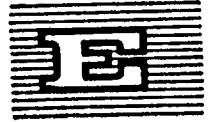


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UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC
AND
SOCIAL COUNCIL



Distr.
GENERAL

E/ECWA/19
26 March 1975

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

Second Session
Beirut, 21-25 April 1975

Progress Report

9 June 1974 - 20 April 1975

(Item 7 A.1 of the provisional agenda)

75-223

A. Development Planning Division

1. During the period under review, the activities of the Development Planning Division of ECWA were directed towards assisting national and regional efforts in the fields of economic and social development planning and policies, development finance and administration, labour and employment, trade and development, and statistics. More specifically, and as envisaged under the 1974 interim period and the 1975 work programmes, the following is an account of the major activities carried out under the various substantive programmes of the Division.
2. ECWA's obligations in connexion with the medium-term review and appraisal of progress in the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Second Development Decade and the implementation of the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order were studied and guidelines were established to assist the various Divisions towards their contribution.
3. Work on the evaluation of development performance in the region continued, in connexion with the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade, and culminated in the up-dating and revision of the study on "overall growth performance in the countries of Western Asia" as ECWA's contribution to the mid-term review and appraisal exercise. The study, which analyzes major growth indicators, highlights achievements during the first half of the seventies, as compared to the objectives envisaged under the Second Development Decade. Moreover, the first comprehensive biennial review and appraisal report of progress in the implementation of the Strategy for the Second Development Decade was revised and edited, where appropriate, for submission as a background document to ECWA's report on the mid-term review and appraisal of progress in the countries of the region.
4. In addition to the review and appraisal exercise, work was undertaken for the preparation of the 1975 publication of ECWA entitled "Selected Studies on Development Problems in Countries of Western Asia". Work in this connexion included selection, finalization and editing of studies, as well as preparation of the Annex, "Sectoral Development and Development Indicators", to the 1975 annual publication.
5. The provisional study on "Regional Finance Availabilities and the Needs of Various Countries in Western Asia (1974-1975)", the projections and analytical framework of which were completed late in 1973, was finalized and issued as an ECWA document (ECWA/DPP/L.1).
6. The Division undertook preparatory work for and participated in ECWA's discussions with the Lebanese Government and UN Headquarters in connexion with the forthcoming Interregional Symposium on Co-operation in Petroleum among Developing Countries.

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7. Preparatory work for the joint ECWA/ILO Seminar on "Manpower and Employment Planning in the Arab Countries" continued under the Labour, Employment and Management Programme of the Division. This has included the review, perusal, translation and reproduction of more than ten papers prepared by consultants on various aspects of manpower and employment, as well as those prepared by nominees from participating countries and regional organizations. The Seminar is scheduled to be held in Beirut from 12 to 24 May 1975.

8. With respect to regional co-operation and trade expansion, the Development Planning Division in co-operation with UNCTAD and UNDP finalized the regional project document on "Multilateral Trade Negotiations". The project, which aims at assisting ECWA member countries in their preparations for and participation in multilateral trade negotiations, has been approved and preparations are being made for its implementation.

9. Work continued towards the finalization of the preliminary drafts of the following four consultancy studies: (a) "Restriction on exports in foreign collaboration agreements in Lebanon". The purpose of this study is to identify, analyze and functionally classify both tariff and non-tariff barriers which manifest themselves in such collaboration agreements and hamper the exports of the manufacturing sector in Lebanon; (b) "The trade regime in Lebanon". This study examines certain aspects of the commercial policy of Lebanon, particularly as they relate to the external sector of the economy, the industrial sector and to Lebanon's role in transit trade within the region; (c) "Intra-Arab transit trade". The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the problems confronting the development and efficiency of transit trade among countries and examine its prospects for the region; (d) The study entitled "Actual and anticipated payments surpluses of selected Middle Eastern countries: their alternative uses in the context of the evolving International Monetary System", examines the major developments in the international monetary system since 1971, as they affect the economies of the countries of the region.

10. During the period under review, a variety of contributions were made in support of United Nations technical co-operation activities and advisory services to Governments in the field of development planning, finance and administration, international trade, labour and employment, and statistics. The Development Planning Division has been working, through its development finance and administration programme, in close collaboration with the Regional Project for Training in Public Finance and Administration (PROPFAD). Substantive contribution was made to the Beirut-based training programme of the Project, which is designed to offer training to senior officials of the Ministries of Finance and the Treasury of Democratic Yemen, Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. In addition to briefing and debriefing UNDP experts assigned to the region and providing substantive review and comments on their reports, as well as the reports of the three Special Fund Projects (i.e., the Arab Institute for Economic and Social Planning in Kuwait, the Planning Institute in Damascus and the Assistance in Development Planning and Execution in Baghdad), the Development Planning Division of ECWA contributed to preparations for and active participation in the following meetings and seminars:

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- (i) The Twelfth FAO Regional Conference for the Near East (Amman, September 1974);
- (ii) United Nations World Food Conference (Rome, November 1974);
- (iii) Round Table Conference on Tax Administration (Beirut, November 1974);
- (iv) Preparatory Meeting of the Committee on the Formulation of Development Strategy for the Arab World (Cairo, February 1975);
- (v) Seminar on Human Resources Development in the Gulf States (Bahrain, February 1975); and,
- (vi) Fourth Arab Labour Organization Conference (Tripoli, Libya, March 1975).

11. At the request of the Government of Jordan, preparations were made to assist in the country's efforts to introduce the concept of 'regional planning' into the overall planning exercise of Jordan along, with the appropriate machinery for the formulation and implementation of regional (sub-national) development plans and programmes.

12. At the request of Governments, the Regional Adviser in Statistics visited the Democratic Yemen, Qatar and the Syrian Arab Republic, where he assisted in the setting up of the new system of National Accounts, developing of production accounts of various economic sectors and input-output tables of various industries, while advising on various other matters in the field of statistics. The Adviser also represented ECWA at the eighteenth session of the Statistical Commission, held in Geneva, in October 1974.

13. The Regional Adviser in Trade Promotion, who joined ECWA late in 1974 visited Iraq, to participate in the National Seminar on the "Generalized System of Preferences", and to assist in the establishment of a "Research and Training Centre in Export Promotion".

B. Public Finance and Administration

1. During the period under review the Project for Public Finance and Administration in Beirut revised the work programme of the second half of 1974 and prepared a detailed programme for the first half of 1975.

2. In its effort to supply the governments of its region with the necessary advisory services, the Project, upon a request from the governments of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, and the Yemen Arab Republic recommended two experts in the field of customs, who are being recruited.

3. Upon the request of the Yemen Arab Republic for an expert in the field of fiscal control and auditing to help in the setting-up of the newly established "Central Organization for Fiscal Control and Auditing", the Project recommended one expert who was accepted by the Government. In fact the said expert finished the first part of his assignment during the period under review.

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4. The Project prepared a detailed programme for the second Beirut-based training programme which is designed for training senior government officials holding key positions in their countries. The programme took place during the period 22 October to 20 December 1974 inclusive.

Following consultations with the Governments concerned, five candidates from each country of the region were chosen. The United Arab Emirates, as was the case in the first Beirut-based training programme, sent four participants at its own expense.

5. PROPFAD prepared detailed programmes for the locally-based training programmes in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, the Sultanate of Oman and the Yemen Arab Republic. They are designed for Government officials at the medium level holding supervisory posts chosen by the Governments concerned in consultations with PROPFAD. The first programme was scheduled in Aden during the period 26 January through 1 March 1975. A second and third programmes are scheduled to be held later in the year in Muscat and Sana'a respectively.

6. PROPFAD is continuing to build up its library in public finance and to acquire data and reference materials on the countries of the region as well as on countries of comparable stages of development for the use of its staff members and participants in its different programmes.

7. A manual of Arabic/English terminology in the field of public finance was put in the hands of the participants following the first one which was an English/Arabic manual. PROPFAD's ultimate aim here is to issue a comprehensive manual containing a unified Arabic terminology in the field of public finance with the original English and French terms.

C. Social Development and Human Settlement Division

1. The Division is charged with the responsibility of implementing the 1974 and 1975 ECWA work programmes in the fields of social development and human settlement. These fields include programmes for youth and for women, social aspects of integrated rural development, developmental social welfare, housing, building, urban planning and urbanization. Continuing co-operation with the UN specialized agencies and other inter-governmental or regional bodies is especially necessary in the social field which, by its very nature, is cross-sectoral and involves different agencies. Therefore, during the reporting period the Division has developed very close working relations with UNESCO, FAO, ILO, WHO, UNICEF, UNRWA, UNDP, UNEP, UNFPA and other bodies at the regional level including the League of Arab States and its specialized agencies, other Arab organizations and Government departments working in the social field.

2. In the field of youth, a general survey of the participation of youth in development in the ECWA region was initiated and will be completed by June 1975. The reports of the survey and of the case study will be presented to the Second Regional Conference on Children and Youth in National Planning and Development in the Arab States, to be held in Cairo in November 1975. ECWA is sponsoring this conference, together with UNICEF and the League of Arab States.

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3. Concerning the participation of women in development, the Division completed two studies, initiated a third one, and took part in a number of meetings. The first study entitled "A Preliminary Report on the Status and Participation of Women in Development in Selected Countries of the ECWA Region" (ECWA/HR/L.2), dealt mainly with Iraq, Kuwait and Lebanon. It indicated areas for future action with regard to the legal, educational and employment status of women in these countries and in the ECWA region. The second study, entitled "Institutions and Organizations Concerned with the Participation of Lebanese Rural Women in Development" (E/ECWA/SDHS/1), identified the institutions and organizations which sponsor programmes for rural women, the type of such programmes and the extent of their coverage. In addition, the study attempted to determine the nature of problems which these organizations have in implementing their programmes and suggested some practical measures to solve such problems and increase the effectiveness of the organizations. The Division co-sponsored, assisted in organizing and participated in the Near East Seminar on the Participation of Women in Integrated Rural Development, held in Cairo from 26 October to 3 November 1974. At the Seminar, which was also sponsored by FAO, UNICEF, and the League of Arab States, the Division, inter alia, presented two studies mentioned above.

4. The Division also participated in the formation of the United Nations Inter-agency Working Group for International Women's Year. The Working Group brings United Nations agencies in the Middle East together with a limited number of other organizations with regional programmes for women. The Working Group has prepared a report based on the programmes of the member agencies, including a chart showing the activities planned by the agencies for International Women's Year. The Division played an important role in the formation of this Group, keeping records of the meetings and providing members with essential documents.

5. Within the context of the International Women's Year, other activities have been initiated by the Social Development and Human Settlement Division. Preparations have been made for the Regional Seminar on the Role of Women in National Development with Special Reference to Population Factors. This Seminar, to be organized under the auspices of ECWA, is expected to take place in September 1975. Also, a study has been initiated to evaluate the effectiveness of home-based employment programmes for women in rural areas of Lebanon. This study is a follow-up to a study completed in 1974 entitled "Institutions and organizations concerned with the participation of Lebanese rural women in development".

6. In the field of integrated rural development, a study on rural industrialization trends and prospects in countries of the ECWA region is nearing completion. The study analyses the problems as well as the effects of rural industrialization on development and proposes some policy guidelines, with particular reference to the social aspects.

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7. The Division also participated in Oman's first conference on local community development held from 7 to 13 December 1974. The conference discussed the problems of development of local communities in Oman, and especially the provision of Government services. The Division is also involved in conducting, jointly with the Division of Information of FAO, two training and orientation seminars in the field of rural development communication. These two workshops, of one month duration each, are being held in Baghdad, Iraq, during the period from March to June 1975. They are pre-requisites for the establishment, on 1 January 1976, of a Rural Development Support Communication Centre by the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform.

8. As part of its contribution to social reporting, the Division prepared a report entitled "Review and appraisal of progress in social development in countries of Western Asia". In addition, it prepared a series of social indicators, based on available statistics for the countries of the region, for the sectors of housing, education and health. The Division prepared two reports, dealing respectively with the work programme and with social indicators, for the twenty-fourth session of the Commission for Social Development held in New York from 6 to 24 January 1975 and participated fully in this session.

9. In the area of human settlement, the Division completed a report on "Review and appraisal of progress in human settlements in countries of Western Asia". It also initiated a study on rent control practices and policies in the ECWA region. A report was prepared on the co-ordination of building research in the countries of the region, emphasizing the need for this type of activity and indicating the desirability of a regional centre for building research. A study on building costs in the region is underway.

10. Work was initiated on a number of meetings in the field of human settlement being organized by the Division. In co-operation with the United Nations Centre for Housing, Building and Planning (CHEP), the Division organized an Expert Group Meeting on the Co-ordination of Building Research in Western Asia. The Meeting was held from 11 to 15 November 1974 in Beirut and was attended by highlevel experts on building research from seven countries in Western Asia and by a number of international agencies. The Meeting produced a series of recommendations designed to advance the co-ordination of building research in the region.

11. ECWA jointly with the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT), The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific is organizing and sponsoring a Regional Seminar on Human Settlement, to be held in June 1975 in Teheran. This Seminar will serve as part of the preparatory work for HABITAT: the United Nations Conference Exposition on Human Settlements scheduled for June 1976 in Vancouver, Canada.

An additional activity in connexion with HABITAT was ECWA's participation in an induction seminar sponsored by the Secretary General of HABITAT in New York in September 1974 and in the first formal meeting of the preparatory committee for HABITAT held in New York in January 1975.

12. The Division participated in the ECWA Expert Group Meeting on Demographic Aspects of Urbanization and Internal Migration, held in Beirut on December 1974 and was responsible for a presentation on problems and policies relating to urbanization in the ECWA region.

13. The Division participated in an Inter-Governmental Meeting, on the protection of the Mediterranean Sea which was held in Barcelona, Spain, from 28 January to 5 February 1975.

14. The Regional Adviser in Human Resources Development undertook, upon the request of Governments, advisory missions to assist in: the formulation of social sectoral plans and programmes as part of the forthcoming national development plans (Iraq and Kuwait); assessment and development of human resources (Yemen Arab Republic); programmes of children, youth, and women (United Arab Emirates and Lebanon); and community and rural development (Oman). In co-operation with UNDP and UNICEF, the Adviser assisted in drafting Government requests for technical assistance (Jordan, Oman and Saudi Arabia). He also assisted in regional training workshops and programmes at the UNESCO Regional Office in Beirut, and at the Arab Institute for Economic and Social Planning, Kuwait.

D. The ECWA/FAO Joint Agriculture Division

The ECWA/FAO Joint Agriculture Division became operational on 1 January 1975. Chief attention has been paid to:

1. The administrative set-up and staffing of the Division;
2. The preparatory activities and the groundwork for the implementation of the projects included in the 1975 work programme, including a detailed implementation schedule. Concerning the implementation of the 1975 projects extensive contacts took place between FAO and other international and regional organizations, on the one hand, and the Division, on the other hand, with a view to assuring smooth implementation of the programme. Thus, for example, the project on Integrated Rural Development will be implemented in close co-operation with the FAO Regional Office in Cairo. While in the main the FAO approach will be followed, special consideration will be given to organizational and implementation problems of integrated rural development at all levels; and,
3. The preparatory activities for undertaking an agricultural sector study, which will focus on major agricultural development policy options within a broad macro-economic framework and under alternative growth patterns and will emphasize the link between policy and programming.

Preparation and finalization of the mid-term review and appraisal of progress in agriculture in countries of the ECWA region.

Preparation of a review on developments in agriculture and fisheries in 1973-74 in the ECWA countries and construction of indicators of agricultural development for inclusion in the Annex of the Annual publication Studies on selected development problems in Western Asia.

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E. Natural Resources, Science and Technology Division

The Division became operational on 16 August 1974. The following activities comprise the accomplishments of the Division:

1. The administrative set-up and staffing of the Division.
2. The preparatory work for the implementation of the projects included in the 1975 work programme.
3. Preparation and finalization of the mid-term review and appraisal of projects in raw materials and development, and science and technology in countries of the ECWA region.
4. Participation in the Second Arab Conference on Mineral Resources organized by the League of Arab States and held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, 2-8 November 1974.
5. The Science and Technology Programme within the Natural Resources, Science and Technology Division is expected to become only fully operational from 1st January 1976 onwards. Thus, during the period under review the programme activities - based on a staff establishment of one professional for this period - consisted mainly of: (a) continuing activities of an administrative nature; (b) preparatory work for the envisaged activities during the 1976-1979 planning period; and, (c) follow-up to the Regional Plan of Action for the Application of Science and Technology in the Middle East. No specific ad hoc projects were included in the 1974 and 1975 work programme.
6. The Division also provided, through a consultant at the expense of ECWA, a wide range of advisory services on oil and mineral resources matters to the Governments of the Arab Republic of Yemen and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen.
7. A preliminary assessment of the status of science and technology in the ECWA region is undertaken aiming at the identification of areas for regional co-operative research and technology projects and focussing in particular on R and D (Research and Development) efforts in various sectors, STS (Science and Technology Services), and STE (Science and Technology Education) as well as the application of new technologies for development, institutional procedures for technology assessment and transfer and arid zone research.
8. With regard to follow-up to the Regional Plan of Action for the Application of Science and Technology to Development in the Middle East - which was prepared by the erstwhile UNECOB and endorsed by ECOSOC - it will be submitted as a guideline to Governments in the region with a view to obtaining their suggestions and proposals concerning areas for regional co-operative research and technology as outlined in the Plan. In addition, the operational aspects of the Plan are also the subject of discussions and consultations with R and D institutions in the region in a variety of fields.

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F. Population Division

1. The activities in the population field were designed with the aim of building up the knowledge and the capacity to respond to needs in the population fields, to promote co-operation and co-ordination, to increase awareness of population problems, its correlates and possible strategies, and to provide assistance in forms and means requested by any Member Government. At the same time, ECWA managed to meet an increasing number of Government requests for advisory services on demographic issues and population problems. Short-term advisory services were rendered in the elucidation of population problems and in the formulation, execution and evaluation of projects.
2. During the period under review, ECWA completed the processing of the socio-demographic survey of Sana'a city, a project which was implemented jointly by the United Nations and the Yemen Arab Republic. This project aimed at providing an overall view of the socio-demographic features of the capital city, particularly with regard to data on size, structure, composition, economic characteristics and components of the population of Sana'a city. During the period, ECWA launched a similar survey in five cities in Oman. The latter survey served as a pilot exercise for the census and for estimating its personnel requirements. ECWA also co-operated with the Government of Lebanon in the analysis of data pertaining to the sample survey on migration. This survey provided useful information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the migrants, reasons for moving and plans regarding their future place of residence.
3. The 7th and 8th issues of the Population Bulletin of ECWA were published in July 1974 and January 1975 respectively covering activities in this region on population matters. The first issue of the Arabic version of the Bulletin was also published.
4. An Expert Group Meeting on the Demographic Aspects of Urbanization and Internal Migration was held in Beirut in December 1974. The main objectives of the meeting were to provide a forum for the exchange of knowledge, experience and views on the situation, levels and trends of urbanization and internal migration in countries of the ECWA region. Senior Government officials from the ECWA region and representatives from UN bodies participated in the meeting. The meeting made a number of recommendations which were taken into account in the formulation of a long-term work programme of ECWA in the demographic field.
5. During the period under review ECWA participated in the World Population Conference which was held in Bucharest, Romania, in August 1974, and the ACC Sub-Committee on population which was held in New York in December 1974. Of particular concern to ECWA was the World Population Plan of Action adopted by a consensus in Bucharest. This Plan of Action was to bring population policy out of the confines of demographic concern into the wider context of socio-economic development. The Plan emphasized the role of national efforts to solve population problems and reaffirmed that population policy was a legitimate area for Government actions designed to affect the six major demographic variables-natality, mortality, migration, population growth, distribution and age/sex composition.

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6. In order to initiate effective implementation of the World Population Plan of Action and the resolutions of the World Population Conference, a decision was taken to organize a Post-World Population Conference Consultation for the ECWA region, which was held in Doha, in March 1975 at the invitation of the Government of Qatar.

G. Transport, Communications and Tourism Division

1. The Transport, Communications and Tourism Division is now in the formative stage and it is hoped that by the middle of the year it will be fully staffed. The Chief of the Division was appointed in September 1974 and has participated in the Conference on Low-Cost Roads organized by the Arab Engineers Federation, in Kuwait in November 1974. He also represented the Secretariat at the Round Table Meeting on the Use of Containers in our Region, organized by the National Lebanese Committee of the International Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Arab Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture held in Beirut in January 1975.
2. A draft of the Consultants' survey on the transport situation in the region referred to in the Programme of Work and Priorities adopted by the First Session of the Commission was completed in December 1974.

H. Joint ECWA/UNIDO Industry Division

1. Commencing on 1 January 1975, the activities of ECWA in the field of Industry are undertaken by the joint ECWA/UNIDO Industry Division, which supersedes the 1974 organizational unit with outposted UNIDO staff.
2. In their desire to strengthen the co-operation between the two organizations and evolve a more effective and co-ordinated programme of industrial development in the countries of the ECWA region, the Executive Secretary of ECWA and the Executive Director of UNIDO entered into an agreement on 27 June 1974 for the establishment of the joint division. The Division which constitutes an integral part of the ECWA Secretariat is staffed by both ECWA and UNIDO personnel and its work programme formulated in consultation between the two organizations.
3. A joint ECWA/UNIDO meeting on Special Problems and Requirements of Industrial Development in Selected Countries of the Middle East was held in Beirut in November 1974. The meeting was held in response to the need for special assistance in respect of the least developed countries in the ECWA region, and of co-operation among developing countries in their economic and social development in pursuance of recommendations and resolutions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Industrial Development Board among others.

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4. In its programme of industrial branch development, the Industry Division concentrated in the period under review on the food processing industries in the countries of the region.

A survey was conducted through national consultants on: (a) sugar; (b) vegetable fat and oils; and, (c) fruits and vegetable canning and preservation industries in preparation for a joint ECWA/UNIDO meeting in Beirut in March 1975 on the Food Processing Industry held in the ECWA region.

5. The Industry Division initiated work on the 1975 work programme project in fertilizers by formulating a joint work plan for its implementation in collaboration with IDCAS and UNIDO.

The three stage work plan for the project which identifies the timing and inputs of each organization for its implementation, envisages: (a) a comprehensive industry in the Arab countries by three teams of experts; (b) an overall plan for the development of the industry on the national and multinational levels to be prepared by international consultants on the basis of the survey; and (c) a meeting jointly sponsored by the three organizations on co-ordination and promotion of the industry in the Arab states to consider the overall plan.

Stages (a) and (b) of the project will be completed in 1975 and the meeting is scheduled for February 1976.

6. Direct advisory services were provided during the period under review to a number of countries in the region. At the request of these countries the Regional Industrial Adviser undertook short-term missions to Bahrain, Iraq, Syria and Yemen Arab Republic where he carried out consultations on the appraisal of a number of project proposals incorporated in their development plans. These included projects in fertilizers, pesticides, sugar, vegetable oils, cement and petroleum refining. He also advised the authorities concerned on various matters pertaining to the organization and operation of a number of existing industrial institutions. In the area of training the Regional Industrial Adviser participated as a lecturer in a course on project formulation and evaluation at the Arab Planning Institute, Kuwait.

7. The Division also participated in, and contributed to, the formulation of the Commission's proposals for the 1976-1981 UNDP inter-country programming exercise and the Commission's own 1976-1977 biennium programme budget and 1976-1979 medium-term plan. The preparation of the industry sector of these programmes was the subject of consultations between ECWA and UNIDO for the purpose of co-ordinating the programme proposals of both organizations.

I. Information Services

1. The period under review witnessed a marked increase in the work of the Information Service following ECWA's First Session, the convening of the Commission's Special Session and the conclusion of several agreements between the Commission and Arab organizations.

A new approach in dealing with the press by establishing personal and ready contacts with focal points in every leading newspaper as well as radio and television so as to ensure adequate dissemination was established.