



**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COUNCIL**

Distr.
LIMITED
E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/L.1
6 November 2013
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Technical Committee
Eighth meeting
Amman, 10-12 December 2013

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

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ANNOTATIONS

1. Opening of the meeting

The opening session of the eighth meeting of the Technical Committee will convene at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 10 December 2013 at Landmark Hotel in Amman.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Pursuant to rule 8 of the Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, which apply to subsidiary bodies, at the beginning of each session, once the Chair has assumed duties in accordance with rule 12, the Commission shall adopt the agenda for that session on the basis of the provisional agenda. The provisional agenda and annotations for this meeting will be presented to the Technical Committee in document E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/L.1. The secretariat has prepared the provisional agenda in coordination with the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Economy, the body responsible for coordination with ESCWA, given that the United Arab Emirates, in its capacity as Chair of the twenty-seventh session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) which was held in Beirut from 17 to 20 May 2012, is currently chairing the Technical Committee pursuant to the terms of reference of the Technical Committee which stipulate that the member State chairing the Technical Committee shall be the same as the one chairing the Commission session.

Also, the proposed organization of work will be presented to the Technical Committee in document E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/L.2. The Committee shall adopt the agenda and the organization of work as submitted or in amended forms.

3. Progress achieved in the work of the secretariat (E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/3)

The secretariat will present the following documents to the Technical Committee:

(a) Implementation of resolutions adopted by ESCWA at its twenty-seventh session (E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/3(Part I))

This document presents the action taken by the secretariat and member States in implementing the resolutions adopted by ESCWA at its twenty-seventh session. The document also presents the outcomes of the sessions held by the various ESCWA subsidiary committees.

Representatives of member States are invited to take note of the progress traced in this document and offer suggestions in that regard;

(b) Implementation of recommendations made by the Technical Committee at its seventh meeting (E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/3(Part II))

This document presents an overview of the actions and activities undertaken by the secretariat and member States pursuant to the recommendations of the Technical Committee at its seventh meeting (Amman, 18-19 March 2013).

Representatives of member States are invited to take note of the progress traced in this document and offer suggestions in that regard.

4. Proposed ESCWA strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017 (E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/4)

The proposed ESCWA strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017 presents the overall orientation for programme 19 on economic and social development in Western Asia of the United

Nations strategic framework which takes into consideration emerging regional and global priorities. It also presents the objective, strategy, expected achievements and indicators of achievement of each of the seven subprogrammes under programme 19. In preparing the proposed strategic framework, the secretariat has taken into account emerging challenges at the regional and global levels and suggestions offered by member States concerning the way to address them.

Representatives of member States are invited to review and approve the proposed strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017 with a view to submitting it to the twenty-eighth ESCWA ministerial session which will be held in May 2014 for adoption.

5. Review of the activities of the technical cooperation network (E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/5)

This document presents the activities of the technical cooperation network implemented by ESCWA in the biennium 2012-2013 in the framework of the three interconnected financing mechanisms, namely the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation, the United Nations Development Account and extrabudgetary resources.

Representatives of member States are invited to take note of those activities and offer opinions on the way to enhance the effectiveness of the network and harmonize its activities with those of the Technical Committee.

6. Regional and global priorities (E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/6)

(a) Sustainable development goals (E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/6(Part I))

The States participating in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) which was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in June 2012, have agreed to initiate an intergovernmental process for the formulation of a set of sustainable development goals that address and incorporate in a balanced way all three dimensions of sustainable development and their interlinkages and that are coherent with and integrated into the United Nations post-2015 development agenda. They also agreed that these goals should be action-oriented, concise and easy to communicate, limited in number, aspirational, global in nature and universally applicable to all countries, while taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. For that purpose, an open working group was formed to prepare a proposal for these goals by September 2014 to be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly. Given that these goals will have a long term impact on the future national and international development and financing programmes, the Arab States must be aware of the proposals and participate effectively in the intergovernmental negotiations taking place in that regard.

In the document presented to the Technical Committee under this item, the secretariat highlights the action taken at the global level with regard to the formulation of the sustainable development goals and the results of relevant efforts undertaken by ESCWA in the region, in addition to expected future actions.

Representatives of member States are invited to review this document and offer comments and suggestions.

(b) Improving statistical data to monitor the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda in the Arab countries (E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/6(Part II))

The formulation of policies related to the implementation and monitoring of the post-2015 development agenda requires a more frequent availability of quality statistical data. The most important statistics needed are those relating to the development aspects of social, environmental

and economic issues. The harmonization of the Arab national statistical systems depends on the improvement of institutional capacity and the revision of the legislative frameworks in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. New cost-effective and quality sources of information must be found in order to produce data more frequently. Such sources include administrative records, the private sector and social networks, in addition to new technologies. In the coming period, the Arab regional statistical system must undertake a crucial role in ensuring the harmonization of statistics in the region taking into consideration national policies and particularities.

Representatives of member States are invited to discuss the challenges faced in strengthening their national statistical infrastructure to support development, and offer suggestions on the work to be undertaken by ESCWA in support of national efforts.

(c) Economic modelling for enhanced policymaking (E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/6(Part III))

The Arab region is facing unprecedented challenges in the political, economic and social spheres. The governments of the region are pressed to reduce social gaps and to accelerate growth while struggling with financial constraints. Under such circumstances, addressing the longer term challenges of a developmental transformation requires different policymaking approaches. A macroeconomic reform is needed. However, the lack of economic modelling capacity in the region limits the potential for such reform. In the document presented to the Technical Committee under this item, the secretariat highlights the efforts aiming at addressing those challenges. It recommends a comprehensive approach that consists of building economic modelling skills, enhancing analysis and forecasting, and developing statistical infrastructure. It also suggests a number of modelling techniques.

Representatives of member States are invited to offer suggestions on the way to improve the support provided by ESCWA in that regard.

7. Establishing a committee on emerging issues and development in conflict settings (E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/7)

In this document, the secretariat highlights the efforts exerted in the process of implementing ESCWA resolution 292 (XXVI) concerning the establishment of an intergovernmental committee on emerging issues and development in conflict-settings. The resolution requests the secretariat to undertake consultations with member States in order to determine the functions and mandates of the proposed committee. The document submitted to the Technical Committee under this item highlights the objectives of the anticipated committee and proposes a set of terms of reference for it and another set of terms of reference for an advisory committee that will be established in parallel to the intergovernmental committee within the Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues Division.

Representatives of member States are invited to review the proposals and provide guidance and suggestions.

8. Revision of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/8)

In ESCWA resolution 302 (XXVII) of 10 May 2012 concerning the requests from Libya, Morocco and Tunisia to become members of the Commission, the secretariat was requested 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 the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia to become the Economic and Social Commission for the Arab Region. Pursuant to that

resolution and to the recommendations of the Technical Committee at its seventh meeting concerning the re-designation of ESCWA and the strengthening of the work of the Technical Committee to enable it to advance the work of the Commission in between the ministerial sessions, the secretariat prepared proposals for the revision of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of ESCWA in light of the 2008 assessment study of the intergovernmental mechanism of ESCWA and its subsidiary bodies and drawing on the experiences of other United Nations regional commissions.

The Technical Committee is invited to examine these proposals and agree on them with a view to submitting them to the ESCWA twenty-eighth session for adoption.

9. Preparations for the ESCWA twenty-eighth session (E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/9)

The secretariat has embarked on the preparation for the ESCWA twenty-eighth session which will be held in the second week of May 2014 at United Nations House in Beirut, if no other member State offered to host it. The document presented to the Technical Committee under this item highlights these preparations and offers suggestions to improve the proceedings of the session and suggests a main theme for the session in the light of emerging regional and global priorities and major development issues. It also presents a proposed agenda for the session.

Representatives of member States are invited to take note of the ongoing preparations and agree on the proposals submitted by the secretariat regarding the agenda and the improvement of the performance of the session.

10. Date and venue of the ninth meeting of the Technical Committee

The Committee will decide the date and venue of its ninth meeting.

11. Other matters

This item shall cover any other matters that the members of the Committee may decide to discuss.

12. Adoption of the recommendations made by the Technical Committee at its eighth meeting

The Committee will consider the draft recommendations made at its eighth meeting for discussion and adoption.
