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**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION**

**PROGRESS MADE DURING 1994 IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF  
THE PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995**

Report on  
follow-up action on the activities of the Transport and Communications  
Decade in Western Asia (1985-1994)

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION  
FOR WESTERN ASIA  
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## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. The present report has been prepared as part of the transport programme of work and priorities of the secretariat of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) for 1994-1995 and to inform the Commission of the progress made in the implementation of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific (1985-1994) in the ESCWA region. It contains a comprehensive review of activities undertaken by the ESCWA secretariat and also provides a detailed summary of the follow-up action pertaining to the current second phase of the Decade (1992-1996).

2. The Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific was proclaimed for the period 1985-1994 by General Assembly resolution 39/227 of 18 December 1984. The Decade was launched in January 1985 by the Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Transport and Communications of States members of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) to increase the infrastructural facilities of developing member countries, to identify the transport and communications problems in the ESCAP and ESCWA regions, to promote a more effective and efficient transport and communications network, and to encourage effective coordination.

3. General Assembly resolution 39/227 highlighted the role of ESCWA in the Decade activities. In paragraph 2 of the resolution, the Assembly requested

"the Secretary-General to extend all necessary facilities and support to the Executive Secretaries of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Economic Commission for Western Asia<sup>1/</sup> in their development of the regional action programme for the Decade in a practical and integrated manner and to mobilize the necessary international support for the successful implementation of the programmes for the Decade, bearing in mind the contents of the seventh preambular paragraph of resolution 236 (XL) of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific."

4. On the basis of the above resolutions, the ESCWA Transport and Communications Division prepared a draft programme of action for the Decade in Western Asia which was submitted to the ESCWA Technical Committee<sup>2/</sup> at its third session, held in April 1985 (see E/ECWA/XII/CP/5/Add.1). The Technical Committee, after having adopted the plan of action,<sup>3/</sup> recommended that the Commission adopt a resolution on the Decade at its twelfth session. On 24 April 1985, the Commission adopted resolution 138 (XII) on the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific. In that resolution the Commission requested the Executive Secretary to coordinate and to follow up Decade activities to be undertaken in the ECWA and ESCAP regions. By that resolution, the Commission also invited member States to "promote the Decade's activities and to participate and contribute in the implementation of [the] programme of action for achieving the objectives of the Decade" in Western Asia.

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<sup>1/</sup> The Economic Commission for Western Asia was redesignated the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia by Economic and Social Council resolution 1985/69 of 26 July 1985.

<sup>2/</sup> Formerly designated the Standing Committee for the Programme.

<sup>3/</sup> The document was published under the title Programme of Action for the Transport and Communications Decade in Western Asia (1985-1994) (E/ECWA/TCT/85/6).

5. In accordance with the above resolution and to apprise the Commission of the ESCWA secretariat's preliminary activities for the Decade, a report was submitted to the Commission at its fourteenth session in 1987 (E/ESCWA/C.1/14/5/Add.1). Through that report, the member countries were informed of the activities carried out by the secretariat in 1985-1986 and on future action pertaining to the Decade to be undertaken by the ESCWA member countries.

6. In follow-up activities, the ESCWA Transport and Communications Division carried out during the period May 1987- September 1988 the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) project concerning preparatory assistance for the Decade's implementation in Western Asia (project RAB/86/052/A/16/55).

**I. PROJECT ON PREPARATORY ASSISTANCE IN PROGRAMMING FOR THE  
TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS DECADE IN WESTERN ASIA  
(RAB/86/052/A/16/55)**

7. The project, prepared and proposed by ESCWA in 1985-1986, was approved by UNDP in November 1986 and became operational in May 1987. It was planned for a six-month period with a total of 20 consultant work-months, requiring a UNDP input of US\$ 200,000. The immediate objectives of the project were to assess the transport and communications situation in the ESCWA region within the framework of the Decade and to identify thrust areas for regional action. The project also aimed at establishing appropriate machinery for consultation and coordination in the Decade programmes at the national and regional levels. The outputs envisaged within the framework of the project included the preparation of reports on (a) the survey of existing transport and communications systems in the ESCWA region, emphasizing planned projects and future trends as perceived by national authorities; (b) identification of major thrust areas for regional action, strategies and programmes; and (c) proposals pertaining to the establishment of a network for consultation, coordination and follow-up of the ESCWA Decade programmes. The main objective of this project was to enable the ESCWA secretariat to launch Decade activities in Western Asia in accordance with resolutions adopted by ESCWA, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

8. The project team was composed of a team leader and one consultant in each of the following five fields: roads; maritime transport; railways; air transport; and telecommunications. The team visited selected member countries (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Yemen Arab Republic<sup>4/</sup>) during the period from June to October 1987. Staff members of the Division accompanied these missions. Information and data collected were utilized for the drafting of the final report on the project, issued in September 1988 as the Project Report on Preparatory Assistance in the Programme for the Transport and Communications Decade in Western Asia (1985-1994) (E/ESCWA/TCD/88/IG.1/3/Rev.1).

9. The above project report included a detailed analysis of current transport and communications infrastructure and facilities in Western Asia and outlined the main problems of these sectors; it also identified 38 thrust areas for further action and described their main features. The project report covered 52 project profiles with cost estimates; it also suggested organizational and institutional measures to be undertaken within the framework of future projects and programmes for the Decade.

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<sup>4/</sup> On 22 May 1990 the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and the Yemen Arab Republic merged to form a single State, the Republic of Yemen.

10. Another output envisaged in the UNDP preparatory assistance document entitled "Assistance in Programming for the Transport and Communications Decade in Western Asia" was "a proposal on the establishment of a network for consultation, coordination and follow-up on the ESCWA Decade Programme". A consultant's report examining such a network in detail was prepared and published in November 1988 under the title Establishment of a Consultation and Coordination Machinery on the Transport and Communications Decade in Western Asia (E/ESCWA/TCD/88/IG.1/4).

## **II. INTERGOVERNMENTAL/INTERAGENCY MEETING ON THE TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS DECADE IN WESTERN ASIA (13-15 DECEMBER 1988)**

11. The ESCWA transport programme of work for the biennium 1988-1989 envisaged the organization of an intergovernmental meeting during the fourth quarter of 1988. The UNDP project document concerning preparatory assistance for the Decade's implementation in Western Asia provided for the holding of an Interagency Coordinating Committee Meeting for consultation and coordination of the Decade programme. As a result of various contacts with ESCWA member countries, it was decided to hold the two meetings concurrently to ensure better consultation and interaction between government officials and agency representatives. Therefore, the Intergovernmental/Interagency Meeting on the Decade was held from 13 to 15 December 1988 at ESCWA headquarters in Baghdad.

12. During the Intergovernmental/Interagency Meeting, which was attended by representatives of ESCWA member countries as well as by representatives of various Arab and international organizations and United Nations agencies, the following three topics were discussed:

(a) The Project Report on Preparatory Assistance in the Programme for the Transport and Communications Decade in Western Asia (1985-1994), in particular the findings and results of the report;

(b) The report on Establishment of a Consultation and Coordination Machinery on the Transport and Communications Decade in Western Asia;

(c) Future activities of the Decade and recommendations pertaining to follow-up action concerning Decade programmes and projects.

13. The Intergovernmental/Interagency Meeting adopted the first two above reports with some modifications and amendments which are indicated in the final report of the Meeting. The two reports adopted were published in combined form as a single document (E/ESCWA/TCD/88/IG.1/3/Rev.1).

14. With regard to its third topic of discussion, the Meeting formulated a number of recommendations which can be classified under three headings:

(a) The establishment of a network for consultation and coordination on the ESCWA Decade programme;

(b) The necessary support and assistance to make the Decade programme and projects successful. This should be realized through the full and active participation of the ESCWA member States in Decade projects, through activities and meetings as well as through the financial support to be provided by UNDP, regional funds and other resources;

(c) The preparation of specific documents, studies and surveys regarding the Decade programme, based on improved data and information to be provided by the ESCWA member countries, which should be further elaborated and consolidated by the ESCWA secretariat.

### III. ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE DECADE

15. The Commission was informed of the above achievements by a special report on the Decade submitted at its fifteenth session held in May 1989 (E/ESCWA/C.1/15/4/Add.6). The Commission, on the basis of that report, adopted resolution 170 (XV) requesting financial and technical support for the implementation of the projects of the Decade from international, regional and national funding institutions, as well as from other international and regional organizations. The Commission also requested the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the implementation of that resolution to the Commission at its sixteenth session.

16. With a view to pursuing the Decade's activities further, and upon the request of UNDP, the ESCWA secretariat prepared an "umbrella" project with a budget of US\$ 1.6 million covering the last six years of the Decade period (1989-1994). That project proposal was submitted to UNDP for funding on 13 April 1989; however no funds were provided by UNDP.

17. Within the above context, it is also relevant to mention the following additional developments:

(a) Cooperation between ESCWA and the League of Arab States (LAS) was strengthened and an agreement on cooperation in the transport sector was signed in 1988;

(b) Within the framework of that agreement, the Transport and Communications Division of ESCWA participated in the various meetings of Arab Transport Ministers and assisted in the formulation of a transport strategy subsequently adopted by the Ministers;

(c) In the context of the agreement with LAS, the Transport and Communications Division identified two projects from among the priority activities envisaged for the Decade and prepared proposals for: (i) a transport information system; and (ii) an Arab Bureau for Ship Classification. The two projects were submitted to UNDP in 1988 for funding. However, UNDP stressed its preference for only one umbrella project linked to the Decade;

(d) Finally, since completing the Project Report on Preparatory Assistance in the Programme for the Transport and Communications Decade in Western Asia (1985-1994), the Transport and Communications Division has always prepared its successive programme budgets in accordance with the thrust areas and in line with the project profiles identified in that report.

18. During the first phase of the Decade, the ESCAP secretariat benefited greatly from UNDP and other extrabudgetary resources totalling \$23 million (of which \$10.3 million were provided by UNDP alone). Those funds were used to implement activities in 22 thrust areas covering 8 transport modes and activities in the communications sector. In sharp contrast UNDP was unable to provide funding to ESCWA to embark on the implementation of the Decade projects.

19. In a report submitted at its sixteenth session, held in Amman from 30 August to 3 September 1992, the Commission was again informed of the Decade activities in the Western Asia region as well as the funding problems faced by the ESCWA secretariat in continuing to carry out its activities on the Decade as mandated by the United Nations legislative bodies including ESCWA resolutions (E/ESCWA/16/3(Part I)/Add.8).

20. Within the framework of the implementation of the ESCWA programme of work for transport in 1992-1993 and in 1994-1995, the secretariat continued to implement specific programme components directly linked to the Decade thrust areas. Moreover, close contacts have been maintained with the ESCAP secretariat in order to follow up Decade activities in Asia and the Pacific and ensure coordination between the two regional commissions.

#### IV. PHASE II OF THE DECADE (1992-1996)

21. A mid-term review of the Decade was undertaken by ESCAP from late 1989 to mid-1990 to assess the impact of the Decade's first quinquennium (1985-1989). ESCAP resolution 47/10 of 10 April 1991 approved the adjustment of the second quinquennium from 1990-1994 to 1992-1996 and the formulation of a new regional action programme with a focus on regional issues and common needs of groups of countries. The regional action programme was formulated with inputs from member Governments, concerned United Nations organizations and specialized agencies and intergovernmental organizations. Phase II of the Decade (1992-1996) was launched by the ESCAP Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Transport and Communications, held at Bangkok in June 1992.<sup>5/</sup> A special ceremony for the signing of a declaration by the Ministers and heads of delegation was held on 5 June 1992. Subsequently an Inter-agency Steering Committee on Phase II of the Decade was established, including the ESCWA secretariat as an associate member. The first Meeting of the Inter-agency Steering Committee on Phase II of the Decade was held at Geneva from 2 to 4 December 1992 to determine the Committee's terms of reference, which were directed towards the enhancement of inter-agency cooperation in the implementation of phase II of the Decade.

22. The Meeting considered the issue of resource mobilization, with particular focus on the UNDP intercountry programme for the fifth funding cycle, 1992-1996 (ICP-V), from which selected activities of the regional action programme were expected to be financed.<sup>6/</sup> However, there was no specific funding foreseen for ESCWA. The Meeting was advised that US\$ 12 million had been allotted for the current funding cycle (1992-1996), compared with US\$ 47 million allotted for regional transport and communications projects during the previous funding cycle (1987-1991). The Meeting was encouraged to consider the possibility of requesting the UNDP Governing Council, at its forthcoming meeting in June 1993, for part of its Special Programme Resources. The Special Programme Resources had been set aside from the global, regional and country allocations to provide funds for additional activities for the regional action programme approved by the Meeting of Ministers. For that purpose, it was agreed that ESCAP would undertake coordination with support from the International Labour Organization and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and that the Inter-agency Steering Committee would convene an ad hoc meeting. The Ad Hoc Meeting of the Inter-agency Steering Committee on Phase II of the Transport and Communications Decade

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<sup>5/</sup> ESCAP resolution 47/10 on phase II of the Decade was adopted on 10 April 1991; Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/75 on phase II of the Decade was adopted on 26 July 1991.

<sup>6/</sup> The resources mobilized (contributions/earmarking/pledging) for the ESCAP regional action programme (1992-1996) during 1992-1994 amounted to US\$ 31.3 million (US\$ 21.9 from UNDP funds plus \$9.4 million from bilateral funds).

for Asia and the Pacific was therefore held in Geneva on 12 and 13 July 1993 and was attended by a representative of ESCWA.

23. The above Meeting considered the possibilities of UNDP funding for the Decade programmes and projects in the ESCAP region as well as the availability of bilateral funds for ESCAP project activities within the framework of the ESCAP regional action programme. The Meeting strongly urged all members to support the funding efforts for the Decade and decided to continue all efforts to promote the second phase of the Decade (1992-1996). The second Meeting of the Inter-agency Steering Committee was held at Bangkok on 9 and 10 December 1993. At that Meeting, the ESCAP coordination and monitoring system for the Decade was reviewed and evaluation reporting methods were established.

24. In the course of the 1993 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, held in Geneva from 28 June to 30 July 1993, the Decade issues were also discussed under item 14 of the session agenda on "regional cooperation". As the leading agency and the coordinator of the Decade activities at the interregional level, the ESCAP secretariat introduced the review of all matters related to the Decade, in particular the future funding requirements. Subsequently, on 30 July 1993, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1993/63 on resource mobilization for the implementation of the regional action programme for phase II (1992-1996) of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific.

25. In its resolution 1993/63, the Economic and Social Council reaffirmed the importance of phase II (1992-1996) of the Decade for Asia and the Pacific region and requested the Governing Council of UNDP "to keep under review the level of funding to be provided for the implementation of the [ESCAP] regional action programme". The Council invited all "Governments in a position to do so to contribute to the implementation of the programme approved by the Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Transport and Communications". The Council recommended to the General Assembly the adoption of that resolution.<sup>7/</sup>

#### V. SPECIFIC ACTIONS TO BE ENVISAGED

26. The General Assembly, by its resolution 48/177 of 21 December 1993, requested the support of UNDP and of all donor countries for the Decade programme and projects.

27. During the 1994 Economic and Social Council substantive session, held from 27 June to 29 July 1994, Council members were briefed by the Secretary-General on phase II (1992-1996) of the Decade under the agenda item on "regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields".

28. Both the third Meeting of the Inter-agency Steering Committee, held at Bangkok on 7 and 8 November 1994, and the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Meeting on Phase II (1992-1996) of the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific, held at Bangkok from 9 to 11 November 1994, considered the progress made in the implementation of the ESCAP regional action programme for phase II of the Decade and resource mobilization as well as views and suggestions regarding the New Delhi Action Plan on infrastructural development in Asia and the Pacific. The ESCWA secretariat was represented at both Meetings.

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<sup>7/</sup> See General Assembly resolution 48/177.

29. Under the present circumstances and in the light of the above recent developments, the ESCWA secretariat will pursue its activities for the Decade within the regular budget funds earmarked for the ESCWA transport programme. Since no additional extrabudgetary funding or any UNDP or bilateral financing is specially provided to the ESCWA secretariat for the implementation of its Decade programmes and projects, the regular budget funds constitute the principal means to carry out the work of ESCWA for the Decade. In this context, the revised ESCWA medium-term plan (1992-1997) as well as ESCWA transport activities for the bienniums 1994-1995 and 1996-1997 will continue to include necessary activities, in particular to promote and to coordinate the Decade programmes and projects in and by ESCWA member countries.

30. Action by the ESCWA secretariat, in close cooperation and consultation with ESCWA member countries, will concentrate on: (a) closer cooperation with the ESCAP secretariat; and (b) informing concerned authorities in ESCWA member countries on Decade activities, meetings and projects.

31. Within the above framework it is worth mentioning that, out of 52 projects under 38 thrust areas defined by the ESCWA secretariat for the implementation of the Decade programmes and action plan in Western Asia, 34 projects have already been covered and carried out during the period 1989-1995 by the ESCWA secretariat within its regular budget work programmes. The ESCWA secretariat will continue to implement Decade-related activities in its programme of work for 1996-1997 in close cooperation with member countries and the ESCAP secretariat. As regards possible follow-up action, programmes and projects for the Decade beyond 1996, they could form parts of infrastructure-related activities in future ESCWA work programmes as well.

32. The following could be envisaged as specific actions which may be undertaken by ESCWA member States:

(a) Establishment of national committees and focal points for the Transport Decade to promote and to coordinate the programme of action for the Decade at the national level;

(b) Active participation in the meetings organized on follow-up activities pertaining to the Decade;

(c) Earmarking of specific funds for the implementation of Decade-related projects and policies such as interregional transport links, transport conventions and facilitation measures, as well as in training activities in the field of interregional transport cooperation. In this respect it would be useful to review the project profiles prepared by the ESCWA secretariat (E/ESCWA/TCD/88/IG.1/3/Rev.1, chap. IV);

(d) Coordination of the national efforts for outside expertise and international fund-raising within the framework of a concerted regional scheme. This would entail the involvement of at least two or more ESCWA member States for the preparation of joint transport investment projects to be submitted to the regional or international financing institutions. Within the same context, member States might also review their respective investment programmes in the transport sector to incorporate specific requirements of the Decade's action plan.

33. The revised ESCWA medium-term plan (1992-1997) and the newly reorganized programme structure of the ESCWA secretariat consider transport activities an integral part of thematic subprogramme 3 on economic development and cooperation. This will provide further intraregional and interregional coordination



opportunities and impetus for member States, thus enabling them to benefit from interregional transport development efforts.

34. The Commission could take note of the present report at its eighteenth session and could encourage member States and donors to support the effective implementation of Decade-related activities and to strengthen interregional and intraregional transport cooperation efforts.

