

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COUNCIL**

Distr.
LIMITED
E/ESCWA/28/4
6 May 2014
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Twenty-eighth session
Tunis, 15-18 September 2014

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

**SUPPORT FOR THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE:
INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE****Summary**

Pursuant to resolution 307 (XXVII) concerning the support for the Palestinian people, adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) at its twenty-seventh session (Beirut, 7-10 May 2012), the ESCWA secretariat continued to support the Palestinian people through the implementation of a wide range of activities. These activities included publications highlighting Israeli violations of international law in Palestine and the repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the Palestinian people; and initiatives to support development efforts in Palestine.

This report presents an overview of the normative and technical support provided by ESCWA to the Palestinian people and institutions, and proposes a series of events and activities to be organized by ESCWA and member States in observance of the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People in 2014.

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Introduction

1. At its twenty-seventh session (Beirut, 7-10 May 2012), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) adopted resolution 307 (XXVII) concerning the support for the Palestinian people. In that resolution, it requested the ESCWA secretariat to continue to support the Palestinian people and their institutions, build regional and international partnerships to implement programmes, projects and initiatives aimed at supporting their struggle to fully enjoy their rights. In November 2013, the United Nations General Assembly, at its sixty-eighth session, adopted resolution 68/12 concerning the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, in which it proclaimed 2014 the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, and requested the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to organize activities during the year, in cooperation with various stakeholders, including Governments, United Nations agencies, intergovernmental and civil society organizations. That resolution echoed General Assembly resolution 32/40, adopted some 36 years ago, in 1977, in which it called for the annual observance of 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

2. Palestine is different from other ESCWA member States, in that it is the only State under occupation: it is subjected to Israeli policies which violate international laws and charters, undermine economic and social development, exacerbate humanitarian and social conditions, and deny Palestinian refugees their right to return to their homeland. Consequently, it is only normal that the support provided by ESCWA to Palestine includes normative and technical activities which are not usually provided to other member States. These include raising awareness about the plight of the Palestinian people, and backing their efforts to obtain their inalienable rights, especially the right to self-determination. Through these activities, ESCWA sheds light on the Israeli violations of international law in Palestine and on the repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people.

I. RAISING AWARENESS OF THE ISRAELI VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND THE REPERCUSSIONS OF THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION ON THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

3. ESCWA strives to promote awareness of the plight of the Palestinian people by issuing a number of publications.

A. NOTE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ON THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REPERCUSSIONS OF THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION ON THE LIVING CONDITIONS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY, INCLUDING EAST JERUSALEM, AND OF THE ARAB POPULATION IN THE OCCUPIED SYRIAN GOLAN

4. ESCWA prepares this report annually, to be submitted by the United Nations Secretary-General to the General Assembly at its annual session. The report documents the Israeli violations of international law and human rights in Palestine, the Israeli discriminatory legislation and actions that constitute a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which stipulates that the occupying Power has the obligation to protect the people living under occupation, as well as their property and natural resources. The Israeli actions include excessive use of force; arbitrary arrest; restrictions on the movement of Palestinians through barriers and checkpoints and the construction of the separation wall in the West Bank, in addition to the blockade of the Gaza Strip; prohibiting the Palestinians from building and denying them access to their natural resources; systematic confiscation of land and property; expansion of settlements; pollution and exhaustion of natural resources, notably land and water. The report reviews the impact of those policies and actions on the social conditions of the Palestinian people, including on the health, education and economic sectors, including food security, which all incur substantial losses due to restrictions enforced by the Israeli authorities and their control over land, resources and border crossings.

B. REPORT ON THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN

5. Mandated by Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/42, ESCWA issues a report on the social and economic situation of Palestinian women biannually, presenting the latest information on the economic and social conditions of Palestinian women and girls living under Israeli occupation. In particular, it addresses poverty, unemployment, food insecurity, in addition to violence against women and the health problems that they suffer as a result of Israeli restrictions. It also monitors the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Council concerning Palestinian women, and provides recommendations for their protection and advancement. This report also feeds into the report of the Secretary-General on women, peace and security.

C. BOOKLET- PALESTINE UNDER OCCUPATION: FACTS AND FIGURES

6. Every year, ESCWA issues a handbook on the repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the occupied Palestinian territory, which derives its contents from the above-mentioned Note of the Secretary-General. ESCWA publishes this handbook in both Arabic and English, and disseminates it to official and civil institutions as a tool to raise awareness of the suffering of the Palestinian people. It also disseminates it during the activities undertaken in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. ESCWA also issues posters containing key information contained in the handbook.

II. NORMATIVE AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR PALESTINIAN INSTITUTIONS TO ACHIEVE DEVELOPMENT

7. ESCWA provides direct normative support to Palestinian institutions, including ministries and government bodies. It also provides technical support in the form of advisory services, training and capacity-building projects, in addition to sponsoring the participation of Palestinian officials and experts in regional and international conferences and events.

A. NORMATIVE SUPPORT

8. The normative support provided by ESCWA to Palestine and other member States includes the preparation of studies and policy papers, and the organization of workshops and meetings. Such support is intended to help them devise country-specific economic and social policies and strategies, and to strengthen regional integration and cooperation.

9. Given the particularity of Palestine, as a result of the Israeli occupation, ESCWA has carried out a number of studies and research on specific Palestinian sectors. In 2011, it conducted a technical study entitled “National profile of the information society in Palestine”, and presented it at the first International Conference on e-municipalities in Hebron, on 25 and 26 June 2012.

10. In 2012, ESCWA prepared a study on social protection in Palestine, which addressed various social protection and insurance programmes, as well as the opportunities and challenges associated with the development of integrated programmes in that field. This study aimed to assist decision makers in identifying the weaknesses of the various programmes and examining the possibility to harmonize them by conducting a national dialogue thereon.

11. Also on social protection, ESCWA carried out in 2013 a study on the Zakat fund in the West Bank as a tool for social protection from a right-based perspective, in consultation with the concerned Palestinian stakeholders. The study was intended to be a contribution to the 2014-2016 National Development Plan in Palestine.

B. TECHNICAL SUPPORT

12. In the light of the conclusions and recommendations resulting from its normative activities, ESCWA provides technical support to member States, including Palestine, upon their request. Such support includes the provision of advisory services, the organization of capacity-building and training courses, and the development of institution-building programmes in a number of fields. It aims to meet the specific needs of Palestine, to assist the Palestinians in addressing the shortcomings that prevent the development of their public institutions, and to formulate development programmes, plans and strategies.

13. ESCWA organized a number of training activities and educational visits intended for capacity-building in surface area measurement, geographical names, strategic planning, policy formulation, policy tools for green economy, environmental governance, energy pricing, energy efficiency participatory research, monitoring and evaluation, information technology, electronic libraries, gender mainstreaming in government institutions, in addition to legislation on specific issues.

14. ESCWA provides its advisory services to Palestine through official visits undertaken by regional consultants. These services cover a wide range of issues, including water and geospatial water-related information and data management in government institutions; sectoral development strategies; national agricultural surveys; national plans to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security; basic registration systems; monitoring and assessment indicators for the National Cultural Strategy; and national accounting systems.

15. Outside the Palestinian territories, ESCWA offered technical support to several dialogue initiatives organized in Lebanon and pertaining to the situation of Palestinian refugees. Among others, it supported the work of the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee affiliated to the Presidency of the Lebanese Council of Ministers.

III. INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

16. In observance of the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, ESCWA is organizing a number of activities, in cooperation with its partners in the civil society and United Nations organizations. While ESCWA has been annually observing the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People for many years through a number of activities, it seeks, this year in particular, to widen the scope of those activities in order to achieve two main objectives: firstly to raise awareness of the suffering of the Palestinian people under occupation and abroad and of their efforts to attain their inalienable rights; secondly to implement specific activities and initiatives that would help the Palestinian people overcome development challenges and those undermining their livelihood, and mobilize the needed resources for this purpose.

17. ESCWA has embarked on the preparation of various cultural, official, intellectual and media activities ever since the United Nations proclaimed 2014 as the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. It will continue to carry out those activities until 29 November 2014, which marks the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

A. THE "181 DAYS" CAMPAIGN

18. In March 2014, ESCWA launched the "181 Days" campaign on its Facebook account. It consists of posting one piece of information on Palestine every day, for 181 days, in reference to General Assembly resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947 concerning the future government of Palestine and containing the Plan of Partition of Palestine. This campaign seeks to raise awareness and offer the advocates of the rights of the Palestinian people materials and resources to enhance their knowledge of the conditions of Palestine and its people under Israeli occupation.

B. SUPPORT FOR THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON

19. ESCWA strives to enhance its support for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, by building the capacity of civil society organizations concerned with their issues and offering them technical and normative support, in the light of the outcome of the dialogue process launched by ESCWA with a number of those organizations.

C. PALESTINE: THE ISRAELI OCCUPATION AND THE FOURTH GENEVA CONVENTION

20. ESCWA has started the preparation of a report which documents Israeli violations of the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Major international entities, including the Security Council and the International Court of Justice, stressed the need to respect this Convention and implement its provisions in the occupied Palestinian territory. ESCWA will launch a large-scale media campaign to inform Arab and international actors of the findings of the report.

D. CAMPAIGN TO MOBILIZE CELEBRITIES AND EMINENT PERSONALITIES

21. In collaboration with several United Nations bodies, civil institutions and the media, ESCWA is planning to mobilize the largest number of celebrities and eminent personalities in all areas, so that they express their solidarity with the Palestinian people and their rights. It is expected that this activity will earn wide media coverage, and will be joined by a high number of figures and celebrities wishing to voice their solidarity with Palestine. This campaign is also expected to effectively promote public awareness of the rights and plight of the Palestinian people.

E. INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

22. Every year, on 29 November, ESCWA organizes a series of activities to commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. The objective of these activities is to voice Arab and international solidarity with the Palestinian people, and to increase awareness of their rights and efforts to attain them. They shed light on the practices of the Israeli authorities in the occupied territories, as well as on Israeli breaches of Palestinian rights and international laws and resolutions, notably their repercussions on the humanitarian, economic and social situation of Palestinians. Given that this year marks the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, ESCWA intends to organize special cultural events on that day, such as exhibitions, symposiums and poetry readings, as well as formal activities involving high-level officials and personalities.

F. OTHER EVENTS

23. ESCWA will provide support to civil society initiatives undertaken for the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People. It plans to issue new publications on the question of Palestine, in order to help achieve the objectives of those initiatives. It asked its partners to put forward proposals and ideas for activities that would serve the Palestinian people, to be implemented in 2014.

IV. PROPOSALS

24. Pursuant to ESCWA resolution 307 (XXVII) concerning the support for the Palestinian people, General Assembly resolution 68/12 of concerning the proclamation of 2014 as the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and several other resolutions adopted by the League of Arab States summits in that regard, the ESCWA secretariat proposes to increase the support for the Palestinian people and institutions, and for initiatives aimed at strengthening their resilience and capacity to overcome existing challenges. It also proposes to intensify the events planned in observance of the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, by taking the following steps:

(a) To hold formal and popular events in member States as an expression of solidarity of the peoples of the region with the Palestinian people and their efforts to attain their rights, in coordination with the ESCWA secretariat and other United Nations bodies, and also with the Palestinian National Committee for the Commemoration of the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(b) To encourage initiatives by Arab and foreign civil and governmental bodies aimed at strengthening the capacities of the Palestinian people and supporting their efforts to attain their rights, by ensuring extensive media coverage and providing all kinds of support for these initiatives;

(c) To include references to the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People into cultural and artistic activities in member States, such as using the emblem of the Year, and emphasizing the Year's significance for global support to the Palestinian people;

(d) To commemorate the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November, and carry out a wide range of official and popular activities in as many Arab capitals as possible.
