

**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

Committee on Social Development  
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Item 11 of the provisional agenda

**Proposed programme plan for 2020 in the field of social development****Summary**

The present document contains the proposed programme plan of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for 2020 under its subprogramme 2 on social development. The proposed ESCWA programme plan for 2020 was welcomed by the ESCWA Executive Committee at its fifth meeting held in Beirut, on 18 and 19 December 2018. It will be presented to the United Nations General Assembly for adoption in 2019.

The present document features the global orientation of the work of ESCWA and the list of deliverables for 2020 under subprogramme 2. The Committee on Social Development is invited to take note of its content.

## SUBPROGRAMME 2: SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

**Objective:** To support member States to achieve inclusive, equitable and participatory social development in the Arab region and to implement, follow up and review the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

1. In 2020, the ESCWA secretariat will strengthen its support to member States to further the development of rights-based social policies and facilitate the social inclusion of youth, persons with disabilities and older persons. It will also provide advice on the improvement of existing social protection systems and sustainable urban planning. The secretariat will continue to provide support to member States for the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and raise awareness on the policy implications of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

1. *Regional road map for rights-based, equality-oriented public policies for achieving social justice*  
(SDGs 10, 16 and 17)

2. Inclusion, equality and justice are combined in a nexus without which there can be no sustainable development. Building on normative and capacity-building interventions to promote social justice, combat inequality and encourage citizens' participation in public policymaking, the ESCWA secretariat will foster this nexus approach to development.

3. In 2020, the ESCWA secretariat will host the annual meeting of the Regional Development Partnership Mechanism (RDPM) to build consensus around a regional road map for the adoption of rights-based, equality-oriented public policies and the promotion of citizens' engagement. Aiming to devise homegrown policy options, the road map will also be translated into national action plans for the realization of equitable, inclusive and participatory social development.

2. *Rights-based social policies and programmes focusing on social inclusion*  
(SDGs 10 and 11)

4. In the Arab region, vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, youth and older persons, encounter many barriers that hinder their inclusion and effective participation in the development process. Vulnerable groups are more likely to have lower access to education, health and employment. The demographic, socioeconomic, environmental and political changes and transitions that the region is witnessing are likely to exacerbate vulnerability, risk of poverty and exclusion. For example, disability prevalence in the Arab region is expected to increase due to ageing, war and conflict, natural disasters and forced displacement.

5. In 2020, the ESCWA secretariat will support member States in promoting social inclusion and equality, including for the most vulnerable, through producing knowledge, encouraging policy dialogue and peer learning, and assisting in building policymakers' technical capacity to develop and implement inclusive, equitable and cohesive policies, strategies and programmes.

6. In order to enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization in the region, the ESCWA secretariat will work with member States and other partners through research, capacity development and consensus building on a variety of social policy issues, such as inclusive urban planning and social housing policies, slum upgrading and shelter development, and inclusive national policies that facilitate the development of inclusive urban space. The secretariat will also work on establishing the necessary global, regional and national partnership frameworks for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda, with an emphasis on social inclusion.

3. *Social protection systems to raise living standards and manage socioeconomic risks*  
(SDG 10)

7. A large segment of society in Arab countries works in the informal sector and suffers from limited access to social services, precarious housing conditions and exposure to different types of shocks. Most Governments in the Arab region are currently reforming their social protection systems by reducing or abolishing subsidies and expanding targeted social assistance. Governance of social protection is being improved through the establishment of unified and transparent social registries.

8. In 2020, the ESCWA secretariat will continue working with member States towards increasing social protection in the informal sector, through studies and targeted capacity-building workshops on social protection systems.

4. *Alignment of national policies with the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*  
(SDG 10)

9. Since 2013, the ESCWA secretariat has spearheaded efforts, in coordination with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the League of Arab States, to inform policymaking across the Arab region on key migration issues. It has also organized training workshops on developing migration policies that uphold migrants' rights while maximizing their contribution to the development of their countries of origin and destination.

10. Rooted in the 2030 Agenda, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration aims to improve governance of migration and address the challenges and opportunities associated with it, including its contribution to sustainable development. Pursuant to paragraph 50 of the Compact, which mandates regional commissions to review its implementation beginning in 2020, the ESCWA secretariat will support member States' efforts to operationalize its objectives and review progress. It will work with relevant partners to encourage dialogue, share experiences and create incentives for policy reform and coherence in line with the Compact's principles and objectives.

5. *Supporting the implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda*  
(All SDGs)

11. ESCWA member States have reiterated the importance of regional collaboration, peer-learning and policy dialogue to realize sustainable development. They mandated the secretariat in December 2015 to lead the organization of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development and the preparation of the Arab Sustainable Development Report, and to provide technical guidance and build capacity on SDG adaptation and implementation. They also welcomed the integrated approach to development planning proposed by the ESCWA secretariat as a tool to enhance cross-sectoral coordination and effectiveness.

12. In 2020, the ESCWA secretariat will work towards achieving a set of interconnected deliverables, aiming to strengthen regional cooperation to contribute to the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development as a unique venue to advance the 2030 Agenda regionally. Interventions will focus on knowledge building, comparative analysis of trends and patterns, progress reports, and the provision of regional multi-stakeholder platforms for learning, exchange and policy dialogue on sustainable development priorities.

## PROPOSED LIST OF DELIVERABLES FOR 2020

### A. FACILITATION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PROCESS AND EXPERT BODIES

#### *Parliamentary documentation (number of documents)*

1. Parliamentary report for the thirty-first session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (1)

#### *Substantive services for meetings (number of three-hour meetings)*

2. Arab Forum on Sustainable Development (9)
3. Meetings of ad hoc expert groups on ageing; disability; migration, social justice and participation, the 2030 Agenda and other various social issues (35)

### B. GENERATION AND TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE

#### *Publications (number of publications)*

4. Publication on disability (1)

#### *Technical materials (number of materials)*

5. Technical paper, brief or bulletin on social development and other issues (1)
6. Technical papers, briefs and bulletins on social justice (3)
7. Technical papers, briefs and bulletins on sustainable development (2)
8. Technical paper or brief on ageing (1)
9. Brief or bulletin on migration (1)

### C. SUBSTANTIVE DELIVERABLES

#### *Consultation, advice and advocacy*

10. Substantive servicing of inter-agency meetings, including Follow up on the New Urban Agenda; servicing of the Inter-Agency Support Group on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; substantive contribution to the Arab Cities Report; contribution to the Commission on Social Development 2020; coordination meetings in support of the Arab Forum for Sustainable Development; input to global and regional events on the 2030 Agenda implementation and follow-up and review.

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