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

Committee on Women  
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Item 9 of the provisional agenda

**PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2012-2013  
IN THE FIELD OF ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

**Summary**

This document presents the activities that will be implemented by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for the biennium 2012-2013 in the field of advancement of women. The proposed activities have been formulated with reference to subprogramme 6, Advancement of women, of programme 18 of the United Nations strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013. The responsibility for implementing the subprogramme lies with ESCWA Centre for Women.

## SUBPROGRAMME 6: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

### A. ORIENTATION OF SUBPROGRAMME 6 FOR THE BIENNIUM 2012-2013

The objective of this subprogramme for the biennium 2012-2013 is to reduce gender imbalances, encourage exchange of lessons learned among member countries and contribute to increased respect of the rights of women in line with international conventions and conferences.

### B. EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
(a) Enhanced knowledge and capacity of national machineries for women to implement and monitor the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and be effective agents in promoting a positive role for women in the socio-economic and political development of their societies	(a) (i) Increased number of initiatives (strategies, policies and programmes) for the advancement of women, designed by national machineries for women with ESCWA assistance, are adopted and implemented in their respective countries  <i>Performance measures:</i> 2008-2009: 10 initiatives Estimate for 2010-2011: 16 initiatives Target for 2012-2013: 20 initiatives
	(ii) Increased number of national machineries for women showing improved reporting on periodical reports submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women  <i>Performance measures:</i> 2008-2009: N/A Estimate for 2010-2011: N/A Target for 2012-2013: 3 national machineries
(b) Strengthened capacity of member countries to mainstream gender in national policies, plans, statistics and programmes	(b) (i) Increased number of initiatives undertaken by Governments, with support from ESCWA, to mainstream gender in selected pilot ministries and their respective policy papers, structure, programmes and disseminated information  <i>Performance measures:</i> 2008-2009: 15 initiatives Estimate for 2010-2011: 16 initiatives Target for 2012-2013: 20 initiatives
	(ii) Increased number of gender-disaggregated data sets, including gender analysis publications, developed by member countries with support from ESCWA  <i>Performance measures:</i> 2008-2009: N/A Estimate for 2010-2011: N/A Target for 2012-2013: 3 publications

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
(c) Strengthened capacity of member countries in fighting gender-based violence	(c) (i) Increased number of initiatives by member countries to raise awareness of gender-based violence in the society  <i>Performance measures:</i> 2008-2009: N/A Estimate for 2010-2011: 0 initiatives Target for 2012-2013: 3 initiatives  (ii) Increased number of plans, programmes and strategies that include measures to fight gender-based violence, produced with support from ESCWA  <i>Performance measures:</i> 2008-2009: N/A Estimate for 2010-2011: 0 initiatives Target for 2012-2013: 2 initiatives

### C. STRATEGY

18.47 The responsibility for implementing subprogramme 6 lies with the ESCWA Centre for Women. The subprogramme will build on the experience gained in previous bienniums and continue to advocate the advancement of women.

18.48 As the recent reports from member countries for the midterm review of the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing+15) have shown, many improvements were seen in the past five years in relation to the status of women in the fields of socio-economic and political development. This is especially true in the areas of education, access to health and legal reform. Nonetheless, representation of women in the economic sphere and in decision-making positions remains one of the lowest in the world. The problem is exacerbated given the limited amount of reliable gender-disaggregated data and information available. At the same time, the need to develop region-specific gender indicators has also arisen among member countries to ensure the availability of a comprehensive and effective measurement of the region's development in the field of gender equity.

18.49 Most member countries in the ESCWA region have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and have been periodically reporting on the implementation progress in the fields of legislation and actual access to rights. Furthermore, some countries are actively lifting some of the reservations that were made to the Convention. Nevertheless, there is a need to widely disseminate the Convention among States where it has already been ratified and promote it among other member countries who are still considering ratification. As has been shown by reports made to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women as well as the concluding comments and recommendations made by the Committee, efforts are still needed to ensure that member countries are fulfilling their international obligations and commitments and producing quality periodical reports.

18.50 Similarly, most countries have engaged over the past years in gender mainstreaming activities at the national level and in line ministries. In fact, many of the member countries have developed initiatives for national gender mainstreaming strategies. Nevertheless, work in this area remains limited to familiar terrain and has not been generalized to all fields and contexts and hence has a weak impact on existing structures.

18.51 Although in most of the member countries a national body for women has been established with a strong mandate, the limited financial resources and lack of staff with adequate training have hindered the

active engagement of national machineries for women at the policy or programmatic levels. Furthermore, the limited exchange of experience among existing machineries has resulted in the duplication of past efforts without analysing the lessons learned from them.

18.52 Finally, the inability to engage civil society to take an active role in the policy dialogue has been one of the key hindering factors affecting the positive involvement of all stakeholders in promoting the equal status and equity agenda.

18.53 The expected accomplishments will be achieved by servicing and providing assistance to member countries through: (a) needs assessment; (b) documentation and dissemination of knowledge; (c) providing advocacy tools and research methodology; (d) sharing knowledge and experience; (e) ensuring that socio-economic development issues related to the advancement and empowerment of women are adequately addressed in the intergovernmental debate; (f) assisting member countries in the development and implementation of national policies and international conventions; and (g) providing training and capacity-building activities on gender issues.

#### D. EXTERNAL FACTORS

Subprogramme 6 will achieve its expected accomplishments on the assumption that: (a) member countries remain committed to implementing international conventions and internationally agreed development goals; (b) there is a political will to enhance the role of national machineries for the advancement of women and strengthen dialogue with civil society; and (c) the political situation is stable enough to permit the undertaking of a development process.

#### E. OUTPUTS

During the biennium 2012-2013, the following outputs are expected to be delivered under subprogramme 6:

(a) *Servicing of intergovernmental and expert bodies (regular budget)*

(i) *ESCWA*

Parliamentary documentation: Report of the Committee on Women on its fifth session (2012, expected accomplishment (a)).

(ii) *Committee on Women*

- a. Substantive servicing of the meetings of the sixth session of the Committee on Women (6 meetings) (2013, expected accomplishment (b));
- b. Parliamentary documentation:
  - i. Review of the status of gender mainstreaming in Government institutions in ESCWA member countries (2013, expected accomplishments (a) and (b));
  - ii. Thematic key development issues concerning the advancement of women: the use of education and information and communications technology to empower women in the ESCWA region (2013, expected accomplishments (a) and (b)).

(iii) *Ad hoc expert groups on the following:*

- a. Addressing the barriers hindering women economic participation in the ESCWA region (in coordination with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UN-Women) (2012, expected accomplishment (b));

- b. Assessment of the status of gender mainstreaming in Government institutions in selected ESCWA member countries (2013, expected accomplishment (b));
  - c. Innovative approaches for promoting women political representation in the ESCWA region (in coordination with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UN-Women) (2012, expected accomplishment (a));
  - d. Women empowerment policies in the ESCWA region: a life cycle approach (in cooperation with the Center for Arab Women Training and Research (CAWTAR) of the League of Arab States/Arab Women Organization (AWO)) (2013, expected accomplishment (a));
- (b) *Other substantive activities (regular budget)*
- (i) *Recurrent publications*
    - a. Women Empowerment Policies in the ESCWA Region: A Life Cycle Approach (joint study by ESCWA and CAWTAR of the League of Arab States/AWO) (2013, expected accomplishment (a));
    - b. Arab Women and Development Series: Assessment of Gender Mainstreaming in Government Institutions in Selected ESCWA Member Countries (2013, expected accomplishment (b)).
  - (ii) *Non-recurrent publications*
    - a. Addressing the Barriers Hindering Women Economic Participation in the ESCWA Region (in coordination with ILO and UN-Women) (2012, expected accomplishment (b));
    - b. Innovative Approaches for Promoting Women Political Representation in the ESCWA Region (in coordination with ECA, UNDP and UN-Women) (2012, expected accomplishment (a));
    - c. Success Stories and Best Practices in Multi-sectoral Partnership to Combat Gender-based Violence in Selected ESCWA Member Countries (in coordination with Oxfam, Great Britain) (2012, expected accomplishments (a) and (c));
    - d. Trafficking of Women and Children in Selected ESCWA Member Countries: A Regional Perspective (in coordination with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)) (2013, expected accomplishments (a) and (c)).
  - (iii) *Booklets, fact sheets, wall charts, information kits*
    - a. Information kit for the sixth session of the Committee on Women (2013, expected accomplishment (a));
    - b. Poster for the sixth session of the Committee on Women (2013, expected accomplishment (a)).
  - (iv) *Special events*
    - Launching of *Women Empowerment Policies in the ESCWA Region: A Life Cycle Approach* (a joint study by ESCWA and CAWTAR of the League of Arab States/AWO and) (2013, expected accomplishment (a)).

(v) *Technical material*

- a. Gender Newsletter (8 issues) (2012-2013, expected accomplishments (b) and (c));
- b. Maintenance and update of ECW homepage on ESCWA website (2012-2013, expected accomplishments (a) and (b));
- c. Economic and social situation of the Palestinian women (2012, expected accomplishments (a) and (c)).

(vi) *Contribution to joint outputs*

- a. Contribution to ESCWA flagship publication on the *Millennium Development Goals: The Day After 2015* (2013, expected accomplishments (a) and (b));
- b. Contribution to ESCWA flagship publication on *Regional Integration* (2013, expected accomplishments (a) and (b));
- c. Contribution to ESCWA flagship publication on the *Arab Countries 2025* (2013, expected accomplishments (a) and (b)).

(c) *Technical cooperation (regular budget/extrabudgetary)*

(i) *Advisory services*

Provide support to member countries at their request in gender mainstreaming and follow-up on the implementation of Beijing Platform for Action, and international conventions and resolutions on gender equality and the empowerment of women (2012-2013, expected accomplishments (a) and (b)).

(ii) *Training courses, seminars and workshops*

- a. Training workshop for members of the national machineries for the advancement of women on the formulation of national action plans to support the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security (2013, expected accomplishment (a));
- b. Training workshop on strengthening legislative frameworks to address all forms of violence against women (the second subregional workshop) (2012, expected accomplishment (a)).

(iii) *Field projects*

Strengthening Mechanisms for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (in cooperation with the United Nations Department of Social Affairs (UN-DESA)) (2009-2013, expected accomplishment (b)).

(d) *Conference services and administration oversight*

External evaluation of subprogramme 6 (2012, related to all expected accomplishments).

Annex

**LEGISLATIVE MANDATES**

**Subprogramme 6: Advancement of women**

*General Assembly resolutions*

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|--------|--|
| 64/137 | Intensification of the efforts to eliminate all forms of violence against women  |
| 64/138 | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women   |
| 64/141 | Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly |
| 64/217 | Women in development   |

*Economic and Social Council resolution*

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| 2009/14 | Situation of and assistance to Palestinian women |
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*Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia resolution*

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| 278 (XXIV) | Increasing the role of women in decision-making with respect to conflict prevention and peacebuilding |
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