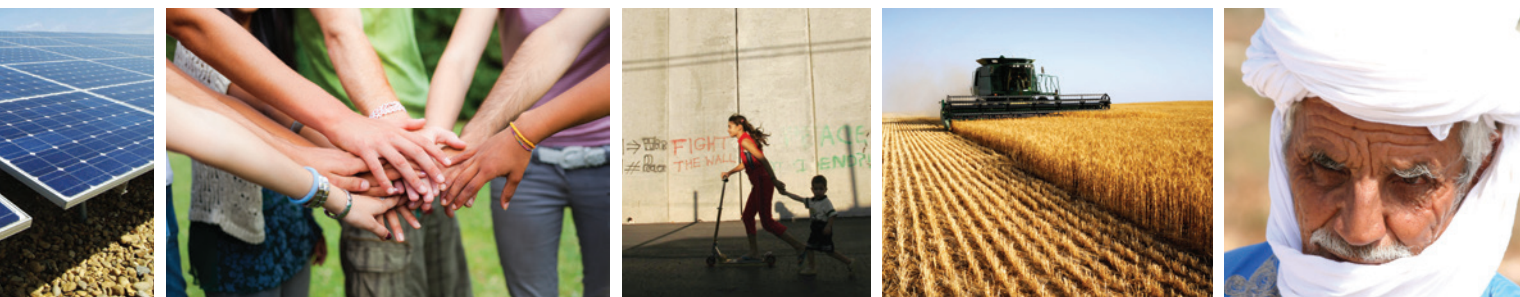


# ESCWA 2012 ANNUAL REPORT



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ESCWA

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

## COVER PHOTOS

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# ESCWA 2012

## ANNUAL REPORT



GO FORWARD





# CONTENTS

FOREWORD	4
ESCWA AT A GLANCE	6
INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT	18
INTEGRATED SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT	28
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION	36
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION	44
STATISTICS FOR EVIDENCE-BASED POLICYMAKING	52
ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN	60
CONFLICT MITIGATION AND DEVELOPMENT	68
PLANNING, PARTNERSHIP AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION	76
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES	82
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	89

# Foreword



Rima Khalaf, Executive Secretary, 2012. Source: ESCWA.

2012 was a year of contrast in the Arab region. The light of hope contrasted with the darkness of conflict and occupation.

Continued transition, socio-economic challenges, occupation and conflict and their ramifications were the dominant features of the year. Despite significant progress in meeting the Millennium Development Goals in areas of gender parity in primary, secondary and tertiary education and adult literacy, the Arab region continued to suffer from persistent poverty and inequality, high levels of unemployment, particularly among youth and women, governance deficits and the erosion of human welfare due to the destabilizing impact of conflict and occupation.

The rallying call of tens of millions Arabs for freedom, dignity and social justice must be heard and answered through human

development, better living standards and opportunities for all people. We at the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) heard their call and realigned our programmes and priorities to provide the best support for new realities in the development of the Arab region.

To that end, I am proud that ESCWA is now better positioned to respond to the calls for technical assistance from our member countries, to support them in delivering the economic, political and social development that the citizens of the region rightly demand.

Throughout 2012, countries in transition benefited from ESCWA activities designed to strengthen State institutions, advance citizen engagement, support national dialogue processes and increase transparency in the management of public services.

In light of the critical role of women and young people, not only in the transition of the region but also in shaping its future, ESCWA continues to ensure that women and young people are at the forefront of our mandate and activities. ESCWA has undertaken significant activities in member countries to promote policies and services to overcome gender-based violence, encourage the political participation of women and youth, promote education and identify and remove barriers to their economic participation.

In order to meet economic challenges in the region, our activities have focused on financing for development, understanding fiscal space in the aftermath of transition, reducing poverty and promoting foreign direct investment, trade and regional integration.

We at ESCWA have actively sought to build on our existing partnerships and to forge new ones in order to provide the most relevant, timely and efficient assistance for the development of the Arab region, working closely and collaboratively with regional institutions. We are working in a spirit of openness and cooperation to improve the lives of Arab people. Our priority is to sharpen and deepen cooperation to ensure that we are ready and able to meet and overcome current challenges on the road to a better, more prosperous future.

Against that backdrop, we welcomed three new member countries to the Commission in 2012: Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia. As we expand our outreach to cover the whole Arab region, we will enhance regional cooperation and integration between the Maghreb and Western Asia. The increased membership of ESCWA will strengthen the capacity of Arab States to harmonize goals, programmes and priorities and will foster closer alignment with other regional organizations.

2012 was a historic year for Palestinians. The achievement of non-member observer status in the General Assembly has given Palestinians greater legitimacy to achieve statehood and end the occupation. During 2012, ESCWA published reports that call attention to the detrimental impact of the Israeli occupation on Palestine and Palestinian women. Our commitment to helping the State of Palestine strengthen its fledgling national institutions remains steadfast and undiminished. Now, more than ever, we must support the Palestinians in their legitimate pursuit of statehood.

We recognize the importance of promoting sustainable development in the Arab region and ensuring that the Arab voice is heard at the global level as the world plans for future development goals. In collaboration with regional partners, ESCWA ensured that the voice of the Arab region was heard at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). Efforts leading up to Rio+20 resulted in the adoption and endorsement of a regional declaration, and the active participation of the Arab region in the formulation of the outcome document at the Conference.

The Arab region continues to be a dynamic and challenging environment that commands global attention. We commend ESCWA staff members for their resilience, determination and courage in what at times has been a challenging year in the region. We embrace the opportunity to serve our member countries and continue to deliver as one.



# ESCWA AT A GLANCE



The United Nations House, 2012. Source: Ahmad Azakir.



# Overview

In 2012, ESCWA sought to adapt and tailor its activities to meet the priority needs of member countries. In addition to undertaking specific projects, ESCWA mobilized a regional knowledge base and prepared country plans upon request. Through those efforts, ESCWA supported member countries in economic development, food security, gender, information and communication technology, the Millennium Development Goals, national dialogue, social development, trade, transport, water and environment, and statistics. Through adherence to the three pillars of our strategic framework: (i) Equitable Growth and Sustainability; (ii) Regional Integration; and (iii) Good Governance and Resilience, the Commission strives to respond to the needs of member countries and strengthen their development and the development of the Arab region.

## ESCWA Strategic Framework

### **Equitable Growth and Sustainability**

- Equity, inclusion and employment
- Competitive knowledge-based economies
- Sustainable natural resource management

### **Regional Integration**

- Knowledge and technology management
- Sustainable infrastructure
- Socioeconomic policy coordination
- Food, water and energy security
- Gender-sensitive policies and legislation

### **Good Governance and Resilience**

- Participation and citizenship
- Socioeconomic impacts of conflict and occupation
- Institutional development
- Resilience to natural and human-made crises

# Reform and transition to democracy

High-Level Meetings foster dialogue between leaders of Arab countries in transition and leaders of countries who have been through those challenges in the past

The efforts of the Commission aimed to support countries in transition through appropriate responses to the economic, political and social challenges of the region.

In response to significant changes that began in 2011, ESCWA collaborated with the five regional commissions to provide a forum for leaders from the Arab region and other parts of the world to exchange experiences and discuss the challenges of transitional periods. In 2012, ESCWA launched a series of High-Level Meetings to foster dialogue between leaders of Arab countries in transition and leaders of countries who have been through those challenges in the past.

The first meeting on Reform and Transition to Democracy was held in Beirut, 15-16 January 2012. Prominent speakers included Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations and Mr. Najib Mikati, Prime Minister

of Lebanon, in addition to Government ministers, members of parliaments and former heads of State. Some of the main themes included the Arab uprisings and their prospects, the multidimensional aspects of transition to democracy and the occupation of Palestine and its significance for region-wide political transition. The meeting highlighted the importance of justice and clear mechanisms of governance, the need to rethink the relationship between the State and citizens, the importance of civil society in strengthening democratic institutions and the political, economic and social rights of women.

As the region progresses towards democracy, ESCWA remains committed to fostering dialogue in regional and global forums to assist and support member countries in achieving the outcomes they desire.



The High-Level Meeting on Reform and Transition to Democracy, 2012. Source: ESCWA.

# The twenty-seventh session

In its role as the regional arm of the United Nations and the voice of its member countries in the international community, ESCWA holds biennial sessions during which the proposed activities, initiatives and direction of the Commission are agreed upon and established. The session highlights the role of the Commission as a forum for the Governments of member countries, governmental and non-governmental organizations and experts to discuss current and emerging issues of concern for the Arab region.

The twenty-seventh session of the Commission\* (Beirut, 7-10 May 2012) was characterized by sustained engagement of Ministers in substantive discussions which delivered ambitious and challenging proposals and recommendations for the Commission.

The debate at the session confirmed that the ESCWA approach of boldly addressing questions, even those that may be seen as political, results in sharper socioeconomic analysis and greater relevance to the concerns of the region.

Furthermore, the Arab ministers expressed their support for the continued efforts of the Commission to improve its performance through monitoring and evaluation, job audits and a review of its internal structure to achieve the highest standards of effectiveness and efficiency.

In addition to adopting amendments to the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013 and the strategic framework for the

During the session, the 14 member countries of ESCWA were asked to consider the requests of Libya, Morocco and Tunisia to join the Commission. The member countries voted in the affirmative and recommended that the Economic and Social Council accept the requests.

biennium 2014-2015, a number of resolutions were adopted, including the following:

- Enhancing macroeconomic policy in ESCWA member countries;
- The role of participation and social justice in achieving sustainable development;
- Sustainable development in the region and follow-up and implementation of the decisions of the Rio+20 Conference;
- Development of the Arab Internet Governance Forum process and sustaining efforts in the Arabic domain names field;
- Support for the Palestinian people;
- The regional dimension of development.

The twenty-eighth session is scheduled to take place in May, 2014.

# Libya, Morocco and Tunisia formally join ESCWA

Through Resolution 2012/1, the Economic and Social Council approved the decision of the twenty-seventh session of ESCWA to admit Libya, Morocco and Tunisia as new members. On 19 September 2012, ESCWA held a formal flag-raising ceremony at the United Nations House in Beirut to welcome Libya, Morocco and Tunisia as the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth members of the Commission.

The accession of the new member countries signifies the commitment of ESCWA to promoting greater integration in the Arab region and the sense of shared responsibility and ownership in its future development and prosperity.

Senior representatives from the new member countries attended the ceremony along with members of the diplomatic community in Lebanon.



Flag-raising ceremony, 2012. Source: ESCWA.

## Enhancing coordination: the Regional Coordination Mechanism

One of the primary functions of ESCWA is to enhance the coordination of regional and global institutions to enable a unified response to challenges in the Arab region. The need for coordination has never been greater than in 2012 as countries and institutions responded to transition and prepared for global conferences and their outcomes.

On 10 December 2012, ESCWA convened the seventeenth meeting of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) in Beirut which was chaired by United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Mr. Jan Eliasson.

The meeting allowed RCM members to debate the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 and the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) and focus on the importance of reflecting regional priorities in global discussions. In particular, the meeting emphasized the centrality of the issues of dignity, justice, equality and good governance within the post-2015 development agenda and the forthcoming sustainable development goals.

The meeting provided an excellent opportunity for all RCM members to engage with global counterparts, including Ms. Amina Mohamed, the Special Advisor to the Secretary-General, on the development agenda beyond 2015. Members of RCM committed to facilitate the efforts of Arab Governments and civil society to reach a consensus on the post-2015 development agenda. They called on ESCWA, as the secretariat of RCM, to coordinate with the United Nations Development Group and the League of Arab States to ensure coherence

The membership of RCM includes all regional United Nations entities, the League of Arab States and representatives of regional and international funding institutions. The meetings focus on regional development priorities and call for a common vision and approach among RCM members. The meetings generate collaborative activities and support the Thematic Working Groups that respond to regional priorities: climate change; food security; statistics; and the Millennium Development Goals. ESCWA is the secretariat of RCM.



between different initiatives and to allow for the following:

- Prioritization of development goals at the regional level;
- Translation of regionally-relevant demands for freedom, social justice, dignity, rule of law and inclusive growth into concrete targets and goals.

In addition, members of RCM called for consolidated regional efforts to support social and economic development and to enhance financing for development. During 2013, ESCWA will convene two meetings of RCM to follow up on the development agenda

beyond 2015 and to bring greater coherence and impact to financing for development in the region.

Meetings of the Thematic Working Groups that support RCM were also convened during the course of the year and fostered cooperation on joint activities of the United Nations and the League of Arab States, including the preparation of the Millennium Development Goals Report 2012 and an event showcasing complementary Arab regional initiatives on climate change at the eighteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP18) in Doha.

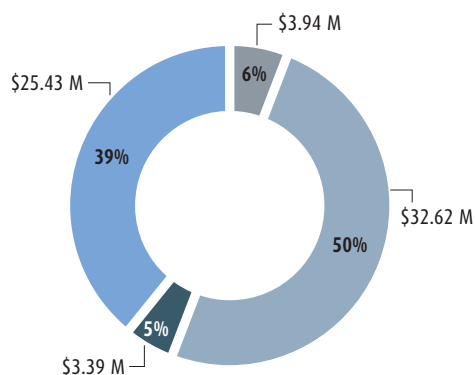
## Budget

TABLE 1: ESCWA budget for 2012-2013 and 2012 expenditure (US\$)

COMPONENT	BUDGET	EXPENDITURE
	2012-2013	31-Dec-12
Policymaking Organ	156,100	69,733
Executive Direction and Management	3,788,100	1,833,297
Programme of Work	32,615,100	16,247,830
Programme Support	28,819,600	14,831,404
Total Regular Budget	65,378,900	32,982,264
Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation	5,175,800	1,835,307
Safety and Security	9,998,700	5,798,407
Development Account and Extrabudgetary	7,181,077	4,259,194
Budget covered from Programme Support Account	592,092	592,092
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>88,326,569</b>	<b>45,467,264</b>

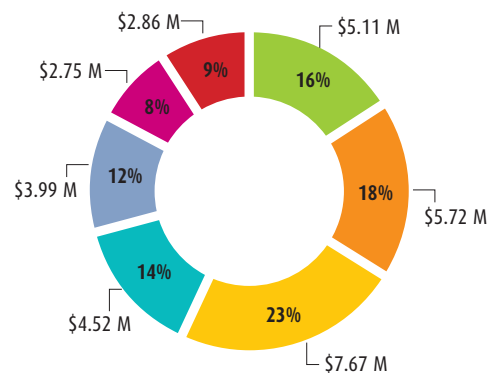
Note: Reported expenditures are as of 1 March 2013, unofficial and unaudited

**CHART 1: Distribution of ESCWA 2012-2013 regular budget resources by functional area**  
(Total: US\$65.38 million)



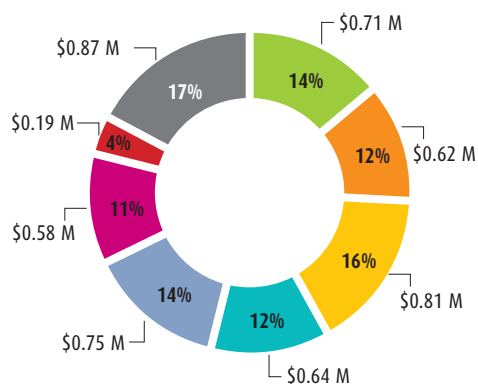
■ Polymaking Organ and Executive Direction and Management  
 ■ Programme of Work  
 ■ Programme Planning and Technical Cooperation  
 ■ Administrative Services

**CHART 2: Distribution of ESCWA 2012-2013 resources by substantive area of work (Total: US\$32.62 million)**



■ Sustainable Development and Productivity  
 ■ Social Development  
 ■ Economic Development and Globalization  
 ■ Information and Communication Technology  
 ■ Statistics  
 ■ Advancement of Women  
 ■ Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues

**CHART 3: Distribution of resources under the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation**  
(Total: US\$5.18 million)



■ Integrated management of natural resources for sustainable development  
 ■ Integrated social development  
 ■ Economic development and integration  
 ■ Information and communication technology for regional integration  
 ■ Statistics for evidence-based policymaking  
 ■ Advancement of women  
 ■ Conflict mitigation and development  
 ■ Secretarial assistance

TABLE 2: Current Development Account projects with budget and expenditure as of 31 Dec 2012 (US\$)

NAME OF PROJECT	START YEAR	END YEAR	TOTAL BUDGET	EXPENDITURE
Knowledge networks through information and communication technology access points for disadvantaged communities	2006	2011	970,000	959,530
Strengthening national capacities in environment statistics, indicators and accounts in support of progress toward achieving the internationally-agreed development goals in the ESCWA and ECLAC regions	2007	2011	602,000	592,972
Participatory human development in post-conflict countries in the ESCWA region	2009	2011	500,000	480,288
Regional harmonization of cyber legislation to promote the knowledge society in the Arab world	2009	2012	401,000	396,211
Strengthening capacities in the ESCWA region to negotiate bilateral investment treaties	2010	2014	502,200	241,801
Strengthening capacities in the ESCWA region to formulate national youth policies and plans of action: Responding to the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY)	2011	2013	379,000	81,446
Capacity building on climate change mitigation for poverty alleviation in western asia	2011	2013	547,200	168,309
Regional project for strengthening statistical capacity for the ESCWA countries in energy statistics and energy balance	2011	2014	509,000	135,141
Strengthening national capacities in ESCWA region in developing green production sector	2012	2013	491,000	191,178
<b>Total</b>			<b>4,901,400</b>	<b>3,246,877</b>

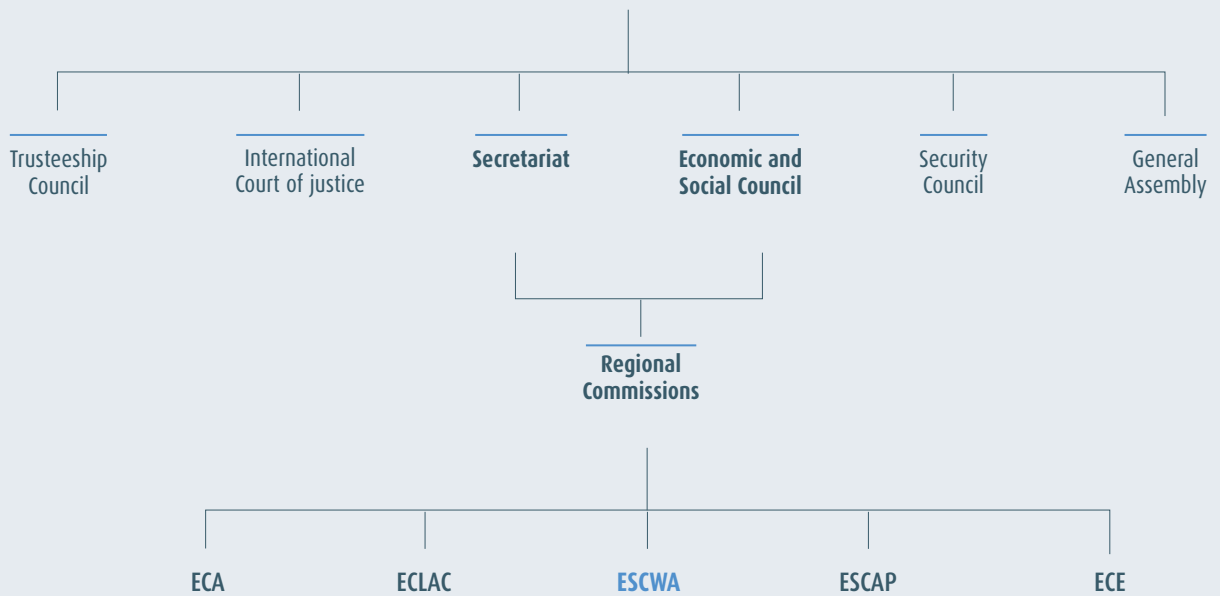
Note: Reported expenditure as of 1 March 2013, unofficial and unaudited.

TABLE 3: Voluntary contributions, 2008-2012 (US\$)

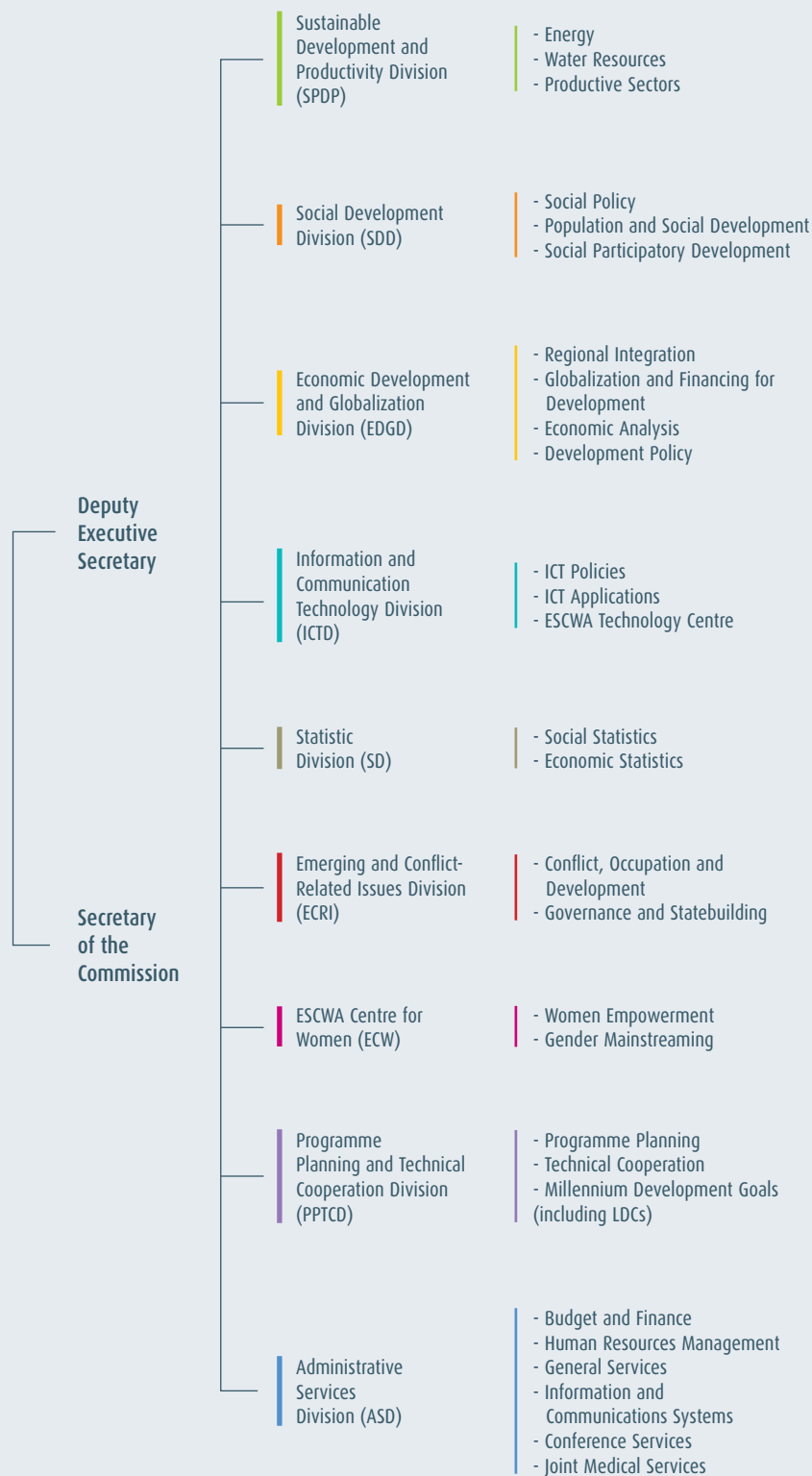
Organization
ARAB FUND FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
ARAB GULF PROGRAMME FOR UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS
AWQAF AND MINORS AFFAIRS FOUNDATION
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF DUBAI
EUROPEAN UNION DELEGATION TO LEBANON
GERMAN AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
HIGHER COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH CENTRE
KING KHALED FOUNDATION
MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION (JORDAN)
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT OF YEMEN
NORWEGIAN EMBASSY, BEIRUT
OFFICE OF THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES
ROYAL SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY OF JORDAN
SALAHADDIN UNIVERSITY
SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY
UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FRAMEWORK IRAQ
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT FUND FOR WOMEN
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT GROUP IRAQ TRUST FUND
UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
UNITED NATIONS ENTITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN
UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES
UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND
WORLD BANK
WORLD BANK AND INTERNATIONAL BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT
OTHERS
<b>Total</b>

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
				544,929	
	35,000		60,000		60,000
		125,000			
		19,210			
					239,606
					125,473
				99,758	74,723
					139,486
	116,613				
				249,648	
		19,983			
					49,408
				11,000	
				99,948	
	53,084				
			1,225,954	2,591,625	1,061,471
				25,000	
					677,608
		35,000			
			1,448,695		455,175
	747,478	827,144	844,068	783,577	54,240
			57,000	67,800	52,521
	131,586				
				161,250	26,750
			200,000	300,000	
					321,247
	53,127	51,667			
	<b>1,136,888</b>	<b>1,078,004</b>	<b>3,835,717</b>	<b>4,934,535</b>	<b>3,337,706</b>

# UNITED NATIONS



**ESCWA** Executive Secretary



# INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



The Dead Sea, 2009. Source: Marc Haering.



# ACCESS TO WATER, FOOD AND ENERGY ARE CLOSELY CONNECTED TO THE DEMAND FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, DEMOCRACY AND DIGNITY

## Overview

Socioeconomic development based on sustainable and efficient management of natural resources is the key goal of ESCWA member countries, but they are facing several challenges, namely water scarcity, lack of affordable and reliable energy supplies, food security and the expected future impacts of climate change. Consequently, the Sustainable Development and Productivity Division (SDPD) has responded to the priorities of Arab countries. The basic concept of sustainable development is that access to water, food and energy are closely connected to the demand for human rights, democracy and dignity.

2012 was a landmark year, which witnessed two important global events: the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) (Rio de Janeiro, 20-22 June 2012) and the eighteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP18) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Doha, 26 November-7 December 2012). Those events placed sustainable development at centre stage and

provided an excellent example of the interplay between the regional and global agendas and the unique role that ESCWA can play in advancing the priorities of the region in global forums. In anticipation of Rio+20, ESCWA led regional preparations including consultations with a wide range of stakeholders to formulate a coherent Arab position on issues related to sustainable development. That effort culminated in the Arab Ministerial Declaration on the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, which was included in the official documentation of Rio+20. Furthermore, at COP18, ESCWA, the League of Arab States and United Nations partners co-convened a regional event entitled Climate Change Vulnerability and Impact Assessment: Initiatives for Adaptation in the Arab Region. The Commission also delivered presentations in side events. At the Conference, Qatar demonstrated global and regional leadership in the area of climate change and showcased the engagement of Arab countries on the linkages between climate change mitigation, adaptation and sustainable development.

# Major achievements

## WATER

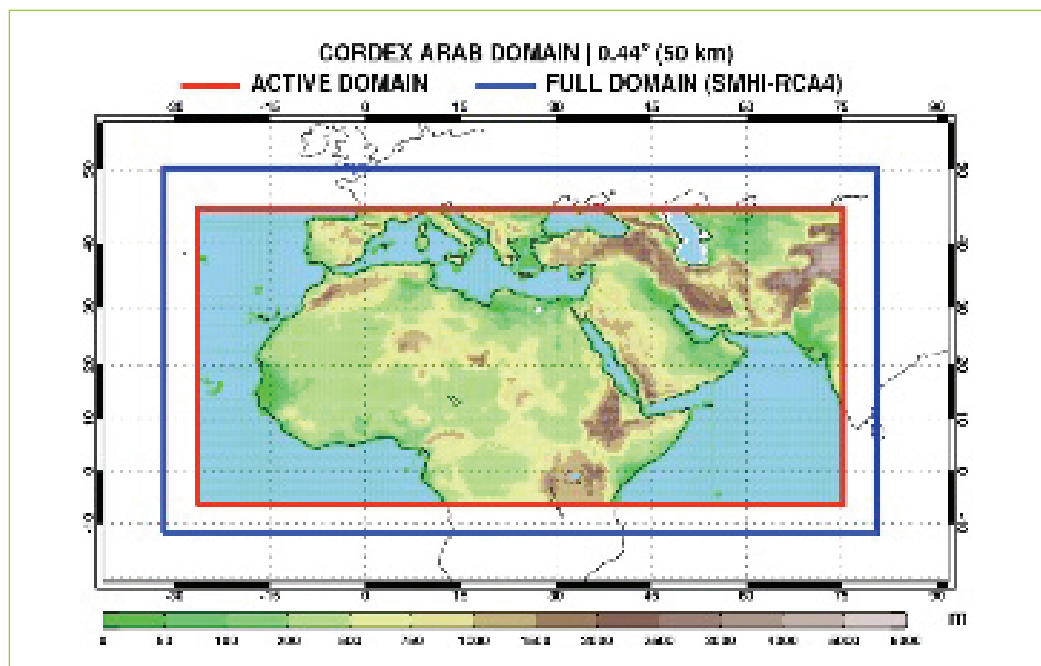
The Commission has embarked on an integrated process to assess the impact of climate change on water resources and sustainable development in the Arab region through the use of regional climate modelling, hydrological modelling and vulnerability assessment tools. This included establishing an Arab domain (figure I) for regional climate modelling applications which was accepted by the Coordinated Regional Climate Downscaling Experiment (CORDEX), with the support of the Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI) under the Regional Initiative for the Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socio-economic Vulnerability in the Arab Region (RICCAR), funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). In addition, ESCWA published a guidance document to

support the initiative entitled Assessing the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socioeconomic Vulnerability in the Arab region: A Methodological Framework for Pursuing an Integrated Assessment.

## RENEWABLE ENERGY, ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

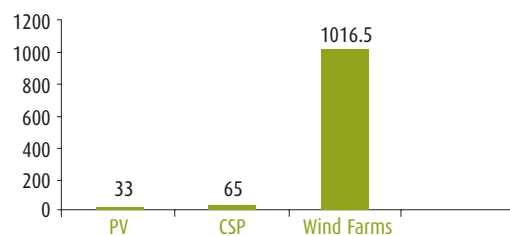
In response to the recommendations of the ESCWA Committee on Energy and the increasing interest of member countries, ESCWA is developing a publication on the role of renewable energy in promoting climate change mitigation in the Arab region. It will review the status of renewable energy, focusing on mature and common commercial applications suitable for member countries, particularly wind and solar energies to generate electricity and heat water. The publication will highlight strategies,

Figure I. The CORDEX domain for the Arab region



Source: ESCWA 2012.

Figure II. Renewable energy capacity in the Arab region (2012)



Source: ESCWA calculations  
 Note: megawatt (MW); photovoltaics (PV); and concentrating solar power (CSP).

frameworks, projects, plans, emissions reduction scenarios and the potential to manufacture renewable energy equipment in the Arab region. In addition, it will explore the potential for regional cooperation, taking relevant international and regional initiatives into consideration (figure II).

### GREEN ECONOMY

In cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, ESCWA is developing a publication on Monitoring the Transition to Green Economy in Arab Countries: The Perspective of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), which will review the progress Arab countries have made and assess the role of private sector in spearheading the transition.

### RIO+20

The highlight of 2012 was Rio+20 and ESCWA led the regional preparation efforts in collaboration with the League of Arab States and the United Nations Environmental Programme, among others, to harmonize the Arab position towards the major issues to be tackled during the Conference. Accordingly, ESCWA organized various consultative meetings on those issues, including the conceptual framework for a green economy and its expected benefits and a review of good practice. The preparatory process resulted in the development of the Arab Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Development that was presented at Rio+20.

Energy efficiency is one of the main pillars of the energy policies of member countries because of its role in climate change mitigation. Consequently, ESCWA issued three technical papers covering the following topics: (i) Opportunities for Energy Efficiency in Existing Buildings in the ESCWA Region; (ii) Effects of Climate Change on the Energy Sector in the ESCWA Region; and (iii) Energy Efficiency in Agriculture: Poultry Sector, which identified indicators of energy consumption and cost.

During the Conference, ESCWA organized side events in cooperation with other partners. The side events covered the following topics: (i) food security and safety for development in a changing Arab world; (ii) advancing sustainable development in post-conflict countries; and (iii) green growth and sustainable development: regional perspectives. In addition, ESCWA assisted in the preparation of United Nations System: Together for the Future We Want, a dialogue that outlined the role of the United Nations in supporting member country efforts to achieve sustainable development.

Maintaining the momentum of Rio+20, ESCWA convened the first intergovernmental consultative meeting between the Committee on Water Resources and the Committee on Energy, to discuss the water-energy nexus (Beirut, 27-28 June 2012). The officials addressed the interrelationship between water and energy and the relevant technical and policy options. They came to a common prioritization of water-energy nexus issues and examined possible mechanisms to coordinate policy efforts.

The Commission initiated cooperation with the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research to develop three regional research programmes on energy efficiency and renewable energy tools, technologies and policies, the controlled replenishment of groundwater and good agricultural practice. The initiative aims to consolidate existing institutional partnerships and build on the comparative advantage of each organization to enhance sustainable development in the Arab region.



Vegetable market, Agadir, Morocco. Source: Bogdan Wankowicz - [www.shutterstock.com](http://www.shutterstock.com).

The General Assembly designated 2012 as the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All. ESCWA contributed to awareness-raising campaigns and capacity-building activities at the national level to promote sustainable energy

### CO P18

During COP18, which also served as the eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, ESCWA co-chaired a Hikma Hours event on Climate Change Vulnerability and Impact Assessment: Initiatives for Adaptation in the Arab Region. It was organized in cooperation with the League of Arab States and United Nations partners to present climate change initiatives in the Arab region and included a presentation by ESCWA on RICCAR.

### SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOR ALL

The General Assembly designated 2012 as the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All. To promote sustainable energy, ESCWA participated in an awareness campaign in cooperation with the United Nations Information Centre in Beirut, Lions Clubs International and the Lebanese television channel MTV. The media campaign, called Change Your Habits, Save Your Energy, concluded with a project to enhance the energy efficiency of a shelter for street children.

Building on the findings of the ESCWA publication Policies and Measures to Promote Sustainable Use of Energy in the Transport Sector in the ESCWA Region (2011), the Lebanese petroleum import and distribution company, IPT, organized a national campaign to reduce air pollution through more efficient energy use in land transportation. The Lebanese Ministry of Environment, ESCWA and the United Nations Development Programme were invited to participate. The campaign aimed to sensitize the Lebanese to the effect of applying energy efficiency measures to reduce air pollution.

In addition, ESCWA facilitated the visit of a delegation from the Sudanese Ministry of Irrigation and Water Resources to the Ministry of Regional Municipalities and Water Resources in Oman in January 2012. The delegation learned about the structures, mandates and activities of their counterparts, gained conceptual and practical knowledge about water harvesting approaches and water management and acquired hands-on experience during field visits. The exchange visit was beneficial for both parties and may open future bilateral cooperation.

# Contributions to technical cooperation

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO TECHNICAL COOPERATION

During 2012, ESCWA provided technical support to Bahrain, Palestine and Saudi Arabia. In Bahrain, ESCWA assisted the Ministry of Works by reviewing the terms of reference and proposed approach of a national pilot study on the injection of treated wastewater into suitable aquifers for intermediate storage and possible future reuse in agriculture and other sectors. In Palestine, ESCWA reviewed the organizational structure of the Water Authority and developed a proposal for a new structure and the establishment of a water information centre. In addition, ESCWA conducted a mapping exercise to identify needs and developed a proposal concerning communication mechanisms between the Palestinian Water Authority and other Palestinian institutions for water-related information. Finally, ESCWA prepared a draft manual on water and environment indicators for sustainable development in national development planning in Saudi Arabia. The manual will be used as a guidance note for the application of sustainable development indicators.

In cooperation with the League of Arab States and Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation, ESCWA organized a conference and a training seminar on Pollution Emissions from the Electricity Sector in Arab Countries (Doha, 27-31 May 2012). The purpose of the conference and the seminar was to highlight the need for sustainable electricity and to showcase the negative environmental impact of electricity production and the methods to mitigate that harm.

To support the Lebanese ecotourism sector, ESCWA and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon organized a workshop for representatives of municipalities and non-governmental organizations (Tyre, Lebanon, 29 March 2012) to raise awareness of responsible ecotourism in the framework of green economies and sustainable

development. The workshop provided a platform to deal with the challenges facing that sector. Participants discussed options for a regional action plan and the need for a strong institutional framework to develop ecotourism strategies and programmes and attract private investment.

## DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT PROJECTS

During 2012, ESCWA implemented activities related to the project on Promoting energy efficiency investments for climate change mitigation and sustainable development, and provided stakeholders with capacity-building materials with a special emphasis on the construction sector. The expert group meeting on Sustainable Consumption and Production: Energy Efficiency (Tunis, 24-26 September 2012) provided a platform for leading experts to share experiences and discuss potential opportunities to develop a regional initiative on energy efficiency in the construction sector.

In cooperation with other United Nations entities, ESCWA has undertaken the project on Capacity-building on climate change mitigation for poverty alleviation in Western Asia to build the capacity of concerned policymakers, planners, executives and representatives of civil society and the private sector to enhance energy security and improve access to energy services in rural areas, based on renewable energy technologies. Activities included the following: a training workshop on Scaling Up the Use of Renewable Energy in Rural Areas in ESCWA Member Countries (Beirut, 1-2 February 2012), in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Office in Cairo and the Regional Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (RCREEE); the Arab Forum on Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency: Building Financing Partnerships (Cairo, 23-24 April 2012), in cooperation with the League of Arab States, the European Union and RCREEE; and a regional workshop

ESCWA is assisting member countries in the design and implementation of effective policies to promote green production sectors and foster renewable energy and energy efficiency



on Enhancing South-South Cooperation and Public-Private Partnerships in Renewable Energy Projects for Rural Development (Beirut, 27 November 2012), in collaboration with the Lebanese Association for Energy Saving and Environment.

The project entitled Strengthening national capacity in the ESCWA region in developing green production sectors is currently being implemented and aims to assist member countries in the design and implementation of effective policies. Activities undertaken include the following: a mapping exercise to review and assess existing green policies in the ESCWA region; the establishment of green production help desks in Lebanon and Oman in partnership with the concerned entities to support SMEs and increase their competitiveness; and the provision of workshops and online e-learning training for stakeholders.

### EXTRABUDGETARY PROJECTS

Through a joint technical cooperation project, ESCWA is cooperating with the Federal

Institute for Geosciences and Natural Resources (BGR) to complete the Inventory of Shared Water Resources in Western Asia, to be launched in early 2013. The inventory compiles and explores shared groundwater systems and surface water basins in Western Asia, with emphasis on hydrology, hydrogeology, water resources development and use and the status of cooperation. The targeted beneficiaries are decision makers, Government representatives of water and other sectors, donors and international organizations.

In response to the call of the Arab Ministerial Water Council to establish a regional mechanism to provide more specific information on access to water supply and sanitation based on local conditions and constraints, the League of Arab States, ESCWA and the Arab Countries Water Utilities Association, with financial support from SIDA, are undertaking the MDG+ Initiative to institutionalize a regional mechanism for monitoring and reporting on access to water supply and sanitation services in the Arab region.



The Dardara Falls on the Orontes River, Lebanon, 2009. Source: Andreas Renck.

The MDG+ Initiative will provide more specific information on access to water supply and sanitation in the Arab region, which will enhance progress towards the Millennium Development Goals

In support of RICCAR, ESCWA is coordinating a SIDA-funded project on the Assessment of the impact of climate change on water resources and socioeconomic vulnerability in the Arab region. Two regional workshops were held as part of the capacity-building and institutional strengthening pillars of the project. The first, Climate Change Prediction/Projection and Extreme Events Indices in the Arab Region (Casablanca, 13-16 March 2012), provided national meteorological offices in Arab countries with hands-on

computer-based training on climate data management software, climate indices and climate modelling tools and was implemented with the World Meteorology Organization and the Moroccan Direction de la Météorologie National. The second, Regional Climate Model Applications and Analysis (Beirut, 2-4 July 2012), provided a forum for the exchange of experience and the review of the process of establishing the CORDEX domain for the Arab region.

## Outlook

In the coming years ESCWA will maintain its focus on developing appropriate region-specific policy options for the transition to the green economy, integrated water resources management, food security and sustainable energy sources. Future publications will include the following: The Future We Want: Greening the Productive Sector; Sustainable Agricultural Production and Consumption in the Arab Region; Cooperation on Shared Water Resources in the Arab Region; Development Trends in the Energy Sector in the Arab Region; and Regional Cooperation for Energy Security in addition to publications on issues related to the water, energy and food security nexus.

In cooperation with the League of Arab States and other partners, ESCWA is committed to providing substantive and technical service at the request of member countries to support their efforts to translate the Rio+20 outcomes into sustainable policies. The Commission will convene regional and subregional consultative meetings to discuss the implications on the sustainable development

agenda, including the updating of the Arab Initiative for Sustainable Development.

The approach of ESCWA to sustainable development in conflict-affected developing countries will shift from emergency response to prevention. It is essential to monitor and plan for droughts in water-scarce countries affected by conflict. With the support of ESCWA, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs will lead a project to strengthen national capacity of conflict-affected countries to manage water scarcity and drought, targeting relevant national planners, policymakers and stakeholders in Western Asia and North Africa.

Moreover, ESCWA will lead a project on developing the capacity of Arab countries for climate-change adaptation by applying integrated water resources management tools. The project will build on the findings of the RICCAR impact assessment and propose integrated water resource management tools for Arab Governments.

# Expert contributions

**Mr. Rafik Missaoui - Vice President**

Tunisian Association of Energy Conservation

## RIO+20 – THE FUTURE WE WANT AND THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

Anticipating the importance of Rio+20 in shaping the regional agenda beyond 2015, the League of Arab States requested the support of ESCWA and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in leading the preparatory process by engaging Governments and stakeholders in rounds of dialogue and high-level policy events.

To prepare for those events, UNEP, ESCWA and the secretariat of the League of Arab States enhanced their awareness campaign and technical support of sustainable consumption and production; economic policies supporting the transition to the green economy; and the international framework for sustainable development. Those efforts resulted in the Arab Ministerial Declaration on Sustainable Development and other milestone regional reports.

At Rio+20, ESCWA and UNEP continued to liaise and interact with the Arab delegations. The aim was to provide support and assistance during the final negotiations of the draft outcome. The Commission participated in the daily meetings of representatives of the Arab region organized by the secretariat of the League of Arab States. The Arab region organized 18 side events during the Summit.

In a follow-up coordination meeting, UNEP and ESCWA agreed to continue their collaboration in providing policy guidance and capacity support to the League of Arab States on issues related to the implementation of the outcomes of Rio+20, particularly the review of the Arab Initiative for Sustainable Development, green economy investment opportunities, sustainable consumption and production and sustainable development indicators among others. The collaboration between UNEP and ESCWA is a great example of United Nations agencies delivering as one.

**Mr. Iyad Abumoghli - Director**

United Nations Environment Programme  
Regional Office for West Asia

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY IN THE ARAB REGION

Most ESCWA member countries will face significant energy supply challenges in the coming years because of increasing energy demand. The first challenge is to ensure the security of the energy supply, given the trend of increasing energy dependence in the region. Currently, the ESCWA region consumes about 55 per cent of the energy it produces, up from only 35 per cent in 2000.

Moreover, the increase in electricity demand far exceeds economic growth. Accordingly,

most member countries will face critical economic and technical challenges associated with the need for additional power plants.

The main challenge for net fuel-importing countries is the dramatic increase in the cost of energy, which will affect economic competitiveness. Meanwhile, most ESCWA member countries pay large public subsidies for conventional energy because of ineffective energy tariff systems, which exceed 20 per cent of the public budget of some countries.



Member countries must change the scale in the energy efficiency market. They should adopt voluntary energy efficiency and renewable energy policies and set up the required instruments and mechanisms for their implementation. That will allow them to improve the security of their energy supply, reduce their vulnerability to energy price shocks and enhance the sustainability of their socioeconomic development.

ESCWA should encourage Arab countries to define such policies by helping them to do the following:

- Develop long-term strategies for energy efficiency and renewable energy;
- Strengthen institutions to scale up the energy conservation market;
- Build the capacity of concerned stakeholders on relevant technical, economic and institutional aspects.



Solar panels, Abu Dhabi, 2011. Source: [www.greenprophet.com](http://www.greenprophet.com).

# INTEGRATED SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT



Ramallah, 2012. Source: Ammar Awad.



# EQUAL RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITY ARE A CENTRAL PILLAR OF THE BROADER SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

## Overview

At the World Summit for Social Development held in Copenhagen in 1995, the Governments of member countries agreed that “social development and social justice are indispensable for the achievement and maintenance of peace and security within and among our nations.” The Copenhagen Programme of Action further emphasized that “human dignity, all human rights and fundamental freedoms, equality, equity and social justice constitute the fundamental values of all societies.” Demonstrations and subsequent transitions that have swept several Arab countries over the past two years can be seen within that context as a struggle for rights, freedom and social justice. Although there are different dimensions of social justice, they all emphasize the importance of equal rights and opportunities, a central pillar of the broad social development agenda.

In 2012, the normative and technical cooperation activities carried out by the Social Development Division (SDD) of ESCWA continued to respond to key regional development challenges with a view to promoting a more inclusive, equitable and just process of social development. Those activities were designed to target critical social development bottlenecks that contributed to the popular demonstrations, such as inequality, unemployment, exclusion and the lack of socioeconomic and political participation. In the area of social development, ESCWA developed four main thrusts of activity: (i) social policy and social protection; (ii) mainstreaming population issues into national development policies; (iii) participatory development and democratic governance; and (iv) regional perspectives on the future global development agenda.

The social policy cluster included building knowledge and capacity on labour-market policy and the provision of social services and social protection. The population cluster developed several knowledge tools and implemented activities aimed to support the efforts of member countries to empower such key sociodemographic groups as young men and women, who, far more urgently than ever before, must be placed at the forefront of future development strategies in the region. The participation cluster addressed critical democracy deficits in the region by fostering partnerships and promoting civic engagement in social dialogue and consensus-building. In addition, the Division spearheaded the Commission’s contribution to ongoing global and regional debates on the future we want for all in a world after the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Regional priorities for the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015 include equitable growth, social inclusion, social protection, employment generation, participatory democracy and peace and security.

During 2012, the work of ESCWA focused on the social development needs of many vulnerable social groups, including the poor, the unemployed, the youth, the elderly, international migrants, persons with disabilities and politically disenfranchised citizens. Those activities took place in line with the four broad goals of the social development agenda of the Commission, namely: (i) to promote social development in member countries; (ii) to provide a regional platform for the exchange of national experiences; (iii) to provide technical assistance at the request of member countries; and (iv) to increase interaction in the area of social development between the Arab region and other world regions.

# Major achievements

The United Nations is currently debating the post-2015 development agenda, and ESCWA is working to ensure that the priority issues of the Arab region are reflected in the agenda beyond 2015

## THE UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT AGENDA BEYOND 2015

As part of its contribution to the ongoing global debate on the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015, ESCWA assumed a leading role in the production of a joint publication of the regional commissions entitled *A Regional Perspective on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda*. The publication, which focuses on the regional dimension of the future development agenda of the United Nations, will be presented to the United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination in the spring of 2013 and to the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons appointed by the Secretary-General, to advise him on the development agenda beyond 2015.

The key objective of the publication is to provide regional perspectives on global development, rights-based approaches to development, inclusiveness and equality. It underlines the need to adapt global goals to regional and national specificities. The publication assesses the political and socioeconomic context in which MDGs were formulated and the challenges and opportunities of that context. With the goal of learning from that experience, the publication also assesses the progress achieved as a result of the MDG agenda and the successes and failures that characterized the processes of setting and implementing goals. The publication analyses regional priorities to identify new global and regional development challenges that need to be included in the post-2015 development agenda. The final chapter consists of recommendations and policy options on the way forward.

The publication highlights some of the priority issues of the Arab region, including the following: (i) equitable and inclusive growth, with a focus on poverty and inequality; (ii) social inclusion and social protection; (iii) the perspectives of women and youth; (iv) democratic governance and participation; and (v) peace and security.

On the global level, ESCWA was actively involved in drafting and preparing the report to the Secretary-General entitled *Realizing the Future We Want for All*, in which all organizations of the United Nations system participated, under the leadership of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme. It was published in June 2012, and ESCWA made a significant contribution to the translation of the report into Arabic.

Finally, at the regional level, ESCWA will hold a special multi-stakeholder session of the Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) on the post-2015 development agenda at the beginning of 2013. The basis of the regional consultation will be the two publications mentioned above; *A Regional Perspective on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda* and *Realizing the Future We Want for All*. The session will include a day to discuss the views of civil society organizations in the region, covering major groups such as women, youth and the private sector, which will feed into another session composed of key regional institutions, such as the League of Arab States and other agencies outside the United Nations system.

## POPULATION AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES

In October 2012, ESCWA held a regional workshop which focused on building a common understanding of key issues facing Arab youth, reviewing existing policies, identifying gaps and discussing possible areas for reform, improvement and technical assistance. That process is aligned with the World Programme of Action for Youth and is supported by capacity-development tools and interventions at the national level. Knowledge-building efforts also included the publication of the fifth issue of the *Population and Development Report*, dedicated to analysing the demographic, social and cultural factors which lead to youth exclusion in the Arab region. The main findings and

policy options presented in that report are currently guiding ESCWA support for youth policy formulation in several Arab countries.

Within its continued effort to support member countries in dealing with and mainstreaming migration into the development policies, ESCWA completed a joint project with the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific on Strengthening national capacity to deal with international migration: maximizing development benefits and minimizing negative impacts. In addition, ESCWA worked with the American University in Cairo to upgrade the University's database to include modules on research experts and research centres on migration in the Arab region. The database will enable greater networking among researchers and member countries and facilitate access to expertise on migration issues. The project will be a cornerstone to strengthen partnerships with the League of Arab States and the International Organization for Migration in preparation for the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in

The recent popular demonstrations across the Arab region and calls for dignity and social justice have confirmed that many Arab countries have an urgent need to address youth issues. Youth empowerment is one of the fastest-growing focus areas at ESCWA. In 2012, ESCWA launched an initiative to enhance the capacity of policymakers to address the specific needs of young men and women by putting youth at the core of long-term development programmes and strategies.

2013. The project will enable ESCWA member countries to maximize the benefits of their contributions to that important global event.

In 2010, the General Assembly decided to extend the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and called upon all relevant organizations of the United Nations system to undertake an operational review of its implementation. During 2012, ESCWA played a central role in administrating the data collection processes of the ICPD global



Cairo. Source: Amy Nichole Harris - shutterstock.com.

survey and extending advisory support to member countries in the preparation of national population and development reports. In preparation for the regional conference to be held in 2013, ESCWA is spearheading the regional ICPD review process in partnership with the League of Arab States, UNFPA, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Union.

### KNOWLEDGE AND POLICY INFRASTRUCTURE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

During 2012, social policy research at ESCWA focused on three areas: labour markets and employment policies; the changing division of responsibilities between the State, the market and civil society in the provision of social services and protection; and social integration with particular attention to persons with disabilities.

Building on earlier research on labour-market policies, ESCWA provided analysis on economic and active labour-market policies and their respective impact on employment in the Arab region. A technical paper entitled *Active Labour-Market Policies in Arab Countries* discussed how only a limited number of the unemployed throughout the region benefit from existing programmes. Women in particular have inadequate access to such programmes. The research revealed that there is insufficient coordination between various service providers, which ultimately limits their effectiveness in addressing unemployment. The role of economic policies in fostering employment creation and the experiences of ESCWA member countries were analysed in the study of *Economic Policy in the ESCWA Region and its Impact on Employment*. The study identified continuing structural weaknesses in many economies which are still characterized by low-wage, low-productivity growth and inadequate job creation. Public spending often distorts incentives and prices, leading to a mismatch in the labour market between demand and supply. As distortions of the labour market continue to be among the key concerns in the region, ESCWA will continue to work on labour-market policies in the future.

To explore and deepen knowledge on the changing division of responsibilities between the State, the market and civil society in the provision of social services, ESCWA, in cooperation with other international and regional organizations, organized an Arab forum entitled *Towards a New Welfare Mix: Rethinking the Roles of the State, Market and Civil Society in the Provision of Basic Social Services* (Beirut, 19-20 December 2012). The forum brought together experts from Governments, civil society and academia and raised awareness on the gaps in social services provided by the public sector. It discussed how those gaps are bridged by various actors from the private sector, faith-based organizations or political parties. The forum addressed the achievements of various actors with regard to equity of access, coverage and quality. The findings of the forum will feed into the Integrated Social Policy Report V, *Towards a New Welfare Mix: The Roles and Responsibilities of Public, Private and Civil Society Actors in the Provision of Social Services*, to be published in 2013.

**Persons with disabilities in the Arab region continue to face numerous political, social, economic and environmental barriers that arise from insufficient awareness, data and information. ESCWA has provided technical assistance to improve the situation of persons with disabilities.**

In October 2012, ESCWA carried out a mission to assist the Higher Council for Affairs of Persons with Disabilities and the Department of Statistics in Jordan in devising a strategy to improve the collection and production of data on disability. The assistance enhanced partnerships between the Government and civil society organizations for designing, implementing and monitoring development policies. There are synergies between the mission and an upcoming project on strengthening knowledge and policy infrastructure for the implementation in the Arab region of the United Nations

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Lessons learned from the technical cooperation activity will feed into the implementation of that project.

### CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN POLICY FORMULATION AND DECISION-MAKING

Responding to the Arab transitions, ESCWA initiated a regional project to operationalize a participatory approach in public policy processes. To advance the objectives of the project, ESCWA developed a manual and toolkit to guide users through a step-by-step participatory procedure towards achieving democratic governance. The manual was vetted by representatives of Government institutions, civil society organizations, academic and media institutions, and United Nations agencies in a subregional workshop (Beirut, 16-19 April 2012). In the same context, an earlier ESCWA project on participatory human development in post-conflict countries continued to yield positive results. In 2012, with the assistance of ESCWA, project beneficiaries established an Iraq-based non-governmental organization called Dar Al-Khibrah and created the Arab Network for Social Development that channels knowledge and lessons learned to address development challenges in Iraq and the region. The positive impact of the project was further verified by the

ESCWA continues to respond to the requests of member countries for advisory and technical support services within the field of participatory democracy, civic engagement and consensus-building

In 2012, ESCWA developed a specialized website on Participatory Development in Western Asia (<http://pdwa.escwa.org.lb>) that hosted an e-seminar on participation and democracy. The e-seminar generated 130 responses from 11 experts, social practitioners, and civil society actors from six Arab countries (namely Algeria, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia). It presented a rich array of perspectives and some actionable recommendations on the process of transition to democracy.

replication of six workshops, one seminar and one research paper based on ESCWA participatory development programmes that benefited some 200 participants from different Government and civil society entities in selected member countries. ESCWA continues to respond to the requests of member countries for advisory and technical support services within the field of participatory democracy, civic engagement and consensus-building. During 2012, ESCWA provided a number of capacity-building initiatives on leadership skills, citizenship, communication and participatory mechanisms to support the involvement of civil society associations and youth groups in national dialogue processes.

### MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS OF ESCWA E-SEMINAR ON PARTICIPATION & DEMOCRACY (1 June-30 September 2012)

The process of transition to democracy requires reinventing governance, establishing a new social contract, building trust and rekindling hope.

The role of women in the process of change in the Arab region is paramount. Transition to democracy, balanced political life and true democracy are not possible if women are excluded from political participation.

Civil society is a major player in the success of national dialogue, and so civil society must adapt and make changes in the process.

Fighting corruption, nepotism and cronyism and ensuring transparency are among the most pressing reforms required in current political transition

Those conclusions will be mainstreamed in ongoing and future ESCWA programmes, projects and activities on participatory development, democratic governance and consensus-building.

# Outlook

ESCWA aims to increase consultation with member countries, civil society, academia and the private sector to reflect regional development needs and specificities and strengthen the regional arm of development

Looking forward, ESCWA will continue to engage in the international debate on the development agenda beyond 2015, with the aim of increasing consultation with member countries, civil society, academia and the private sector to reflect regional development needs and specificities and strengthen the regional arm of development. In 2013, ESCWA will take the lead in preparing the regional report for Arab States on the ICPD Programme of Action beyond 2014, a major reference point for future policies that takes the nexus of population and development into consideration. In addition, ESCWA will

produce a publication on citizenship and civic engagement in democratic transitions with the aim of assessing ongoing social transformations in the region and upholding the institutionalization of participation to promote citizenship. Those efforts will be complemented by capacity-building workshops in support of participatory, consultative processes on consensus-building dialogue. Finally, ESCWA will carry out activities and identify lessons with the aim of promoting a common vision for an integrated social protection strategy in the region

# Expert contributions

**Mr. Gilbert Doumit - Founder and Managing Partner**  
Beyond Reform and Development Lebanon

My cooperation with ESCWA, which goes back to more than 10 years, continues through research activities, training, and the exchange of knowledge in the areas of political, economic, and social development. What characterizes ESCWA is that it is constantly looking for ways to deal with or adapt to changes taking place in the region, through a work methodology that seeks to involve the largest number of experts, activists, decision makers, and stakeholders in the design, implementation and evaluation stages of its work.

The participatory approach of ESCWA, and its continuous communication with all governmental and civil society stakeholders, enhances its ability to interact with its environment and adapt its programs to the needs and expectations of beneficiaries and decision makers. My most recent cooperation with ESCWA was the development of a training manual on Capacity Building for Partnership in Democratic Governance.

The guide aims to build the capacities of governmental and non-governmental leaders that have emerged and acceded to power as a result of political transformations. The process of developing this guide is an example of the participatory approach of ESCWA. It included the preparation of research papers and case studies by different experts, as well as series of meetings and brainstorming sessions that brought together participants from various countries in the region to discuss the material prepared and present recommendations. In collaboration with a number of colleagues, I based work on the guide on those papers, studies, and discussions, resulting in 10 chapters that included case studies from 10 countries. The guide was shared with a group of experts and stakeholders for review and suggestions, with a view to finalizing it after a concluding meeting in Beirut. In the final stages, the guide was tested at a training session for civil society activists and decision makers from the region. Recommendations emanating



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from this meeting were adopted in the final version of the guide.

This experience highlights the distinctiveness of ESCWA at three levels: first, its ability to react quickly and effectively to the political transitions in the region, which allowed it to adjust its priorities according to the emerging needs and expectations of the region, and thus take the decision to develop this guide; second, its commitment to involve all parties, be it experts, activists, or policymakers in the production of a tool that addresses the needs of the region; and third, its provision of an

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interactive space for shared learning among countries, sectors, and individual experts, in a manner that reflects positively on various communities of the region.

In this period of political transformations that countries of the region are going through, the role of ESCWA is becoming increasingly important. Its relationship with all parties, its ability to engage them in dialogue, and its credibility with decision makers makes it an essential reference in public policymaking for countries of the Arab region.

### Ms. Rasha Jarhum - Social Development Advisor Lebanon

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Countries in the ESCWA region are currently at the crossroads where, to respond to recent political developments, they have to think seriously about the social dimension of development. The situation is highlighted by a finding of the Arab Forum: Towards a Social Welfare Mix, organized by ESCWA in 2012 that several countries provide relatively elaborate services to a limited percentage of the population, while large percentages do not even have access to basic social services of good quality. The Arab Forum provided an opportunity to discuss the linkages and relationships between various social actors and how these relationships influence social protection in the region.

In the development discussion in Arab countries, most attention is given to economic issues while social issues are relatively neglected. Thus, a strength of ESCWA is that it adopts a holistic approach to social policies. ESCWA has an inherent edge in providing much-needed technical assistance

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in specific areas such as welfare policy and zakat management, and fostering organized corporate social responsibility.

As an example, the research I conducted on zakat management in Yemen indicated significant gaps within the legislation as well as the administrative procedures, resulting in inadequate zakat collection and redistribution mechanisms, where the poor benefit only to a limited extent from social policies enacted for their protection. The recommendations of ESCWA in this area can be highly instrumental for social policy considerations, particularly during these times of political transition and instability in the region.

The role of ESCWA as a regional platform for exchange of experiences between member countries should be strengthened as countries need more opportunities to share experiences related to the design of social protection policies.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRATION

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# EQUITABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, REGIONAL COOPERATION AND INTEGRATION ARE KEY OBJECTIVES OF ESCWA

## Overview

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The main objective of Economic Development and Globalization Division (EDGD) is to foster long-term dynamic growth and equitable development in the economies of Western Asia and to enhance regional cooperation and integration at the subregional, regional and global levels through strengthening linkages between countries of the region and promoting their effective integration into the world economy. The Division consists of four sections that deal with specific themes: regional integration, globalization and financing for development, economic analysis, and development policy.

The Division has adopted a three-track strategy: first, national, regional and global economic monitoring and assessment; second, research, policy analysis and empirical analysis of long-term structural and development issues that form the core of flagship publications; and third, knowledge management, where the Division develops and shares policy options and good practice and facilitates capacity-development and

knowledge-building through meetings, advisory services and staff missions. Focus areas include poverty alleviation, income distribution, inclusive and sustainable equitable development in the Arab region and productivity and competitiveness. That also includes advice on the design and implementation of suitable macroeconomic policies for long-term growth in the region. Furthermore, the Division promotes economic and financial integration within the region and with other regions, and strengthens South-South cooperation through participation in global supply chains.

Finally, EDGD improves the capacity of ESCWA member countries to finance socioeconomic development. It provides support for sustained follow-up to the agreements and commitments contained in the Monterrey Consensus and helps member countries fill the financing gap by raising domestic and international financial resources.



# Major achievements

## FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT

The Commission is active in key areas related to financing development in the Arab region, namely financing small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and financing infrastructure through public-private partnerships. During 2012, ESCWA published a comprehensive study on the main financial constraints SMEs face. The study was discussed at the twenty-seventh session of the Commission in a round table on inclusive finance (10 May 2012) and at a regional expert group meeting (EGM) on the role of SMEs in sustainable development in the Arab region (Kuwait, 6-7 November 2012) in cooperation with the Arab Planning Institute. The meetings resulted in an agenda for further research in 2013.

Under the public-private partnership initiative, EDGD developed a paper on the potential for ESCWA to help member countries prepare viable projects and structure appropriate financing options. That work will continue throughout 2013, with an EGM to launch the ESCWA public-private partnership platform.

## FISCAL SPACE IN THE ARAB REGION

The Commission undertook an analytical study that aimed to assess the impact of recent transitions on fiscal space in Arab countries and their capacity to finance the development transformations that the people demanded. The study confirmed that fiscal space in the aftermath of recent transitions is more constrained than it was before. Nevertheless, the study found that basic social protection was affordable for most countries within current spending, if expenditure on subsidies was switched to social protection. Regional development will play an important role for countries with restricted fiscal space in the short term. Those findings were discussed at the first Arab Economic Forum organized by ESCWA (Beirut, 23-24 November 2012). The deliberations resulted in the suggestion to

develop a fiscal space index for the region to facilitate the development of policy recommendations at the regional and subregional levels.

## MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

During the Arab Conference on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) organized by the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs (Cairo, 2-3 December 2012), ESCWA contributed a background paper and participated in the discussions. The paper assessed the main successes and failures of the efforts of the Arab region to achieve MDGs, with a special focus on food insecurity and increasing undernourishment in the region. Based on that assessment, ESCWA presented a range of ideas for the United Nations development agenda beyond 2015, including the importance of incorporating the issues of inequality, social protection and governance. In addition, the Commission proposed the establishment of an Arab food security fund to strengthen regional development.

**To build the capacity of member countries to compile foreign direct investment (FDI) statistics, ESCWA conducted a national training workshop on the Compilation and Dissemination of Statistics on FDI Inflows (Beirut, 24-28 September 2012).**

## POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY IN JORDAN

During 2012, ESCWA contributed to a poverty-reduction strategy for Jordan that is currently being finalized and will be ready in early 2013. The Commission evaluated the country's current tax structure and developed different policy options that can make the tax structure more pro-poor. In addition, ESCWA assessed poverty among employed people in Jordan, and evaluated the cost of including the working poor in social security programmes. ESCWA provided modelling and analysis

based on household surveys along with innovative, tailored policy options for poverty reduction.

### TRADE AND REGIONAL INTEGRATION

The Commission published two technical papers on trade liberalization and productive capacity, and liberalizing trade in services. Both papers aimed to assist member countries in assessing the benefits of trade liberalization and its impact on various development issues. In addition, a paper on Growth and Employment Outcomes of Different Arab Maghreb Union Integration Options: Preliminary Results was prepared upon the request of the Government of Tunisia. The paper estimated the impact of alternative scenarios of fostering the integration of member countries of the Arab Maghreb Union.

In connection with the review of progress towards the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus on financing for development, ESCWA prepared a report that highlighted trade liberalization measures that member countries implemented during the period 2009-2011 to enhance the role of trade in financing for development. The report highlighted important issues including export

**During 2012, ESCWA continued to support member countries in formulating and implementing trade policies that are conducive to growth and regional integration.**

diversification, trade complementarity, and non-tariff measures facing trade flows between Arab countries, and will feed into the Arab Integration Report, prepared by the Office of the Executive Secretary of ESCWA.

The Division also contributed to the Arab Integration Report by assessing progress in economic integration, trade integration and macroeconomic policy convergence. The Division developed simulations of alternative scenarios of deeper Arab economic integration and estimated its impact.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) organized the twenty-fifth regional course on key issues on the international economic agenda for Western Asia. ESCWA presented papers during the course on scenarios of deeper Arab economic integration, options for financial cooperation between Arab countries and the European Union and the impact of trade liberalization using the product space map approach (Oman, 18-20 November 2012).



Gulf of Aqaba, Source: Chris Hyde - [www.shutterstock.com](http://www.shutterstock.com).

The Commission organized an EGM on preferential trade agreements and regional integration (Tunis, 5-6 December 2012). The meeting concerned trade integration between Arab and non-Arab countries, including members of the European Union, and addressed non-tariff barriers and their impact on trade flows between Arab countries. Participants from 11 member countries attended the meeting in addition to representatives of private sector organizations, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the International Trade Centre, the African Development Bank and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, among others.

In the Sudan, ESCWA has supported the implementation of a single window for trade facilitation

To promote the intraregional movement of human and physical capital and traded goods, ESCWA prepared a study on Establishing and Implementing a Single Window for Trade Facilitation in the Sudan. The study discussed international recommendations and concluded with a proposed plan of action. In addition, ESCWA organized a workshop in the Sudan with the Ministry of Trade and the National Labour Union, to discuss obstacles and solutions, international recommendations and the experiences of other countries. As a result of the workshop, the Minister for Trade agreed to supervise and support the implementation of a single window for trade facilitation and the Sudan Customs Authority was assigned as the focal point for formalities while the Sudan Port Authority was assigned as the focal point for logistics.

## TRANSPORT

Under its technical cooperation mandate, ESCWA provided technical assistance to Egypt to activate the National Transport and Trade Facilitation Committee. A draft action

plan, prepared by ESCWA, was discussed during the workshop on Transport and Trade Facilitation in Egypt (Cairo, 11 April 2012), and sent to the Ministry of Transport for adoption. The implementation will be initiated by the Ministry with support from ESCWA.

In partnership with the Arab Union for Land Transport and other organizations, ESCWA co-organized a regional workshop on the Implementation of the Action Plan of the United Nations Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020 (Amman, 14-15 November 2012). Representatives of 12 member countries, the Economic Commission for Europe and more than 16 Arab, international, regional and non-governmental organizations were in attendance. During the meeting, participants discussed good practice and lessons learned from other regions, funding tools for road safety improvements, the need for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of road safety and the preparations for the second United Nations Global Road Safety Week in May 2013. At the meeting, ESCWA proposed the establishment of a national lead agency or council on road safety involving partners from a range of sectors.

## INTEGRATED TRANSPORT SYSTEM IN THE ARAB MASHREQ

To follow up with member countries on the development and implementation of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq (ITSAM), ESCWA organized the thirteenth session of the Committee on Transport (Beirut, 24-26 April 2012). At the session, committee members discussed regional harmonization of the institutional frameworks and legislation in the transport sector and methods of financing the infrastructure of some components of ITSAM.



# Contributions to technical cooperation

## DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT PROJECTS

As part of the project on Strengthening capacities in the ESCWA region to negotiate bilateral investment treaties, ESCWA conducted several workshops and technical meetings in Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the Sudan. In addition, ESCWA launched a user-friendly website on bilateral investment treaties in March 2012. The website provides a space for the exchange of experience and

expertise in the area of bilateral investment agreements between ESCWA member countries.

Furthermore, in cooperation with UNCTAD, ESCWA organized a study tour for 12 Government officials from five member countries (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman and the Sudan) to attend the World Investment Forum 2012 (Doha, 21-22 April 2012).

## Outlook

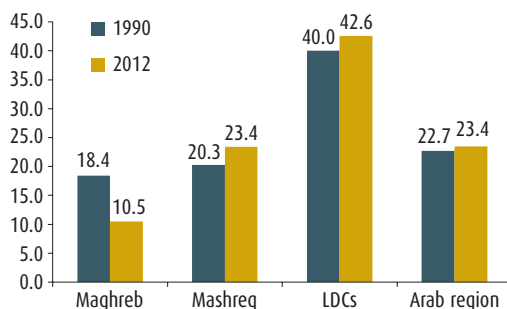
From 1990 to 2012, the poverty rate increased in the Arab region (see figure below). Accurate measurements of poverty are an important tool to formulate appropriate policies to reduce poverty. In 2013 ESCWA will undertake an evaluation of current measures of poverty and inequality and measurement techniques to identify how they could be improved. The study will review current approaches to definitions and calculations of poverty to analyse their robustness (theoretical approach), review the structures of current household expenditure and income surveys and discuss potential

changes (practical approach). By linking theoretical and practical approaches, the study aims to influence the measurement and analysis of poverty, which will influence policy and the way the Arab region fights poverty.

The League of Arab States, ESCWA and other United Nations agencies in the Arab region are cooperating to prepare the fourth Arab MDG Report. The objectives of the report are: to provide a thorough assessment of MDG progress to date in the Arab region; to analyse what worked and what did not; and to discuss the desired future development paradigm from a regional perspective, given the current global debate on the post-2015 development agenda. The report will be presented to the Council of Arab Ministers of Social Affairs in July 2013.

The Commission is planning to prepare a publication on the Arab development outlook, which will discuss the medium- and long-term socioeconomic outlook for the region and recommend policies based on an in-depth analysis of recent trends and developments that affect the economic, social, environmental, food, water, security and governance sectors of the region. The publication will also present subregional narratives of development prospects in the

Poverty in the Arab region and subregions (percentage)



Source: ESCWA calculations based on national data.  
Note: Least developed countries (LDCs).

Gulf Cooperation Council countries, countries of the Arab Mashreq, Maghreb countries, and the Arab least developed countries.

Within that context, ESCWA will develop a variety of quantitative models that inform economic analysis in the region. Due to the ongoing development of the statistical capacity of member countries, more varieties of quantitative models such as computable general equilibrium and dynamic stochastic general equilibrium have become technically feasible. During 2013, the Commission will continue to share technical expertise in quantitative modelling concepts and techniques with experts and practitioners in the Arab region through advisory services, with a view to ultimately contribute to establishing an Arab macroeconomic platform to accelerate regional integration for optimal economic benefit.

Upon request, ESCWA will continue to support member countries in specific areas. Currently, ESCWA is creating an assistance programme for Tunisia and developing an overall investment strategy that aims to attract job-creating investments to strategic

**ESCWA will increase its knowledge base and provide policy advice on economic governance and economic institutions to member countries, based on lessons learned from the region. Specifically, ESCWA will prepare several reports and policy working papers, organize an EGM and provide policy support to selected countries in the region.**

sectors and regions. The assistance programme is based on the investment framework of the country and comprehensive research. It calls for capacity-building measures to promote efficient and well-coordinated institutional architecture to promote investment. Proper legislation and regulations, along with tools such as bilateral investment treaties are needed to support the implementation.

In response to the request of Jordan, ESCWA is assisting in the following: developing the analytical capacity of the Government of Jordan to develop a socioeconomic model that links macroeconomic policies to poverty, employment and diversification and acts as a tool for policymaking; enhancing the business



Olive processing, Ramallah, Source: Ammar Awad.

environment in Jordan; and encouraging entrepreneurship by easing constraints on SMEs and improving the business environment for them. In addition, ESCWA is developing a technical assistance project for Oman. The purpose of the project is to assist policymakers to develop tools and local capacity to generate information about household welfare at a much finer level than before. The project will assess and map poverty in Oman and

establish a capable team of national poverty analysts at the Supreme Council for Planning, which will mainstream primary inputs into the country's five-year development plan. The poverty assessment report will complement the national human development reports and raise awareness of inclusive development by highlighting regional discrepancies, money-metric poverty and its concentration in certain regions or in particular population groups such as women and children.

## Expert contribution

**Mr. Issa Maldaon- Vice President**

Economics Faculty, Damascus University

During 2012, new development challenges appeared in the region. To face those challenges, working methodologies and creative approaches are needed. The most important challenges are as follows:

**1.** Economic, social and political changes are taking place in the countries of the region that experienced the Arab Spring, and those changes have resulted in new priorities that reflect the demands and needs of the people.

**2.** Populations have placed increasing pressure on their Governments to respond immediately to their demands, especially with regard to employment and social protection.

**3.** There is an urgent need to adopt a new development approach, to ensure that all categories of citizens have access to the benefits of development on the basis of social justice and human rights, in accordance with inclusive development.

**4.** Funding sources and sufficient fiscal space is needed to finance development plans and ensure sustainability, especially in the non-oil exporting countries of the region.



# INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION



Cairo, 2012. Source: Ed Giles - [www.gettyimages.com](http://www.gettyimages.com).

# ESCWA ASPIRES TO CLOSE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE AND DEVELOP AN INCLUSIVE INFORMATION SOCIETY, KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMIES AND GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

## Overview

Information and communication technology (ICT) and knowledge play an increasingly important role in development processes. They influence the global economic, social and cultural sectors now more than ever and are central to knowledge-based economies. Member countries of ESCWA have varying capabilities to adapt to the relentless advance of knowledge and technology and face real challenges in their transition to the information society and knowledge economies. The widening digital divide between developed countries and ESCWA member countries increases vulnerability to global economic turmoil. Member countries must direct their efforts towards building human capital and strengthening digital literacy and education, particularly for women and youth.

The Information and Communication Technology Division (ICTD) of ESCWA aspires to close the digital divide and develop an inclusive information society, knowledge-based economies and global competitiveness. The Division works in compliance with the outcomes of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), the 2003 Geneva Plan of Action, the 2005 Tunis Agenda and international development goals. It follows up on the implementation of the outcomes of WSIS, the ESCWA Regional Plan of Action for Building the Information Society and the Arab ICT Strategy.

There are three ICTD entities, namely the ICT Applications Section, the ICT Policies Section and the ESCWA Technology Centre.

The ICT Applications Section promotes the use of ICT applications and e-services for socioeconomic development with special

focus on digital Arabic content. It seeks to improve knowledge-based economies in the region with a special focus on building trust in cyberspace through the development and harmonization of cyberlegislation at the regional level. It measures and profiles the information society in member countries and explores new trends in ICT for development.

The ICT Policies Section supports the formulation and implementation of policies and strategies that assist member countries in their transition towards knowledge-based economies. The Section also focuses on building a competitive ICT sector that is based on innovation and partnerships. The Section supports the participation of the Arab region in the global dialogue on Internet governance. It launched a dialogue between stakeholders and developed a platform to discuss strategic issues and options related to regional priorities in the field of Internet governance.

The ESCWA Technology Centre assists countries, public entities and private organizations in the region to acquire the tools and capabilities to facilitate sustainable development, attain technological parity with other regions of the world and transform their economies so that they are based on scientific and technological knowledge. The Centre strengthens the capacity of member countries to develop and manage national systems; develop, transfer, adapt and apply technology; determine and facilitate the development of technologies that are suitable for the region; and improve the legal and commercial framework for the transfer of technology. It also aims to enhance the role of technology and science in the major economic sectors of member countries.

# Major achievements

The ESCWA Cyberlegislation Directives, which were officially launched during the twenty-seventh session of the Commission

## HARMONIZATION OF CYBERLEGISLATION

A reliable legal framework for cyberspace provides the foundation for the development of the ICT sector in the Arab region and fosters an enabling environment for the knowledge society. Since 2009, ESCWA has been implementing the project on Regional harmonization of cyberlegislation to promote the knowledge society in the Arab world. In collaboration with the League of Arab States, ESCWA organized the regional workshop on Developing and Harmonizing Cyberlegislation in the Arab Region (Cairo, 14-15 March 2012). As a testament to its achievements in the region, the Council of Arab Ministers of Justice recommended at its twenty-seventh session to continue cooperation between the Executive Bureau of the Council and ESCWA on legal matters for developing and harmonizing cyberlegislation in the region.

The project to harmonize cyberlegislation in the region resulted in the publication of the ESCWA Cyberlegislation Directives, which were officially launched during the twenty-seventh session of the Commission in May 2012. The Directives were designed to assist Arab countries in the development of national cyberlaws and to harmonize cyberlegislation at the regional level.

To raise awareness of the importance of harmonizing cyberlegislation in the Arab region and to promote regional integration in the formulation of cyberlaws, ESCWA organized two regional workshops that targeted stakeholders in the legal and ICT sectors, including representatives of ministries, academic institutions and associations. In addition, ESCWA convened national workshops in collaboration with local counterparts in the following countries: Algeria (Ministry of Post and Media and Information Technologies); the Sudan (Ministry of Justice); Bahrain (Legal Affairs Department and the eGovernment Authority); Lebanon (Arab Lawyers Union, Beirut Bar

Association and the Arab Center for the Development of the Rule of Law and Integrity); and the United Arab Emirates (United Arab Emirates University). Through those capacity-building workshops, Government officials and experts will be in a better position to formulate, understand and adopt cyberlegislation and develop the legal system of cyberspace.

## THE ARAB INTERNET GOVERNANCE FORUM

In 2006, the global Internet Governance Forum (IGF) began as a multi-stakeholder platform for policy dialogue. Since then, ESCWA has continued to engage Arab stakeholders in Internet governance. In 2012, cooperation between ESCWA and the League of Arab States on the Arab Dialogue on Internet Governance culminated in the establishment of the Arab IGF. During the twenty-seventh session of the Commission, ESCWA adopted resolution 306 (XXVII) entitled Development of the Arab IGF process and sustaining efforts in the Arabic domain names field.

Following the Conference and Public Consultation to Establish the Arab IGF (Beirut, 31 January-1 February 2012), a decentralized platform for inclusive policy was established under the umbrella of ESCWA and the League of Arab States and will involve all stakeholders. The Arab IGF secretariat is represented by the National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Egypt, and the Kuwait Information Technology Society hosted the first annual meeting. The Arab IGF facilitates the implementation of the programmes of the Arab Regional Road Map for Internet Governance: Framework, Principles and Objectives, that identified the needs and priorities of the Arab region and sought to build capacity and raise awareness among stakeholders in Arab countries, especially those who were not actively taking part in the Internet governance process.



On 13 June 2012, a milestone in the history of the internet was reached when new domain names were approved, including ".arab", ".eg" and 14 other names that use Arabic script

### DOMAIN NAME ".ARAB"

To support Arab identity in domain names and to open doors for new business opportunities in the domain names industry, ESCWA has promoted the use of the Arabic language in top-level domains (TLDs) of Internet addresses as part of the global Internationalized Domain Names programme.

In January 2012, ESCWA hosted the final meeting of the Steering Committee of the Arab TLD project. The purpose of the meeting was to finalize the assignment of the operational mandate of the registry functions of the intended Arab TLDs to the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) of the United Arab Emirates on behalf of the League of Arab States. The official application for TLDs in Arabic was submitted to the International Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) in April 2012. The application phase required the intensive technical involvement of the League of Arab States, ESCWA, the International Telecommunications Union and TRA. On 13 June 2012, a milestone in the history of the Internet was reached when ICANN approved

the application for new domain names including ".arab", ".eg" and 14 other names that use Arabic script.

In addition to TLDs, ESCWA has also supported the acquisition of country code TLDs for Arab countries by developing standards on the use of Arabic in domain names. Currently, 11 Arab countries have registered country code TLDs in Arabic.

### DIGITAL ARABIC CONTENT

During 2012, ESCWA continued to implement an initiative entitled Promotion of the Digital Arabic Content Industry in the Arab World. To promote cooperation between various stakeholders and to boost the development of digital Arabic content industry in the region, ESCWA held an expert group meeting (Amman, 1-2 October 2012). Governmental officials and representatives of specialized ICT associations participated in the meeting along with concerned investment institutions, experts and academics working to developing digital Arabic content.



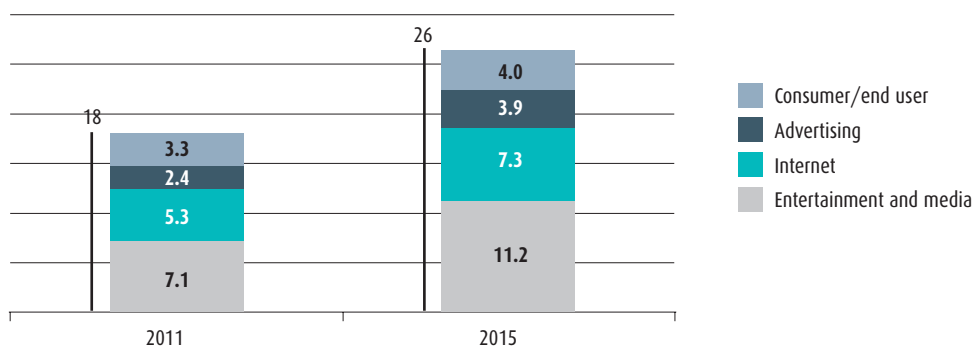
Source: Alexei Logvinovich - www.shutterstock.com, modified by Ghazal Lababidi

A number of institutions expressed interest in partnering with ESCWA to implement the initiative.

In addition, ESCWA published two studies on digital Arabic content that are important references for entrepreneurs, start-ups and small and medium enterprises in the field of digital Arabic content. The first described new business models to promote digital Arabic content while focusing on trends in content development, including the emergence and growth of mobile computing, social networks and user-generated

content. The second study on the Status of the Digital Arabic Content Industry in the Region presented the economic outlook for the growth of that industry. The digital content industry is one of the main pillars of the knowledge-based economy and has the potential to generate ICT investment opportunities in the Arab region. The study drew upon the latest data and concluded that the value of digital content in Arabic for the region was US\$18 billion for 2011 and was projected to reach US\$26 billion by 2015 (see figure I).

Figure I. Market estimates for digital Arabic content (Billions of United States dollars)



Source: ESCWA, 2012, Status of the Digital Arabic Content Industry in the Region

## SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

During 2012, the ESCWA Technology Centre provided technical advisory services to Government ministries, chambers of commerce, academic institutions and private foundations. The Centre conducted workshops and fostered partnerships between entities in the region that are active in science, technology and innovation. Specifically, the Centre identified matching opportunities at the national level for Jordan. In partnership with El Hassan Business Park and Talal Abu Ghazaleh Licensing Executive Society-Arab Countries, the Centre implemented a regional technology commercialization tour. The Centre launched a virtual technology market and matched 35 science and technology-based small and medium enterprises with investors.

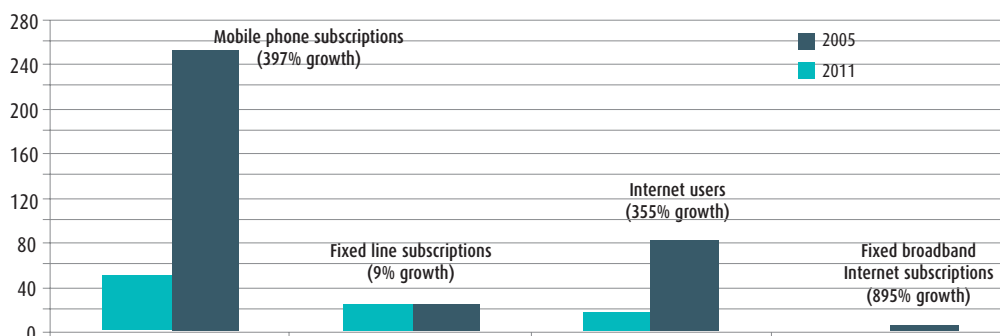
The Economic and Social Council selected the theme of Science, technology and innovation and a culture for sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for the 2013 Annual Ministerial Review. The ESCWA Technology Centre hosted the regional preparatory meeting for Western Asia in November 2012. High-level representatives of member countries and United Nations agencies attended the meeting, which emphasized the role of science, technology and innovation in enabling productive capacity and achieving sustainable development.

## CYBERSECURITY AND CYBERCRIME

At the global level, ESCWA is collaborating with a variety of international partners to enhance cyberlegislation. This effort, collectively lead by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), will raise awareness and be a catalyst for action at the international

level for dealing with that emerging threat. Additionally, ESCWA and UNODC hosted a workshop in April 2012 for Government officials with expertise in cybercrime issues, to collect data on the state of cybercrime and cyberlegislation in the region. The data will be analysed in a report that shows the status of measures to combat cybercrime worldwide and recommends strategic actions.

Figure II. Adoption of ICT services in the ESCWA region, 2005-2011 (Number of users)



Source: ESCWA, 2012.

## ICT FOR DEVELOPMENT

Collaboration between ESCWA and the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development continued throughout 2012. In that regard, ESCWA participated in the 10th World Telecommunication/ICT Indicators Meeting (Bangkok, 25-27 September 2012). During the meeting, ESCWA contributed to an interactive debate, moderated by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), on measuring e-commerce, presented its findings on the barriers to measuring e-commerce and proposed a measurement framework along with other recommendations.

## ICT SERVICES IN THE ESCWA REGION

Throughout the region, ICT penetration rates have improved, with a dramatic increase in mobile telephony and broadband services (see figure II). In addition, the levels of adoption and use of ICT applications and e-services has increased in the region, as has the participation of Governments and other stakeholders in building the information society.



Source: Herminia Lucia Lopes Serra de Casais - [www.shutterstock.com](http://www.shutterstock.com).

# Contributions to technical cooperation

Advisory services on the application of the ESCWA Cyberlegislation Directives were provided in response to requests from Bahrain, Jordan, Oman, Palestine and the Syrian Arab Republic to review draft laws and existing cyberlaws to identify opportunities for improvement. The Syrian Arab Republic issued a law on online communications and cybercrime in February 2012 after receiving advisory services from ESCWA. The other four countries are planning to adopt newly revised laws during 2013, and those laws will encourage the use of e-services and improve citizen's trust in cyberspace.

In its first year, the Arab IGF formed the Arab Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group and convened two meetings and a public consultation (Cairo, 18-19 June 2012 and 4-6 September 2012). Through ESCWA technical cooperation resources, those meetings have facilitated the preparation of the first annual meeting of the Arab IGF (Kuwait, 9-11 October 2012) that was held under the theme A Better Internet for a Better Arab World. Various partners were involved in the process, including ICANN and the Réseaux IP Européens Network Coordination Centre (RIPE NCC). The event resulted in a number of lessons relating to the coordination of a multi-stakeholder process which will be used to enhance cooperation between partners.

Furthermore, ESCWA has initiated the implementation of the Trust Fund project on

the Promotion of the digital Arabic content industry through incubation. The project was launched on 1 and 2 October 2012. The basic components include awareness campaigns on the importance of digital Arabic content development in addition to regional and national competitions. The project will be implemented through a network of partners that includes ministries of ICT, business and technology incubators and ICT associations in Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

The activities of the ESCWA Technology Centre are financed through extrabudgetary resources, and are focused on creating partnerships between technology-related organizations, academic institutions and industries in the region. The Centre facilitated cooperation and networking between national and international entities, which resulted in a memorandum of understanding between Mu'tah University and Cortec Middle East. The Centre also assisted in the formation of a new business relationship between the National Information Center in Yemen and the Knowledge World Company for digital Arabic content. A detailed account of the achievements of the ESCWA Technology Centre is available from its website ([www.etc-un.org](http://www.etc-un.org)).

## Outlook

In the light of the outcomes of the project on harmonizing cyberlegislation (2009-2012), ESCWA plans to collaborate with the League of Arab States and Arab countries towards promoting the harmonization

of cyberlegislation in the Arab region. It will also continue to cooperate with member countries on the development of national cyberlaws based on the ESCWA Cyberlegislation Directives.

Through effective networking, ESCWA will continue to enhance marketing opportunities for local production sectors to grow the exports and economies of the region

The Commission will continue to measure the impact of selected e-services on socioeconomic development in the region. A study will assess the availability, maturity and status of selected e-services and measure their impact in terms of improved efficiency and productivity, transparency and governance and progress towards MDGs and WSIS targets.

The work of ESCWA to promote the digital Arabic content industry in the Arab region will continue and involve collaboration with regional and national partners and technology incubators to foster entrepreneurship, innovation and the creation of start-ups in that field.

Each biennium, ESCWA profiles the information society in member countries. In 2013, the sixth issue of the Regional Profile of the Information Society in Western Asia will be published based on national profiles of the information society in the 17 member countries.

Furthermore, ESCWA will continue to support the development and sustainability of the Arab IGF process throughout its first mandate from 2012 to 2015. A plan is underway to establish a structured mechanism for it, to enhance outreach, awareness and knowledge of Internet governance issues and promote the engagement of all stakeholders in public consultations and dialogue. Three meetings of the Arab Multi-stakeholder Advisory Group will be held in 2013 in preparation for the second annual meeting of the Arab IGF.

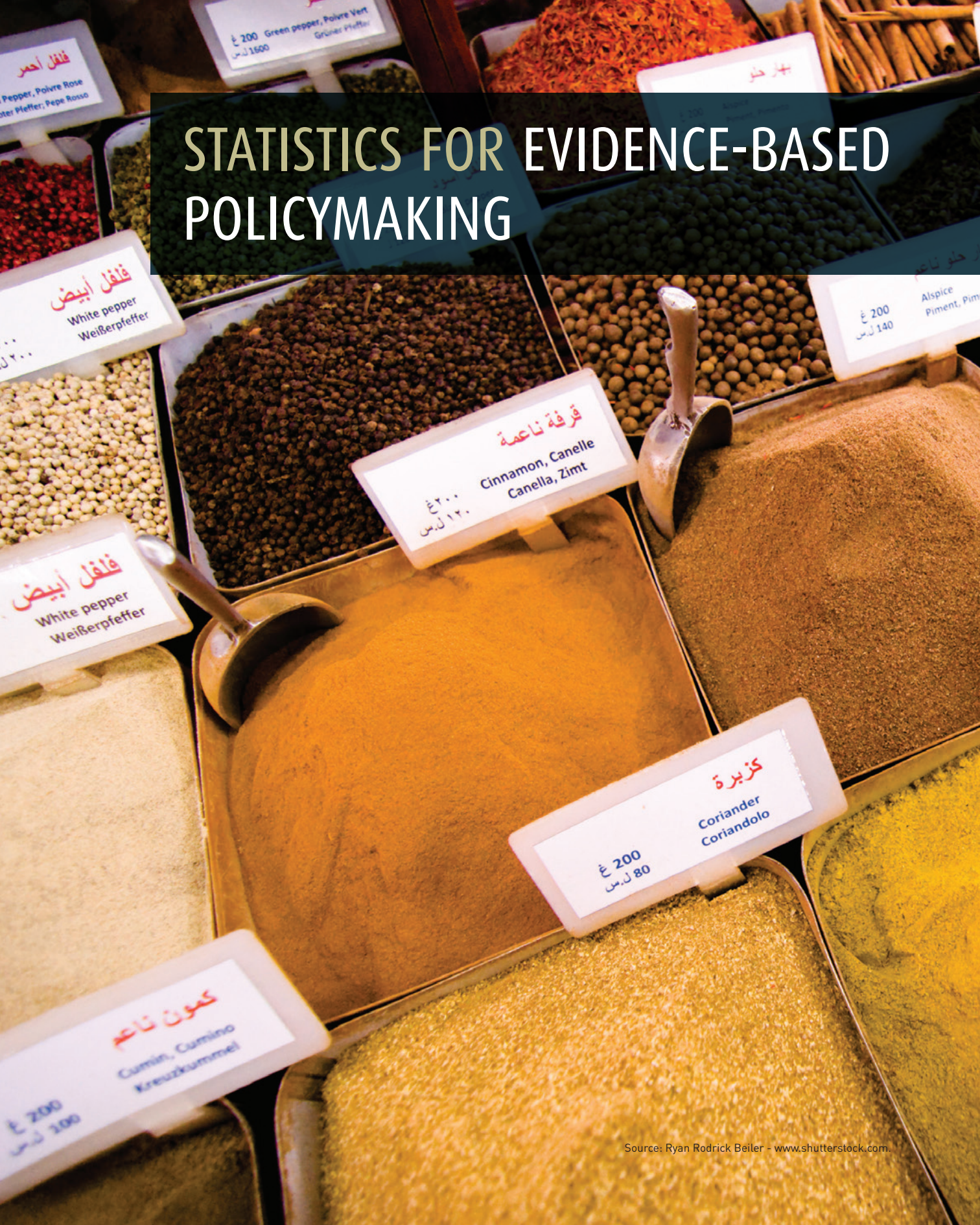
The Commission will continue to support activities targeting the development of the ICT sector and will produce a study entitled Competitiveness of the ICT Sector in the Arab Region. In addition, ESCWA will convene a conference on investment, research and development and innovation in the Arab ICT sector.

In 2013, ESCWA will begin the implementation of the Academy of ICT Essentials for Government Leaders. It includes core training modules for both traditional and online learning systems to build capacity in the region. The project has the mandate to use ICT for sustainable development and to achieve MDGs, and to strengthen human and institutional capacity.

Through effective networking, ESCWA will continue to enhance marketing opportunities for local production sectors to grow the exports and economies of the region. Efforts will be directed as follows: to begin the process of integrating local and regional production capacity as a part of multinational production system through outsourcing; to harvest the capacity of national and regional production systems towards becoming part of the international value chain of economic support, creating employment and growing local economies; to address the challenges of localization and capitalize on the potential of those opportunities.



# STATISTICS FOR EVIDENCE-BASED POLICYMAKING





# ESCWA SEEKS TO DEVELOP THE STATISTICAL CAPACITY OF MEMBER COUNTRIES, HELP THEM OVERCOME TECHNICAL BARRIERS AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND AVAILABILITY OF DATA AND INDICATORS TO SUPPORT POLICYMAKING

## Overview

The task of the Statistics Division is to improve the production and dissemination of quality socioeconomic statistics and indicators and to facilitate evidence-based policymaking by national and international decision makers and civil society.

The efforts and resources of the Division are focused primarily on developing statistical capacity, overcoming technical barriers, advocating for appropriate institutional frameworks and linking statistical strategies to emerging policy needs. In addition, the Division seeks to strengthen national statistical systems and harmonize official statistics in the Arab region. It also coordinates the statistical data of the ESCWA secretariat and the collection, production and dissemination of statistics in print and electronic media.

The ESCWA Statistics Committee, which is composed of the executive heads of national statistical offices of member countries, guides the work of the Division. A permanent dialogue with members of the Committee ensures that the activities of the Commission are aligned with the statistical needs of member countries. The Division comprises the Economic Statistics Section, the Demographic and Social Statistics Section and the newly established Statistical Policies and Coordination Unit.

In 2012, the Economic Statistics Section focused on priorities that were agreed upon at the ninth session of the Statistics Committee: the implementation of the 1993 and 2008 System of National Accounts (SNA); the International Comparison Program and

price statistics; external trade in goods and services and industrial statistics; energy and environment statistics and accounts; and information and communication technology indicators.

The Demographic and Social Statistics section collaborated extensively with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and the Pan-Arab Project for Family Health (PAPFAM) to assess gender gaps in the region, based on household survey data. The section also partnered with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to hold workshops on demographic estimation and census preparedness (the latter in cooperation with the National Institute of Statistics in Tunisia). The workshops were part of the project to strengthen national capacity in social statistics and preparedness for the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014 (ICPD@20).

The Statistical Policies and Coordination Unit began a process to ensure that official statistics respond effectively to policy needs. The first target of that process is to complete and adopt a Framework for Effective Use of Statistics in Policymaking that was drafted in 2012.

The Division continued its involvement in monitoring the Millennium Development Goals for the region and improving the quality of relevant data. In 2012, it conducted its biennial needs assessment of national statistics offices based on the principles of official statistics.

# Major achievements

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS

The League of Arab States, ESCWA and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) continued to cooperate on the issue of sustainable development indicators of priority in the Arab region. In 2012, the manual on Sustainable Development Indicators for the Arab Region was published jointly with the League of Arab States, UNEP and Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe and was distributed in English and Arabic to guide Arab countries on the compilation and derivation of indicators. The manual includes indicators on the environment and social and economic development. A meeting of the Working Group on Sustainable Development Indicators (Cairo, 11-13 November 2012) was held to follow up on the compilation of indicators in Arab countries, assess difficulties and set the way forward for countries to compile and report on the agreed indicators.

In cooperation with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, in coordination with the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) and the MEDSTAT programme of the European Union for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, ESCWA completed the project on strengthening national capacity in environment statistics, indicators and accounts. The focus was mainly on the 2008 System of Environmental and Economic Accounting for Water (SEEAW) that guides policymakers in integrated water resources management.

At the end of the project, 6 out of the then 14 ESCWA member countries developed pilot physical supply and use tables for SEEAW and are further developing the monetary and hybrid accounts of the system. Hybrid accounts combine physical and monetary accounts and are very important because they determine the cost associated with production, infrastructure investment and maintenance, fees paid and subsidies received and instruments used for resource

management. Asset accounts determine the produced capital and the natural capital to allow countries to assess the status of natural resources over time and their value in the economy. The project was highlighted by the United Nations Development Account as a success story among the projects of the fifth tranche.

To ensure the sustainability of the project after its completion, a follow-up workshop on water accounts and statistics for four Mediterranean countries was organized under technical cooperation with the European Environment Agency and UNSD (Beirut, 20-22 March 2012). Participating countries improved tables on water accounts by linking the physical accounts to the economic accounts.

**In collaboration with UNFPA and in cooperation with the National Institute of Statistics in Tunisia, ESCWA organized a workshop on census preparedness from 3 to 5 July 2012. Participants represented eight Arab countries: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia and Yemen. Regional population experts also attended the event, and the participants recommended regional and national training and plans of action for technical support over a five-year period.**

## DATA QUALITY AND ACCESS

The International Labour Organization (ILO), ESCWA and the World Bank are working together on the Data Improvement and Quality in Access initiative for the Middle East and North Africa region. The main objective of the project is to anonymize unit record data to enable user access to country survey data. Currently, ESCWA is working with countries that agreed to be involved in the pilot stage of the project. In the long term, the initiative is expected to achieve an increase in the availability of useable data, with improved data quality, access and comparability in the region.

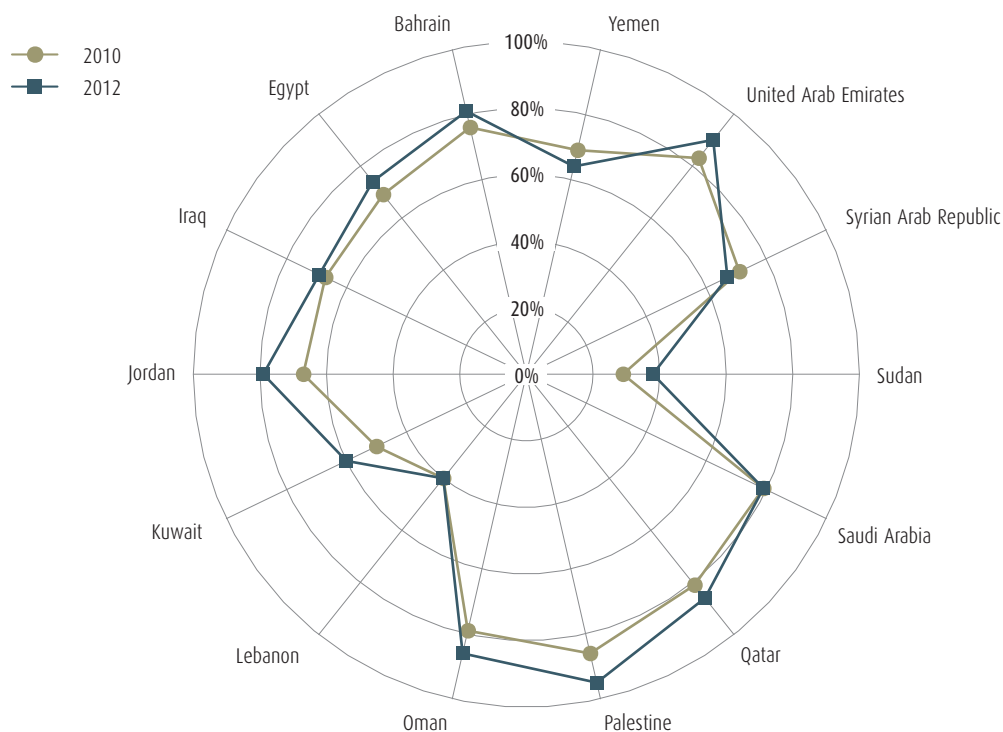
## THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF STATISTICS

In the Arab region, ESCWA advocates for implementing the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics. In 2008, ESCWA adopted Resolution 283 (XXV) concerning the compliance of member countries with international standards, including the Fundamental Principles. Following that resolution, the ESCWA Statistical Committee has evaluated progress biennially. The assessments are based on questionnaires completed by national statistical offices. During the second quarter of 2012, ESCWA completed the third assessment, which showed improvements in the adherence of member countries to the principles of official statistics. Figure 1 shows progress member countries achieved in the implementation of the Fundamental Principles between 2010 and 2012.

Countries were rated “average” if their implementation level was below 65 per cent, “good” if their implementation level was between 65 and 80 per cent, and “advanced” if their implementation level was above 80 per cent. Bahrain and Oman moved up from good to advanced over the past two years, while Yemen slipped from good to average. While those figures are useful for monitoring some aspects of a country’s progress, it should be noted that they are not intended to be a comprehensive measure of commitment to the Fundamental Principles.

During 2012, ESCWA launched the statistics e-publications portal (<http://data.escwa-stat.org>) where digital versions of statistical publications are available.

Figure 1. Level of implementation of the United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics



Source: ESCWA, 2012.

## Contributions to technical cooperation

In addition to the normative and analytical work, the operational work of the Commission was enhanced during 2012 through technical assistance missions to member countries, led by the regional advisor on national accounts. Those missions were part of a strategic plan to improve statistics and meet the requirements of 2008 SNA implementation. The development of that strategic plan was based on the assessment by the regional advisor of the status of economic statistics in the Arab region. Work plans were designed and follow-up missions were held in Jordan, Kuwait and Palestine. The missions focused on several important themes, namely: developing an operational plan to improve the quality of economic surveys and meet growing needs; improving resources and work methodologies relating to price and volume indices; enhancing the periodicity of national accounts compilation; developing mechanisms to identify the drawbacks in basic source data and determine the extent of its weakness; and developing a new segment in economic statistics on the release of

real estate price indices. The last theme is considered crucial for countries where real estate is the leading economic sector.

Within the technical cooperation programme, ESCWA provided capacity-building activities in the areas of industrial and international trade statistics for officials from national statistical offices to raise awareness on relevant issues and recent standards and techniques. In partnership with UNSD, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the League of Arab States, ESCWA organized the subregional workshop on industrial statistics for Gulf Cooperation Council countries (Doha, 8-10 May 2012). The workshop enabled participants to understand and implement industry classifications and business registers.

To build capacity in the region in Statistics of International Trade in Services (SITS), ESCWA continued working with partners including UNSD, the World Trade Organization, the Arab Institute for Training and Research in



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Statistics (AITRS) and others. In cooperation with UNSD and AITRS, ESCWA organized a regional workshop on SITS (Amman, 12-14 June 2012). Priority issues for ESCWA include assisting member countries in establishing national working groups to coordinate collection and dissemination of SITS, conducting regular surveys of foreign direct investment and Foreign Affiliates Statistics and assisting in hands-on training on the compilation of SITS.

In collaboration with UN-Women, ESCWA is working on a project on Analysis of gender equality gaps in Arab countries. The overall objective of the project is to make sufficient knowledge about gender disparities accessible for use in regional and national strategies. It will enrich the knowledge base with statistical evidence and qualitative analysis of the gender gap in selected areas and will provide updated comparative data that shed light on important aspects of gender inequality, especially among youth, for use by policymakers, researchers, donors and the general public. In connection with that project, UN Women and ESCWA organized a meeting on Analysis of Gender Equality Gaps among Youth in Arab Countries (Amman, 4-5 November 2012). The meeting aimed to discuss the findings of two studies and agree on recommendations for further research on gender gaps.

In collaboration with UNFPA, ESCWA organized a training workshop on demographic estimation (Amman, 9-13 December 2012), an activity of the project on Strengthening national capacity in social statistics and preparedness for the upcoming ICPD@20. The workshop focused on training statisticians from national statistical offices on producing demographic estimates from available data sources such as the census, using the computer software programs Microsoft Excel and MORTPAK. At the workshop, 15 participants from 10 Arab countries were trained to produce demographic estimates.

In support of the nineteenth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) that will take place in Geneva in 2013, ILO and

The following projects related to economic statistics are being implemented by ESCWA:

- (a) A project on the strategy of implementation of the 2008 SNA, funded by the technical cooperation budget, beginning in four pilot countries. Workshops and expert meetings will share technical expertise and ESCWA will develop a manual on national accounts for the countries of the region;
- (b) A Development Account project to strengthen the statistical capacity of member countries in energy statistics and balances. The project is being implemented in coordination with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNSD, the International Energy Agency (IEA) and MEDSTATIII;
- (c) A joint project between the five regional commissions on the informal sector, led by the Economic Commission for Africa. The project began at the end of 2012.

ESCWA organized a Preparatory Regional Meeting of Arab Labour Statisticians (Beirut, 18-20 June 2012). The main purpose of the meeting was to bring the consultation and technical discussions to countries in Western Asia and North Africa and to ensure that the revised draft standards to be prepared by ILO adequately reflect the labour markets and labour-force data priorities of countries in the region.

Finally, ILO, AITRS, the Jordanian Department of Statistics and ESCWA jointly organized a training workshop for representatives of national statistical offices and other line organizations on Conducting and Analysing Labour-Force Surveys to Monitor the Labour Market (Amman, 18-22 November 2012). The objective of the workshop was to build and enhance the capacity of participants to use household surveys to collect and analyse information on labour-force statistics. The organizations agreed to establish a body to coordinate training and future activities.

## DATA CONSISTENCY

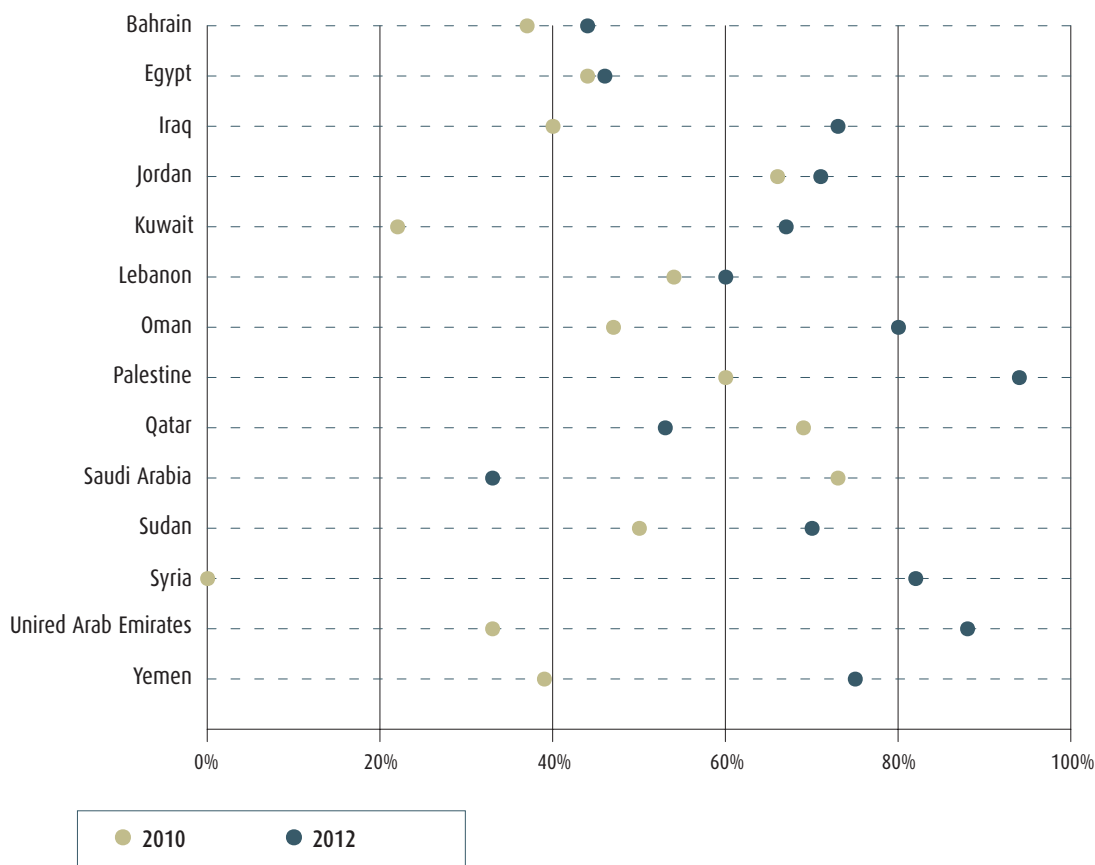
The statistical activities of ESCWA focus on improving the production and dissemination of quality socioeconomic statistics and

From 2010 to 2012, there has been a significant decrease in discrepancies between data released by national producers of statistics and those released by the United Nations

indicators through capacity-building and other activities. One of the challenges is the lack of comparability and variations between data released by national producers of statistics and those released by the United Nations. There has been a significant decrease in discrepancies which was achieved through detailed analysis and measures to better align statistical methodologies. Figure II provides the percentage of national data released by member countries that differed by less than 10 per cent from data published by UNSD.

Across the Arab region from 2010 to 2012, there was increased consistency between United Nations and national data, with the exception of Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The Syrian Arab Republic witnessed the largest increase, where consistency jumped from 0 per cent in 2010 to 82 per cent in 2012. Although the figures are not strictly comparable owing to variations in the amount of data released each year, the data indicate better alignment between the statistical output of the United Nations and Arab countries.

Figure II. Consistency between member country data and data published by UNSD



Source: ESCWA, 2012.

# Outlook

The Commission has developed a proposal for a Working Group on Population and Housing Censuses in Arab Countries and will serve as the secretariat of the group. A member country will chair the group. One of the objectives of the group is to encourage the dissemination of census data using modern methods.

In continuation of earlier collaboration between ILO and ESCWA, the two organizations have agreed on future activities on labour statistics, including a training workshop on school-to-work transition surveys and revising and updating the international standards of labour statistics.

A concept note has been developed and funds are being sought for the Data Improvement and Quality in Access initiative in the Arab region to strengthen the capacity of national statistical offices and the ministries that oversee them. The initiative will strengthen their capacity to collect, analyse and disseminate social data. The project will be carried out by ESCWA, the World Bank and ILO in three pilot countries.

The Commission chairs the Task Force on Statistical Coordination for Arab States, which focuses on five priority areas: population, migration and labour statistics; social statistics, including poverty, social protection, education and health; environment statistics; agriculture statistics; and national accounts. The objective of the Task Force is to achieve greater efficiency and consistency in statistical activities undertaken at the regional level. The future work of the task force will include a regional database on MGD indicators and an inventory of questionnaires

In the Arab region, ESCWA will lead the implementation of the Global Strategy to Improve Agricultural and Rural Statistics, a ground-breaking effort to strengthen agricultural statistics. At the global level, the Strategy is being led by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Bank. Its framework for national and international statistical systems will enable the production and application of the basic data and information needed in the twenty-first century.

and data collection activities by participating agencies.

It is expected that an ESCWA proposal will be approved for a Development Account project on strengthening the statistical capacity of member countries in producing and disseminating short-term economic indicators for sustainable growth. The project will be implemented from 2013 to 2015 with United Nations partners including the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNSD, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Middle East Regional Technical Assistance Center and the International Monetary Fund.

The Commission is studying the feasibility of integrating the consumer price index and the International Comparison Program in the region at minimal cost. While progress has been made in the Arab region in the area of price statistics, improvements in data collection and production mechanisms are still needed to produce comparable price statistics that depict real purchasing ability and the movement of inflation rates across countries.

# ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN



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# ESCWA BUILDS ON POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS IN EACH MEMBER COUNTRY TO ADVOCATE FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF GENDER EQUALITY

## Overview

National reports on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) indicate that the access of women to education and health services in ESCWA member countries has improved considerably. Many Arab countries have undertaken legal reforms to ensure gender equality and protect the rights of women. Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, the Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic have developed strategies for the empowerment of women, while Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia have integrated a section for women into their national development plans. Moreover, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Tunisia have put forward targeted strategies to respond specifically to violence against women.

Notwithstanding those significant steps, the ESCWA region continues to yield weak results in areas such as the participation of women in public policy processes and their full integration into the economic and political spheres. Moreover, gender-based violence remains a significant challenge, especially in conflict-affected countries where women and

girls are especially vulnerable to violence. The 2012-2013 workplan of the ESCWA Centre for Women (ECW) built on the positive developments noted in each member country to advocate for further improvement for women and the advancement of gender equality. Through an approach of knowledge-sharing and continuous dialogue, ESCWA has responded to ongoing challenges in the region by focusing on the following areas: (1) developing knowledge and building the capacity of national machineries for the advancement of women to implement CEDAW and promote an effective role for women in the socioeconomic and political processes of their societies; and (2) strengthening the ability of member countries to mainstream gender in national policies, plans, programmes and statistical systems. In particular, ESCWA has been engaged in building the capacity of the region to fight gender-based violence and continues to work closely with member countries to lift their reservations to CEDAW. Most reservations have been placed on articles related to the obligations of States to guarantee equality, the right to nationality and equal rights within the family. To date, Morocco and Tunisia are among the countries that have fully ratified the Convention without any reservations.



# Major achievements

During 2012, ESCWA undertook a range of activities related to the advancement of women. Those activities included the following: (1) mainstreaming gender into the work programmes of its substantive divisions; (2) publishing reports and studies on gender-related topics; (3) developing and implementing new regional projects; and (4) providing advisory services and technical assistance to member countries.

## MAINSTREAMING GENDER INTO THE WORK PROGRAMME OF ESCWA

In 2012 ECW activated the ESCWA gender focal point network, and developed terms of reference to regulate the roles and responsibilities of its members to mainstream gender within each Division. One publication from each Division was selected for review and focal points are to ensure that gender is represented in line with the ESCWA mandate on gender equality.

## PUBLICATIONS

During 2012, ESCWA published several studies on gender and priority issues related to women in the Arab region, including the economic and political participation of women and gender-based violence. Some of those publications focused on emerging issues in the context of recent events in the Arab region, while others were based on recommendations of the fifth session of the Committee on Women. The following studies were produced or were under production during the reporting period.

### 1 Addressing Barriers to Women's Economic Participation in the ESCWA Region

The participation of Arab women in the labour force is considered to be the lowest in the world and current national economic and employment policies discourage women from entering and remaining in the labour market. The study calls upon policymakers

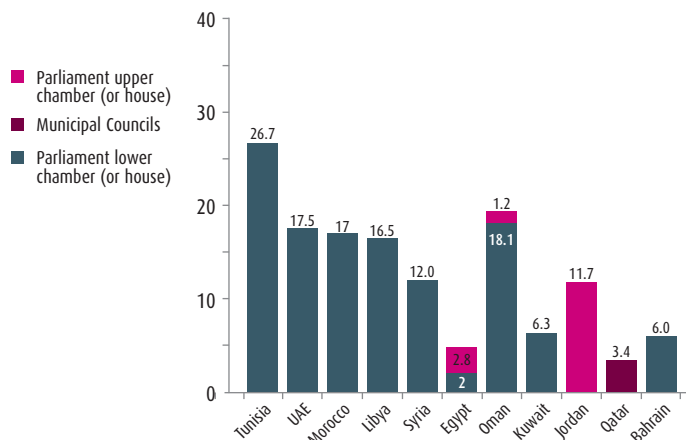
Within ESCWA, ECW is leading the implementation of the System-wide Action Plan (SWAP) on gender equality and the empowerment of women based on the guidelines of the United Nations Chief Executive Board for Coordination. To implement the framework of SWAP, ECW will assess and periodically report on gender equality at ESCWA according to the following indicators: (1) accountability; (2) results-based management; (3) monitoring, evaluation and reporting; (4) human and financial resources; (5) staff capacity and competency in gender mainstreaming; and (6) coherence and knowledge management. Having successfully piloted SWAP across the Commission, ECW will continue to monitor the Commission's progress towards full compliance with SWAP.

to recognize all types of work, revise gender blind economic policies, improve maternity benefits at work and adopt policies on school-to-work transition with the aim of linking educational strategies to market demands.

### 2 Multi-Sectoral Efforts and Partnerships to Address Violence against Women in the ESCWA Region

In partnership with the non-governmental organization Abaad (Dimensions Resource Centre for Gender Equality), ESCWA is carrying out a study on violence against women in the Arab region. The purpose of the study is to accomplish the following: (1) explore the role of governmental and civil society organizations in raising awareness; (2) highlight multisectoral efforts to provide protection, counselling and rehabilitation services to vulnerable groups; and (3) identify success stories and good practice pertaining to the role of different sectors in enhancing national capacity to respond to violence against women. The publication (to be completed in April 2013) will use a qualitative methodology and will solicit information from relevant stakeholders and available studies.

Figure I. Women in elected office after the popular demonstrations



Source: ESCWA, 2012.

### 3 Innovative Approaches for Promoting the Political Participation of women in the ESCWA Region

The publication examines the political participation of Arab women before the recent upheaval in some Arab countries. It analyses structural factors limiting the effective political engagement of women in the region, and provides an in-depth comparison between their participation before, during and after the latest political developments (see figure above). Furthermore, the study (currently is in its final stages of production) identifies lessons learned from other regions and the best approaches to facilitate the integration of women into the political sphere in the ESCWA region.

### 4 Social and Economic Situation of Palestinian Women (2011-2012)

ESCWA reports on the social and economic situation of Palestinian women in recurrent publications. The 2012 report provides updated information on the living conditions of Palestinian women and girls under Israeli occupation, including increasing poverty, unemployment, food insecurity, domestic violence and health hazards. The report provides information on progress towards the implementation of earlier resolutions and made recommendations to improve the conditions of Palestinian women and girls.

## REGIONAL PROJECTS AND WORKSHOPS

Drawing upon public activities, especially expert group meetings (EGMs), ESCWA promotes multilevel collaborations and builds synergies with key stakeholders, including experts from across the Arab region, United Nations agencies and international organizations. The meetings have provided a joint platform for knowledge sharing and validation of the findings of flagship studies of ECW.

## ENHANCING NATIONAL ACTIONS PLANS TO IMPLEMENT SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325 (2000)

During 2012, ESCWA signed a memorandum of understanding with Kuwait to implement a regional training workshop on Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security (Kuwait, 11-12 December 2012). The workshop aimed to achieve the following: (1) build the capacities of member countries to develop and monitor national action plans for the implementation of the resolution; and (2) exchange success stories and lessons learned from international experiences of protecting the human rights of women in armed conflicts and promoting their role in peacemaking. Participants from 13 ESCWA member countries attended the meeting, including specialists who prepare national reports on human rights and develop strategies to promote gender equality.

In cooperation with the Hariri Foundation for Sustainable Human Development, ESCWA will establish an Observatory for Women that will create gender equality indices tailored specifically to the region and sex-disaggregated socioeconomic databases for selected Arab countries. The first phase of the project is currently being implemented. Deliverables expected in 2013 include a sex-disaggregated database on the civil, political, social, economic and legal status of women in Lebanon.

# Contributions to technical cooperation

Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) calls for the increased participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes

## BUILDING THE CAPACITY OF ARAB PARLIAMENTS TO IMPLEMENT SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1325 (2000)

Funding has been approved for a Development Account project that aims to build and strengthen the capacity of Arab parliamentarians and legislative bodies through training on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security. The project, implemented in partnership with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Economic Commission for Africa Subregional Office for North Africa, targets members of parliaments, parliament administrators and national women's machineries in ESCWA member countries that are affected by conflict or are currently in transition, namely Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Palestine, Tunisia and Yemen.

The project entails the establishment of a sustainable knowledge network among

parliamentarians in selected Arab countries and calls for the design of a manual on the roles of members of parliaments in the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). As part of that project, ESCWA will produce a study on gaps in legislation for the full implementation of the resolution in selected Arab countries. Moreover, the project will establish an electronic network for members of parliaments and parliament administrators, within the International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics, to sustain acquired knowledge and provide a forum to exchange good practice and success stories in the implementation of the resolution.

## ADVISORY SERVICES AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

During the reporting period, ESCWA provided advisory services and technical assistance on gender-related topics to 10 member



Source: Tawakkul Karman, Frank Plitt.

ESCWA provided advisory services and technical assistance in the areas of gender mainstreaming, strategic planning and CEDAW reporting

countries, namely Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. More than 400 officials benefitted from the direct assistance and services of ESCWA in the areas of gender mainstreaming, strategic planning and CEDAW reporting.

During 2012, ESCWA continued to focus efforts on MDGs, especially Goal 3 on gender equality. In cooperation with Emerging and Conflict Related Issues Division of ESCWA, ECW supported the efforts of the Sudan to meet MDGs. Accordingly, ESCWA facilitated

two training sessions on adapting the Goals on gender equality and environmental sustainability to the national development plan of the Sudan. The training also focused on the development needs and geographical specificities of Khartoum and the White Nile.

As a result of the capacity-development efforts and advisory services of ESCWA, an increasing number of member countries have begun to mainstream gender in national policies. In addition, an increasing number of member countries have recently formulated a national strategy or action plan for the empowerment of women and gender equality.

## Outlook

In partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and with funding support from the Norwegian Embassy in Lebanon, ESCWA will publish a flagship report to examine violence in Arab countries, particularly violence against children within the household, spousal violence and violence against older persons. An inception report was produced in 2012 detailing the conceptual and methodological framework of the study, along with an overview of gender-based violence in national legal structures in the Arab region. Fieldwork and data collection are planned for the first quarter of 2013, and the findings will be analysed and integrated into the final report. The report will explore existing legal systems in the region as they relate to various types of gender-based violence. In the process, the report will examine factors contributing to violence against women, including traditional perceptions of masculinity, violence and gender roles.

ESCWA will publish a study of national efforts in the Arab region to combat trafficking of women and children. It will highlight root causes of the problem and will focus on three relevant areas: 1) consistency between national laws and applicable

and ratified international conventions and protocols; 2) efforts of Governments and civil society institutions to protect victims of trafficking, including the provision of legal assistance, medical, psychological and social rehabilitation services; and 3) national efforts to prevent trafficking in persons through capacity-building activities, advocacy and awareness campaigns. The publication will be finalized during the second quarter of 2013 and will provide recommendations to policymakers, civil society organizations, and United Nations organizations.

Building on earlier efforts to strengthen the capacity of member countries in the field of gender mainstreaming, ESCWA is working on the development of a consensus framework and guidelines on gender mainstreaming to enable national machineries for the advancement of women to effectively mainstream gender in their workplans. During 2013, ESCWA will undertake a series of activities and organize an EGM to explore gaps and challenges of mainstreaming gender in Government institutions. Guidelines proposed at the meeting will be documented in a publication that will be piloted as a training tool in a workshop for representatives of national machineries for the advancement of women.

# Expert contributions

**Ms. Zoya Rouhana - Director**

KAFA (enough) Violence and Exploitation

## A DRAFT LAW ON FAMILY VIOLENCE

In 2007, the Lebanese non-governmental organization, Kafa (enough) Violence and Exploitation, formed a committee of judges, lawyers and representatives from the Internal Security Forces to draw up a draft law to protect women from family violence. The draft law, created in response to the absence of legislation concerning family violence, included two parts: reforms to the penal code criminalizing all forms of family violence and establishing penalties for perpetrators; and special protection measures for female victims. The finalized draft law was submitted to the Cabinet of Ministers, who approved and transferred it to the Lebanese Parliament in April 2010.

A Parliamentary subcommittee consisting of seven ministers was formed to study the draft law. During the review process the subcommittee removed many important articles on the pretext that the law did not conform to the sociocultural and religious context of Lebanon and that by specifying the protection of women, the draft law

contradicts the principle of equality in the Lebanese constitution. However, pressure exerted by Kafa and the National Coalition to Legalize Protection of Women from Family Violence spurred the subcommittee to do the following:

- Reintroduce women into the title of the law (previously the subcommittee had changed the law's specificity to women);
- Reintroduce an article criminalizing only the methods used by the spouse to rape his wife, such as the use of threats or violence (but not the rape as such);
- Introduce a limitation on the jurisdiction of the religious courts in cases related to family violence.

The subcommittee completed its work in August 2012, and submitted the revised draft law to the joint Parliamentary committees for approval before the final vote by the General Assembly. When the law is passed, it will represent a major breakthrough in the patriarchal system of Lebanon.



## Ms. Camillia Fawi El-Solh - Socioeconomist/Consultant Lebanon

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### COMBATING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

In the Arab region, laws and regulations of direct or indirect relevance to combating gender-based violence are dispersed in various legal sources which may contradict one another. Moreover, the application of Personal Status Laws, which all too often is influenced by subjective interpretation by the judiciary system, tends to override other sources of legislation. That is particularly evident in manifestations of domestic violence that remain a relatively under-researched area in the Arab region, and which are the focus of a joint forthcoming report by ESCWA and UN-Women.

Such contradictions reflect the reality that Arab girls and women of all age groups are disproportionately vulnerable to gender-based violence, owing to pervasive gender inequalities in society, the economy and the

political sphere. In addition, Government services supporting and protecting survivors of gender-based violence tend to be dispersed among public sector institutions. While civil society organizations attempt to fill the service gaps, there are constraints on the capacity of human resources and sustainable funding.

This has implications for institutionalizing an up-to-date gender-sensitive quantitative and qualitative information base on manifestations of gender-based violence, particularly domestic violence. Evidence-based information and data are required to fill legislation gaps and contradictions and to formulate relevant policies and strategies that effectively tackle the root causes of gender-based violence in Arab societies rather than the symptoms.

# CONFLICT MITIGATION AND DEVELOPMENT



# ESCWA WORKS TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF CONFLICT AND OCCUPATION, STRENGTHEN PEACEBUILDING EFFORTS AND MEET THE CHALLENGES OF TRANSITION

## Overview

Recent political events in Arab countries have brought, conflict and occupation to the front of the regional agenda. Those issues have the potential to cause short- and long-term harm to the institutions of the affected countries and their development prospects and erode the well-being of their people. From the outset, ESCWA has closely followed those developments and recognized their significance. It is possible to propose ways to mitigate the impact of conflict and contain its ramifications only after the complex combination of deeply rooted factors and transitory conditions that led to recent events has been understood.

The mandate of the Emerging and Conflict Related Issues Division (ECRI) of ESCWA includes the following key functions: (a) monitor and study emerging and strategic issues; (b) assist in the formulation of conflict prevention, reconciliation and peacebuilding policies; (c) analyse the impact of occupation and assist in the formulation of mitigation policies; (d) assist in addressing the challenges of democratic transition and promote reconciliation, social cohesion and peacebuilding; (e) contribute in the formulation and implementation of policies to address and reduce the impact of conflict and its spillover effects; and (f) mainstream good governance practice and policies for institutional development.

The main focus areas of ECRI are to promote development despite instability or occupation, mitigate the impact of conflict and occupation, strengthen peacebuilding efforts and good governance and meet challenges of transition and prepare for emerging issues. To conduct its activities in those areas, the Division has two sections: Conflict, Occupation and Development; and Governance and Statebuilding.

To mitigate the impact of conflict and its spillover effects on people and development in the ESCWA region, ECRI anchors its diverse range of activities around two complementary fronts. The first is to identify potential sources of conflict and provide policy options to address them, to assist Governments in the development and implementation of actions once conflict has appeared and to contain its impact. The second is to help member countries develop their capacity to apply good governance models to strengthen public institutions, achieve reconciliation and attain development goals. The Division is a fundamental actor in implementing the strategic objectives of ESCWA, namely good governance and resilience through participation and citizenship, institutional development and mitigation of the socioeconomic impacts of conflict and occupation.

# Major achievements

## GOOD GOVERNANCE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE INSTITUTION-BASED STATE

A growing governance gap was one of the main factors behind the transition and the urgent application of good governance practices became a priority for countries in transition. That was the subject of the Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on Good Governance and the Establishment of the Institution-Based State, jointly organized by ESCWA, the League of Arab States, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Transparency International, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank (Cairo, 8-10 September 2012). The central topics of discussion were the challenges of good governance and public sector reforms in the Arab region, anticorruption and transparency in the delivery of public services during transition, the relationship between governance and economic performance and the role of civil society in enhancing good governance.

## CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND THE POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA

The relationship between citizens and the State should be at the centre of the transition agenda. An essential component of that relationship is the engagement of citizens and the civil society in the setting of national development priorities and policy actions. That was the main topic of the EGM on citizen engagement and the post-2015 development agenda, co-organized by ESCWA and the Division of Public Administration and Development Management of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (Beirut, 5-6 December 2012). During the event, experts from the region and other parts of the world shared experiences and ideas about citizen engagement and its importance for public policy. The result and future focus will be dedicated to developing the capacity of ESCWA member countries to conduct self-assessments of citizen engagement

In partnership with the Common Space Initiative, ESCWA supported initiatives for national dialogue between different political groups in Yemen, and facilitated a dialogue between high-level leaders of the Southern Movement of Yemen and other parties. Further analytical work on national dialogues is anticipated, to examine relevant lessons learned and good practice from other parts of the world, with a specific focus on Arab countries undergoing transition.

mechanisms within the public sector and track progress in participatory governance. It is anticipated that ESCWA will continue developing those themes in partnership with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in 2013.

## MITIGATING CORRUPTION AND INCREASING TRANSPARENCY IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC RESOURCES

An essential component of good governance is the aim of mitigating corruption and increasing transparency in the management of public resources. That is particularly relevant in the Arab region, given that regime change and other transitions are taking place in some countries. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Bank have developed frameworks and started an initiative to build capacity to identify and recover assets illegally held abroad, one of the components of the fight against corruption. To bring the most up-to-date practices and methodologies to the region and adapt them to the needs of the member countries, ESCWA organized the EGM on Asset Tracing and Recovery (Beirut, 2 July 2012). Asset recovery requires a high degree of dialogue and cooperation and the meeting provided an ideal forum to exchange experience and promote the establishment of regional mechanisms for the recovery of stolen assets.

Asset recovery requires a high degree of dialogue and cooperation, and is one of the components of the fight against corruption

## FOOD SECURITY

Upon the request of the Emirate Center for Strategic Studies and Research, and to raise awareness and increase knowledge of food security, ESCWA led a team that prepared an analytical paper on Food Security Strategies in the Arabian Gulf Region. Food Security is particularly important for Gulf countries because their heavy dependence on food

imports could be a destabilizing factor if food prices increase dramatically as they did from 2007 to 2008. Dependency is expected to continue rising with population growth, economic development, depletion of local natural resources and climate change. The document proposed a number of strategies to confront that challenge.

### FACTS AND FIGURES: FOOD SECURITY STRATEGIES IN THE ARABIAN GULF REGION

Agriculture accounts for only 1-2 per cent of the overall GDP of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and employs less than 4 per cent of the labour force in Kuwait and Qatar. The sector is affected by environmental constraints and water scarcity, and there is increasing reliance on food imports and consequently greater exposure to food price shocks. The impact of those constraints is expected to increase given demographic growth, urbanization patterns and dietary trends in the region. Climate change is expected to have a further negative impact.

The following table shows the self sufficiency ratio (SSR) for selected food items in GCC countries in 2008, the ratio of domestic production to availability.

Policies to support agricultural production in GCC countries have included unregulated well digging, subsidized agricultural inputs, consumer price support and lower taxation for farmers.

Recommendations to improve food security in GCC countries include the following: (i) target investment to bottlenecks in supply-chain logistics and infrastructure; (ii) make

commodity-based financial instruments complaint with cultural and religious criteria and reform the legal and regulatory framework accordingly; (iii) increase budget allocations and strengthen the governance of the regional agricultural research and development system; (iv) move towards economically and environmentally viable water governance arrangements; and (v) create a regional food security platform for policy discussion that may eventually feed into a region-wide food security strategy.

FOOD ITEM	SSR (%)
Cereals	15.9
Vegetables	70.3
Fruits	65.1
Sugar	0.0
Fats and oils	0.4
Meat	44.4
Fish	81.7
Eggs	89.6
Milk and dairy products	25.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33.5</b>

## THE IMPACT OF OCCUPATION

As in previous years, the Division assisted in the preparation of the annual note of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council concerning the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including

East Jerusalem and of the Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan.

The report highlighted trends including the excessive use of force, arrests and detentions, home demolitions, property confiscation, settlement activities and settler violence and the illegal use of the natural resources of occupied lands by the Israeli Government



and private sector. It also examined Israeli restrictions on movement and the resulting harm to the social and economic welfare of the Palestinian and Syrian populations. The Commission observed the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, in partnership with the League of Arab States at its headquarters in Cairo. The event asserted the inalienable rights of the

Palestinian people and highlighted Israeli violations of international law. The ceremony was accompanied by a photo exhibition of life under occupation and the struggle of the Palestinian people. In addition, a booklet produced by ESCWA for that occasion, entitled *Palestine Under Occupation: Facts and Figures 2012*, was distributed at the ceremony.

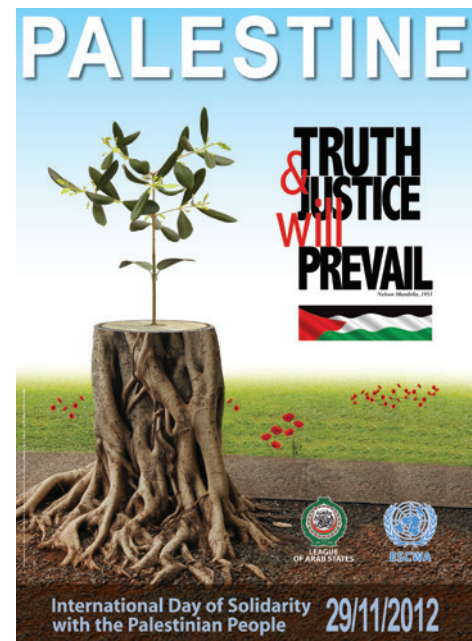
### FACTS AND FIGURES: IMPACT OF OCCUPATION

Between January and August 2012, Israeli security forces and settlers killed 52 Palestinians (including 7 children) and injured 2,194 Palestinians (including 202 children). During that period, 244 settler attacks resulted in Palestinian casualties or property damage. Seven mosques and one church were vandalized and set on fire by settlers between February 2011 and February 2012.

As of August 2012, 212 Palestinians were held in administrative detention in Israeli prisons on orders authorized by the Israeli military. Detainees may be held without trial or charges for a renewable period of six months. While detainees may appeal the detention order before a military court, their lawyers do not have access to the charges on which the detention is based.

The Israeli Government has continued to authorize settlement expansion into the West Bank. Israel has authorized and recognized 150 such settlements along with approximately 100 outposts with a total population of over 500,000. Both types of settlements are considered illegal under international law.

Contrary to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, Israel continues the construction of the Wall in the West Bank. The 708 kilometre-long structure runs inside the West Bank and East Jerusalem for approximately 85 per cent of its route. As of May 2012, 62 per cent of the Wall had been completed, while a



further 8 per cent was under construction. Annually, Palestinians consume 83 cubic metres of water per capita, contrasting with 333 cubic metres per capita in Israel, roughly four times as much. Israel uses 73 per cent of the water resources of the West Bank, diverts an additional 10 per cent to its settlements and sells the remaining 17 per cent back to the Palestinians.

In the Gaza Strip, Israeli overpumping of groundwater between 1967 and 2005 has led to increasing seawater infiltration into ground wells. As a result, 95 per cent of the water in Gaza is unfit for human consumption. It is projected that Gaza will have no potable water within 15 years.

Source: From "Palestine Under Occupation: Facts and figures 2012" and the Report of the Secretary General on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan.

# Contributions to technical cooperation

ESCWA contributed to nation-building and citizenship in post-2003 Iraq through the development of curricula that reinforce a sense of national identity, citizenship and the promotion of human rights and gender equality

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN LEBANON

In 2012, ESCWA led a project entitled Strengthening national capacity for the integration of sustainable development principles into development strategies in countries emerging from conflict, which is being funded by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Lebanon was the main target of the project, although it also included a regional component. Its objective was to assist the Government in its efforts to achieve sustainable development and lasting peace. The project succeeded in engaging a wide range of ministries and stakeholders in Lebanon and provided a platform for dialogue on sustainable development and national planning. The outputs of that project included the following: an assessment report on the capacity for sustainable development in the country; two stakeholder consultation workshops that brought together public officials, country experts and participants from civil society organizations to discuss the integration of the principles of sustainable development into national policymaking; and a side event to present those issues at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in June 2012.

## FIELD PROJECTS IN IRAQ

During 2012, ESCWA worked on the project Promoting civic values and life skills through education in Iraq, which was conducted in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Population Fund, the European School of Governance and national counterparts. Its goal was to strengthen nation-building and citizenship in post-2003 Iraq through civic values and life-skills-building for Iraqi youth through the development of education curricula that reinforce a sense of national identity and citizenship and promote human rights and gender equality. The project was directed to both the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government. In addition, ESCWA organized study missions for civic

education curricula development (Warsaw 23-26 April 2012) and for civic education policymaking (Berlin, 21-24 May 2012). Participants included high-level officials from the ministries of education, labour and social affairs, youth and sports and human rights in addition to legislators and representatives of non-governmental organizations and schools at the national and regional levels. Finally, a national consultative workshop that brought together over a hundred stakeholders from participating ministries, civil society organizations and experts (Erbil, Iraq, 10-12 December 2012).

In addition, ESCWA implemented the first part of the project on public sector modernization in Iraq in partnership with several United Nations agencies and the Government. ESCWA organized two study tours designed to expose officials of the Government of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government to relevant experiences and good practice. High-level officials visited Istanbul and learned about the experience and success of Turkey with public-private partnerships (26-29 January 2012). Another study mission was organized to cover such topics as fiscal federalism, budgeting, transfers between different levels of government and mechanisms for consultation and dispute settlement (Ottawa, Edmonton and Fort McMurray, Canada, 16-22 October 2012). Canada was chosen as the subject of study because it is the most decentralized country in the world and has successfully organized tax systems, provided public services and managed natural resources across the three levels of government. In 2012, the scope of the project was extended and additional activities were requested. Two additional technical assistance training exercises were conducted on strategic planning for public administration officials from both the Government of Iraq and Kurdistan Regional Government. The first training exercise took place in Istanbul (17-21 November 2012) and the second took place in Erbil, Iraq (13-18 December 2012).

# Outlook

Forthcoming activities and publications will focus on good governance practice, the socioeconomic repercussions of occupation and preparedness for emerging issues in the Arab region

In 2013, ESCWA will expand its ability to build and reinforce the technical capacity of member countries through policy formulation, advisory services and other programmes. ESCWA will develop strategic interventions sensitive to regional specificities, ensure the complementarity of efforts and the adaptability of interventions to mitigate the impact of conflict, instability, emerging trends and build the essential prerequisites towards achieving MDGs.

In addition to the current challenges to development facing the region, other issues continue to emerge with the potential to increase tension and instability and exacerbate challenges to development. To address those challenges ESCWA will expand its analytical scoping by monitoring and identifying trends that may cause tensions and instability, reporting on potential threats to member countries as an early warning mechanism, recommending possible pre-emptive measures and formulating capacity-building activities to help member countries mitigate the impact.

Forthcoming activities and publications will focus on good governance practice, measuring governance, institutional

development in countries in transition, security and rule of law in conflict-affected countries, the socioeconomic repercussions of occupation and other impacts of conflict, political transition, State-building and preparedness for emerging issues in the Arab region. Those efforts will help member countries achieve good governance and resilience.

Moreover, ESCWA will launch a biannual flagship study, the Arab Governance Report, to monitor and assess progress on governance in selected Arab countries (particularly those in transition). The report will identify capacity gaps in governance institutions and make appropriate recommendations. It is expected to enhance the capacity of governance institutions and share examples of successful governance reforms.

The Commission has already established a partnership with the Arab Administrative Development Organization of the League of Arab States and has coordinated its activities with other relevant stakeholders with the aim of being a catalyst for governance-based policy dialogue in the region.





# PLANNING, PARTNERSHIP AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION



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**THE NEW PPTCD WILL FOCUS ON HIGH-LEVEL  
STRATEGIC GUIDANCE AND PROGRAMME  
PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

# The new PPTCD

In 2012, ESCWA embarked on a sweeping internal job audit of the Programme Planning and Technical Cooperation Division to review its role within the organization and to improve its structure and function. The results are exciting and challenging and the implementation of the recommendations is well underway. The following recommendations were made:

1. To increase coherent and integrated planning across all budget lines;
2. To enhance resource mobilization efforts and partnerships at the regional level;
3. To strengthen evaluation functions.

In December 2012, the division was restructured and renamed as the Planning, Partnership and Technical Cooperation Division (PPTCD). The new PPTCD features two complementary teams, one focusing on strategic planning and monitoring and the other on partnerships and resource mobilization. A third team will manage internal and external evaluations. The restructuring process has shifted the focus of PPTCD from oversight and administrative support towards high-level strategic guidance and programme planning and implementation within the regular programme of work and technical cooperation.

The newly redesigned PPTCD will develop frameworks for partnership-building and resource mobilization. A dedicated approach to building and maintaining partnerships will focus on regional intergovernmental bodies, emerging civil society actors, regional think tanks, research institutions and universities across the Arab region. The resource mobilization strategy will reach out to new donors, targeting United Nations and other entities, the private sector and global and regional funds.

The Division will also place greater weight on implementing the evaluation policy of ESCWA to enhance the impact of its work. A more systematic approach to evaluation within

ESCWA will strengthen a results-oriented culture across the functions and programmes of the Commission based on the Evaluation Policy developed in 2010 and revised in 2012. The Division aims to further build evaluation capacity, processes and reports for the purpose of enhancing the coherence, focus and impact of the work programme and responding to the needs of member countries in a timely manner.

One underutilized strength of ESCWA is that it unites experts and researchers from a wide range of disciplines and specializations in one location. In 2013, the task of harnessing a wealth of contributions to interdisciplinary initiatives and intersectoral issues will be an important goal of the Division. PPTCD is establishing mechanisms for greater coordination between subprogrammes, whether the output is a publication, partnership agreement or an XB project, in line with the new approach to the Strategic Framework.

The new approach to the Strategic Framework will set priorities across subprogrammes with interdisciplinary outputs and outcomes that maximize human and financial resources. The staff and member countries of ESCWA are increasingly demanding a more interdisciplinary, results-oriented approach to planning and implementation and the new PPTCD is an exciting and substantial leap towards that objective.

In 2013, PPTCD will support all the Divisions to ensure the strategic, integrated planning, monitoring and evaluation of the work of the Commission. PPTCD will focus on two fronts. First, it will support the Commission as it transitions to a truly integrated implementation of social and economic development in line with the 2014-2015 Strategic Framework. The Division will enhance synergies between normative work and technical assistance provided to member countries and will push for a stronger emphasis on practical and measurable

outcomes. Second, PPTCD will strengthen existing partnerships and forge new ones, not only with traditional partners and donors but also with the private sector, academia and new actors in civil society. It will work to

leverage additional extrabudgetary resources that will strengthen the outreach of the Commission and enhance the impact of its programmes.

## Strategic Framework

The work of ESCWA is to promote inclusive and sustainable development in the Arab region. The interdependent subprogrammes of the Commission focus on the three pillars of the Strategic Framework: 1) equitable growth and sustainability; 2) regional integration; and 3) good governance and resilience.

Through integrated planning, ESCWA ensures that its subprogrammes jointly achieve

the strategic objectives and impacts under each pillar. In other words, no strategic pillar is the sole responsibility of any single subprogramme. As a fully integrated body, ESCWA is targeting predetermined and measurable outcomes under each priority area, paying particular attention to changes in line with the objectives set under each subprogramme.

## Managing the technical cooperation programme

ESCWA staff, regional advisors, and consultants work on the ground providing tangible and immediate assistance, finding practical solutions and supporting Government-led policies and initiatives

The technical cooperation programme of ESCWA aims to build the technical, institutional and managerial capacity of member countries to efficiently and effectively overcome development challenges and respond to emerging issues in the region.

The Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC) represents the practical manifestation of the Commission's commitment to national, regional and global development, maximizing the interrelationships between policy analysis, intergovernmental deliberations and operational activities. Technical cooperation programmes, projects and services provide the means through which ESCWA operationalizes its normative work and creates a virtuous cycle of policy-oriented research, learning, implementation and knowledge exchange. In implementing the technical cooperation programme, ESCWA staff, regional advisors, and consultants

work on the ground providing tangible and immediate assistance, finding practical solutions and supporting Government-led policies and initiatives. The Commission exerts every effort to ensure a coherent, interdisciplinary and results-oriented approach.

In implementing the different technical cooperation programmes, projects and services, ESCWA seeks to achieve the highest results. The initiatives are guided by the strategic and policy objectives set by relevant international decisions and recommendations, including intergovernmental meetings, and are provided on the basis of the technical cooperation strategy of ESCWA. There is no "one size fits all" approach to the technical assistance needs of countries in the region, and technical cooperation initiatives respond to the needs of member countries as articulated in their development plans. Technical cooperation projects and services



Technical cooperation services are designed to meet the strategic needs of member countries within the mandate of the Commission through well-established national and subregional networks of policymakers and technical experts

are predominately demand-driven and tailor-made to the needs and requirements of beneficiaries. In whichever form they are provided, the services seek to enhance the capacity of beneficiary countries in policy formulation processes.

In 2012 ESCWA adopted a new policy of hiring short-term regional advisors to meet the emerging priorities of the region in the areas of governance, peacebuilding and transition, empowerment and advancement for women, social policies, information and communications technology policies, national accounts, water and environment and macroeconomic modelling. In addition, the technical cooperation focal points played a vital role in developing and strengthening long term cooperation between the Commission and its member countries. Seven member countries attended an ad hoc meeting of the Technical Cooperation Network (Beirut, 11 May 2012), and recommendations from the meeting focused on clarifying the roles and responsibilities of the focal points and streamlining procedures related to technical cooperation services.

Furthermore, the technical cooperation programme has shifted from providing ad hoc services to preparing country plans. Technical cooperation services are designed to meet the strategic needs of member countries within the mandate of the Commission and build on the comparative advantages of ESCWA through well-established national and subregional

networks of policymakers and technical experts, which are critical for long-term sustainability, Technical cooperation activities aim to achieve a multiplier effect by targeting cross-border issues that cover a wide range of beneficiaries.

During 2012, ESCWA completed 72 technical advisory missions that included national workshops on water and environment, social development issues, economic development, transport, trade, Millennium Development Goals, information and communication technology, statistics, gender issues and dialogue processes. In addition, ESCWA conducted 11 regional and subregional workshops covering themes related to trade statistics, linking population censuses with agricultural censuses, developing Arab time-use statistics, water accounts and statistics, industrial statistics, environmental pollution emissions in the electricity sector and energy efficiency investments for climate change mitigation and sustainable development. The commission also fostered intraregional dialogue on challenges facing countries in the transition to democracy and the rights of persons with disabilities. The technical advisory services of ESCWA built the capacity of around 200 officials to make and implement policies, improve performance, build on what has been achieved and incorporate lessons learned. In addition, three study tours were organized for 14 participants in the fields of economics, sustainable developments and social issues.

## Development Account

\*A tranche is a two-year funding cycle with a specific theme. The seventh tranche covered the years 2010-2011 and the eighth tranche covered the years 2012-2013.

The Development Account (DA) enhances the quality of ESCWA deliverables and their impact by providing dedicated resources for operational capacity-development projects at the subregional, regional and interregional levels. Its projects strengthen and thereby expand opportunities for South-South cooperation and the sharing of experiences. Under the seventh and eighth tranches,\* ESCWA is leading 14 projects

and participating in 26. Under the ninth tranche, announced in August 2012, ESCWA has received funding for four regional and interregional projects for a total of US\$2.5 million. The projects focus on institutional capacity-development in a variety of different areas such as climate change, trade facilitation, gender mainstreaming, youth policies, migration, among others.

# Extrabudgetary resources

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Extrabudgetary (XB) resources have been mobilized to carry out innovative project ideas that respond to emerging issues of member countries. In 2012, ESCWA raised nearly US\$3 million in XB resources. Some of the main donors include the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), the European Union, the United Nations Development Group Iraq Trust Fund, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) of Canada, the Higher Council for Science and Technology in Jordan, and the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations

Development Organizations (AGFUND). Projects funded through XB resources cover a wide range of topics including climate change, water resources, the Millennium Development Goals, democratic transformation, public sector modernization, civic values for youth, gender, information and communication technology development, economic development and foreign direct investment, statistics, population and participatory approach in public policies. The activities are implemented as part of the Strategic Framework of ESCWA.



# ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES





# Administrative Services

The Administrative Services Division (ASD) ensures the implementation of all administrative, managerial and organizational services at ESCWA. It provides advice to the Executive Secretary on policies and guidelines, monitors the management reform process and coordinates central common services. It also represents the United Nations in negotiations related to the host country agreement.

Administrative services are provided through the following sections and functional areas: Budget and Finance, Human Resources Management, Conference Services, General Services, Information and Communications Systems, Joint Medical Services and Procurement.

Beyond the concern for proper policy enforcement and responsible stewardship of resources, ASD is also tasked with the implementation of significant cross-cutting projects that include business continuity planning and the transition to the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and Umoja, the upcoming enterprise resource planning (ERP) system of the United Nations.

## BUDGET AND FINANCE

The Budget and Finance Section (BFS) is responsible for regular budget resources (including the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation and the Development Account) and extrabudgetary resources. Its services include budget preparation, implementation and reporting, accounting, payments, cash disbursements and payroll. The section is responsible for establishing and updating financial controls. It also provides technical advice on cost-recovery agreements and supports the Security and Safety Section as well as United Nations partner agencies in Lebanon on financial and budget matters. The Section is responsible for the local team that will ensure the Commission's successful transition to IPSAS.

Further, BFS is the focal point on ethics, the reports of the United Nations Board of Auditors, the Office of Internal Oversight Services and the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations. Finally, the Section performs a broad range of additional corporate services including chairing the Local Contracts Committee and the Local Property Survey Board.

## HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The Human Resources Management Section (HRMS) of ESCWA handles entitlement transactions, recruitment and training in addition to facilitation, monitoring, problem solving and reporting. The General Assembly has placed increasing emphasis on performance management, and HRMS strives to "do more with less" by ensuring that training activities were completed, especially those focusing on mandatory training programmes. During 2012, approximately 95 per cent of ESCWA managers and first reporting officers (on board as of June 2012) completed the Performance Management and Development training. Commendably, ESCWA was among the first United Nations duty stations to comply with the requirement to report to the local Joint Monitoring Group on the implementation of the performance management and development system. The Commission has submitted reports on time for the second year since the implementation of the new performance system.

## RECRUITMENT

The United Nations has set a target of 92 days to fill vacant posts at ESCWA. In 2011, it took ESCWA an average 131 days to fill vacant posts, and in 2012, the Commission reduced that average to 75 days. The significant reduction in days resulted from a series of integrated activities. For example, the Lessons Learned Workshops for hiring managers and CR bodies contributed to the reduction in days. In addition, in July 2012, the dual launch of the ESCWA Expert Knowledgebase, a recruitment portal for

consultants and individual contractors, and the Expert Recruitment module, an internal Lotus Notes based application, generated noteworthy improvements in the transparency, accountability and efficiency of selection processes.

### TRAINING

The organization-wide investment in Skillport and the increase of locally certified trainers during 2012 resulted in an overall 84 per cent completion rate on six mandatory training activities. In 2013 HRMS will provide significant training and communications support to the change management teams for IPSAS and Umoja.

In 2011, ESCWA hosted the Orientation and Development Programme for Young Professional staff members. As a result of that success, ESCWA was selected to host it for a second time in April 2012. The orientation in 2012 was also a resounding success.

### RECORDS MANAGEMENT

As part of the business continuity plan, ESCWA digitized all active personnel files, which had been selected as the top priority. Further digitization of ESCWA archives will take place in 2013.

### CONFERENCE SERVICES

The Conference Services Section supports, promotes and disseminates the work of ESCWA. It presents the various outputs of the Commission to member countries, Governments and civil society through the production of documents, publications and promotional material. The Section organizes and services various intergovernmental events, expert group meetings and workshops convened by the Commission in Beirut and elsewhere in the region. Services are provided by a team of Arabic, English and French language experts, referencing and editorial assistants, designers, conference organizers and text processing and printing operators.

### LIBRARY

Through the ESCWA Library, economic and social information is made available to ESCWA staff, member countries and academic researchers. The library enables visitors, member country representatives and Internet users to access reference documents produced by the Commission and other entities.

During 2012, the Library also accomplished the following:

- Delivered multiple training sessions within ESCWA on the use of electronic library resources;
- Reviewed and identified high-quality open-access resources and made them available through the Library web page;
- Continued to add ESCWA publications to the Official Document System of the United Nations;
- Reorganized the Library to enhance efficiency;
- Managed the participation of ESCWA in the Beirut International Book Fair.

During 2013, the Library aims to accomplish the following:

- Improve access to scholarly resources using innovative solutions;
- Increase use and citation of library resources within ESCWA publications;
- Provide proactive, flexible service to library patrons;
- Support inter-library loan and document delivery services.

### ESCWA COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION UNIT

The United Nations designated 2012 as the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All. During 2012, the ESCWA Communication and Information Unit (ECIU) partnered with the United Nations Information Centre in Beirut (UNIC-Beirut), to launch an awareness campaign entitled Change your Habits, Save your Energy. The campaign focused on energy efficiency and conservation and was supported by the Lebanese television channel MTV. Educational institutions are vital partners in creating lasting public

awareness of the crucial regional issues at the heart of the work of ESCWA. That conviction led ECIU to focus on schools and universities to share the message of the Commission. Briefings and lectures have been a high note in 2012, involving students from Lebanese schools and universities such as Cedars High School and the American University of Science and Technology in Lebanon, as well as those visiting from universities in Europe, such as Aarhus University in Denmark and the University of Helsinki. Outreach activities also included celebrity visits, such as renowned Lebanese performer and Goodwill Ambassador of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Ms. Magida El-Roumy, who visited ESCWA to learn more about its work and discuss future collaboration in the areas of poverty alleviation and the protection of the environment. During 2013, similar outreach activities will be the main focus of ECIU in addition to creative plans to market the flagship publications of the Commission.

### GENERAL SERVICES

The General Services Section (GSS) provides support in the areas of facilities management, operation and maintenance, custodial services, space planning, transportation services, travel and visa, property and inventory control, mail, archives and records management and common services. The

Section implements the greening initiatives of the United Nations, such as energy-saving and paper recycling activities.

In addition the Section achieved the following in 2012:

- Identified and evaluated temporary locations for ESCWA;
- Provided support services for Project Access Control Technology (PACT);
- Established an emissions reduction strategy for ESCWA and executed the related projects;
- Set up photocopiers as multifunction devices (scanners, printers) to reduce energy use;
- Implemented and monitored advance air travel booking rules.

During 2013, GSS anticipates the following activities:

- Participate in the implementation of IPSAS and Umoja, as related to property and equipment;
- Establish new archiving and records management facilities and systems;
- Refurbish the conference room on the mezzanine level of the United Nations House (subject to the availability of funds) to comply with standards of accessibility for persons with special needs.



Beirut International Book Fair, 2012. Source: ESCWA.



University students visit ESCWA, 2012. Source: ESCWA.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

The Information and Communication Systems Section (ICSS) supports the substantive, administrative and management processes of the Commission by providing technological solutions and maintaining the information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure of the organization. Working within the framework of the United Nations ICT policy, new technologies are introduced to improve performance and resilience, enhance business process automation and improve efficiency.

In the course of 2012 new systems were designed in-house to support the recruitment process and the registration of conference participants in addition to the Strategic Dashboard, a business intelligence solution. The Strategic Dashboard was introduced to support decision-making for top management. Furthermore, during 2012 ICSS upgraded the internet connection speed at the United Nations House and it is now four times faster.

During 2012, ICSS strengthened the main data centre and introduced a state-of-the-art storage area network system to increase the rate of server virtualization. The old Novell network operating system has been migrated to a standard Windows Active Directory.

The Section introduced a number of important security and efficiency features during

2012. To support business continuity and the information security of the Commission, ICSS installed a mirror site at the premises of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon. The Section also installed a new network security device, introduced a document archiving solution for administration, prepared a shared working area in the building basement and replaced many desktop computers with new laptops. Video conferencing equipment has been upgraded to the latest Cisco digital technology.

In 2013, additional process automation initiatives are expected, such as the roll-out of the Strategic Dashboard to substantive divisions and an integrated solution for enterprise content management, by redesigning the main website, launching a document management system and a social collaboration tool in cooperation with the Office of Information and Communication Technology in New York. The internet protocol (IP) telephony system will be upgraded to the latest version. In addition, ICSS will continue to support IPSAS and Umoja as required.

## JOINT MEDICAL SERVICES

Joint Medical Services (JMS) provides health-related care to some 900 staff members of ESCWA and more than 15 United Nations agencies. Services range from medical clearances for recruitment to medical visits and treatment for staff members. The International Renewable Energy Agency,

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located in Abu Dhabi, became the first United Nations agency to join JMS from outside Lebanon. In close coordination with BFS, JMS launched a cost-recovery mechanism to partially offset the provision of services to partner agencies. The mechanism is expected to become permanent. In collaboration with GSS, JMS formed a working group to implement occupational health and safety standards in the workplace.

During 2012, JMS initiated the Electronic Medical Records Implementation Process (EARTHMED), which was finalized at the end of January 2013.

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## PROCUREMENT UNIT

In support of the work programme of ESCWA, the Procurement Unit carries out its activities in accordance with the established Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations and the guidelines of the Procurement Manual. Through fairness, integrity and transparency in the procurement process, the Unit ensures that ESCWA obtains quality products and services that meet specifications at competitive prices and within the time frame required.

The imminent transition to IPSAS has major implications for procurement, specifically concerning purchase orders within a full accrual accounting regime. The transition to IPSAS will be a key priority for 2013.



# Abbreviations and acronyms

AITRS	Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
COP18	Eighteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
CORDEX	Coordinated Regional Climate Downscaling Experiment
ECW	ESCWA Centre for Women
EDGD	Economic Development and Globalization Division
ECRI	Emerging and Conflict Related Issues Division
EGM	Expert group meeting
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
ICANN	International Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ICT	Information and communication technology
ICTD	Information and Communication Technology Division
IGF	Internet Governance Forum
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPSAS	International Public Sector Accounting Standards
LDCs	Least developed countries
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
RCREEE	Regional Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency
RCM	Regional Coordination Mechanism
RICCAR	Regional Initiative for the Assessment of the Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources and Socioeconomic Vulnerability in the Arab Region
Rio+20	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
RPTC	Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation
SDD	Social Development Division
SDPD	Sustainable Development and Productivity Division
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SME	Small and medium enterprise
SMHI	Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute
SNA	System of National Accounts

SWAP	System-wide Action Plan
TLD	Top-level domain
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division
UN-WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

## NOTES



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Printed at ESCWA, Beirut  
E/ESCWA/OES/2013/1  
13-0017 - May 2013 - 1000