



**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COUNCIL**

Distr.
LIMITED
E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/10/Report
28 January 2014
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

**REPORT
OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON ITS EIGHTH MEETING
AMMAN, 10-12 DECEMBER 2013**

Summary

The Technical Committee of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its eighth meeting in Amman from 10 to 12 December 2013, bringing together representatives of ESCWA member States.

The meeting agenda included the following items: (a) progress made by the secretariat in the implementation of the resolutions adopted by ESCWA at its twenty-seventh session and of the recommendations made by the Technical Committee at its seventh meeting; the proposed strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017; (b) review of the activities of the technical cooperation network; (c) regional and global priorities with regard to the sustainable development goals, improving statistical data to monitor the implementation of the United Nations post-2015 development agenda in the Arab countries and economic modelling for enhanced policymaking; (d) establishment of an intergovernmental committee on emerging issues and development under crisis; (e) revision of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of ESCWA; and (f) preparations for its twenty-eighth session.

This report includes an overview of the key issues that were raised during the meeting, in addition to the recommendations adopted at its conclusion.

CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	1-4	3
<i>Chapter</i>		
I. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE AT ITS EIGHTH MEETING	5-7	3
A. Recommendations made to member States	6	3
B. Recommendations made to the ESCWA secretariat	7	4
II. TOPICS OF DISCUSSION	8-40	5
A. Implementation of resolutions adopted by ESCWA at its twenty-seventh session	8-13	5
B. Implementation of recommendations made by the Technical Committee at its seventh meeting	14-15	6
C. Proposed ESCWA strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017	16-19	6
D. Review of the activities of the technical cooperation network.....	20-21	7
E. Sustainable Development Goals.....	22-23	8
F. Improving statistical data to monitor the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda in the Arab countries.....	24-25	8
G. Economic modelling for enhanced policymaking	26-28	9
H. Establishing a committee on emerging issues and development under crisis	29-30	9
I. Revision of the Terms of Reference and Rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.....	31-33	9
J. Preparations for the ESCWA twenty-eighth session.....	34-36	10
K. Memorandum of understanding with Saudi Arabia on the implementation of the ESCWA project on the development of performance indicators for government agencies	37-38	10
L. Date and venue of the ninth meeting of the Technical Committee	39	11
M. Other matters	40	11
III. ADOPTION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE AT ITS EIGHTH MEETING	41	11
IV. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	42-49	11
A. Date and venue	42	11
B. Opening	43-45	11
C. Participants	46	12
D. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters	47-48	12
E. Documents.....	49	12
ANNEXES		
I. List of participants		14
II. List of documents		16

Introduction

1. The Technical Committee was established pursuant to the decision of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) at its twenty-fourth session, held in Beirut from 8 to 11 May 2006. It aims to enhance direct communication between the ESCWA secretariat and member States on the economic and social development issues of concern for the region. The Committee convenes periodically to address the latest global and regional developments, follow-up the implementation of the ESCWA programme of work and provide support for its activities.
2. The Committee held its eighth meeting in Amman, from 10 to 12 December 2013. It addressed the items on its agenda, in addition to items that were supposed to be addressed at its ninth meeting. On the first day, participants discussed the implementation of the resolutions adopted by ESCWA at its twenty-seventh session; the implementation of the recommendations made by the Technical Committee at its seventh meeting; the proposed strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017; and the activities of the technical cooperation network.
3. On the second day, discussions tackled the regional and global priorities of the sustainable development goals; the improvement of statistical data to monitor the implementation of the United Nations post-2015 development agenda in the Arab countries; economic modelling for enhanced policymaking; the establishment of a committee on emerging issues and development under crisis; in addition to a review of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of ESCWA and preparations for its twenty-eighth session. On the third day of the meeting, participants discussed and adopted the meeting recommendations.
4. This report covers the issues raised and recommendations made at the meeting.

I. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE AT ITS EIGHTH MEETING

5. At the end of its eighth meeting, the Technical Committee reached a number of recommendations and suggestions related to its agenda items.

A. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE TO MEMBER STATES

6. The Technical Committee made the following recommendations to member States:

(a) Take note of the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the Technical Committee at its seventh meeting and of the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-seventh session; and, for those member States that have not yet submitted reports on the progress made in the implementation of these resolutions, do so no later than mid-February 2014;

(b) Adopt the recommendation of the Technical Committee at its seventh meeting on the redesignation of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia as the “Economic and Social Commission for Arab States”; and consider a draft resolution on the subject at the twenty-eighth session of ESCWA with a view to adopting it;

(c) Approve the draft strategic framework for 2016-2017 and the priorities included therein, namely supporting the regional integration process, building statistical capacities and enhancing expertise in economic modelling as a tool to support decision-making, however noting the following:

- A number of terms and concepts used in the draft strategic framework should be clarified, such as “occupation” which should be referred to as “foreign occupation”; social protection which should reflect the concepts of social welfare and social solidarity; and “conflict settings” which should be referred to as “crises” in subprogramme 7, in conformity with the

relevant resolution. In addition, the use of a concept such as human security, which has not been clearly defined within the United Nations system, should be avoided. Finally, a number of concepts should be adapted to the different contexts in which they appear, such as resilience in the contexts of foreign occupation, good governance and crises;

- Comments on the draft strategic framework should be submitted to the ESCWA secretariat in writing no later than 6 January 2014, so that they may be taken into consideration in amending the draft. Submissions received after the deadline will be deferred to the senior officials segment of the twenty-eighth session;

(d) Agree on the redesignation of subprogramme 7 as “Mitigation of the impact of crises on development” to reflect new developments in the region, and to highlight the role of the subprogramme in mitigating the impact of crises on development and in assisting member States to tackle developmental and institutional challenges (in accordance with the relevant resolutions);

(e) Agree on setting up an intergovernmental committee on emerging issues and development under crisis;

(f) Capitalize on the work undertaken by the ESCWA secretariat in the field of economic modelling, taking advantage of the Commission’s expertise to build the capacity of the concerned national entities in order to ensure the sustainability of that work; support the efforts of the secretariat in turning the Regional Integration Section of the Economic Development and Globalization Division into a Centre for Arab Economic Integration; and request the secretariat to present its views on the design and implementation of this Centre at the twenty-eighth ESCWA ministerial session;

(g) Agree on the redesignation of the Technical Committee as “the Executive Committee” and on the amendment of its terms of reference, so that it may play a greater role in steering and coordinating all ESCWA activities; and request the secretariat to submit a proposal on these terms of reference to the twenty-eighth ministerial session;

(h) Support the requests of those specialized subsidiary intergovernmental committees that wish to convene annually; and recommend the approval of the requests submitted by the Statistical Committee and the Committee on Water Resources to that effect;

(i) Agree on holding the twenty-eighth ministerial session at the United Nations headquarters in Beirut, on 14 and 15 May 2014, unless a member State other than Lebanon expresses its wish to host it, noting that a three-day senior officials meeting will be convened prior to the session; and approve that social justice be the major theme of the upcoming session which will coincide with the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of ESCWA, and that a ministerial declaration on addressing social justice in national policies be issued, with enhanced media coverage for the session.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS MADE TO THE ESCWA SECRETARIAT

7. The Technical Committee made the following recommendations to the ESCWA secretariat:

(a) Prepare new draft terms of reference for the intergovernmental committee on emerging issues and development under crisis, including its objectives, framework, functions and powers. The draft should be based on the proposals of the Technical Committee, in the light of the mandate of ESCWA in the economic, social and developmental fields and ESCWA resolution 292 (XXVI). It should be presented to the senior officials meeting to be held prior to the session;

(b) Implement regional programmes aimed at building the statistical capacity of member countries, improving the related infrastructure and expanding the scope of their statistical activities; build and

strengthen the statistical capacity of policymakers; and draw mainly on national data for the preparation of ESCWA reports;

(c) Step up efforts to support Arab consultations on the sustainable development goals, which should encompass the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainable development and take into consideration the priorities and interests of the Arab region, thus strengthening the Arab position in the negotiations scheduled for 2014. Progress made in this regard should be reported to the twenty-eighth ministerial session;

(d) Submit to member States a list of the intergovernmental meetings scheduled for the upcoming biennium, including their preliminary dates, and a list of the recommendations adopted at such meetings as soon as it is available; disseminate the outcomes of expert group meetings as appropriate; and update the ESCWA website;

(e) Review the terms of reference of the technical cooperation network in order to enhance its efficacy and efficiency, stressing the importance of holding regular network meetings and of coordination with national focal points before the submission of technical cooperation requests to the secretariat; submit the outcomes of this review to the Technical Committee at its ninth meeting;

(f) Agree that any communication on intergovernmental meetings with meeting participants should be channelled through a mechanism set by national focal points and the ESCWA secretariat;

(g) Present its views on the ESCWA Centre for Arab Economic Integration to the twenty-eighth ministerial session.

II. TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

A. IMPLEMENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY ESCWA AT ITS TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION (Agenda item 3 (a))

8. Under this item, the secretariat, based on document E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/3(Part I), presented an overview of actions taken to implement the resolutions adopted by ESCWA at its twenty-seventh session. The representatives of Palestine, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates reviewed the steps taken towards the implementation of the recommendations that were addressed to member States.

9. Commenting on this item, the representative of Egypt solicited information about whether the Arab Integration Report had been prepared in consultation with member States and the League of Arab States, and about the date of its launch. She noted the need to increase the visibility of ESCWA publications and reports, and the importance of regularly updating the Commission's website in both Arabic and English. The representative of Oman emphasized the importance of setting clearly defined and action-oriented sustainable development goals. The representative of the Sudan underlined the need to establish mechanisms and modalities so that countries would benefit from incoming financial remittances, pointing that as much as 85 per cent of the remittances sent to the Sudan were received through informal channels, which deprived the country of their expected benefits. Furthermore, he called for facilitating labour migration between member countries, so that skills and expertise could be shared throughout the region. He also expressed the willingness of the Sudan to share its experience in using alms and waqf funds to advance social justice. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic requested ESCWA to convey to member States the recommendations and reports of its meetings soon after their conclusion.

10. The representative of Palestine indicated that the report on resolution implementation should include the measures taken by both ESCWA and member States in that regard. This view was approved by the Chairperson of the meeting who requested member States to submit their national reports on the subject to

the secretariat by mid-February 2014, so as to present them at the twenty-eighth ESCWA ministerial session. The representative of Palestine also suggested the establishment of a database of experts in member States, which ESCWA would use to identify invitees to expert group meetings, who would attend such events in their personal capacity. Furthermore, the representative of Morocco urged ESCWA to document good practices and lessons learned in the work of its technical committees.

11. In response to these comments, the Director of the Social Development Division (SDD) of ESCWA stated that the Arab Integration Report was the first of its kind; that it would provide examples of economic integration indicators in the Arab countries and assess efforts towards the implementation of the Arab Customs Union. It would also propose a variety of scenarios that Arab States could adopt in preparation for the establishment of the Union, and suggested policies to mitigate the negative consequences that might result from its materialization. Stating that the report would be issued once every two years, he added that ESCWA worked closely with several organizations, including the League of Arab States, to carry out such activities in member States.

12. The Director of SDD also pointed that ESCWA sought to benefit from the experience of the Sudan in utilizing alms and waqf funds to achieve social justice. He also touched on the cooperation between ESCWA and the League of Arab States in collecting information on measures taken by member States to address the issue of persons with disabilities and the challenges that they face. The representative of the Sustainable Development and Productivity Division (SDPD) informed the participants of the formation of an ESCWA Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals, mandated with drafting sustainable development goals and indicators on the basis of lessons learned from the development and implementation process of the Millennium Development Goals, taking into consideration the specificities of the Arab region.

13. The Acting Secretary of the Commission voiced the determination of ESCWA to update its website and enhance communication with member States, underlining the importance of setting efficient communication channels to ensure the effective dissemination of information. He added that, although the secretariat had made considerable efforts to publish reports and other meeting-related documents in a timely manner, a number of exigencies had to be satisfied prior to publication, such as updating documents in the light of final outcome of expert group meetings. As for the Technical Committee's previous request to have the reports of intergovernmental committees submitted to it for consideration and adoption, in order to reduce the backlog before ESCWA sessions, the Acting Secretary underlined that, to date, the review and adoption of these reports were within the mandate of the ministerial session only.

B. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
AT ITS SEVENTH MEETING
(Agenda item 3 (b))

14. Under this item, the secretariat presented an overview of the actions and activities undertaken by ESCWA and member States pursuant to the recommendations of the Technical Committee at its seventh meeting. The presentation was based on document E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/3(Part II).

15. There were no interventions on this item from the floor.

C. PROPOSED ESCWA STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2016-2017
(Agenda item 4)

16. Under this item, the secretariat presented the proposed ESCWA strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017, based on document E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/4. The presentation outlined the overall orientation of programme 19 on economic and social development in Western Asia, which takes into account emerging priorities on the regional and international levels; the strategic framework of the seven subprogrammes; in addition to the expected outcomes and indicators of accomplishment under each subprogramme. A number of steps were taken to draft the proposed strategic framework for 2016-2017, including: (a) review of the

priorities identified during the meetings of ESCWA subsidiary bodies; (b) consultations with United Nations organizations in the Arab region through the regional coordination mechanism, in order to ensure complementarity, taking into account the comparative advantages of each organization; (c) identification of upcoming international and regional major events; (d) enhancement of coherence and complementarity between the various subprogrammes in a number of priority areas; and (e) amendment of the expected outcomes of the subprogrammes in order to facilitate the identification of clear and measurable targets, which represents a commendable attempt to emphasize the link between undertaken activities and achieved outcomes.

17. The representative of Palestine commended the change in the overall strategic orientation of ESCWA and attempts to enhance complementarity between its subprogrammes. The representative of Oman noted the need to increase the use of quantitative indicators of accomplishment and to clarify the measures proposed under a number of topics on the basis of their compliance with Islamic values. The representative of Morocco noted that it would have been useful to emphasize, under the strategic framework, the interrelation between the various subprogrammes and to identify numerical indicators of accomplishment to facilitate the materialization of the vision set out under the framework. Furthermore, she noted the need to adopt a results-based methodology and strengthen partnerships between member States. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic requested that the term “foreign” be added to “occupation”, and that the terms “human security” and “social protection” be reconsidered.

18. The representative of the Sudan underlined the importance of designing special programmes for the Arab least developed countries, such as Yemen and the Sudan, noting the need for regional cooperation in the achievement of growth. The representative of Egypt welcomed the comprehensive character of the strategic framework. She emphasized, however, the need for extreme caution in the use of a number of concepts, such as conflict, political transformations and social protection, and for a clear differentiation between the economic and political dimensions referred to in the framework.

19. Participants agreed that more time should be allotted to country representatives to comment on the framework and consult thereon with the concerned ministries and other national stakeholders. Consequently, it was agreed that member States would submit their observations regarding the strategy by 6 January 2014, and that submissions received after that deadline would be presented to the twenty-eighth ministerial session.

D. REVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE TECHNICAL COOPERATION NETWORK (Agenda item 5)

20. Under this item and on the basis of document E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/5, participants reviewed the activities of the technical cooperation network in the biennium 2012-2013, in the framework of the three interconnected financing mechanisms, namely the Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation, the Development Account and extrabudgetary resources.

21. Participants thoroughly discussed the role of the technical cooperation network and the challenges it faced over the past years in duly implementing its activities, especially that the network held three meetings only since its inception in 2007, while its terms of reference provided that it should convene annually. They agreed that the Network should continue to function, that its role and terms of reference should be revised and its action assessed within a year. The Acting Secretary of the Commission underlined the importance of this exercise, which is intended to highlight the strengths of the network, assess its weaknesses and suggest ways to tackle these. He added that the Technical Committee would be periodically briefed of the technical cooperation activities undertaken. He finally noted that the secretariat would request the focal points of the technical cooperation network in member States to forward a copy of technical cooperation requests to the national focal points of the Technical Committee.

E. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
(Agenda item 6 (a))

22. Under this item, which was discussed on the basis of document E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/6(Part I), the secretariat laid out the proposal of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals on the sustainable development goals, asserting the interrelation and complementarity of their social, economic and environmental dimensions, in conformity with the post-2015 United Nations development agenda. The Working Group had been set up to prepare a proposal on the global sustainable development goals by September 2014, for its subsequent submission to the United Nations General Assembly. The ESCWA report discussed under this item included an overview of the actions taken at the global level with regard to setting the goals, the outcome of efforts made by ESCWA at the regional level and further steps envisaged.

23. Commenting on the overview, participants inquired whether the identification of sustainable development goals and the creation of a post-2015 development agenda would be integrated into a single process. The representative of Egypt pointed that one could benefit from the experience of the Economic Commission for Africa in this regard, given that it had developed 12 goals that responded to the specificities and needs of its members. Finally, the representative of the secretariat commended the efforts of ESCWA towards formulating development goals which took into account the specificities of the region and responded to peoples' aspirations, and the scope of which would be broader than that of the Millennium Development Goals, which were not all relevant to Arab countries. Finally, the speaker indicated that these specific goals would be incorporated into the ESCWA strategic framework.

F. IMPROVING STATISTICAL DATA TO MONITOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POST-2015
DEVELOPMENT AGENDA IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES
(Agenda item 6 (b))

24. The Technical Committee considered this item on the basis of document E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/6 (Part II). The Director of the Statistics Division highlighted that the design and monitoring of policies related to the post-2015 development agenda required high-quality, frequently updated statistical data, notably statistics on the developmental aspects of social, environmental and economic issues. He added that the successful harmonization of Arab national statistical systems depended on the progress towards building institutional capacities and revising legislative frameworks, in line with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. Furthermore, he pointed to the need to seek new, cost-effective sources of information of high quality, in order to increase the frequency of data production. Such sources could include administrative records, data from the private sector and social networks, in addition to information produced by modern technologies. Finally, he argued that the statistical systems in Arab countries had a major role to play in harmonizing statistics in the region, also noting that the cultural and political specificities of each country should be given due consideration.

25. Commenting on the presentation of the secretariat, the representative of the Sudan recommended that statistical data be derived from official sources in order to ensure their accuracy. He proposed that training workshops be carried out for statistical workers, with the objective of enhancing their capacity to produce high-quality statistical data. The representative of Jordan underlined the need to support Arab statistical offices in producing all types of statistical data, and to adopt a harmonized methodology in conducting surveys. He suggested that ESCWA should play the role of coordinator in the compilation of statistics from Arab countries, which should be forwarded to the United Nations Statistics Division. Furthermore, he suggested that indicators on important issues such as good governance be also developed. The representative of Palestine suggested conducting a programme to support countries in the production of data on common regional issues, and to improve national capacities in data reading and analysis, which would positively affect decision-making processes.

G. ECONOMIC MODELLING FOR ENHANCED POLICYMAKING
(Agenda item 6 (c))

26. Under this item and on the basis of document E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/6(Part III), the secretariat made an overview of the efforts exerted to address the unprecedented challenges faced by Arab countries in the economic, social and development fields. These challenges include tackling social disparities, decelerating growth and financial difficulties, which requires a change in policymaking methodologies and macroeconomic reforms. These reforms should begin with an assessment of the various development prospects and available policy options; however, the region lacks the economic modelling expertise needed to carry out such an assessment. The speaker finally presented a number of available economic modelling techniques.

27. The representative of Palestine, in turn, stressed the importance of economic modelling for the region. The representatives of Egypt and Oman enquired about the time frame for the preparation of economic performance indicators, the number and qualifications of staff needed, and the technical support that ESCWA would provide in that area. The representative of Saudi Arabia commended the enhanced cooperation between his country and ESCWA in the implementation of a joint project, whose terms were signed on the sidelines of the eighth meeting of the Technical Committee.

28. The Director of Economic Development and Globalization Division argued that the time frame depended on the availability and quality of data, and also on the availability of qualified human resources. He noted that the region abounded in highly qualified people who could be trained in economic modelling.

H. ESTABLISHING A GOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE ON EMERGING ISSUES
AND DEVELOPMENT UNDER CRISIS
(Agenda item 7)

29. Under this item and based on document E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/7, participants reviewed the steps taken by ESCWA to implement resolution 292 (XXVI) which called on the Commission to establish a committee on emerging issues and development under crisis and set its functions and terms of reference in consultation with member States. The secretariat laid out the objectives of this committee and put forward a proposal on its terms of reference.

30. Participants agreed to designate the envisaged committee as “Committee on Emerging Issues and Development under Crisis”, in conformity with resolution 292 (XXVI). The same resolution provided that this committee be governmental; that its terms of reference be set out in accordance with the terms of reference of ESCWA and its economic and social mandate and in consistency with the resolution; that these terms of reference be thoroughly revised and amended in consultation with member States, with a view to submitting them to the preparatory meeting for the ESCWA twenty-eighth ministerial session for adoption.

I. REVISION OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE AND RULES OF PROCEDURE
OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA
(Agenda item 8)

31. Under this item and based on document E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/8, the secretariat made proposals on revising the Terms of Reference and rules of Procedure of ESCWA, in the light of those of other regional commissions and of the outcome of the 2008 assessment of the intergovernmental mechanism of ESCWA and its subsidiary bodies. This revision was conducted pursuant to resolution 302 (XXVII) and to the recommendations of the Technical Committee at its seventh meeting, which had called for the redesignation of the Economic and Social Commission of Western Asia as “Economic and Social Commission for the Arab Region”, and for enhancing the work of the Technical Committee so that it serves to further advance the work of the Commission.

32. Participants unanimously approved the redesignation of the Technical Committee as “the Executive Committee”, in order to better reflect the nature of its functions. They also agreed that this proposal should

be submitted to the upcoming ESCWA ministerial session for adoption, and that the terms of reference of this Committee be expanded to enhance its decision-making capacity during the intersessional periods. In this context, they stressed the importance of accelerating the implementation of resolution 302 (XXVII) on the redesignation of ESCWA as “the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for the Arab Region”.

33. In order to enable the subsidiary bodies of ESCWA to achieve more and keep pace with emerging issues on the regional and global levels, a number of country representatives suggested that Committees convene annually.

J. PREPARATIONS FOR THE ESCWA TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION (Agenda item 9)

34. Under this item and based on document E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/9, ESCWA provided an overview of its preparations for the twenty-eighth ministerial session, including a draft agenda and measures to ensure the effectiveness of session proceedings. The presentation suggested social justice as a main theme for the session, in the context of the emerging priorities and developments in the region and worldwide.

35. Participants hailed the choice of social justice as the main session theme, given its relevance and timeliness for the region. In response to queries about the participation of a number of civil society representatives in the session, the Acting Secretary of the Commission underlined that they would participate in panel discussions, given their experience in the theme of the session, which will enrich the debates. He added that their participation would be subject to the rules and regulations of the United Nations in relation to the participation of civil society organizations in intergovernmental meetings.

36. It was agreed that a preparatory meeting for the session be held from 11 to 13 May 2014, and that the session be held on 14 and 15 May 2014 in Beirut, Lebanon, unless another ESCWA member State expresses its wish to host it.

K. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH SAUDI ARABIA ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ESCWA PROJECT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

37. On the sidelines of the eighth meeting of the Technical Committee, the Ministry of Economy and Planning in Saudi Arabia, represented by Mr. Bandar Bin Abdulaziz Ouaili, Under-Secretary for Planning, and ESCWA, represented by Mr. Nadim Khuri, Deputy Executive Secretary of the Commission, signed a memorandum of understanding on the development of performance indicators for government agencies in Saudi Arabia. This joint project is part of a broader project implemented by the Government of Saudi Arabia, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), aimed at finding solutions for sustainable human development.

38. On the occasion of the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding, Mr. Ouaili voiced the commitment of his country to strengthen its cooperation with ESCWA and to achieve human development. He indicated that one of the objectives of the joint project was to materialize this commitment, by enhancing the capacity of the Ministry of Economy and Planning in operational, strategic and developmental planning, and by supporting it in the preparation and follow-up of the tenth development plan for Saudi Arabia (2015-2019).

L. DATE AND VENUE OF THE NINTH MEETING OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE
(Agenda item 10)

39. Participants agreed that the ninth meeting of the Technical Committee would be held at the United Nations headquarters in Beirut, in December 2014, and that the exact date would be determined by the secretariat, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee.

M. OTHER MATTERS
(Agenda item 11)

40. No comments or proposals were made under this item.

**III. ADOPTION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE
TECHNICAL COMMITTEE AT ITS EIGHTH MEETING**
(Agenda item 12)

41. At the close of the meeting, the Technical Committee made recommendations, which would take their final form after the incorporation of the participants' suggested amendments and their inclusion in a comprehensive report on the actions and results of the meeting.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. DATE AND VENUE

42. The Technical Committee held its eighth meeting in Amman, from 10 to 12 December 2013. Pursuant to its Terms of Reference, which stipulate that the presidency of the Committee shall coincide with that of the ESCWA ministerial session, the representative of the United Arab Emirates was designated as Chair of the eighth meeting of the Technical Committee, in its capacity as chair of the twenty-seventh session of ESCWA, held in Beirut from 7 to 10 May 2012.

B. OPENING

43. At the opening session of the meeting, Mr. Mohamed Saleh al-Shalwah, Assistant Secretary of the United Arab Emirates Ministry of Economy and Chair of the eighth meeting of the Technical Committee, delivered welcoming remarks.

44. Ms. Rima Khalaf, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCWA, welcomed the participants. She underlined that ESCWA had readjusted its priorities in the light of regional developments and priorities and, to that end, had started restructuring a number of its subprogrammes, in order to establish a unit on economic modelling, develop its capacity in statistical data production and establish a hub for regional integration. She pointed that the objective of the meeting was to discuss the proposed strategic framework for 2016-2017, drafted according to a new approach aimed to enable ESCWA to measure its accomplishments, enhance its impact and facilitate the assessment of its work.

45. Furthermore, the Executive Secretary briefed the participants on the ongoing preparations for the ESCWA twenty-eighth ministerial session. She indicated that the session would be centred on a single topic, namely social justice, given that justice is a major aspiration of citizens and a primary priority for Arab countries. Therefore, she added, the session would be held under the theme "Social justice: from concepts to policies", and its ministerial segment would focus on a number of substantive issues. The speaker finally stated that member States would be allowed more time to make their interventions and share their experiences, for the sake of enriching debates and enhancing regional interaction.

C. PARTICIPANTS

46. The eighth meeting of the Technical Committee was attended by representatives of member States. A list of participants is included in annex I to this report.

D. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

47. The Technical Committee adopted the agenda of its eighth meeting in the version set forth in document E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/L.1. The agenda in its adopted form was as follows:

1. Opening of the meeting.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Progress achieved in the work of the secretariat:
 - (a) Implementation of resolutions adopted by ESCWA at its twenty-seventh session;
 - (b) Implementation of recommendations made by the Technical Committee at its seventh meeting.
4. Proposed ESCWA strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017.
5. Review of the activities of the technical cooperation network.
6. Regional and global priorities:
 - (a) Sustainable development goals;
 - (b) Improving statistical data to monitor the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda in the Arab countries;
 - (c) Economic modelling for enhanced policymaking.
7. Establishing a committee on emerging issues and development under crisis.
8. Revision of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.
9. Preparations for the ESCWA twenty-eighth session.
10. Date and venue of the ninth meeting of the Technical Committee.
11. Other matters.
12. Adoption of the recommendations made by the Technical Committee at its eighth meeting.

48. The Committee also adopted the proposed organization of work as set forth in document E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/L.2.

E. DOCUMENTS

49. Annex II to this report features the list of documents considered by the Technical Committee at its eighth meeting.

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Bahrain

Mr. Fouad Sadek al-Baharneh
Consultant
Department of Organizations
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Egypt

Ms. Amani Fahmi
Deputy-Assistant Foreign Minister for
International Economic Relations
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Iraq

Ms. Akoud Hussein Salman
Assistant Director-General
Executive Department for population politics
Ministry of Planning

Jordan

Ms. Zeina Toucan
Head, International Cooperation Division
Ministry of Planning and International
Cooperation

Mr. Ziad Oubeidat
Head, Development Plans and Programmes
Division
Ministry of Planning and International
Cooperation

Mr. Mutasim al-Kilani
Head, Sustainable Development Division
Ministry of Planning and International
Cooperation

Ms. Raghed al-Shakhanbeh
World Bank and United Nations Relations Section
Ministry of Planning and International
Cooperation

Kuwait

Ms. Imene Ibrahim al-Haddad
Head, Department of International Organizations
International Economic Co-operation Department
Ministry of Finance

Ms. Hassa Ibrahim al-Hamlan
Economic Coordinator
International Economic Co-operation Department
Ministry of Finance

Lebanon

Mr. Ali al-Mawla
Charge d'Affaires, Lebanese Embassy in Amman
Jordan

Morocco

Ms. Hanan al-Tourani
Consultant
Ministry of Public Affairs and Governance

Oman

Mr. Hamed Bin Jaber Bin Saud al-Mahrooqi
Director General for Services Sector Development
Higher Council of Planning

Ms. Suad bent Mohammed al-Fadhel
Director, Technical Cooperation Department
Higher Council of Planning

Palestine

Mr. Mahmoud Ataya
Acting General Director, Social Planning
Ministry of Planning and Administrative
Development

Saudi Arabia

Mr. Bandar A. al-Waily
Deputy Minister for Planning Affairs

Mr. Abdullah Ali al-Marwani
Assistant Secretary for planning
Ministry of Economy and Planning

The Sudan

Mr. Al-Taher Suleiman Edam
Director-General, Department of International
Relations
Ministry of Trade

The Sudan (continued)

Ms. Majida Ahmad Al-Mahdi
In charge of relations with ESCWA
Ministry of Trade

Syrian Arab Republic

Mr. Mohammad Taleb Abou Sariyya
Consultant
Embassy of the Syrian Arab Republic
Amman, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Tunisia

Ms. Afifa Mallah
Ambassador
Amman, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Mr. Mohammad Maher al-Moadab
Consultant, Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ms. Hajar al-Shalwati
Assistant Director
Ministry of Development and International
Cooperation

United Arab Emirates

Mr. Mohamed Saleh al-Shalwah
Assistant Undersecretary for Economic Policies
Affairs
Ministry of Economy

Mr. Nizar Faisal al-Mashaal
Director, Cooperation and Economic Agreement
Department
Ministry of Economy

Yemen

Mr. Mohammed Ahmad al-Hawiri
Director General
Conferences and International and Regional
Organizations
Ministry of Planning and International
Cooperation

Annex II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Title	Item	Symbol
Provisional agenda and annotations	2	E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/L.1
Organization of work	2	E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/L.2
Progress achieved in the work of the secretariat:	3	E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/3
Implementation of resolutions adopted by ESCWA at its twenty-seventh session	3 (a)	E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/3(Part I)
Implementation of recommendations made by the Technical Committee at its seventh meeting	3 (b)	E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/3(Part II)
Proposed strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017	4	E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/4
Review of the activities of the technical cooperation network	5	E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/5
Regional and global priorities:	6	E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/6
Sustainable development goals	6 (a)	E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/6(Part I)
Improving statistical data to monitor the implementation of the post 2015 development agenda in the Arab countries	6 (b)	E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/6(Part II)
Economic modelling for enhanced policymaking	6 (c)	E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/6(Part III)
Establishing a committee on emerging issues and development during crises	7	E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/7
Revision of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	8	E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/8
Preparations for the ESCWA twenty-eighth session	9	E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/9