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

Twenty-eighth session  
Tunis, 15-18 September 2014

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

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## ANNOTATIONS

### A. SENIOR OFFICIALS SEGMENT

1. Opening of the twenty-eighth session

The twenty-eighth session of the Commission is held at Regency Hotel in Tunis. It comprises two segments, namely the senior officials segment which will begin at 10 a.m. on Monday 15 September 2014; and the ministerial segment which will begin at 9.30 a.m. on Wednesday 17 September 2014. The representative of the United Arab Emirates will give the opening address as Chair of the twenty-seventh session, followed by a welcoming statement by Dr. Nadim Khouri, Deputy Executive Secretary of the Commission.

2. Election of officers

Rule 12 of the Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia provides that member countries shall chair the sessions of the Commission on a rotating basis, in the Arabic alphabetical order employed by the United Nations,\* and that the Commission shall, at the beginning of each session, elect from among the representatives of its members two Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur, who shall remain in office until such time as their successors shall be elected and be eligible for re-election.

3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Rule 8, article 1 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission provides that the Commission shall, at the beginning of each session, after the election of the Chair according to rule 12, adopt the agenda for that session on the basis of the provisional agenda. The provisional agenda was drawn up by the ESCWA executive secretariat in consultation with the Chair of the twenty-seventh session and the Technical Committee (a body composed of senior officials from member States) at its eighth meeting in December 2013. Pursuant to that rule, the Commission will be presented with the provisional agenda and annotations for the session in this document E/ESCWA/28/L.1 and the organization of work in document E/ESCWA/28/L.2. The Commission may adopt these two documents in the form in which they were submitted or make amendments thereto.

4. Consideration of requests by States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of ESCWA to participate as observers in the twenty-eighth session of the Commission (E/ESCWA/28/3)

The Commission will have before it the requests received from States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of the Commission to participate as observers in the twenty-eighth session of the Commission, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1818 (LV), paragraph 4, and rule 63 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission.

The Commission is invited to consider those requests for approval.

5. Economic and social developments in the Arab region 2013-2014 (E/ESCWA/EDGD/2014/1/Summary)

The secretariat will present a summary of the Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the Arab Region for the period 2013-2014. The Survey, which is being prepared by ESCWA, reviews the

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\* ESCWA member States in the Arabic alphabetical order are as follows: Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Tunisia, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Sudan, Iraq, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

latest economic and social developments in the Arab region and their prospects for 2014. It also analyses Arab economies from a global perspective; the status of natural resources, including oil and phosphate; and the emerging issues in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Mashreq and Maghreb countries and the least developed Arab countries.

The Commission is invited to express its views and proposals on the content of the document.

6. Outcomes of the Arab High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development  
(E/ESCWA/SDPD/2014/WG.1/6/Report)

The secretariat will present the report on the Arab High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development (Amman, 2-4 April 2014) which was organized by ESCWA in collaboration with the League of Arab States and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and hosted by the Government of Jordan. The objective of the Forum was to prepare for the second session of the United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development to be held in New York in July 2014. The report presents the outcomes of the discussions that took place at the Forum on proposals for sustainable development goals that serve the priorities of the Arab region; the Arab strategic framework for sustainable development; implementation mechanisms including the Arab road map for investment in the green economy, technology transfer and partnerships; the role to be played by the Forum to ensure integration and balance between the three dimensions of sustainable development; and the Arab perspective on sustainable development issues that will be discussed at the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

The Commission is invited to take note of the outcomes of the Forum and follow-up actions to be taken by ESCWA and offer views on the matter.

7. Support for the Palestinian people: International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People  
(E/ESCWA/28/4)

The secretariat will give an overview of the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. It will also present the activities carried out or to be undertaken by ESCWA in observance of the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People 2014, which was proclaimed by the United Nations, and to intensify efforts to support Palestinians in their endeavour to fully realize their inalienable rights.

The Commission is invited to discuss proposals made by the secretariat to support the Palestinian people and promote the efforts of member States in that regard.

8. Revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017 (E/ESCWA/28/5)

The secretariat will present the ESCWA strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017 as revised in accordance with the remarks provided by member States on the first version, which was submitted to the Technical Committee at its eighth meeting (Amman, 10-12 December 2013) and guidance provided by the Secretariat of the United Nations. The strategic framework contains the overall orientation of the work to be undertaken by ESCWA, as well as the strategy, objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement for each of the seven subprogrammes.

The Commission is invited to take note of the revised strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017 and approve it.

9. Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission (E/ESCWA/28/6)

Under this item, the following reports will be presented to the Commission:

(a) Financial status of the Commission (E/ESCWA/28/6(Part I))

The report presents the various financial aspects of the programmes implemented by the Commission, including allocations and expenditure under the regular budget, the United Nations Development Account, extrabudgetary resources and the ESCWA Trust Fund for Regional Activities.

The secretariat invites member States, donor funds, organizations and agencies to contribute to extrabudgetary resources, in order to support the activities and projects undertaken by ESCWA and enable it to continue to meet the increasing demands and needs of member States.

The Commission is invited to take note of the financial status of the Commission and provide guidance and comments thereon.

(b) Programme performance in the biennium 2012-2013 (E/ESCWA/28/6(Part II))

The report presents an overall evaluation of the performance of the ESCWA programme of work in the biennium 2012-2013 and highlights achievements and lessons learned for each of the seven subprogrammes. It also contains an assessment of the performance of the executive management component, including the Office of the Executive Secretary, the Planning, Partnerships and Technical Cooperation Division and the Administrative Services Division, as well as the United Nations Information Services/Centre.

The Commission is invited to review the report and provide comments and guidance on the overall ESCWA programme performance and the performance of individual subprogrammes.

(c) Technical cooperation and regional advisory services (E/ESCWA/28/6(Part III))

The report presents a review of the technical cooperation activities undertaken by ESCWA during the biennium 2012-2013 within the framework of the three interrelated funding modalities, namely the Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation (RPTC), the United Nations Development Account and extrabudgetary resources.

The activities funded by RPTC aim to enhance capacity-building in member States through training, advisory services and technical assistance in formulating policies, strategies and plans of action in various specializations. The activities funded by the Development Account and from extrabudgetary resources consist of intraregional and interregional projects.

The Commission is invited to take note of those activities and provide guidance and comments thereon.

(d) Implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-seventh session (E/ESCWA/28/6(Part IV))

The report presents a follow-up to the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-seventh session (Beirut, 7-10 May 2012) concerning the different fields of action of ESCWA and various issues of importance to member States. It also presents information received from member States on some aspects of the implementation of those resolutions.

The Commission is invited to take note of what has been implemented since the twenty-seventh session pursuant to those resolutions.

(e) Reports of the subsidiary bodies on their sessions (E/ESCWA/28/6(Part V))

Under this sub-item, the Commission will be presented with the reports of the subsidiary bodies on their sessions that were held between the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth sessions of the Commission, as well as the reports of the Technical Committee on its meetings held during the same period. In addition to the recommendations, the reports set out the issues discussed, information on the organization of those sessions and meetings, lists of participants and documents presented therein.

The Commission is invited to endorse the recommendations contained in those reports.

(f) Activities of the ESCWA Technology Centre in the period 2011-2013 (E/ESCWA/28/6(Part VI))

The secretariat will present a report on the activities of the ESCWA Technology Centre for the period 2011-2013. The Centre works to strengthen the capacity of member States to develop and manage national technology systems; transfer, adapt and apply technology; determine the suitable technology for the region and facilitate its development; improve the legal and commercial frameworks for the transfer of technology; and promote scientific and technological knowledge of major economic sectors in member States.

To complete the implementation of ESCWA resolution 294 (XXVI) on the establishment of the ESCWA Technology Centre, which was endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2010/5, the Commission shall elect a Board of Governors for the Centre during this session; therefore, interested member States are invited to nominate their representatives to the Board of Governors.

The Commission is invited to take note of the content of that report and offer their comments thereon. They are also invited to approve the membership of the Board of Governors.

10. Management issues (E/ESCWA/28/7)

Under this item, the following reports will be presented to the Commission:

(a) Evaluation of the work of the Commission (E/ESCWA/28/7(Part I))

The report presents the activities undertaken by the secretariat under the assessment plan for the biennium 2012-2013 to improve its performance through careful planning and substantive and self-evaluation and to strengthen accountability and credibility, in order to develop and improve performance on the basis of past experiences. The secretariat has developed the assessment plan pursuant to resolution 312 (XXVII) concerning the evaluation of the work of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, which was adopted by the Commission at its twenty-seventh session in 2012. The assessment plan covers all subprogrammes; projects financed by the Development Account; working procedures; and the intergovernmental mechanism.

The Commission is invited to take note of the report and provide comments thereon.

(b) Proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015  
(E/ESCWA/28/7(Part II))

The document contains the proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015 in the light of emerging issues since the Commission adopted the programme of work at its twenty-seventh session. These changes are also based on the new mandates that emanated from the sixty-sixth and sixty-seventh sessions of the General Assembly.

The Commission is invited to consider the proposed amendments with a view to endorsing them for incorporation into the programme of work.

(c) Proposal for the establishment of an intergovernmental committee on information and communications technology for development (E/ESCWA/28/7(Part III))

The secretariat proposes the establishment of an intergovernmental committee on information and communications technology for development comprising representatives of ESCWA member States. It prepared this proposal upon the recommendation of the evaluation of subprogramme 4 on information and communication technology for regional integration during the biennium 2012-2013 to assist member States in the area of information and communications technology. If the proposed committee were established, it would replace the Consultative Committee on Scientific and Technological Development and Technological Innovation which was established by ESCWA in 2001, comprising experts who provide advice to the secretariat in their personal capacity. Since its establishment, the Committee has provided support to the secretariat to develop information and communications technology programmes.

The Commission is invited to consider the proposal for approval.

(d) Proposal for the establishment of an Arab trade and economic integration centre (E/ESCWA/28/7(Part IV))

The secretariat presents a proposal for the establishment of an Arab trade and economic integration centre, including its objectives, working procedures, comparative advantage and beneficiaries. The proposal also includes the rationale for launching such a regional initiative aimed at promoting Arab intraregional trade; introducing structural changes; diversifying exports; and promoting exchanges within sectors. The proposed centre will focus on research, policy analysis, capacity-building, knowledge-sharing and advisory services. The secretariat has prepared this proposal pursuant to the recommendation of the Technical Committee at its eighth meeting concerning the establishment of a regional integration centre.

The Commission is invited to take note of the proposal and provide comments thereon, with a view to endorsing it.

(e) Proposed terms of reference of the intergovernmental committee on emerging issues and development under crisis (E/ESCWA/28/7(Part V))

The secretariat presents this proposal, pursuant to resolution 292 (XXVI) concerning the establishment of an intergovernmental committee on emerging issues and development under crisis, which was adopted by the Commission at its twenty-sixth session in 2010. The resolution provides that functions and mandates of such committee shall be determined after further consultations with member States. Representatives of member States participating in the eighth meeting of the Technical Committee (Amman, 10-12 December 2013) have made comments on the functions and terms of reference of the committee and recommended that these observations be taken into consideration in a proposal to be submitted to the Commission at its twenty-eighth session.

The Commission is invited to discuss the proposed terms of reference of the intergovernmental committee on emerging issues and development under crisis for approval.

(f) Proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (E/ESCWA/28/7(Part VI))

In the implementation of resolution 302 (XXVII), adopted by the Commission at its twenty-seventh session, and the recommendations of the Technical Committee at its seventh and eighth meetings concerning the renaming of the Commission to become the Economic and Social Commission for Arab States and enabling the Technical Committee to advance the work of the Commission in

intersessional periods, the secretariat proposes amendments to the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Commission, after having examined the terms of reference of other regional commissions.

The Commission is invited to consider the proposed amendments for approval.

## B. MINISTERIAL SEGMENT

### 11. Opening of the ministerial segment

The opening session of the ministerial segment will start at 9.30 a.m. on Wednesday, 17 September 2014 and will comprise the following: opening remarks by the representative of the United Arab Emirates as Chair of the twenty-seventh session of the Commission; a statement by Ms. Rima Khalaf, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCWA; and an address by a representative of the Lebanese Government.

### 12. Social justice in the policies of Arab States (E/ESCWA/28/8)

“Social justice in the policies of Arab States” is the main theme of this session and will be the topic of discussion of four ministerial plenary and interactive sessions. The debate will focus on how to disseminate the principles of social justice in national development policies, plans and measures and on building regional consensus to promote national efforts in that regard. The debate shall conclude with a ministerial declaration on social justice to be adopted by member States. The ministerial discussions will tackle the following:

- (a) First panel: Social justice and the new development approach (E/ESCWA/28/8/Panel.1);
- (b) Second panel: Economic policies in support of social justice (E/ESCWA/28/8/Panel.2);
- (c) Third panel: Intergenerational justice and access to natural resources (E/ESCWA/28/8/Panel.3);
- (d) Fourth panel: Social justice – Monitoring and measurement (E/ESCWA/28/8/Panel.4).

### 13. Adoption of a ministerial declaration on social justice in the policies of Arab States

The Commission will consider a draft ministerial declaration on social justice in the policies of Arab States that would be issued at the conclusion of the ministerial discussions with a view to adopting it.

### 14. Date and venue of the twenty-ninth session of the Commission

Rule 1, paragraph (a) of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission provides that the regular sessions of the Commission shall be held in April every two years, at a time to be determined by the members of the Commission. It is expected that the Commission will decide to hold its twenty-ninth session in Beirut in April 2016, unless it receives an invitation from a member State to host the session.

### 15. Other matters

This item covers any other issue which the members of the Commission may wish to discuss.

### 16. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its twenty-eighth session

The Commission will consider the draft report on its twenty-eighth session, which contains the recommendations and resolutions, for adoption.

### 17. Closure of the session.

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