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Committee on Women
Fifth session
Beirut, 19-21 December 2011

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

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ANNOTATIONS

1. Opening of the session

The fifth session of the Committee on Women is held in Beirut from 19 to 21 December 2011. The opening session begins at 10 am on Monday 19 December 2011, and is chaired by the Syrian Arab Republic which is assuming the presidency of the fourth session of the Committee on Women. Ms. Rima Khalaf, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), will deliver the keynote speech of the fifth session.

2. Election of officers

Rule 18 of the Rules of Procedure of ESCWA provides that "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".¹ Pursuant to that rule, the Sudan shall assume the chairmanship of the fifth session of the Committee on Women, following the Syrian Arab Republic which chaired the fourth session from the day it was held on 21 October 2009 to 19 December 2011, date of the fifth session. The Committee shall then elect, among its members, two vice-chairmen and a rapporteur.

3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Rule 8 of the Rules of Procedure of ESCWA, which apply to subsidiary bodies, provides that "At the beginning of each session, once the Chairman has assumed his duties in accordance with rule 12, the Committee shall adopt the agenda for that session on the basis of the provisional agenda". Pursuant to that rule, the provisional agenda shall be submitted to the Committee on Women, in document E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/L.1, and the proposed organization of work shall be submitted in document E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/L.2. Both documents may be adopted by the Committee as submitted or following amendments.

¹ ESCWA member countries, in the Arabic alphabetical order, are: Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Sudan, Iraq, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen.

4. Progress achieved in the field of advancement of women since the fourth session of the Committee on Women:

- (a) Implementation of activities related to the advancement of women under ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011, and pursuant to the recommendations of the Committee on Women at its fourth session (E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/3)

The executive secretariat will give a presentation based on the document submitted to the Committee under this item, which includes a review of the activities and programmes undertaken by the ESCWA Centre for Women since the fourth session of the Committee. Those activities and programmes were implemented in the framework of ESCWA programme of work in the field of advancement of women for the biennium 2010-2011, and pursuant to the recommendations addressed to the secretariat which were made by the Committee at its fourth session. It should be noted that the recommendations adopted by the Committee at its fourth session included recommendations addressed to member countries, and others addressed to the secretariat. The implementation of recommendations addressed to member countries will be reviewed under paragraph 4 (b).

- (b) Actions taken by member countries in the field of advancement of women pursuant to the recommendations of the Committee on Women at its fourth session (Presentations by member country representatives)

Member country representatives shall give presentations on national actions taken to implement the recommendations made by the Committee on Women at its fourth session, and challenges faced in that regard. The secretariat asks member country representatives to identify in their presentations the support needed by their countries to implement the recommendations. Member country representatives wishing to give a presentation should submit a request in advance to the Committee bureau. The sequence of presentations shall follow the order of registration of requests.

5. Gender mainstreaming in public institutions

- (a) Guide on gender mainstreaming in the policies, programmes, and activities of ministries of labour and social affairs in ESCWA member countries²

Under this item, the secretariat will give a presentation on the guide prepared by the ESCWA Centre for Women on gender mainstreaming in the policies, programmes, and activities of ministries of labour and social affairs in ESCWA member countries. Over the past couple of years, the Centre conducted several activities including training sessions for participants from member countries to build capacity to mainstream gender in the policies, programmes, and activities of ministries of labour and social affairs and to prepare implementations reports. The Guide on gender mainstreaming was prepared by the Centre on the basis of the reports prepared by countries which participated in the training, to be used by public institutions in all Arab countries, particularly member countries, in the process of gender mainstreaming in the policies and programmes of ministries of labour and social affairs and to benefit from successful experiences and lessons learnt in that field.

- (b) Efforts of Arab countries in gender mainstreaming in public institutions (Presentations by country representatives)

Representatives of countries that have participated in the training sessions and prepared reports on gender-based institutional analysis will give presentations on their national experience in gender mainstreaming in the policies, programmes, and activities of ministries of labour and social affairs.

² The Guide published by ESCWA is available in Arabic only and will be distributed to participants as a reference document (E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/2).

Member country representatives wishing to give a presentation should submit a request in advance to the Committee bureau. The sequence of presentations shall follow the order of registration of requests.

6. Progress made in the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in the Arab countries

(a) Implementation of the Convention in the Arab countries: Comparative analysis of achievements and challenges (E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/4)

The secretariat will give a presentation based on the document submitted to the Committee under this item. The document, which reviews the progress made in the implementation of the Convention in the Arab countries, draws on periodic national reports submitted to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, national reports on the implementation of Beijing Platform for Action: +15 submitted to ESCWA,³ and a comparative analysis of shared experiences and good practice in the implementation of the Convention in the countries of the region.⁴ Arab countries are hereby encouraged to withdraw their reservations on the Convention, and reach practical recommendations for its implementation and follow-up at the national level.

(b) Creative initiatives to combat violence against women in the Arab countries⁵

Under this item, the secretariat will give a presentation based on analytical studies and training workshops conducted by the ESCWA Centre for Women since the fourth session of the Committee on Women. This item aims to raise awareness of issues related to violence against women, and to present creative initiatives to combat all forms of gender-based violence in the Arab region.

(c) Exchange of successful experiences and lessons learnt at the national level
(Presentations by country representatives)

Country representatives will give presentations about the progress achieved in the implementation of the Convention. The secretariat asks country representatives to identify in their presentations the support needed by their countries to implement the Convention, notably General Recommendation 19 on combating gender-based violence.⁶ Member country representatives wishing to give a presentation should submit a request in advance to the Committee bureau. The sequence of presentations shall follow the order of registration of requests.

7. Women participation in public decision-making: Comparative analysis
(E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/5)

The secretariat will give a presentation based on the document submitted to the Committee under this item. The document includes a comparative analysis of national case studies in addition to sub-regional studies on women in leading positions and in political parties represented in parliament, and on women running for elections in national and local councils. Furthermore, the document addresses

³ See: ESCWA, Consolidated Arab Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action: +15 (E/ESCWA/ECW/2009/IG.1/3/Rev.1); and a summary of responses given by Arab countries to the questionnaire on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action: +15 (available in Arabic only) (E/ESCWA/2009/WP.1).

⁴ See: ESCWA, Good practices and successful experiences in the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in the Arab countries (E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/3).

⁵ See: ESCWA, Creative initiatives to combat violence against women in the Arab countries (E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/CRP.1).

⁶ General Recommendation 19 is available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/recommendations/recomm.htm>.

factors promoting or challenges reducing women opportunities to take decision-making positions and participate in public life at all levels. It also tackles women participation in the current movements taking place in Arab countries as an example of challenges facing women.

8. Promoting the role of media and means of communication in women empowerment in the Arab region: Successful experiences and lessons learnt⁷

The secretariat will give a presentation based on the outcomes and recommendations of the expert group meeting organized by the ESCWA Centre for Women on the role of media in empowering women and reversing the negative stereotypes through the media.

9. Programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013 in the field of advancement of women (E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/6)

The Committee will take note of the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013 in the field of advancement of women, which includes the strategy of subprogramme 6 on the advancement of women and its expected achievements and performance indicators, in addition to the activities to be conducted by the ESCWA Centre for Women during the biennium.

10. Date and venue of the sixth session of the Committee on Women

Member country representatives shall agree on the date and venue of the sixth session of the Committee on Women to be held in 2013.

11. Other matters

This item covers any other issues that the Committee members may wish to raise and discuss.

12. Adoption of "Beirut statement on the advancement of women in the Arab region: Promoting the political participation of Arab women"

The Committee shall discuss and adopt the draft "Beirut statement on the advancement of women in the Arab region: Promoting the political participation of Arab women" with a view to adopting it.

13. Adoption of the report of the Committee on Women on its fifth session

The Committee shall consider and adopt the draft report of the Committee on Women on its fifth session, which includes conclusions and recommendations.

⁷ See: ESCWA, Report of the expert group meeting on the role of media and means of communication in women empowerment in the Arab region (E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/WG.2/Report) (available in Arabic only).