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Technical Committee
Fourth meeting
Beirut, 26-27 January 2010

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

CONSIDERATION OF TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**Summary**

Upon the recommendation of the Technical Committee at its third meeting (Beirut, 21-22 July 2009) that the Terms of Reference and functions of the Technical Committee to be reviewed to clarify its role in following up implementation of the resolutions adopted by ESCWA member countries, and upon its recommendation to modify the frequency of meetings of the Technical Committee, such that three meetings are held per biennium, in addition to a fourth, if necessary, upon consultation between the secretariat and the Committee Bureau, the secretariat reviewed the Terms of Reference of the Technical Committee and the functions entrusted to it, particularly with regard to the frequency of meetings and to the follow-up of the resolutions adopted by ESCWA member countries. These revised Terms of Reference are presented to the assembled company for information.

The Technical Committee is invited to discuss the revised Terms of Reference and approve them as submitted or introduce amendments thereto.

1. The Technical Committee was established pursuant to the decision of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) at its twenty-fourth session, held in Beirut from 8 to 11 May 2006, with the aim of facilitating direct communication between the secretariat of ESCWA and member countries on issues of economic and social development of concern to ESCWA. The Committee currently meets once every six months to follow up implementation of ESCWA programme of work and the resolutions made by its ministerial sessions, keep abreast of international and regional developments, and secure support for ESCWA activities and projects.
2. The Technical Committee held its third meeting at the United Nations House in Beirut on 21-22 July 2009. The conferees arrived at a set of recommendations and proposals; some related to the topics on the agenda, others to the nature of the work of the Committee and how to enhance it. The Technical Committee requested the secretariat to review its functions and Terms of Reference that were approved at its first meeting (Beirut, 16-17 January 2008), and clarify its role in following up implementation of the resolutions adopted by ESCWA, so that the proposed new version be presented to members of the Committee at its next meeting. Moreover, in order to give member countries and the secretariat sufficient time to implement and follow up resolutions and provide a comprehensive report on them, the Technical Committee recommended that the frequency of its meetings be amended, such that three meetings are held per biennium, in addition to a fourth, if necessary, upon consultation between the secretariat and the Committee Bureau.
3. Accordingly, the secretariat reviewed the Terms of Reference of the Technical Committee and the functions entrusted to it, particularly with regard to the frequency of meetings and to the follow-up of the resolutions adopted by ESCWA member countries. These revised Terms of Reference are presented to the assembled company for discussion and approval as submitted or subsequent to introduction of amendments thereto. The secretariat will prepare a draft resolution on this matter to present to the twenty-sixth ministerial session of ESCWA.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

4. The Technical Committee was established pursuant to the decision adopted by the twenty-fourth session of the Ministerial Committee held in Beirut in 2006, to facilitate direct communication and consultation between the secretariat of the Commission and member countries on substantive development issues.
5. Membership of the Technical Committee comprises of high level senior officials of the member governments of the Commission, from the capital, designated by the National Focal Points of ESCWA.
6. Members of the Technical Committee shall be responsible for self financing their participation, as agreed by member countries at the twenty-fourth session.
7. The Technical Committee holds three meetings per biennium, in addition to a fourth, if necessary, upon consultation between the secretariat and the Committee Bureau. Thus, the Committee holds one session in the years when an ESCWA ministerial session is held, and two sessions in other years. This measure shall come into effect as of 2010. The aim is to lengthen the interval between the ministerial session and the following meeting of the Technical Committee, in order to allow sufficient time for following up the resolutions of ESCWA and provide the Technical Committee with comprehensive reports on implementation of these resolutions.
8. Members of the Committee shall assume the chairmanship of the meetings on a rotating basis for the duration of two years, in the Arabic alphabetical order employed by the United Nations.
9. Chairmanship of the Committee shall coincide with the chairmanship of the ministerial session of ESCWA.

10. The Technical Committee shall have the following functions:

(a) To advise and assist the secretariat in drawing up proposals for the strategic framework, the programme of work and priorities, consistent with the guidance of the Ministerial Committee and the provisions of its mandate;

(b) To advise and assist the secretariat in following up implementation of the Ministerial Committee resolutions, through undertaking the task of a general coordinator, as well as through being the body in the member countries responsible for implementation of the resolutions adopted at the ministerial sessions, following up this implementation, and reporting on it, in accordance with the themes and in coordination with bodies representing member countries at each of the relevant intergovernmental bodies that deal with specific themes (water resources and energy, statistics, transport, trade and financing of development, social development, mitigation of impact of conflict, and gender issues);

(c) To advise and assist the secretariat on following up the implementation of the programme of work and activities of ESCWA, including the mobilization of extrabudgetary resources to support implementation, and any other outstanding matters requiring action;

(d) To advise and assist the secretariat in identifying emerging economic and social issues and other relevant priority issues for incorporation in the agenda of the Ministerial Committee sessions of ESCWA and the subsidiary intergovernmental committees before finalization, and in compliance with the Rules of Procedure of ESCWA;

(e) To carry out any other task entrusted to it by the Ministerial Committee.
