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**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RESOLUTIONS
ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION AT ITS TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION**

Summary

This report presents the actions taken by the secretariat to implement the resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) at its twenty-seventh session (Beirut, 7-10 May 2012) on the various areas of work of the Commission and issues of interest to member States.

It also presents the information received from member States on the implementation of those resolutions.

14-00043

I. ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE SECRETARIAT

302 (XXVII) Request from Libya, Morocco and Tunisia to become members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

A. TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION

1.   In this resolution, the Commission requested the secretariat to submit a recommendation to the Economic and Social Council to approve the requests from Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. It also requested the secretariat to invite all other Arab countries to become members of ESCWA and to coordinate with relevant United Nations entities and the League of Arab States the re-designation of ESCWA to become the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for the Arab Region.

B. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

2.   The secretariat submitted to the Economic and Social Council resolution 302 (XXVII) containing a recommendation to approve the requests from Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. The Council approved the admission of those countries to membership of the Commission in its resolution 2012/1 adopted during its substantive session of 2012 (New York, 1-25 July 2012).

3.   The secretariat has continued its efforts to invite more Arab countries to submit applications to become members of ESCWA. Such efforts are aimed at widening ESCWA membership to include all Arab countries and at establishing a platform to align ESCWA goals, activities and projects with Arab priorities and the efforts of the League of Arab States, the Regional Bureau for Arab States of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Economic Commission for Africa.

303 (XXVII) Towards enhancing the macroeconomic policy in ESCWA member countries

A. TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION

4.   In this resolution, the Commission requested the secretariat to form an expert group to discuss macroeconomic policies in the region, facilitate the exchange of good practice between countries and provide assistance in finding solutions to key macroeconomic issues. It also requested the secretariat to provide specialized advisory and training services in the economic field, to disseminate information and to coordinate regional multi-stakeholder meetings. It requested the Executive Secretary to follow up on the implementation of the resolution and submit a report on the progress achieved in that regard to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session.

B. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

5.   Pursuant to this resolution, the secretariat formed an expert group to discuss macroeconomic policies in the region. It included several relevant activities in the programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015, such as the following:

(a) Holding expert group meetings, in collaboration and coordination with member States and regional and international organizations, to undertake the following:

- Evaluate the progress in formulating and implementing economic reform policies;

- Establish sustainable institutions to enhance the role of the private sector under good economic governance;

- Evaluate the progress in implementing sustainable strategies for governing State-owned companies;

- Implement the recommendations contained in the Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the Arab Region and the Arab Development Outlook;

- Examine investment policies in Arab countries;

(b) Providing advisory and training services in the following areas:

- Adopting and implementing macroeconomic and good governance policies;

- Preparing and applying estimated general equilibrium models and mathematical macroeconomic models in the various economic and social fields;

(c) Preparing and publishing technical and analytical reports and publications on various economic and social issues, such as the Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the Arab Region; the Arab Development Outlook, Development Finance in the Arab Region; Economic Integration in the Arab Region; and a number of specialized technical papers;

(d) Implementing several field projects funded by the United Nations Development Account, including those entitled "Strengthening capacities in the ESCWA region to negotiate bilateral investment treaties"; and "Strengthening capacities to utilize workers' remittances in financing for development".

304 (XXVII) Role of participation and social justice in achieving sustainable development

A. TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION

6.   In this resolution, the Commission requested the secretariat to undertake the following:

(a) Assist member States in developing employment strategies that are integrated with economic, education and social protection policies while paying special attention to informal sector workers and youth unemployment;

(b) Strengthen the capacity of member States to mainstream the concerns of older persons, youth and persons with disabilities into national development plans and engage them in the formulation and implementation of those plans;

(c) Assist member States in exploring adequate instruments for expanding social security coverage, including insurance and social protection;

(d) Support member States in strengthening participatory social dialogue and building public, private and civic partnerships aimed at enhancing the delivery and accessibility of social services with a focus on accountability and transparency;

(e) Strengthen cooperation with member States to collect data on all social groups, disseminate good practice and exchange experience in designing policies and programmes aimed at promoting social inclusion and providing equal opportunities in all aspects of life.

7.   It also requested the Executive Secretary to follow up on the implementation of this resolution and to submit a report on the progress achieved in that regard to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session.

B. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

8.   Pursuant to this resolution, the secretariat initiated the following outputs:

- A study on the labour-intensive employment programme in Yemen, containing an analysis of the programme; an evaluation of its advantages and disadvantages as a social protection tool; and a comparison between labour-intensive programmes and capital-intensive programmes;

- A report on standards and indicators for measuring the effect of youth policies in Arab countries;

- A policy brief on migration and the opportunities and challenges facing young people;

- Three studies on social protection mechanisms: the first covers microinsurance in the region; the second covers the expansion of the social security network in Jordan, the mechanisms adopted to expand the scope of pension systems and the resulting benefits and challenges; and the third tackles increasing job opportunities in the public sector as a means of broadening social protection in Yemen;

- A project entitled "Social protection as a component of development" aimed at building capacities of ESCWA member States to formulate integrated social protection policies on the principles of human rights, citizenship and equity.

9.   The secretariat has completed the following outputs:

(a)   Studies, research and other publications:

- The Integrated Social Policy Report V entitled "Towards a New Welfare Mix: Rethinking the Roles of the State, the Market and Civil Society";

- Three studies on labour market issues: the first entitled "Active Labour Market Policies"; the second "Labour Market Data, Structures and Challenges in the ESCWA Region"; and the third "Economic Policy in the ESCWA Region and Its Impact on Employment";

- A brochure entitled "Managing Change: Mainstreaming Disability into the Development Process";

- A training manual entitled "Capacity-Building for Partnership in Democratic Governance", a reference guide on the foundation of partnerships between government institutions and civil society to establish democratic governance and manage transition processes;

- A study entitled "Promises of Spring: Citizenship and Civic Engagement in Democratic Transitions". It focuses on the main elements of consensus building and the maintenance of social cohesion during transitional periods. It also defines the civil State, the pillars of social justice and the requirements of transitional justice in the aftermath of popular uprisings. The study offers recommendations on the environment conducive to institutionalizing partnerships, empowering civil society organizations and cementing the principles of citizenship;

- A working paper and policy brief containing key information on the concept of social justice and the principles, tools and challenges linked to achieving participatory social justice;

- Summary reports and papers on participatory democracy, participation in the achievement of transitional justice and effective indicators for the measurement of civil society participation;

- A concept paper for a regional project on youth employment;

- A report on the impact of youth participation in the decision-making process on social cohesion in Arab countries;

- A technical report on youth issues, priorities and policies in some Arab countries;

- A reference guide on formulating and implementing national youth policies targeting policymakers at the technical level in Arab countries and presenting the stages and tools for formulating, developing, implementing and evaluating national youth policies. The guide includes a handbook on the main guidelines for national youth policies;

- A manual entitled "Policy options under the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY)", containing over 45 illustrative examples from across the world on responsive national policies to various youth issues and priorities, guided by WPAY;

- Technical and knowledge-centred support for the preparation of a national agenda for youth development in Yemen in response to the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference and the National Youth Conference;

- Technical and knowledge-centred support to prepare a vision for the national youth policy in Tunisia in the light of the outcomes of the consultative meeting between youth groups and the National Youth Observatory (Tunis, 3-5 October 2013);

- An study entitled "Ageing in the Arab region: Trends, Implications and Policy Options", which was prepared within the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014 Operational Review (twenty years after it was held);

- The Population and Development Report on "Development Policy Implications of Age-Structural Transitions in Arab countries", which stresses the need to rethink the approach to development and reformulate economic and social policies to ensure that they respond to the age-structural transitions;

- Country profiles on integrated social protection in Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen;

- A study on women's participation in civil society and their role in the Arab popular uprisings that tackles the challenges faced by women in their struggle to achieve social justice and gender equality.

(b) Support for ESCWA member States:

- Organized the "Subregional consultations on labour-intensive employment programmes as a tool for extending social protection" (Tunis, 25-26 September 2013). These consultations, held in collaboration with the International Labour Organization, the Tunisian Ministry of Investment and International Cooperation and several member States, aimed to build the capacities of officials to examine the various options for public work programmes; to exchange experiences to improve labour-intensive employment programmes; and to provide social protection in a sustainable and equitable manner;

- Organized, in collaboration with the League of Arab States and the Arab Organization of Disabled People, the Conference on the Arab Decade for Persons with Disability and beyond: Enhancing the knowledge and policy infrastructure for the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Arab Region (Cairo, 30-31 October 2013)Participants in the Conference discussed the challenges and achievements of policies related to disability in Arab countries. They also discussed documents prepared by ESCWA on the basis of statistical data from 22 Arab countries, which was the first time data from such a large number of Arab countries was made available, in addition to information on national legal and institutional frameworks. The Conference concluded with a joint statement reaffirming the commitment of participating countries to implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and calling for the establishment of a new regional framework to support Governments in their efforts to formulate appropriate policies;

- Held consultations with the Alliance of Civil Society Organizations in Libya aimed at examining the potential role of civil society institutions and the technical support that ESCWA could offer to enhance the role of civil society in formulating public policies and developing related laws;

- Held five dialogue sessions on the theme "Civil society dialogues: exploring new frontiers" (between January and July 2013), aimed at evaluating the changes in the Arab region as a result of popular uprisings in several Arab countries and at discussing the role of civil society organizations in promoting the process of change and tackling its challenges;

- Held the regional Arab consultative meeting of civil society organizations on the post-2015 development agenda (Beirut, 14 March 2013), culminating in a declaration by Arab civil society organizations outlining the priorities they have identified for the post-2015 development framework;

- Held an open dialogue session on the priorities of transition processes and the main developments in and challenges faced by the Arab region as a result of the popular uprisings in some Arab countries (Beirut, 5 November 2013);

- Held a subregional workshop on "Building capacity for partnership in democratic governance" (Beirut, 5-9 November 2013), aimed at building the capacities of organizations and institutions involved in social and political movements to participate in reform processes, disseminate a culture of dialogue, develop mechanisms that strengthen social cohesion and avoid the escalation of conflicts during periods of transition to democracy;

- Provided technical guidance and support to seven civil, academic and government entities in Iraq and Yemen aimed at broadening the scope of those benefiting from capacity-building programmes to implement domestic and participatory development approaches and participatory development research methods adopted by ESCWA. Those entities held a large number of training workshops and implemented strategic development plans over the period 2012-2013;

- Took part in the preparations for the Arab forum on the theme "Towards a new welfare mix: rethinking the roles of the State, market and civil society in the provision of basic social services" (Beirut, 19-20 December 2012), in which government and civil society representatives discussed social service issues, with a focus on accountability and transparency;

- Organized a workshop on "Microinsurance as a mechanism for social protection for the agricultural sector in Lebanon" (Beirut, 1 October 2013), aimed at raising awareness of

microinsurance and building the capacities of officials and non-governmental organizations to examine the available options related to developing microinsurance;

- Held a regional capacity-building workshop on "Youth issues and priorities in the ESCWA region" (Beirut, 16-18 October 2012) aimed at determining the principle issues that should be covered in national youth policies in the region, and reference frameworks for developing and adapting national youth policies to respond to youth issues and priorities, guided by WPAY;

- Held a regional workshop on "Developing and reforming youth policies in Arab countries" (Dubai, 3-4 April 2013), in partnership with the General Authority of Youth and Sports Welfare in the United Arab Emirates, to support Arab countries in developing national youth policies that respond to youth priorities and WPAY recommendations;

- Held a regional workshop on "Empowering youth in Arab countries: rethinking youth employment policies" (Beirut, 6-7 November 2013), where the experiences of five Arab countries were presented, namely Jordan, Iraq, Palestine, Tunisia and Yemen;

- Held a regional workshop on "Youth empowerment in the post-2015 development agenda" (Tunis, 13-14 December 2013), where experiences of Arab countries regarding youth empowerment and their participation in future decision-making processes were presented;

- Held a national workshop for senior staff of the Higher Council for Youth and Sports in Palestine (Amman, 16-19 June 2013) to build their capacity to develop a plan for the implementation of the national youth strategy for the period 2014-2016;

- Held a consultative workshop on "National youth policy in Iraq" (Amman, 17-20 September 2013) to build the capacity of the Technical Committee for the National Youth Strategy in Iraq to develop a work plan for the monitoring and evaluation of the strategy;

- Collected data on persons with special needs as a necessary step towards making them beneficiaries of national development plans, highlighting data gaps across the region and collaborating with special needs organizations in formulating development plans (a report on this process is currently being prepared);

- Organized a training workshop on "Programme cycle management and project formulation" for staff of the Ministry of Social Affairs in Lebanon (Beirut, 21-25 October 2013);

- Assessed the requirements of various social affairs institutions in Palestine for technical support provided by ESCWA for 2014;

- Provided technical guidance to the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security in the Sudan, on the formulation of integrated social policies and the preparation of poverty maps in the Sudan (November 2013);

- Provided technical guidance to the Ministry of Social Development in Oman, to develop the social work strategy for the period 2016-2025 (January 2014);

- Organized a training workshop for senior staff of the Higher Council for Youth and Sports in Palestine on "Strategic planning, public policy making, monitoring and evaluation" (Ramallah, 18-25 February 2014).

**305 (XXVII) Sustainable development in the region and follow-up and implementation
of the decisions of the Rio+20 Conference**

A. TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION

10.   In this resolution, the Commission requested the secretariat to prepare a report on the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference that includes proposals regarding matters of concern to the region and to assist member States in building their capacity to address those outcomes. It also requested the secretariat to continue to coordinate and cooperate with Arab Governments, United Nations organizations and the League of Arab States and its specialized committees to take measures to achieve sustainable development, and in particular to provide support to the energy, water and environmental sectors on climate change issues and to promote regional institutional frameworks for sustainable development. It requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session on measures taken to implement this resolution.

B. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

11.   Pursuant to this resolution, the secretariat implemented the following outputs:

(a) Studies, research and other publications:

- A report on the follow-up to the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference that was submitted to the Technical Committee at its seventh meeting (Amman, 18-19 March 2013);

- A background paper on "Rio+20 outcomes and implications for the Arab region", which was presented at the Arab Regional Implementation Meeting for the twentieth session of the Commission for Sustainable Development – Follow-up on Rio+20 (Dubai, 29-30 May 2013). The Meeting adopted the "Dubai document for the Arab regional implementation of Rio+20" that highlighted Arab priorities and specific recommendations;

- A background paper on "Key issues for consideration on the sustainable development goals and post-2015 development agenda" from an Arab perspective, that was presented at the Arab Regional Implementation Meeting in Dubai;

- A manual on climate change negotiations which was presented at a regional training workshop on "Capacity development for climate change negotiations (Amman, 22-24 October 2013) which was organized by the secretariat in collaboration with the League of Arab States;

- A study to assess policies designed to develop green production sectors, and identify the requirements for their development and the possible opportunities, through the implementation of pilot programmes;

- A study on monitoring the transition to a green economy in Arab countries from the perspective of small and medium-sized enterprises;

- A study entitled "The Role of Renewable Energy in Mitigating Climate Change in the ESCWA Region".

(b) Support for ESCWA member States:

- The secretariat held "The Arab consultative meeting on the sustainable development goals" (Tunis, 18-19 November 2013). It will also hold an intergovernmental meeting in that regard in April 2014;

- It initiated, in collaboration with the League of Arab States and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the process of updating the Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region in the light of the Rio+20 outcome document and regional and international developments. It was agreed that it should be renamed the Conceptual Framework for Sustainable Development in the Arab Region. It will be submitted to the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment at its special session in May 2014 and, if adopted, it will then be presented to the Economic and Social Council at its meeting in Tunis at the start of 2015;

- It is developing an investment approach and road map for the transition to a green economy in the Arab region; the proposed methodology for the preparation of the road map was approved by the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment at its 2013 session;

- It has been closely monitoring the international debates on the establishment of the sustainable development goals and the post-2015 development agenda. It participated in a number of events at the twentieth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and at the first session of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, in New York, in September 2013;

- It held a regional workshop on "Lessons and challenges for the implementation of international sustainable development guidelines in conflict-afflicted countries (Beirut, 11-12 July 2012), in collaboration with the Sustainable Development and Productivity Division and the Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues Division at ESCWA and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs;

- It organized, in collaboration with the Arab Planning Institute in Kuwait, a regional expert group meeting on the role of small and medium-sized enterprises in sustainable development in the Arab region (Kuwait, 6-7 November 2012);

- It developed a number of plans to meet sustainable development requirements and to follow up the issues contained in the Rio+20 outcome document, by undertaking the following activities with regional partners:

  - Holding a regional meeting to discuss post-Rio+20 and to prepare for the nineteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development in May 2013;

  - Organizing a town hall meeting for ESCWA divisions aimed at ensuring the compatibility of their plans with the Rio+20 outcomes;

  - Presenting a report at the fourteenth session of the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR) (Cairo, 30 September 2012);

  - Organizing meetings between the Regional Coordination Mechanism and the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change to discuss the sustainable development goals (December 2012);

  - Participating in the twenty-fourth meeting of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (Baghdad, 24-25 December 2012) to discuss post-Rio+20;

- The secretariat organized a joint consultative meeting on the water and energy nexus in the ESCWA region for the Committee on Water Resources and the Committee on Energy (Beirut, 27-28 June 2012);

- It continued to implement the Regional Initiative for the Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socioeconomic Vulnerability in the Arab Region, with the League of Arab States, several Arab Governments, other United Nations entities and other international organizations;

- It continued to implement the GIZ project "Adaptation to Climate Change in the Water Sector in the Middle East and North Africa Region";

- In 2013, it launched the Development Account project on "Developing Capacities of Arab Countries for Climate Change Adaptation by Applying Integrated Water Resource Management Tools", in collaboration with the UNEP Regional Office for West Asia, the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Arab Countries Water Utilities Association and the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ);

- It is also implementing the Development Account project on "Strengthening National Capacities to Manage Water Scarcity and Drought in West Asia and North Africa", in collaboration with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and other organizations;

- Within the framework of the Development Account project on "Capacity-building on climate change mitigation for poverty alleviation in Western Asia", it organized the "Conference on renewable energy and sustainable development in rural areas of the ESCWA region" (Rabat, 26-28 November 2013), in collaboration with the Ministry of Energy, Mining, Water and the Environment in Morocco, the League of Arab States and the Regional Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency;

- Within the framework of the Development Account project on "Promoting energy efficiency investments for climate change mitigation and sustainable development", it organized a regional training on "Technical and economic aspects for developing energy efficiency investment projects" (Tunis, 24-26 September 2012);

- It organized, in collaboration with the League of Arab States, a regional training workshop on "Capacity development for climate change negotiations for the Arab countries" (Amman, 22-24 October 2013);

- It participated in the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the eighth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (COP18/CMP8) (Doha, 26 November - 7 December 2012). ESCWA and the League of Arab States chaired a side event on climate change adaptation initiatives and climate change vulnerability, in collaboration with UNDP, UNEP and WHO.

306 (XXVII) Development of the Arab Internet Governance Forum process and sustaining efforts in the Arabic domain names field

A. TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION

12.   In this resolution, the Commission encouraged Governments of member States to actively participate in completing the process of establishing the Arab Internet Governance Forum in coordination with the League of Arab States. It requested the secretariat to facilitate the establishment of the Arab Internet Governance Forum in partnership with the League of Arab States and in cooperation with the relevant international and regional organizations and the United Nations regional commissions and to support policies and directions concerning the implementation of the subprogrammes of the Arab Regional Road Map for

Internet Governance under the umbrella of the Arab Internet Governance Forum process and to sustain efforts in the Arabic domain names field. It requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session on the progress achieved in the implementation of this resolution.

B. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

13.   Pursuant to this resolution, the ESCWA secretariat, in cooperation with the League of Arab States, as sponsors of the Arab Internet Governance Forum, carried out the following activities:

- Established the Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group of the Arab Internet Governance Forum by setting out rules for membership applications and nominations and the regulatory mechanism for the Committee and the Forum;

- Invited the Governments of member States to join the Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group of the Forum;

- Encouraged members of the Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group to participate in all activities of the Forum, by funding those activities directly or indirectly;

- Participated in the coordination meeting for the major Forum partners (Beirut, April 2013), in which the Forum Executive Bureau for Joint Coordination was established;

- Prepared the reference framework document of the Forum's structure and components for the period 2012-2015 which sets out the functions and work mechanisms of the Forum, taking into account the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society; the Arab dialogue initiative on Internet governance, principles and goals; the outcomes of the consultative meeting on the establishment of the Forum; and the decisions of the Arab Telecommunication and Information Council of ministers in this regard; the document was presented at the coordination meeting for the major Forum partners;

- Encouraged the Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group to establish three interim subcommittees from among its members to submit suggestions and future visions for the Forum concerning funding, marketing, communications and governance mechanisms; ESCWA oversaw the work of those subcommittees and participated in their activities;

- Organized four meetings of the Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group in 2012 and 2013 and actively participated in them as follows: the first meeting was held in Cairo, on 18 and 19 June 2012; the second was also held in Cairo, on 5 and 6 September 2012; the third was held in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, from 3 to 5 March 2013; and the fourth was held in Casablanca, Morocco, from 10 to 12 June 2013;

- Organized two open consultative meetings. The first on issues related to Internet governance in the Arab world (Cairo, 4 September 2012), in collaboration with the Kuwait Information Technology Society, and the second on the theme "Multilateral Internet governance in the Arab region: we are all partners" (Dubai, 3-5 March 2013), which was hosted by the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of the United Arab Emirates and the Coordination Centre of the European Internet Protocol Networks (RIPE NCC), and in collaboration with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN);

- Encouraged Governments to host the Forum's annual sessions. Such efforts have succeeded for two consecutive years, 2012 and 2013. Kuwait hosted the first annual session on the theme "Better Internet for a better Arab world" (9-11 October 2012), which was attended by more than 300 participants. Algiers hosted the second annual session on the theme "Partners for development" (1-3 October 2013) which was attended by 14 Arab ministers, and around 800 participants;

- Planned and led the organization of the first and second annual sessions of the Forum, ensuring that the agendas of both sessions contained the key issues highlighted in the Arab Regional Road Map for Internet Governance; organized three workshops during the first session on the development of Arabic domain names; Internet exchange points; and protecting children online and the effects of website filtering and regulations in the Arab region; and organized a workshop during the second session on legislation concerning the protection of children online in the Arab region;

- Prepared a project document within ESCWA aimed at enhancing the sustainability of the Forum by mobilizing the necessary resources to fund its activities as a sponsor organization of the Forum.

307 (XXVII) Support for the Palestinian people

A. TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION

14.   In this resolution, the Commission requested the secretariat to continue to support the Palestinian people and their institutions in accordance with the priorities and needs defined by the Palestinian people and their institutions, through the following:

(a) Raising awareness of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and disseminating information on Israeli violations of those rights;

(b) Monitoring and documenting the practices of the Israeli occupation and their negative economic, social and environmental repercussions, and submitting periodic reports on the subject to the ministerial sessions of the commission;

(c) Increasing cooperation between ESCWA and regional and international bodies, including the League of Arab States and the United Nations organizations involved in assisting and supporting the Palestinian people to build and reinforce Palestinian institutions;

(d) Supporting the efforts of Palestine to obtain full membership in international forums, organizations and bodies;

(e) Developing and implementing initiatives and projects to support the Palestinian people and mitigate the impact of the Israeli occupation on living conditions;

(f) Mobilizing resources and building regional and international partnerships for the implementation of projects, programmes and initiatives to support the Palestinian people in their struggle for their full rights.

15.   It also requested the Executive Secretary to follow up the implementation of this resolution and report on progress made in that regard to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session.

B. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

16.   Pursuant to this resolution, the secretariat undertook the following activities:

(a) Studies, research and other publications:

- The 2012 and 2013 reports 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. The Secretary-General referred both reports to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly;

- A booklet on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation, for distribution at the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly;

- A poster containing information on a number of Security Council resolutions, the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Israeli occupation of Palestine;

- Consultations with UNDP in the Gaza Strip to prepare a joint study on public sector workers and their integration options (July-September 2012);

- Observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People and other activities in partnership with the League of Arab States to support the Palestinian people through coordinating and exchanging information to monitor and document the practices of the Israeli occupation and their repercussions on the Palestinian people (from June 2012 to date).

(b) Support for ESCWA member States:

- Held consultations with the Palestinian Authority and Palestinian non-governmental organizations to develop a training session for experts on research skills in the Gaza Strip;

- Organized a training session for Palestinian government staff on formulating development policies (December 2013);

- Provided technical support to the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee, under the Presidency of the Lebanese Council of Ministers, in formulating its work plan and strategy; facilitated the workshops organized by the Committee; and participated in the establishment of the National Observatory for Palestinian Gatherings in Lebanon (June-December 2013).

308 (XXVII) The regional dimension of development

A. TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION

17.   In this resolution, the Commission welcomed the recommendations of the independent study on the regional dimension of development and the United Nations and invited the United Nations bodies working at the global and regional levels to support their implementation. It requested the secretariat, in consultation with regional and subregional organizations and with the Regional Coordination Mechanism where appropriate, to ensure implementation of those recommendations, so that the engagement of the United Nations system with regional and subregional organizations is coherent and coordinated, contributes to the realization of strategic goals and fits into a larger comprehensive approach in support of regional integration efforts. It requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session on the implementation of this resolution.

B. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

18.   Pursuant to this resolution, the secretariat undertook the following activities:

- Continued to ensure synergy between the work of the United Nations Development Group and the Regional Coordination Mechanism, in close collaboration with the Regional United Nations Development Group for the Arab States, by participating in the Regional Peer Support Group for the provision of technical support to the preparation and revision of common country assessments and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework;

- Developed a matrix of the various activities that will be undertaken jointly with the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States;

- Strengthened ties with a number of United Nations entities to involve them in the work of the Regional Coordination Mechanism and to encourage the adoption of regional approaches to development. The following are the main United Nations entities that ESCWA approached:

  - The International Trade Centre in Geneva, concerning integrated regional trade issues;

  - The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, to mobilize regional efforts to participate in the preparations for the Annual Ministerial Review of the Economic and Social Council;

  - The United Nations Environment Programme, to develop a regional vision regarding the sustainable development goals;

  - The United Nations Population Fund, to collaborate in supporting member States prepare for the International Conference on Population and Development +20 in 2014;

  - The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), to collaborate in supporting member States prepare for the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women to be held in 2015, at which the Commission will review the progress made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (Beijing+20);

- Coordinated, when necessary, with United Nations resident coordinators in member States, including Egypt, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and Yemen;

- Signed a memorandum of understanding with the League of Arab States on 27 June 2013 to strengthen cooperation, support decision-making structures within the League and strengthen ties with its ministerial councils, within a new framework for partnership;

- Prepared a report on the economic, social and environmental clusters, which sets out the strategic priorities and joint procedures for cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States. This report and two other reports, one on the political cluster and the other on the humanitarian aid cluster, were prepared in response to calls from the Secretary General of the League and the Secretary-General of the United Nations to enhance coordination;

- Coordinated with UNDP periodical updates of the matrix of joint activities of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, agreed in July 2012. The Regional Coordination Mechanism meeting was chosen as a forum to review the progress achieved and reaffirm commitments;

- Organized a meeting of the Regional Coordination Mechanism in 2012 and two meetings in 2013. Regional and international organizations participating in the last meeting (Cairo, 26-27 November 2013) examined ways to support regional integration, especially by supporting the outcomes of the Arab Economic and Social Development Summit, including those related to establishing an Arab customs union. Participants also discussed the Arab stance on the post-2015 development agenda and the support that the United Nations entities could provide to the next Arab Economic and Social Development Summit, which will be held in Tunis, in 2015, and decided to submit their suggestions to relevant ministerial councils.

309 (XXVII) Adoption of the amendments introduced to the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013

A. TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION

19. In this resolution, the Commission requested the secretariat to follow up the implementation of the programme of work and, if necessary, include activities to address any challenge that emerges in the ESCWA region. It requested the Executive Secretary to convey to member States information on further

amendments that may be introduced to the programme of work in the report on progress made in implementing the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013 that will be distributed to member States.

B. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

20. No further amendments were introduced to the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013 in its version adopted by member States. The programme of work was implemented and the secretariat prepared a report on its implementation entitled "Programme performance report for the biennium 2012-2013 which is presented to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session under the symbol E/ESCWA/28/5(Part I).

310 (XXVII) Adoption of the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015

A. TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION

21. In this resolution, the Commission requested the secretariat to distribute the strategic framework in the form adopted by member States. It requested the Executive Secretary to submit a report to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session on the progress made in implementing the strategic framework as well as the amendments introduced thereto.

B. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

22. The strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015 served to prepare the programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015. The secretariat prepared a report on the amendments introduced to the programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015, which is presented to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session under the symbol E/ESCWA/28/6(Part II).

312 (XXVII) Evaluation of the work of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

A. TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION

23. In this resolution, the Commission endorsed the recommendations contained in the report on the evaluation of the work of the Commission and requested that they be implemented. It called upon the Executive Secretary to continue efforts to improve the performance of the secretariat through, inter alia, evaluation of the work of the secretariat and review of its internal structure to achieve the highest standards of effectiveness and efficiency. It requested the Executive Secretary to report to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session on the progress made in implementing this resolution.

B. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

24. ESCWA strived to implement all the recommendations contained in the report on the evaluation of the work of the Commission, enhance intergovernmental mechanisms and strengthen coordination with several United Nations agencies and programmes.

25. ESCWA received the results of the first "performance scorecard" for the biennium 2010-2011 that assessed the evaluation practices of the United Nations Secretariat. Compared to other departments and regional commission, ESCWA was generally rated positively, given that it had clear reporting lines; had adopted an evaluation policy and work plan with monitoring mechanisms and incorporating accountability and lessons learned; and had published the 2010 and 2011 evaluation reports on its website.

26. The scorecard rated ESCWA as making progress in some aspects of its evaluation work, such as absorbing the results of the evaluation and improving the quality of evaluation reports. It also highlighted the following three shortfalls: the budget allocated to evaluation procedures did not exceed 1 per cent of the

ESCWA budget; insufficient adoption of the evaluation outcomes to improve results and enhance accountability; and the lack of distinction in the evaluation reporting lines between evaluation processes and planning processes. It should be noted that the results of the evaluation scorecard allowed ESCWA to highlight gaps and make the evaluation process an integral part of its work.

27.   The secretariat continued to improve its performance by bridging gaps in the work procedures and institutional structure, allocating the necessary resources and broadening internal evaluation processes to cover its subprogrammes, the Development Account projects, extrabudgetary projects, the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation and the intergovernmental meetings mechanism. The ESCWA evaluation policy aims to deepen the culture of innovation by adapting to regional changes and benefitting from past experiences.

28.   The secretariat reviewed the terms of reference and structure of the Commission in 2013 with a view to ensuring that its work was consistent with the needs of member States. Taking into account the comparative advantage of ESCWA, the review included recommendations on building ESCWA capacities in statistics and macroeconomic modelling and confirmed the great importance of regional integration in all aspects of its work. Those recommendations are being implemented by rearranging the priorities of subprogrammes and redistributing resources.

29.   The secretariat also reviewed the internal structure of the Programme Planning and Technical Cooperation Division to increase the effectiveness and consistency of its work. In the light of this evaluation, the Division was restructured to include a new section for monitoring partnerships, mobilizing resources and supporting joint initiatives. It was thus renamed the Planning, Partnership and Technical Cooperation Division. In 2014, the Division initiated a second evaluation to ensure that it was providing adequate strategic support to all ESCWA divisions and organizational units.

30.   The secretariat evaluated the performance of sub-programme 2 on social development and subprogramme 4 on information and communication technology for regional integration. On the basis of these evaluations, the Social Development Division and the Information and Communication Technology Division prepared detailed and time-bound work plans to implement the recommendations of the evaluations.

31.   The secretariat also evaluated four Development Account projects in the following areas: participatory development; cyber legislation; formulation of social policy for young people; and bilateral investments.

32.   The secretariat prepared an ambitious evaluation plan for the biennium 2014-2015 that includes the evaluation of at least two subprogrammes and various priority thematic areas. ESCWA will also develop evaluation plans for seven Development Account projects and five extrabudgetary projects whose activities should be completed within the biennium. It is also planning to evaluate the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation. It will work with the United Nations Evaluation Group to improve and develop policies and guidelines for the ESCWA evaluation process; develop practical and time-bound work plans that meet the recommendations of the various evaluation processes; and ensure a systematic approach to implementing the recommendations of past evaluations. ESCWA will also strive to incorporate lessons learned in future planning and programming, guarantee more accountability with regard to results and widen the network of independent evaluation experts.

II. ACTIONS TAKEN BY MEMBER STATES

304 (XXVII) Role of participation and social justice in achieving sustainable development

A. TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION

33.   In this resolution, the Commission called upon ESCWA member States to:

(a) Explore the possibility of expanding contributory social security systems to cover all social groups and to establish a social protection floor for all groups that cannot be included quickly into contributory social security schemes;

(b) Encourage the representation and participation of youth, women and all social groups in national committees, parliaments and other elected bodies responsible for shaping public policy at local and national levels;

(c) Strengthen participatory dialogue and social partnerships, ensure free and fair elections and implement, monitor and assess the implementation of the international human rights instruments and social development initiatives;

(d) Intensify their efforts to mainstream social justice and the concerns of all social groups into sustainable development strategies, including economic strategies aimed at reducing poverty, generating employment and addressing environmental issues, making efforts to ensure an equitable geographic balance;

(e) Enhance transparency and accountability in the provision of social services and adopt a participatory approach that delineates clear distribution of responsibilities between the State, the private sector, and civil society.

B. Implementation procedures

34. The secretariat received the following information on actions taken by member States to implement this resolution.

Palestine

- The Council of Ministers established a national social security team headed by the Prime Minister and comprising all Government, civil society and private sector stakeholders, to develop social security legislation;

- The Government has adopted the principle of participation in the formulation of development plans and policies. It has therefore established the necessary frameworks for stakeholder participation in the process;

- The issues of gender equality and human rights are the main pillars of the national development plan. In addition to the existing cross-sectoral national gender equality and women empowerment strategy, a national plan to enhance human rights is being developed, which will be incorporated into sectoral strategies and the national development plan;

- Social protection activities cover all marginalized social groups, especially poor individuals and families, persons with disabilities, children, the elderly and women victims of violence. It should be noted that national committees have been established to tackle the issues and needs of those groups. A strategy for children, the elderly, persons with disabilities and women victims of violence has therefore been prepared. Bridging the gaps between regions and social groups in the country is also a key priority in the national development plan to achieve social justice;

- The Ministry of Social Affairs established an advisory council for social protection comprising all stakeholders. It has also developed the targeting mechanisms that determine eligibility to receive services and reviews them periodically. The Ministry collaborates with all stakeholders to ensure the provision of integrated services.

Saudi Arabia

- Provides social security services to all targeted social groups;

- Included 30 women and several young leaders as members of the Shura Council, and enhanced women and youth representation in municipal councils;

- Established the King Abdulaziz Centre for National Dialogue which offers citizens the opportunity to participate in the national dialogue in accordance with human rights international instruments;

- Ensured that sustainable development, including social justice issues and the needs of all social groups, is incorporated in the five-year development plans;

- Provided all types of social services, including healthcare and education services, to all citizens and residents, with assistance provided to the Government by the private sector and civil society.

305 (XXVII) Sustainable development in the region and follow-up and implementation of the decisions of the Rio+20 Conference

A. TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION

35.   In this resolution, the Commission called upon member States to undertake the following:

(a)   Adopt the Arab Declaration issued by the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment on 19 April 2012 as a reference for the negotiations concerning the outcome document of the Rio+20 Conference;

(b)   Take an active part in the upcoming preparatory meetings to be held in New York from 29 May to 2 June 2012, which will be an important stage in the development of the negotiations, and to participate actively in the Rio+20 Conference;

(c)   Review policies, strategies and national frameworks with a view to making them more responsive to the requirements of sustainable development, to promote implementation of ministerial statements and declarations issued in that regard, and to review institutional frameworks with a view to integrating the three economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development.

B. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

36.   The secretariat received the following information on actions taken by member States to implement the resolution.

Palestine

- Adopted the Arab Declaration issued on 19 April 2012 by the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment as a reference document, during negotiations on the Rio+20 outcome document;

- Presented a report on its preparations for Rio+20 and sent a high-level delegation to the Conference, headed by the Palestinian Foreign Minister. It also organized a side event at the Conference;

- The Environment Quality Authority is working to ensure the integration of sustainable development requirements in the national strategies and development plan for the period 2014-2016, focusing on strengthening links between the economic, social and environmental pillars of sustainable development.

United Arab Emirates

- Adopted the Arab Declaration of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment as a reference document;

- Actively participated in all the preparatory meetings for the Rio+20 Conference; its delegation to the Conference comprised high-level officials from all parts of the Government;

- Showcased its extensive experience in sustainable development through presentations given by its delegation, highlighting key initiatives and successes. In May 2013, it hosted the Arab Regional Implementation Meeting for the twentieth session of the Commission for Sustainable Development, resulting in the adoption of the "Dubai Document for the Arab Regional Implementation of Rio+20" that contained a series of recommendations and priorities for the Arab region. Pursuant to the Dubai Document, the United Arab Emirates, in collaboration with ESCWA, is currently preparing a regional road map for post-Rio+20;

- Continued to implement strategies that are more responsive to sustainable development requirements. It launched a series of initiatives in this regard, such as cleaner production, green architecture, sustainable transportation, renewable energy, alternative energy and other green policies;

- Officially adopted in 2012, prior to the Rio+20 Conference, the green economy approach for sustainable development by launching the national green development strategy entitled "Green economy for sustainable development";

- The Ministry of Environment and Water is finalizing the road map for the implementation of the national green development strategy;

- Hosted in March 2014, the First Global Conference on Partnership for Action on Green Economy, in collaboration with UNEP.

306 (XXVII) Development of the Arab Internet Governance Forum process and sustaining efforts in the Arabic domain names field

A. TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION

37. In this resolution, the Commission encouraged Governments of member States to actively participate in the process of establishing the Arab Internet Governance Forum in coordination with the League of Arab States.

B. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

38. The secretariat received the following information on actions taken by member States to implement this resolution.

Palestine

- Participates in the Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group of the Arab Internet Governance Forum through the representative of the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology in the Forum. It also participated in the first annual session of the Forum.

United Arab Emirates

- Participated in the second annual session of the Arab Internet Governance Forum, held in Algeria from 1 to 3 October 2013;

- Is collaborating with the League of Arab States through the Permanent Committee for Telecommunications and Information;

- Hosted through the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority the open consultation meeting of the Multi-Stakeholder Advisory Group of the Arab Internet Governance Forum in Dubai, in March 2013 under the slogan "We are all partners", in collaboration with the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) and the Coordination Centre of the European Internet Protocol Networks (RIPE NCC);

- After the launching in 2010 of the Arabic domain name "امارات." (dotEmarat), which is being used by governmental and non-governmental organizations and individuals, the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority was charged by the Arab Telecommunications and Information Council of Ministers in 2012 with managing, launching and operating the new Arabic domain name "عرب." (.arab).

307 (XXVII) Support for the Palestinian people

A. TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION

39.   In this resolution, the Commission called upon member States to undertake the following:

(a) Raise the level of their support for the Palestinian people in their struggle to obtain their full rights and establish an independent Palestinian State in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions;

(b) Support Palestine's efforts to obtain full membership in international forums, organizations and bodies;

(c) Redouble efforts and support to reinforce the resilience of the Palestinian people and ensure their continued existence on their land, and to mitigate the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation and its policies.

B. IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

40.   The secretariat received the following information on actions taken by member States to implement the resolution.

United Arab Emirates

- Issues periodic statements reaffirming its commitment to all international resolutions that support the Palestinian cause in meetings and forums organized by the United Nations at all levels;

- Galvanized support to grant Palestine the status of non-member observer State in the United Nations, and voted in favour of the resolution on 30 November 2012 during the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly;

- Adopted 16 United Nations resolutions on various Palestinian issues that are annually reviewed by the United Nations General Assembly and committees;

- Plays a key role in the efforts to reach a settlement for the Palestinian cause and achieve peace in the region through meetings held between Emirati officials and their counterparts and stakeholders at international events;

- Participates in the work of the monitoring committee of the Arab Peace Initiative which held several consultative meetings with the United States Administration on all aspects and dimensions of the stalled peace process to present the Arab stance on the international approach and mechanisms for handling the Palestinian cause and the Arab-Israeli conflict;

- Contributed to the establishment of the Joint Committee for Implementing the National Reconciliation;

- Fulfilled all its financial commitments in support of the Palestinian Authority;

- The Emirati President issues an annual statement on the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (29 November) in which he expresses the solidarity of the United Arab Emirates with the Palestinian cause;

- Allocated in 2012, the amount of 5,071,818,653 Emirati dirham to support Palestine.