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**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION  
FOR WESTERN ASIA**

Twenty-fourth session  
Beirut, 8-11 May 2006

**INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS**



**UNITED NATIONS**  
2006

06-0129

## I. INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

The twenty-fourth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) will be held at the United Nations House in Beirut, the permanent headquarters of the Commission, from 8 to 11 May 2006.

The session will be attended by representatives of ESCWA member countries; States Members of the United Nations invited as observers; relevant United Nations organs and specialized agencies; observers from interested regional and intergovernmental organizations; organizations and entities with standing invitations from the General Assembly; and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council.

The Commission hopes that member countries will be represented at the ministerial level and that their delegations will include experts in economic, commercial, and social fields. The session will consider several issues related to general policy in the ESCWA region, including new challenges and their impact on the work of the Commission addressing the problems of youth unemployment and achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

### *Credentials*

Official credentials duly signed by the appropriate authorities of Governments, agencies or organizations in accordance with the relevant provisions of the rules of procedure of ESCWA should, if possible, be submitted to the Secretary of the Commission (room F-845, ext. 1845) no later than one week before the opening of the session, or to the ESCWA registration desk at the time of registration.

### *Arrival in and departure from Lebanon*

The composition of delegations and expected dates and times of arrival should be communicated to the Secretary of the Commission. All participants will have the right of entry into and exit from Lebanon, and no impediment will be imposed on their transit to and from the session areas. They will be granted facilities for speedy travel. *Visas will be granted on arrival at the airport to participants from Gaza, where there is no Lebanese embassy, provided the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is informed of passport details (and faxed copies of passports) at least 15 days prior to the arrival of the delegate in question. Participants will be exempted from airport tax.*

### ***Media coverage***

The public meetings of the session will be open to representatives of the press and of other information media accredited by the United Nations; such representatives will be issued with the required passes and provided with the necessary facilities. All enquiries related to media coverage and public information should be directed to the United Nations Information Service at ESCWA (UNIS, room F-849A, ext. 1894).

## **II. CONFERENCE SERVICES AND FACILITIES**

The ESCWA secretariat will provide, for as long as is required for the session, (including during the preparatory period preceding the session and the period following the session) the necessary premises, including conference rooms, committee rooms, delegates' and interpreters' lounges, suitable office space with communications facilities, storage areas and related amenities.

The three conference rooms will be equipped for simultaneous interpretation between the Arabic and English languages and will have facilities for sound recording in both languages.

The staff of the Conference Services Section at ESCWA are responsible for registering delegates, issuing the necessary badges and providing provisional lists of delegations. They will also provide information on and support with regard to meetings services, including documents distribution, agendas and interpretation, as well as the editing, translation, reproduction and distribution of the final report of the twenty-fourth session.

General inquiries regarding meetings services may be made to the Conference Services Section (room F-117, ext. 1117).

### ***Registration and identification***

Participants will be provided with identity badges at the registration desk and are requested to wear those badges at all times.

### ***Session documentation***

During the session, documents will be available in limited quantities at the documents distribution desk in the conference area. Participants are requested, however, to bring with them the complete set of documents sent by ESCWA to their Governments or organizations. All session documents may be downloaded from the relevant page of the ESCWA website, available at: <http://www.escwa.org.lb>.

Delegates wishing to submit documents for circulation should present them to the Secretary of the Commission or to the ESCWA meetings room officer. A minimum of 100 copies is required to ensure distribution to all delegations. In accordance with United Nations regulations for the control and limitation of documentation, the ESCWA secretariat cannot undertake to translate or reproduce documents or statements submitted by individual delegations unless the Commission takes a specific decision to that effect and approves the financial implications thereof. Participants may consult with the Secretary of the Commission on any matter pertaining to the issuance or distribution of documents during the session.

Only United Nations documents may be distributed during the session. Session documents will be distributed in conference rooms by a documents officer. Other ESCWA publications will be available outside the conference rooms.

### **III. FACILITIES AND SERVICES FOR PARTICIPANTS AT UNITED NATIONS HOUSE**

#### ***United Nations House***

United Nations House, the permanent headquarters of ESCWA, is located in Riad El-Solh Square in Beirut Central District. The building also houses other United Nations entities, including the local or regional offices of the United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Population Fund, World Bank, United Nations Industrial Development Organization, Centre for International Crime Prevention, the Office of the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General for Southern Lebanon and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Three large conference rooms and several smaller meetings rooms with state-of-the-art facilities occupy an entire floor. The building and grounds include ramps, lifts and toilets accessible to the disabled. Extensive in-house support services and facilities are available for session participants, as described below. Related enquiries may be directed to Building Management Unit (room F-133, ext. 1133).

#### ***Travel services***

Travel assistance is available through the ESCWA Travel Unit on the second floor of United Nations House, open during office hours from 7.30 a.m. to 3 p.m. (room F-227, ext. 1143 or 1187). Participants are requested to communicate the expected date and time of their arrival and their flight numbers to ESCWA. It is advisable to confirm return travel arrangements well in advance.

### ***Dining room***

The dining room, located at the ground floor of United Nations House, provides a wide range of meals, snacks, desserts and beverages at reasonable prices. The dining room is open from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.

### ***Library***

A large library occupies much of the second floor and is open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., from Monday to Friday for internal users, and from 10.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. from Monday to Friday for external users. Participants will have access (on the premises only) to publications, journals and newspapers, the Internet and on-line databases. The library can also provide research services on any topic of interest to participants.

### ***Information services***

The function of the United Nations Information Service at ESCWA is to provide the media, Government officials, NGOs and other entities with information on United Nations activities, documents, press releases, and other information materials. It also produces press releases, collaborates with local radio and television broadcasters and organizations, participates in arranging media events to promote ESCWA and other United Nations activities. In order to seek the assistance of the United Nations Information Service, please contact Mr. Nabil Abu-Dargham, Information Officer, on extension 1894 or at [dargham@un.org](mailto:dargham@un.org).

The ESCWA web site provides up-to-date information on the structure and activities of the secretariat, as well as access to the library and other resources. Participants may access the site at <http://www.escwa.org.lb>.

### ***Medical facilities***

Medical facilities adequate for first aid in emergencies will be provided by the ESCWA secretariat. The ESCWA clinic is located on the first floor of United Nations House (rooms F-145 to F-147, ext. 1145, 1146 and 1147) and is open during official working hours (7.30 a.m. to 3 p.m., from Monday to Friday). For serious emergencies, the secretariat will ensure immediate transportation by ambulance and admission to a hospital with first-class facilities. In the event of emergencies, the Chief of the ESCWA Security and Safety Unit can be contacted for assistance (GF-03, ext. 1003).

### ***Security and safety***

The ESCWA Security and Safety Unit, based on the ground floor of United Nations House (GF-00 and GF-03, ext. 1000 or 1003), operates on a 24-hour basis.

Security officers are prepared to provide assistance in all matters relating to security and safety. The Unit maintains contact with all local emergency services and relevant authorities. Officers will also provide information on how to contact ESCWA staff members, if necessary. For security inquiries and security clearance (United Nations staff), the Security and Safety Unit can be reached by e-mail on: [security@escwa.org.lb](mailto:security@escwa.org.lb).

#### ***Postal and telecommunications services***

Incoming letters and telegrams will be distributed to participants. Participants who expect mail to arrive after their departure should contact the ESCWA Mail and Registry Unit (room MB-11, ext. 1033) and provide a forwarding address. During the session, mail for participants should be addressed to:

Name of participant (twenty-fourth session)  
c/o Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)  
P.O. Box 11-8575  
Riad El-Solh, 1107/2812  
Beirut, Lebanon

The main listed telephone number of ESCWA is 981301. Direct calls can be made to the secretariat from outside (preceded by the country and city code 961-1 if required), followed by the correct four-digit extension of the party sought. Direct internal calls can be made by dialling the four-digit extension alone. It should be noted that staff of other entities at United Nations House are on the same exchange, with the exception of the World Bank. Telephone information may be obtained from the ESCWA Communications Unit (room F-229, ext. 1210); the operator may be reached within the building by dialling "9". Incoming telephone calls for participants will be put through to the meeting whenever practicable. Personal telephone calls, fax, mail and courier services may be provided against cash payment.

The ESCWA fax numbers are 961-1-981510/1. The Communications Unit may be reached by e-mail at [comcenter@escwa.org.lb](mailto:comcenter@escwa.org.lb).

### **IV. FACILITIES AND SERVICES IN LEBANON**

#### ***Accommodation***

Hotel accommodation is available at reasonable rates for persons attending the session. A comprehensive list of hotels in the area and their prices may be requested from the Procurement and Travel Unit at ESCWA (room F-141, ext. 1141). For more information on hotels in Beirut, see the session page on the ESCWA Internet site: <http://escwa.org.lb>.

### ***Banking, currency and exchange rates***

The unit of currency is the Lebanese pound (LL). Coins are issued in denominations of LL 50, LL 100, LL 250 and LL 500 and notes in denominations of LL 1,000, LL 5,000, LL 10,000, LL 20,000, LL 50,000 and LL 100,000. The current rate of exchange for United Nations programmes is US\$ 1.00 = LL 1,501, while the exchange rate on the Beirut market is US\$ 1.00 = LL 1,500.

There are no exchange restrictions on the inflow and outflow of local and foreign currency or on the exchange and transfer of currencies. Banks are open between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m., from Monday to Friday, and between 9 a.m. and 12 noon on Saturdays. Exchange offices are open until late in the evening. There are several banks located in the vicinity of United Nations House.

### ***Transportation***

Many travel agencies in Beirut have modern buses available for sightseeing and tourist trips to various areas of Lebanon. In addition, there are numerous car rental and taxi offices. For travel between hotels and United Nations House, participants may wish to travel by taxi or "service" (LL 5,000 per car or LL 1,000 per passenger respectively, negotiated before departure). Such vehicles are plentiful and may be hailed along any street in Beirut. Shuttle services can be arranged to and from hotels where any group of at least 10 participants in the session is staying.

### ***Restaurants and shopping***

There are many Lebanese, European and Middle Eastern restaurants in and around Beirut, as well as a number of fast-food restaurants. More information can be obtained from the hotel in which the participant is staying. Many restaurants are located in the Beirut Central District, minutes' walk away from United Nations House.

### ***Sightseeing***

United Nations House is located in the Beirut Central District. Sights in the immediate vicinity include the newly-restored town centre area, offering shops, restaurants and Roman ruins; the Corniche, a wide paved walkway along the sea; the famous Hamra Street, for those who like to shop; and the Parliament building. The Ministry of Tourism or any of the numerous travel agencies in Beirut may be contacted for further information on guided tours or other cultural and touristic sites of interest around Lebanon. The following websites may be visited for more information:

<http://www.lebanon-tourism.gov.lb>

<http://www.lebanon.com/tourism>

<http://www.travel-to-lebanon.com>.

### ***Electrical current***

The electrical current is 220 or 110 volts AC (50 cycles) country-wide.

### ***Weather during the session***

Weather in Lebanon is generally moderate, typical of many Mediterranean countries. The temperature is expected to range between 20° and 25° C.

### ***Government office hours***

Lebanese time is two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time. Office hours are from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., except on Sundays and official holidays. No official holidays coincide with the session.

## **PHONE NUMBERS AND CONTACT POINTS (Until 7 May 2006)**

		Direct number
<b><i>Cabinet</i></b>		
Ms. Mervat Tallawy	Executive Secretary	961-1-978800
Mr. Khaled Galal AbdelHamid	Secretary of the Commission	961-1-978844
<b><i>Chiefs of Substantive Divisions</i></b>		
Ms. Anhar Hegazi	Chief of Sustainable Development and Productivity Division (SDPD)	961-1-978502
Mr. Christian DeClercq	Chief of Programme Planning and Technical Cooperation Division (PPTCD)	961-1-978818
Mr. Fadhil Mahdi	Chief, Economic Analysis Division (EAD)	961-1-978453
Mr. Nazem Abdalla	Chief of the Globalization and Regional Integration Division (GRID)	961-1-978351
Mr. Youssef Nuseir	Chief of Information and Communications Technology Division (ICTD)	961-1-978506



Mr. Riadh Tappuni	OIC, Social Development Division (SDD)	961-1-978417
Mr. Ahmad Hussein	Chief, Statistical Coordination Unit	961-1-978408
Ms. Huda Osseiran	OIC, ESCWA Centre for Women	961-1-978-402
<b><i>Administrative Services Division (ASD)</i></b>		
Mr. Ivan Koulov	Chief of Administrative Services Division	961-1-978316
Mr. Nabil El-Zohairy	Chief of Conference Services	961-1-978113
Mr. Milan Trojanovic	Chief of Support Services Section	961-1-978132
Mr. Issa Toubbeh	Chief of Meetings, Publishing and Protocol	961-1-978117
<b><i>Security and Safety Section</i></b>		
Mr. Elias Daoud	Chief of Section	961-1-978003
<b><i>Government ministries</i></b>		
Ministry for Foreign Affairs		961-1-333100 or 961-1- 200469
Ministry of Tourism		961-1-340940/4

Other telephone information may be obtained from the ESCWA Communications Unit by dialing “9” within the building.