



**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COUNCIL**

Distr.
LIMITED
E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/IG.1/L.1
14 March 2013
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Committee on Social Development
Ninth session
Amman, 12-13 October 2013

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND ANNOTATIONS

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ANNOTATIONS

1. Opening of the session

The ninth session of the Committee on Social Development will begin at 10 a.m. on Saturday, 12 October 2013 in Amman. The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, in his capacity as chair of the eighth session of the Committee, will give the welcome speech. Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCWA, Ms. Rima Khalaf, will deliver the opening speech.

2. Election of officers

Rule 18 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission states: "Member countries shall assume the chairmanship of the sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on a rotating basis, in the Arabic alphabetical order employed by the United Nations. Unless the Commission decides otherwise, those bodies shall elect all their other officers".* Pursuant to that rule, the Sudan shall assume the chairmanship of the ninth session of the Committee, succeeding the Syrian Arab Republic, which assumed the chairmanship of the eighth session, from 24 March 2011 to the date of convening the ninth session. The Committee shall elect the two vice-chairmen and the rapporteur from among its member representatives.

3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Rule 8 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission, which apply to subsidiary bodies, states: "At the beginning of each session, once the Chairman has assumed his duties in accordance with rule 12, the Commission shall adopt the agenda for that session on the basis of the provisional agenda". Pursuant to that rule, the Committee will be presented with the provisional agenda and annotations for this session in document E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/IG.1/L.1. It will also be presented with the proposed organization of work in document E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/IG.1/L.2. The Committee shall adopt the agenda and the organization of work as submitted or in amended forms.

4. Implementation of social development-related activities and recommendations under ESCWA programme of work since the eighth session of the Committee on Social Development (E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/IG.1/3)

The Committee will review in that document the progress achieved in implementing activities and recommendations related to social development under ESCWA programme of work since the eighth session of the Committee. Member country representatives will be invited to take note of those activities and make comments and recommendations thereon.

5. Priority issues in the field of social development in the Arab region (E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/IG.1/4)

Under this item, the Committee will discuss the following issues:

(a) Employment and labour markets (E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/IG.1/4(Part I))

Employment and employment generation continue to be major political concerns in Arab countries. However, the efforts exerted by Governments to reduce unemployment remain limited due to weak economic structures, deep labour market segmentation and lack of flexibility.

* ESCWA member countries 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.

This report contains a review of existing research on the economic structures of Arab labour markets. It also offers suggestions and makes recommendations on ways to address the challenges faced by those markets.

(b) Role of civil society and participatory development in political transitions (E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/IG.1/4(Part II))

This report highlights the role of civil society in promoting participatory development, particularly addressing the challenges of political transitions that were prompted by popular uprisings in the region since 2011. The report also presents lessons learned from the implementation of the ESCWA participatory development approach which could be used in future initiatives and projects to foster national dialogues, build the capacity of national stakeholders in the regional negotiation process, reach consensus and design a new social contract that fulfils the aspirations of citizens.

(c) Impact of youth participation on social cohesion (E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/IG.1/4(Part III))

This report draws on the study conducted by ESCWA in 2012 on youth policies in the Arab region, within a regional project on development policies that respond to the aspirations and demands of youth in the region, in the light of the social and political events that swept some Arab countries since the end of 2010. The study underlines that the poor participation of youth at all levels of decision-making undermines their role in society and affects social cohesion. Therefore, more efforts are needed at the national level to empower the youth and promote their participation in decision-making.

This report explains how youth participation and engagement in public life can advance social cohesion. It stresses the importance of empowering this fast growing group which constitutes the fifth of the population of the region.

(d) Integrating a regional Arab dimension to the post-2015 United Nations development agenda

ESCWA will give a Power Point presentation on its contribution to the ongoing global debate on the development agenda for the period beyond 2015, the deadline set for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The presentation draws on the report entitled "A Regional Perspective on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda" which was prepared by the five United Nations regional commissions and coordinated by ESCWA.

In the presentation, ESCWA will summarize key findings of the assessment of progress achieved in the implementation of the MDGs, namely, the need to adapt global development goals to regional and national priorities and challenges. It will emphasize that while there are many commonalities among the regions, their different circumstances call for a nuanced approach that takes into consideration regional specificities within the global development agenda. Therefore, a regional Arab dimension to analysis and goal-setting is required to keep pace with changing regional socioeconomic and political dynamics. ESCWA will make recommendations on policy directions and offers suggestions on implementation mechanisms for the post-2015 development agenda. Representatives of member countries are invited to discuss options and initiatives to chart a way forward in that direction.

6. Proposed programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015 in the field of social development (E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/IG.1/5)

The Committee will review the proposed activities and outputs to be undertaken by ESCWA under its programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015 in the field of social development. The programme of work was prepared in line with subprogramme 2 on social development of the revised strategic

framework for the biennium 2014-2015, which was adopted by ESCWA at its twenty-seventh session (Beirut, 7-10 May 2012). Member country representatives will be invited to review the social development-related activities proposed in the programme of work and provide comments in that regard.

7. Date and venue of the tenth session of the Committee on Social Development

The Committee on Social Development will decide the date and venue of its tenth session which is scheduled to be held in 2015.

8. Other matters

This item shall cover any other matters that the members of the Committee may wish to discuss.

9. Adoption of the report of the Committee on Social Development on its ninth session

The Committee will consider the draft report on its ninth session, which contains the recommendations, for discussion and adoption.
