The indicators of achievement used below are intended to measure direct impacts of the work of ESCWA.

SUBPROGRAMME 1

INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Objective: To support the integrated management of natural resources through improved food, water and energy security, enhanced resilience to climate change, and the mainstreaming of sustainable development goals into regional and national policy processes

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
(a) Member States mainstream appropriate sustainable development goals into national multisectoral strategies and action plans for the integrated management of natural resources including tools for measuring, monitoring and reporting <i>Strategic pillar: inclusive development</i> <i>Priority area: sustainable natural resources</i>	(a)(i) Number of multisectoral institutional mechanisms established to follow up on sustainable development goals (ii) Number of harmonized methodologies for measuring sustainable development targets and indicators adopted at the sector level in member States (iii) Number of strategies, plans and policies adopted by line ministries to support the integrated management of natural resources

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
(b) Member States adopt common platforms and resolutions on regional cooperation on shared water resources, energy networks and environmental sustainability to improve food, water and energy security	(b)(i) Number of regional or subregional platforms developed to improve cooperation on food, water and energy (ii) Number of intergovernmental resolutions and recommendations adopted to enhance regional cooperation on environmental sustainability (iii) Number of harmonized tools, techniques and guidelines implemented by member States for food, water and energy security
<i>Strategic pillar: regional integration</i> <i>Priority area: agreements and strategies</i>	
(c) Member States develop coordinated policies, strategies and frameworks for climate change mitigation and adaptation and for disaster risk reduction to enhance resilience and respond to the impact of natural and human-induced disasters	(c)(i) Number of recommendations, resolutions and decrees adopted by member States to coordinate responses to climate change and measures for climate change adaptation and mitigation and disaster risk reduction
<i>Strategic pillar: good governance and resilience</i> <i>Priority area: resilience to crises and occupation</i>	

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19.36 The responsibility for implementing subprogramme 1 is vested in the Sustainable Development and Productivity Division. The interrelated and complex challenges facing the region and the current social and political tensions have a wide-range of consequences that provide an opportunity for concerted efforts to strengthen the interlinkages between the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development and to galvanize action at the national and regional levels. Regional challenges include increasing population pressure and the related rise in demand for food, water and energy services; unsustainable production and consumption patterns; the need to ensure water, energy and food security; the disparity between urban and rural development; low agricultural productivity; inefficient energy use in key productive and consuming sectors due to ineffective tax and subsidy mechanisms; as well as climate change and its impact on water resources, desertification and land management.

19.37 To enhance the impact of the work of ESCWA and improve its services to the countries of the region, the implementation of subprogramme 1 will contribute to the achievement of inclusive development, regional integration, and good governance and resilience. ESCWA will support member States to address the above-mentioned challenges and move towards a more sustainable development path by doing the following: implement and follow up on the outcomes of major United Nations summits on sustainable development, including the outcome of the 2012 Rio+20 Conference which initiated an intergovernmental process to formulate a set of sustainable development goals and the outcome of the 2010 High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals which requested the Secretary-General to initiate the formulation of a post-2015 development agenda; strengthen the capacity of member States to formulate, develop, and implement policies, strategies and action plans for the sustainable management of water, energy and land; advocate the integration of policies on water, energy and food to foster synergies and increase efficiency; facilitate regional cooperation and coordination on water, energy and land resources for greater food, water and energy security; and assist them to develop mechanisms for coordinated responses to climate change and other natural crises.

19.38 To support the efforts of member States to meet the challenges mentioned above, ESCWA will do the following:

(a) Advocate and raise awareness of global and regional commitments, particularly the sustainable development goals, the “Sustainable Energy for All” initiative of the Secretary-General, the Sustainable Development Strategic Framework for the Arab Region (which updates the Sustainable Development Initiative for the Arab Region), Arab strategies and action plans for the integrated management of water resources and energy, climate change mitigation and disaster risk reduction;

(b) Serve as a forum for promoting multisectoral policy dialogue on sustainable development issues and priorities such as the management of shared water resources, water supply and sanitation, green value chains, rural livelihoods, sustainable energy, agricultural production and consumption, and the energy mix for forging regional positions and perspectives based on the exchange of information, lessons learned and best practice;

(c) Support member States in their efforts to improve the efficient use of water, energy and land resources by analysing performance in these sectors, providing policy recommendations, promoting the application of appropriate green technologies, and encouraging the integrated management of water, energy and land to achieve sustainable development;

(d) Facilitate regional cooperation and coordination on water, energy and land as the means to enhance food, water and energy security and alleviate poverty in rural areas, and build national and regional capacity on these issues;

(e) Support the development of national or regional mechanisms, networks or help desks for the integration of the different pillars of sustainable development including shared water resources, oil and gas, and so on;

(f) Foster regional approaches on climate change adaptation and mitigation by supporting member States in the development of national and regional mechanisms to deal with climate change impacts, examine climate change impact assessments, vulnerability assessments, and associated socioeconomic and environmental issues related to the water sector to inform their policymaking processes; undertake policy-oriented research on climate change mitigation including energy efficiency and renewable energy; and support member States in their negotiations.

19.39 This will be achieved through servicing intergovernmental bodies such as the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDARE) and committees such as the ESCWA Committee on Water Resources and Committee on Energy; conducting high quality policy-oriented research and analytical work on the science-policy interface as it relates to natural resources management; organizing high-level and expert group meetings; providing advisory services; implementing field projects, including extrabudgetary and United Nations Development Account projects; building capacities through workshops and other technical assistance activities; supporting dedicated knowledge platforms for water and energy professionals such as the Arab Integrated Water Resources Management Network (AWARENET); and issuing technical materials to raise awareness and enhance capacity to take regional or global action to address sustainable development issues and challenges.

19.40 Work under the subprogramme will strive to maximize synergies through collaboration with United Nations agencies, regional commissions and organizations, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and through participation in the United Nations interagency coordination mechanisms on water resources and energy (UN-Water and UN-Energy), United Nations High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Regional Coordination Mechanism. ESCWA will continue to cooperate with the League of Arab States and its associated bodies,

particularly the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE), the Arab Ministerial Water Council (AMWC) and the Arab Ministerial Council for Electricity (AMCE) and their associated technical and advisory committees, in addition to other regional platforms for coordination on sustainable development. ESCWA will also seek to enhance its strategic collaboration with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), German Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ), the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) and other donors and partners to further regional integration and cooperation and to advance sustainable development in the region.

SUBPROGRAMME 2

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Objective: To enhance the capacity of member States to adopt and implement rights-based social policies to promote social justice and equitable, inclusive and participatory socioeconomic development

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
(a) Member States develop rights-based social policies and programmes that promote social cohesion, social inclusion, social protection and the provision of adequate social services for all	(a)(i) Number of policies, programmes and measures formulated or enhanced to improve social protection or expand the provision of social services (ii) Number of policies, programmes and measures formulated or enhanced to ensure the social integration of vulnerable groups
<i>Strategic pillar: inclusive development</i> <i>Priority area: social justice</i>	
(b) Member States are engaged in a regional consensus-building process on international migration towards the elaboration and implementation of policies that maximize the development impact of international migration and foster intraregional coordination and cooperation	(b)(i) Number of instances where ESCWA facilitated or promoted policy dialogue on international migration between Governments of member States (ii) Number of policies that reflect awareness of the regional development opportunities and challenges of international migration
<i>Strategic pillar: regional integration</i> <i>Priority area: policy coherence</i>	
(c) Member States adopt a participatory approach to social policy formulation and implementation through consensus building, the empowerment of civil society and the engagement of civic groups and other stakeholders in advocating the values and tools necessary to achieving a just society	(c)(i) Number of instances in which representatives of governments, civil society organizations and other stakeholders engage in substantive policy dialogue with the support of ESCWA (ii) Number of governmental and non-governmental institutions making use of the knowledge and tools generated by ESCWA on participatory development and civic engagement, in their development initiatives
<i>Strategic pillar: good governance and resilience</i> <i>Priority area: participation and citizenship</i>	

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19.41 The responsibility for implementing subprogramme 2 lies with the Social Development Division. During the biennium 2016-2017, ESCWA will build on the experience gained during the previous biennia

and continue to advocate the principles of social justice as a guiding framework for public policymaking. Specific attention will be paid to the following: promoting and implementing policies that foster social inclusion and social protection and address the social dimensions of poverty; mainstreaming key population and human development themes in public policymaking processes, including youth development and international migration; upholding participatory development and civic engagement; and addressing the social dimension of the post-2015 United Nations development agenda.

19.42 The adoption of an equitable, inclusive and consensus-based development policy is central to the achievement of social justice. In the ESCWA region, however, the approach to development and social justice, characteristic of the prevailing social contract, has given priority to economic growth at the expense of equity, social inclusion and the rights of citizens on the assumption that social development will follow. In the process, social policy has been reduced to a tool used to cushion the impact of structural adjustments on vulnerable groups and has been geared towards assistance rather than development. Certain social groups such as persons with disabilities, informal workers and the poor often lack adequate protection and are highly vulnerable to illness and destitution. At the same time, the nexus between population and human development continues to be poorly addressed, including the challenges and opportunities presented by age-structural changes and international migration. In many ESCWA member States, the concerns of youth and older persons are not sufficiently integrated into development plans and processes. Similarly, intraregional cooperation and consensus-building on the potentials and challenges of international migration need to be enhanced.

19.43 These deficiencies are compounded by the absence or weakness of participatory frameworks for the involvement of civil society organizations in the decision-making process, which prevents both governments and citizen groups from making qualitatively informed decisions. As a result, despite progress on a number of human development indicators in ESCWA member States in recent decades, inequality, vulnerability and social exclusion have increased and economic growth has not led to social justice. The unprecedented popular movements that have shake a number of Arab countries since late 2010 attested to the fact that a growth-first model at the expense of social and governance reforms does not necessarily trickle down to equitable social development dividends for all nor reduce poverty.

19.44 The aforementioned deficits can be best addressed by designing policies and programmes which promote social inclusion, equity and equal access to social services, protection and opportunities, and uphold citizenship rights, particularly for those who are marginalized or vulnerable. The adoption of such policies requires political commitment, regional dialogue, sharing experience and building institutional and human capacity. It also requires a participatory development framework that promotes consensus-building and seeks to forge partnerships between the State and non-state actors to ensure that all people benefit equally from and contribute to development and that the demands of the people for change and social justice are met.

19.45 To achieve the expected accomplishments outlined above, ESCWA will undertake normative analyses and formulate policy recommendations, conduct meetings and implement technical cooperation activities. The latter includes advisory services, capacity-building workshops and field projects on select social development issues, namely social inclusion, social protection as development, population and human development, youth development, international migration, participatory development and civic engagement, as part of the broader question of social justice. Under the subprogramme, ESCWA will continue to monitor the implementation of the internationally agreed-upon goals and plans of actions, and contribute to the regional analysis and monitoring of the inclusive social development pillar of the post-2015 United Nations development agenda. Moreover, ESCWA will continue to act as a regional platform for the exchange of experiences, good practices and lessons learned in the above-mentioned areas, and for increased interaction between the Arab region and other regions. Partnerships will be further strengthened with other regional commissions, United Nations entities, regional and international organizations and civil society organizations.

SUBPROGRAMME 3

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION

Objective: To achieve a decent standard of living for all people in Western Asia, through sustained growth and human security within a more integrated region

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
<p>(a) Member States reform economic institutions and develop and implement policies based on principles of good governance in order to enable economic planning and policymaking in support of inclusive and sustainable development</p> <p><i>Strategic pillar: good governance and resilience</i> <i>Priority area: institutional development</i></p>	<p>(a)(i) Number of member States that commit to or pass regulatory reforms or legislation related to the improvement of governance in economic institutions</p> <p>(ii) Number of policies related to good economic governance adopted by member States with the assistance of ESCWA</p> <p>(iii) Number of member States that improve their rating on established national and/or international indicators for good economic governance, such as business environment scorecards, open budget survey, the World Bank ease of doing business index or others</p> <p>(iv) Number of member States that use the models advocated by ESCWA to prepare national development strategies for evidence-based policy dialogue</p>
<p>(b) Member States design and implement pro-poor, rights- and evidence-based economic plans and policies towards eradicating poverty</p> <p><i>Strategic pillar: inclusive development</i> <i>Priority area: social justice</i></p>	<p>(b)(i) Number of member States that adopt plans and policies that promote new methods of monitoring poverty</p> <p>(ii) Number of pro-poor, rights- and evidence-based plans designed and implemented</p>
<p>(c) National policymaking institutions develop evidence-based tools to create decent, value-added, and competitive jobs for men and women</p> <p><i>Strategic pillar: inclusive development</i> <i>Priority area: knowledge economy and employment</i></p>	<p>(c)(i) Number of member States that design and incorporate an employment agenda into their national development planning mechanisms</p> <p>(ii) Number of member States requesting and receiving ESCWA support in developing knowledge-based economic strategies and policies to reduce unemployment</p>
<p>(d) Member States and regional institutions develop policies and implementation mechanisms towards economic policy convergence</p> <p><i>Strategic pillar: regional integration</i> <i>Priority area: policy coherence</i></p>	<p>(d)(i) Number of member States that set up a mechanism for the coordination of their monetary policies</p> <p>(ii) Number of member States that set up a mechanism for the coordination of their fiscal policies</p>

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
(e) Member States and regional institutions develop plans for cross-border infrastructure especially in transport and trade facilitation <i>Strategic pillar: regional integration</i> <i>Priority area: agreements and strategies</i>	(e)(i) Number of member States that improve their major logistic performance indicators (ii) Number of member States that adopt plans containing new measures articulated in the Trade Facilitation Agreement of the World Trade Organization (iii) Number of member States that adopt the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq (ITSAM) agreements and create national committees for transport and trade facilitation

STRATEGY

19.46 The responsibility for implementing subprogramme 3 lies with the Economic Development and Globalization Division. The following provide the legislative mandates for the subprogramme: the 2013 report of the Secretary-General on global economic governance and development, the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017), the follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development, the Monterrey Consensus, the Doha Declaration on Financing for Development, the Doha Development Agenda, the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq (ITSAM), and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and ESCWA.

19.47 During the biennium 2016-2017, ESCWA will promote equitable growth and sustainability, regional integration and economic governance by supporting member States in the following efforts: reforming economic institutions and developing and implementing policies based on principles of good governance; designing and implementing pro-poor, rights- and evidence-based economic plans and policies towards poverty eradication; creating and improving access to decent, value-added, and competitive jobs for men and women; fostering policies and implementation mechanisms towards economic policy convergence; and enhancing regional integration via different mechanisms such as transport, trade and finance.

19.48 The main directives of the subprogramme in the period 2016-2017 are the needs and demands of the populations of the region as well as the ongoing economic and political transitions taking place in some member States. The primary concerns of the Arab region are the promotion of decent employment opportunities in an equitable knowledge economy that is based on principles of good governance and poverty eradication.

19.49 Moreover, evidence-based planning in a context of regional integration is highly needed to enhance economic development in the region. In this context, efforts include following up on the implementation of intraregional as well as international agreements on trade and transport, and establishing well-coordinated fiscal, investment and monetary policies, taking into account the consequences of the regional political transitions and global economic and financial crises.

19.50 To achieve these expected accomplishments, different types of activities will be carried out as follows: development and use of economic analysis and forecasting tools such as macroeconomic models that enable sound policy recommendations; research leading to ESCWA flagship publications; and provision of technical assistance and capacity-building to member States based on their individual needs

19.51 Work under the subprogramme will be carried out in close coordination with relevant stakeholders in member States, particularly Governments, development partners, including international financial institutions, civil society organizations and private sector. Existing and new partnerships with other regional

commissions, United Nations agencies, the League of Arab States, academic institutions, regional and international organizations will be strengthened.

SUBPROGRAMME 4

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION

Objective: To promote the building of information societies and knowledge economies in ESCWA member States, leveraging technology and innovation in accordance with the development requirements in the region and the internationally agreed development goals

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
<p>(a) Member States develop or update strategies and policies that leverage human resources, innovation and modern technology towards knowledge-based economy and information society as the new paradigm for employment and sustainable economic growth</p> <p><i>Strategic pillar: inclusive development</i> <i>Priority area: knowledge economy and employment</i></p>	<p>(a)(i) Number of public institutions adopting strategies, road maps, and/or solutions to foster innovation and enhancing economic growth</p> <p>(ii) Number of member States that developed or updated strategies and policies leveraging information and communication technology (ICT) and innovation to enhance the impact on social and economic development</p>
<p>(b) Member States coordinate implementation of harmonized policies and legal and regulatory frameworks in science, technology, innovation (STI) and ICT, to foster the development of regional platforms and services</p> <p><i>Strategic pillar: regional integration</i> <i>Priority area: policy coherence</i></p>	<p>(b)(i) Number of member States implementing harmonized policies and legal and regulatory frameworks in STI and ICT</p> <p>(ii) Number of regional STI and ICT initiatives that aim to build a knowledge society and encourage complementary partnerships for economic development in the Arab region</p>
<p>(c) Public institutions deploy ICT policies and e-government services based on good governance principles with focus on open government in general and e-participation in particular</p> <p><i>Strategic pillar: good governance and resilience</i> <i>Priority area: institutional development</i></p>	<p>(c)(i) Number of initiatives focusing on trends in e-government, such as open government and e-participation</p> <p>(ii) Number of public institutions deploying open government and e-government services</p>

STRATEGY

19.52 The responsibility for implementing subprogramme 4 lies with the Information and Communication Technology Division. Technology and knowledge play a major role in the move towards a productive knowledge society. Recent technological advancements have modified the principles of economic growth and affected all economic sectors. The capacity of member States to adapt and contribute to ever-accelerating changes in technology and knowledge varies significantly. With the continued monitoring and implementation of activities pertaining to various sustainable development initiatives such as the outcomes of Rio+20 Conference, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) and WSIS+10, the ESCWA Regional Plan of Action for Building the Information Society and the Arab Information and

Communications Technology Strategy of the League of Arab States, work under the subprogramme will help and guide member States in their transitions towards an information society and a knowledge economy.

19.53 To meet the development needs of member States, ESCWA will produce analytical studies and policy recommendations, convene meetings, provide advisory services and implement development projects in partnership with national and regional stakeholders. The implementation of the subprogramme will enhance regional collaboration and foster partnerships aimed at harnessing research and development in technology, with an emphasis on information and communication technology for socioeconomic development. The activities under this subprogramme will serve as catalysts for change in national and regional policymaking and will help member States devise results-driven strategies. They will promote the adoption of comprehensive sets of measurements and indicators that will facilitate strategic decision-making and identify priority areas of policy formulation. ESCWA will rely on feedback from member States and on regional and global benchmarking exercises to assess and revise plans of action, monitor progress and evaluate the impact of technology on national and regional economies. To help the countries of the region take advantage of the opportunities presented by advancements in technology and knowledge, field projects undertaken under this subprogramme will incorporate a social dimension, seek the active involvement of local communities, pay special attention to the employment needs of young people and advocate the empowerment of women.

19.54 More specifically, ESCWA will leverage technology to smooth the transition of the countries of the region towards knowledge economies and information society. It will focus on enhancing the competitiveness of technological sectors, creating enabling environments, promoting the development of innovative e-services and advocating the adoption and implementation of new trends in e-government with a special emphasis on open government initiatives. The ESCWA Technology Centre will assist production sectors, universities and research centres in member States to acquire the tools and capabilities to adapt and develop suitable technologies that are critical to solving sustainability challenges. To make ICT accessible to all population segments of the region, ESCWA will encourage member States to enhance ICT infrastructure, implement a regional telecommunications backbone and reduce the cost of access to broadband and mobile services.

SUBPROGRAMME 5

STATISTICS FOR EVIDENCE-BASED POLICYMAKING

Objective: To strengthen regional and national statistical systems in order to produce and disseminate quality statistics for evidence-based policies for inclusive and sustainable development, regional integration and good governance

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
<p>(a) National statistical offices implement methodologies in line with good practices and international standards and recommendations</p> <p><i>Strategic pillar: good governance and resilience</i></p>	<p>(a)(i) Number of member States that adopted, with the assistance of ESCWA, new or revised international statistical standards, including the System of National Accounts and foundational socioeconomic classifications</p> <p>(ii) Number of assistance/capacity-building activities related to implementing international standards and recommendations provided by ESCWA upon the request of member States</p>

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
(b) Stakeholders make greater use of quality statistics and methodological studies prepared and published by ESCWA	(b)(i) Number of queries to ESCWA online statistical databases
<i>Strategic pillar: inclusive development</i>	(ii) Number of citations and references to ESCWA statistical databases and publications
(c) Regional and national statistical institutions adopt agreements and guidelines for harmonization and comparability of official statistics	(c)(i) Number of strategies adopted for the harmonization of statistics in the region reached through joint work by national statistical offices and ESCWA
<i>Strategic pillar: regional integration</i>	(ii) Number of statistical activities organized by ESCWA to which regional and international parties contribute financially and in substance (more than 30 per cent)
	(iii) Number of agreements and guidelines developed under the auspices of ESCWA and adopted by the Statistical Committee of ESCWA or another statistical authority in the region

STRATEGY

19.55 The responsibility for implementing subprogramme 5 lies with the Statistics Division. There is a continued need to improve quality, relevance, availability and comparability of statistics in the region. Those improvements must be made primarily within the national statistical systems of member States. In addition, ESCWA also aims to improve the quality of data released within its analytical and methodological studies, and avoid data discrepancies in its publications and studies.

19.56 Institutional development for official statistics will remain the first priority for ESCWA with an ultimate goal of enabling member States to produce quality statistics that will satisfy the requirements of international standards and recommendations. This will include technical capacity development, building skills needed for statistical surveys and censuses as well as exchange of knowledge and good practices between member States. These efforts will concentrate primarily on the following areas: national accounts; short-term economic statistics; the 2020 round of population and housing censuses; living conditions, income and poverty; civil registration and vital statistics; environment and energy statistics; statistics on science and technology; as well as gender statistics and mainstreaming a gender perspective in all areas of statistics. ESCWA will react to emerging issues of official statistics, and will adjust the priorities based on the analysis of gaps and discrepancies of data released by member States. ESCWA will also work with partners in the region and at the global level including the League of Arab States, the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics, the United Nations Statistics Division, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and others to ensure that assistance to member States is fully adapted to their needs.

19.57 ESCWA will support member States in improving their institutional setup and legal framework for official statistics in line with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. To this end and in cooperation with experts from other international organizations, ESCWA will assist member States in assessing national statistical systems with a view to defining strategies for the development of statistics.

19.58 The second priority is the provision of data and analytical services to stakeholders in member States, in partner organizations and within ESCWA itself to produce and disseminated quality statistics and studies in an accessible format. User-needs surveys and satisfaction surveys will be conducted periodically to assess the impact of data disseminated by ESCWA, and adjust the data collection and dissemination programme

accordingly. Work under the subprogramme will focus on the collection of national statistical data released by member States, which will be complemented by ESCWA estimates and/or data available from other international organizations to fill any gaps. Databases maintained by other organizations will also be used in cases where such data are of a quality accepted by ESCWA member States, and where direct data collection by ESCWA would unnecessarily increase the reporting burden on national statistical offices.

19.59 The Statistics Division is primarily responsible for the quality of data collected and released by ESCWA, while other divisions at ESCWA continue to collect specific statistical data needed for analysis and studies. To ensure consistency of these data, the Statistics Division will work closely with client divisions on identifying the most appropriate sources and data collection methods, as well as the most appropriate presentation and interpretation of data. Annual data collection plans will be used to coordinate data requests emanating from all divisions of ESCWA.

19.60 The third priority of the subprogramme is the regional coordination and harmonization of subject-matter indicators. In cooperation with regional and national statistical institutions, ESCWA will work towards formulating consensus-based agreements and guidelines for the harmonization and comparability of official statistics. Under the auspices of the Statistical Committee of ESCWA, this work will be delegated to advisory groups established in specified priority areas with the aim of delivering tangible outputs, such as methodological and technical guidelines. Once the advisory groups reach a consensus, ESCWA will work with national statistical systems of member States to implement the new methodologies and guidelines, and achieve their full impact.

19.61 To enhance coherence across international statistical agencies, ESCWA will take active part in cooperation and coordination initiatives of the regional and global statistical systems. Every effort will be made to ensure that the reporting burden on member States is minimized and data are shared between international organizations to the maximum extent possible, while paying due respect to data originating from member States.

19.62 In order to accomplish the strategy of the subprogramme, ESCWA will act as a centre of excellence and a forum for exchange of views on statistical issues for member States; will provide training at the national, subregional and regional levels; will work on data quality assurance, estimation techniques and the implementation of international classifications and recommendations in close and/or direct cooperation and coordination with professional staff in national statistical offices; will respond to requests for technical assistance coming from member States; will assist in the exchange of expertise between member States; and will build trust with counterparts in member States and regional and international organizations.

SUBPROGRAMME 6

ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Objective: To reduce gender imbalances, encourage exchange of lessons learned between member States and contribute to increased respect of the rights of women in line with international conventions and conferences

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
(a) Member States design and implement inclusive gender-sensitive strategies and plans towards the elimination of discrimination against women and violations of their economic and social rights	(a)(i) Number of inclusive gender-sensitive strategies designed with the assistance of ESCWA (ii) Number of inclusive gender-sensitive action plans implemented with the assistance of ESCWA
<i>Strategic pillar: inclusive development</i>	
<i>Priority area: social justice</i>	

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
(b) Member States collaborate on the development and implementation of regional frameworks that are in line with international conventions and conferences relevant to the rights of women and gender equality <i>Strategic pillar: regional integration</i> <i>Priority area: policy coherence</i>	(b)(i) Number of subregional or regional frameworks that are in line with international conventions, conferences and agreements (ii) Number of regional networks established with the assistance of ESCWA for collaboration and cooperation on women's issues
(c) Member States establish institutional mechanisms that ensure the effective participation of women in decision-making processes <i>Strategic pillar: good governance and resilience</i> <i>Priority area: participation and citizenship</i>	(c)(i) Number of established mechanisms, including yearly campaigns to increase women's access to decision-making processes (ii) Number of committees that include civil society organizations and national machineries for the advancement of women established with the assistance of ESCWA to collaborate on drafting national reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

STRATEGY

19.63 The responsibility for implementing subprogramme 6 lies with the ESCWA Centre for Women. The progress of member States towards the advancement of women notwithstanding, the economic and political participation of women in the Arab region and their representation at decision-making levels continue to be lower compared to other regions. Moreover, current popular movements represent a risk, as they may result in the reversal of progress that has been made towards ensuring the rights of women. Therefore, there is a need to increase the number of women in decision-making positions, especially in post-conflict and transitional processes. Furthermore, greater synergies and coordination are needed at the regional level to develop frameworks to promote gender equality and empower women.

19.64 Building on the experience gained in past bienniums, work under the subprogramme will consist of enhancing collaboration between member States to respond to priority areas and requirements stipulated in relevant international conventions, conferences, resolutions and declarations, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), through the development of regional and subregional frameworks, including strategies, platforms, appeals, action plans, declarations and agreements. These regional frameworks would cover various issues and practices related to women and gender relations, such as trafficking in women and girls, female labour migration, peace and security, and the rights of female refugees. The regional frameworks will be developed following evidence-based research, knowledge formation and sharing, capacity-building, advocacy and networking, evaluation of proposed and existing legislation, needs assessments, policy briefs and situation analyses. In that context, ESCWA will act as a regional forum for joint governmental and non-governmental discussions on gender issues and will lead the process of formulating regional frameworks.

19.65 Work under the subprogramme will also focus on supporting member States and other stakeholders, in ensuring the rights of women and eschewing gender discrimination at all socioeconomic levels, through the design, development and implementation of relevant national strategies, policies and plans. Special attention will be placed on building the capacity of member States to address discrimination in the private sphere, namely in terms of personal status (including custody, inheritance, marriage age and so on), in the economic sector (specifically in access to financial resources, equal employment opportunities and job

discrimination), and in the social domain (including violence against women and girls, child marriage, negative depictions of women and gender roles in the media and popular culture and so on). This will be undertaken through normative work and technical and advisory services.

19.66 Work will also focus on ensuring that women are represented in governance structures and decision-making processes, especially during times of conflict and occupation. This includes ensuring the participation and representation of women in executive, legislative, parliamentary and judicial bodies; as well as official missions, negotiation teams and representative bodies in both the private and public sectors. This shall be undertaken through normative work and technical and advisory services covering relevant issues, such as women and elections, the role of political parties (or unions) in the political participation of women, and women in peacebuilding and post-conflict negotiation.

19.67 ESCWA will continue fostering relationships between Government bodies dealing with the empowerment and advancement of women and civil society organizations by holding meetings to analyse and discuss the situation of women at the regional level. Work will continue closely with other United Nations entities and regional organizations, including the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Development Programme Subregional Resource Facility for Arab States, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the International Labour Organization, the League of Arab States, the Arab Women Organization and the Center of Arab Women Training and Research, in order to consolidate and enhance the impact of development support in the area of the advancement of women in the region.

SUBPROGRAMME 7

CONFLICT MITIGATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Objective: To mitigate the impact of crises, including conflict and occupation, on development in the ESCWA region through strengthening resilience and governance

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
(a) Public institutions develop governance strategies and policies to efficiently perform government functions in addressing emerging needs	(a)(i) Number of member States seeking and receiving substantive and technical assistance based on ESCWA outputs
<i>Strategic pillar: good governance and resilience</i> <i>Priority area: institutional development</i>	(ii) Percentage of civil servants participating in forums organized by ESCWA that report having benefited from its outputs on mainstreaming good governance practices or that report that those outputs led to internal dialogue
(b) Member States engage in policy dialogue to form and implement nationally led and owned strategies that respond to political transformation challenges	(b)(i) Percentage of civil servants participating in forums organized by ESCWA that report having benefited from its outputs on political transformation or that report that those outputs led to internal dialogue
<i>Strategic pillar: good governance and resilience</i> <i>Priority area: participation and citizenship</i>	(ii) Number of member States initiating follow-up activities as a consequence of ESCWA outputs on political transformation

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
(c) Member States develop strategies for the mitigation of the negative impact of occupation, the ramifications of conflict, as well as their spillover effects on human development in the region	(c)(i) Percentage of member States participating in activities organized by ESCWA that report having benefited from its outputs on conflict prevention and mitigation (ii) Number of member States seeking and receiving substantive and technical assistance based on ESCWA outputs
<i>Strategic pillar: good governance and resilience</i> <i>Priority area: resilience to crises and occupation</i>	

STRATEGY

19.68 The responsibility for implementing subprogramme 7 lies with the Division for Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues. The development process in the Arab region has been characterized by limited, poor-quality indicators of governance and socioeconomic development, particularly in conflict-afflicted countries. This has been further exacerbated by limited citizen participation in policymaking or decision-making. The political transformations witnessed in some Arab countries since late 2010, however, have indicated a public demand for better governance practices, including transparency, accountability and participation. ESCWA is increasingly expected to play a role in enhancing the capacity of member States to implement democratic governance, participatory approaches to development and resilience to the adverse ramifications of conflict and occupation.

19.69 ESCWA will assist member States in enhancing their capacity to mitigate the negative impact of conflict, political polarization and limited participation, through the formulation of policies and programmes aimed at strengthening public institutions. Initiatives aim to overcome the adverse effects of conflict and governance deficits, and address the array of challenges and emerging issues associated with political transformations.

19.70 To achieve its expected accomplishments under the governance and resilience strategic pillar, the implementation of the subprogramme will focus on three main areas, namely the development of good governance strategies and policies to enhance the efficiency of public institutions to perform government functions in the light of emerging needs; the participation of member States in policy dialogue to form and implement nationally led and owned strategies that respond to political transformation challenges; and the development of strategies for the mitigation of conflict and the reduction of the impact of occupation and its spillover effects on human development.

19.71 The promotion of good governance practices is an important component of the strategy of the subprogramme to support the institutional development of member States. This will be achieved through identifying gaps and developmental priorities as well as enhancing implementation mechanisms across different tiers of government. These interventions aim to enhance the overall efficiency of the public sector to perform basic government functions in the light of emerging needs and potential crises. Based on consultations, expert group meetings, advisory services and staff missions ESCWA will formulate research, policy recommendations and capacity-building programmes for national civil servants and other concerned stakeholders. This will include issuing a biennial monitoring mechanism that will identify progress on governance in member States. The long term effectiveness of that effort will depend on strengthening data sources and analysis by building the capacity of concerned national partners, particularly within the civil service and civil society.

19.72 To support member States in meeting the challenges of political transformation, ESCWA will foster policy dialogues with concerned public institutions and experts to define strategies that are nationally led and owned and encourage participation and citizenship. Through meetings, advisory services, staff missions and

research, ESCWA will promote institutional development strategies aiming to strengthen consensus-building mechanisms, including national dialogues and citizenship-based practices. Furthermore, ESCWA will share lessons learned and good practices from countries that have witnessed similar political transformations, focusing on national dialogue and reconciliation mechanisms, including transitional justice, political participation, in addition to other priority issues relevant to transition processes.

19.73 Moreover, through in-depth research into the root causes of conflict, its negative consequences on human development and its regional spillover effects, ESCWA will identify and analyse crisis-related trends and potential crisis-mitigation measures. It will also publish the annual analysis of the socioeconomic impact of the Israeli occupation of Palestine to enhance awareness of its negative repercussions, supported by studies, field assessments and analyses of trends. The normative work of ESCWA and consultations with national stakeholders will also support the formulation of resilience strategies that aim to mitigate the impact of conflict, occupation or political polarization on human development, particularly in the Arab least developed countries.
