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**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION****THE ROLE OF ESCWA IN SUPPORTING THE MANDATE
OF THE UNITED NATIONS****Summary**

1. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) undertakes various activities outside its programme of work with a view to publicising its role and that of the United Nations with respect to Government and non-governmental bodies; strengthening the interaction between those bodies and United Nations organizations; and kindling awareness of the mandate and responsibilities of ESCWA.
2. The activities undertaken by ESCWA in this regard include the following:
 - (a) *Official activities*
 - (i) The Executive Secretary of ESCWA has represented the Secretary-General of the United Nations at a number of regional and international gatherings;
 - (ii) The Executive Secretary has visited six ESCWA member countries, and it is hoped that she will visit the remaining member countries in the course of 2003.
 - (b) *Media activities*
 - (i) The secretariat hosts groups of civil society organizations in order to acquaint them with the roles played by the United Nations and ESCWA;
 - (ii) The secretariat makes use of the various forms of mass media in order to publicise its activities as part of a media outreach strategy which includes the issuance of one weekly and one monthly publication; the production of brochures and posters of a general nature or on a specific subject; the use of compact discs (CDs); the introduction of a Web site and subsidiary subject-specific pages; the production of documentary films; the organization of television programmes; and participation at local and international publications fairs.

A. OFFICIAL ACTIVITIES

1. *Representing the Secretary-General of the United Nations at regional and international gatherings*

3. In the period between June 2001 and March 2003, the Executive Secretary has represented the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the United Nations organization on the following occasions:

(a) The Sectoral Meeting between the United Nations and the League of Arab States, which was held in Cairo from 18 to 20 June 2002;

(b) The United Nations African Meeting in Support of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, which was held in Rabat from 24 to 26 June 2002;

(c) The General Meeting between Representatives of the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference Secretariats, which was held in Vienna from 9 to 11 July 2002;

(d) The Dubai Strategy Forum 2002, which was held from 28 to 30 October 2002;

(e) The Global Forum on Reinventing Government, which was held in Marrakech from 10 to 13 December 2002.

2. *Official visits paid by the Executive Secretary to member countries*

4. The Executive Secretary paid official visits to Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. In the course of those visits, she discussed the relationship between ESCWA and member countries with officials and technical personnel, and the importance of the political and financial support provided to ESCWA by member countries. She reviewed the priorities of those countries and the services that ESCWA provides to them, as well as ways of increasing activities undertaken jointly by ESCWA and member countries. The regional advisor for social development policy affairs was delegated to follow up the outcomes of the official visits.

5. In the course of her official visits, the Executive Secretary also accepted the invitations of media institutions to hold press conferences and give interviews to print, visual and audio forms of the media, thereby strengthening the media connections between ESCWA and member countries and increasing awareness of the ESCWA mandate and its activities in the Arab region. The Executive Secretary intends to complete her official visits in 2003 by visiting the remaining member countries, namely, Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

6. With respect to Lebanon, the host country, the Executive Secretary maintains regular contacts with the President, the President of the National Assembly, the Prime Minister, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and other ministers, and ambassadors accredited to Lebanon, with a view to keeping them informed of ESCWA activities in Lebanon and the Arab region and learning their considered views on how services to the host country may be strengthened.

B. MEDIA ACTIVITIES

7. Subsequent to her appointment in February 2001 as the head of ESCWA, the Executive Secretary reviewed the media activities of the Commission, and the secretariat prepared a media plan based on three main elements, namely, the improvement and expansion of media coverage; the use of the various forms of the media; and advertising and marketing.

1. *The improvement and expansion of media coverage*

8. The secretariat has increased the number of press releases it issues with respect to conferences, meetings and the official receptions and visits of the Executive Secretary. It has focused on the issues held by

member countries to be a priority, including social development policies, water and energy-related issues, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and globalization, and science and technology.

2. The use of the various forms of the media

9. The secretariat has taken action to update the ESCWA English language Web site (www.escwa.org.lb) with respect to both form and content. The focus in the site is on the most significant new developments in the work of ESCWA with respect to the implementation of field projects, the provision to member countries of consultancy services, the convening of conferences and meetings and the publication of studies. In 2003 the secretariat launched an Arabic language ESCWA Web site.

10. In response to the request of member countries, the secretariat launched one subsidiary page devoted to WTO issues and others devoted to population issues and the World Summit on the Information Society, which is scheduled to be held in Geneva from 10 to 12 December 2003. In order to mark the convening of the twenty-second ESCWA session, the secretariat has also established a page devoted to the session, with a view to ensuring proper coverage of its work.

11. The secretariat issues a weekly publication in Arabic and English that covers the most important of the events taking place in the Commission and its activities. It also issues a monthly publication entitled *ESCWA Update* that covers the main subjects related to the Commission and its activities and the studies that it publishes.

12. During this period, the secretariat has focused on publicising ESCWA activities and meetings, by publishing related pamphlets, brochures and posters.

13. The secretariat has also concentrated on hosting students from schools, universities and other institutions, with a view to publicising the activities and objectives of ESCWA and increasing awareness of its work, not merely at official level, but also at civil society institution level. The secretariat has therefore resolved to participate in certain local and international publications fairs held in Lebanon, which has given ESCWA the opportunity to make direct contact with hundreds of visitors, who have shown an interest in familiarizing themselves with the mandate of ESCWA and the many activities it undertakes.

14. The secretariat has produced three documentary films that featured, respectively, the work of ESCWA, the Western Asia Preparatory Conference for the World Summit on the Information Society, which was held from 4 to 6 February 2003, and the most important events and outcomes of the period between the twenty-first and twenty-second ESCWA sessions.

3. Advertising and marketing

15. With a view to publicising ESCWA and its mandate in a simple manner, the secretariat prepared an advertisement that focuses on the ESCWA slogan for 2002, namely, "ESCWA for regional integration", which covers all the fields in which the Commission operates. The secretariat also prepared an advertisement for the Western Asia Preparatory Conference for the World Summit on the Information Society and another for the twenty-second ESCWA session. In addition, it produced certain ESCWA souvenirs for distribution to Government and non-governmental institutions, in order to spread the concept of regional integration.

16. In preparation for the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference, which was held in Doha from 9 to 13 November 2001, the secretariat issued a series of papers covering the most important WTO-related issues, together with CDs on the same subjects. The secretariat then adopted the same energetic approach in its preparations for the World Summit on Social Development, that was held in Johannesburg from 26 August to 4 September 2002.
