

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA**

**REPORT**

**ON THE MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE PROJECT ON  
INTEGRATED REGIONAL FOLLOW-UP BY THE ARAB STATES  
TO UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL CONFERENCES  
BEIRUT, 24 FEBRUARY 1999**

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## I. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

### A. ATTENDANCE

1. Two preparatory meetings of representatives of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) were held, at which it was decided:

(a) That ESCWA should prepare the invitation form to be addressed to the members of the Steering Committee;

(b) That the Meeting should be held at United Nations House in Beirut on 24 February 1999;

(c) That the invitation should be addressed to the following States, organizations and bodies: Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Arab Gulf Programme for the United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND) and the League of Arab States;

(d) That the proposed organization of work of the Meeting should be as in annex II;

(e) That the office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Beirut should address invitations to the Arab States which were to participate in the Meeting, through the offices of the United Nations resident coordinators in those States, together with a copy of the project document, the agenda of the Meeting and the work plan, while ESCWA should address invitations to regional bodies and organizations to participate in the Meeting, all invitations being signed by the two inviting organizations, namely UNDP and ESCWA;

(f) That ESCWA should undertake all other organizational tasks relating to the preparation of the papers to be presented to the Meeting, travel and accommodation arrangements for participants, all related administrative and financial matters, supervision of the Meeting sessions and attention to all logistic needs.

### B. DATE AND VENUE

2. The Meeting was held at United Nations House in Beirut on 24 February 1999 at the invitation of the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States and ESCWA.

### C. OBJECTIVES

3. The invitation to the first meeting of the Steering Committee of the project "Integrated regional follow-up by the Arab States to United Nations global conferences"<sup>1</sup> included a definition of the main purpose of the Meeting, namely: to examine and adopt the work plan prepared by ESCWA for the said Project in accordance with the project document signed by the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States (the financing agency), ESCWA (the executing agency) and the countries participating in the meeting. The document stipulated that ESCWA should be charged with performing that task.

4. In addition to its principal task of reviewing and adopting the work plan, the Steering Committee, as advisory body to the executing agency and the national and regional bodies and institutions working together

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<sup>1</sup> This project relates to monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations and programmes of action of the four main international conferences on social development, namely: the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II).

with it, directs efforts towards the satisfaction of the needs of the Arab States and the intensification of endeavours to build their national capacities in the field of follow-up to the recommendations of the global conferences on social development.

5. In this connection, one of the items on the Meeting agenda was devoted to organization and to institutional considerations relating to the implementation of the Project, including the mandate (terms of reference) of the Project Steering Committee.

#### D. PARTICIPATION IN THE MEETING

6. Representatives of the following Arab countries took part in the Meeting: Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates.

7. Also present were representatives of the League of Arab States, UNFPA, WHO, UNICEF, UNIDO, ILO, the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States and ESCWA. The total number of participants was 25.

8. It should be mentioned that membership in the Steering Committee remains open to other Arab countries and to other bodies, organizations and institutions, whether official or non-governmental, that are interested in participating in the Project and in supporting efforts to implement the recommendations of the global conferences mentioned above. Invitations will be addressed to all of them to participate in the second meeting of the Steering Committee, to be held in February 2000.

#### E. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

9. Annex II contains the organization of work of the Meeting as agreed upon by the two organizations which called the Meeting. The organization of work was appended to the notice of the Meeting sent to the members of the Steering Committee.

#### F. OPENING SESSION

10. The opening session began with a statement by the Executive Secretary of ESCWA in which he mentioned the importance of the Project to ESCWA and the Arab States and its significance for social development in the region. He welcomed the representatives of the Arab countries participating in the Project, a pioneering regional endeavour, and commended the cooperation and coordination established for that purpose between ESCWA and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States. The Project, he said, was vital and constituted a new building-block in the edifice of regional cooperation and formed a firm basis of partnership between the two organizations. The Executive Secretary invited other regional organizations, institutions and agencies, whether part of the United Nations system or not, to join in the Project with a view to greater coordination and greater comprehensiveness in serving the region's countries and backstopping its development efforts.

11. He said that the outcome of the United Nations global conferences represented commitments undertaken by the signatory States and involved, for the most part, public strategy and policy recommendations that required implementation at both the national and regional levels. He added that the agendas that had emerged from those conferences constituted a practical reference framework for the formulation of policies and national, regional and international programmes aimed at promoting the right of the human being to development, including the right to security, peace, justice and dignity.

12. The Executive Secretary stressed that the Project did not invalidate or oppose, nor was it a repetition of, the work and efforts of the United Nations specialized agencies in cooperating with countries on follow-up to the recommendations of any particular conference among those mentioned. Its focus, rather, was that the basic areas of common interest and related matters at the international level could enter into the formation of national and regional policies, programmes and activities. The Project, he said, was part and parcel of the efforts of the United Nations to coordinate its support for national and regional follow-up to the conferences, particularly in the areas of consciousness-raising, integration of governmental efforts with those of civil society, development of means, indicators and methods for applying the recommendations of the

conferences and monitoring their implementation. That was precisely what had been incorporated into the Project plan.

13. Mr. Szeremeta, Regional Adviser with the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States, also participated in the opening session as representative of the said Bureau. He welcomed the members of the Committee and praised the fruitful cooperation and partnership existing between UNDP and ESCWA. He spoke of the significance of the Project and explained the reasons why UNDP felt that it was important and had decided to allocate resources in support of it.

14. He said that the situation was changing rapidly and there was a growing awareness that a profound change was coming to all societies. That change, he felt, represented a dramatic shift for the leading factor of production. While it had long been commonly accepted that whatever nations had the greatest physical capital and invested in building their physical capital were rich nations, that was about to change, for the source of wealth would become human intelligence enhanced with information technology.

15. He said that the project was meant to build national and regional capacities and that it was solely for that purpose that regional cooperation was important, because it was only through the building and raising of the capacities of the Arab countries and Arab regional institutions that lasting results would be achieved.

16. The opening session concluded with a statement by a representative of the Council for Development and Reconstruction in Lebanon in which he explained that the purpose of the meeting was to program and monitor the work of the project on integrated regional follow-up to global conferences. The Meeting, he said, was an outgrowth of the desire of the participating States and United Nations organizations to bring about genuine follow-up to the resolutions of those conferences. He added that the project's two main objectives, namely to create a database and to establish development indicators for follow-up to the resolutions of the United Nations international conferences on sustainable social development, were indicative of the earnest efforts being made towards the genuine implementation of the resolutions adopted by those conferences.

17. He felt confident that the implementation of the recommendations of the global conferences covering the various fields enumerated by the Executive Secretary of ESCWA, such as population, environment, human development, social development and the fight against poverty, would effectively help to support the efforts made to improve the standard of living of individuals in the region. He considered that translating words into deeds was the foundation of human existence. God had given human beings the ability to think, and He had also given them hands or strength to enable them to translate their thoughts into concrete action. Such action enriched thought and allowed it to move from the realm of the invisible to the realm of the tangible. He concluded by saying that the work of the project lay in the strength of the hands, which would raise the resolutions of the United Nations global conferences to the level of action.

## **II. DISCUSSION OF AGENDA ITEMS**

### **A. BRIEF PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT**

18. The Chief of the Social Development Issues and Policies Division of ESCWA presented an outline of the Project, indicating its *raison d'être*, characteristics, basic components and objectives.

19. He stressed that the primary focus of the Project was to integrate the various recommendations of the conferences mentioned above so as to condense them and extract their essence in order that they might be expressive of prevailing situations and issues, anticipated trends and social development priorities in the Arab region. A further aim was to adopt appropriate standards, indicators and tools for the implementation, in the Arab States, within their national frameworks, of the plans and programmes of action adopted by those conferences.

## B. PRESENTATION AND REVIEW OF THE PROJECT WORK PLAN 1999-2001

20. The Chief of the Multidisciplinary Social Issues Unit acting as Project Coordinator presented the Project Work Plan for 1999-2001.<sup>2</sup> He explained that the Project consisted of 29 activities, 5 of which were ongoing while the remaining 24 were limited to a specific period of time. The activities were divided among the three years of the Project as follows: 8 in 1999, 9 in 2000 and 12 in 2001. Within the framework of the Project, a database and an information system were to be developed that would cover basic quantitative indicators and national policies in the field of social development and would serve as essential tools for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of the international conferences. The Project also provided for the organization of five regional meetings, including a conference of States and community organizations, an expert group meeting and three round table discussions on selected topics. In addition, there would be two workshops on training of personnel responsible for follow-up to the conferences in the Arab countries in the use of indicators, databases and other tools to be developed specifically for follow-up to the conferences and the related monitoring.

21. He indicated that the Project would generate 14 studies, 8 reports, 3 technical papers on methodology and 6 information booklets. In addition, a publicity campaign in the various media would be carried out on the fundamental issues dealt with by the Project.

## C. ORGANIZATION AND INSTITUTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS RELATING TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

22. The paper prepared by the Project Coordinator and distributed at the Meeting dealt with all the issues pertaining to the form and institutional organization required for carrying out the activities of the Project, which also defined the role and responsibilities of the teams participating in it. Within this framework, as provided in the Project document, the Project was to have a steering committee with clearly defined terms of reference specifying how it was to be formed, its mandate and the organization of its meetings.

23. The Project document also provided for the creation within ESCWA of a steering committee so that ESCWA might be the Project's executing agency. The members of the committee would include representatives of the sections and units concerned with social development and the various international conferences, so as to impart to the committee a comprehensive, multidimensional perspective and the requisite competence for the development issues and phenomena referred to in the plans of action of the global conferences and dealt with by the Project.

24. To enable the executing agency (ESCWA) to undertake the diverse Project activities, which overlapped to some extent with the programmes of work of the sections concerned within the organization, and in view of the focussing and coordination which that entailed, in addition to cooperation and coordination with other organizations in the carrying out and monitoring of activities, a special unit was set up within the Social Development Issues and Policies Division of ESCWA and entrusted with the responsibility for the implementation of the Project, its supervision and the achievement of its goals. Pursuant to a decision of the Executive Secretary of ESCWA based on the Project document, that unit was created under the name "Multidisciplinary Social Issues Unit" and an ESCWA staff member was appointed as Project Coordinator. An administrative assistant and a research assistant were also assigned to the Project.

## D. DISCUSSION

25. The following is a summary of the discussions, interventions and commentaries of the participants in the meeting, the full details of which can be found in a separate report. It should be noted that the debates related almost exclusively to the Work Plan.

(a) The discussion began with an intervention by a representative of UNDP, who affirmed that the Regional Bureau for Arab States and UNDP agreed with the Project and the Work Plan and were convinced

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<sup>2</sup> The Work Plan, in English, was distributed to the participants at the Meeting.

of their value. He added that without such agreement and conviction, approval for the Project would not have been forthcoming and the Project document would not have been signed. He urged the representatives of the Arab States and regional institutions present to express their views and appraisals during the Meeting not only with respect to the outputs of the activities included in the Work Plan, but also with regard to their anticipated effects and results. He wondered, for example, whether they were convinced that the proposed action would bring about any changes in their countries, and if so, whether such changes would be lasting. He proposed a point-by-point examination and discussion of the activities in the Work Plan. He emphasized the need for activities to be carried out by regional and national institutions and agencies outside the United Nations building, so that the role of ESCWA would be one of supervision, training, sponsorship and technical support. He also suggested confining the discussion to the activities for the year 1999 contained in the full Project Work Plan for 1999-2001 and urged the participants to introduce any changes they saw fit, advancing or deferring the timing of activities or cancelling activities. He said that they might shorten the Project duration from three to two years and remarked that he looked forward to concrete proposals regarding standards by which to measure the success achieved in the implementation of activities and the attainment of the goals set;

(b) In their successive interventions and discussions, some of the representatives of States and organizations took up new issues, while others requested clarifications concerning matters relating to the proposed activities and still others tried to answer the questions raised. All, however, emphasized the importance of the Project and expressed their approval of the Work Plan. A few proposals were made for combining certain activities or shifting their execution to a different year;

(c) The participants stressed the need to adhere to the terms of reference of the Steering Committee, the provisions of the Project Document and the mandate of the Committee, as mentioned in the letters of invitation to attend the Meeting that had been addressed to the participants. The purpose of the Committee Meeting was to review the Work Plan and adopt it as a complete, undivided whole. Another essential task of the Committee was to review and evaluate the project and its different activities and to provide guidance to ESCWA at future meetings on the process of carrying out activities in order that the Project might achieve its goals, which included answering the needs of the States and ensuring regional coordination for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of the global conferences;

(d) The participants discussed a proposal to merge the round table discussion on civil society partnership, participation and synergy for accelerating national implementation of plans/programmes of action of global conferences (non-governmental organizations) (activity 4 in the Project Work Plan 1999-2001) with the Arab conference on assessing progress achieved in the implementation of plans/programmes of action of global conferences (key future actions) to be held in October 1999 and to issue recommendations that were more focussed, practical and susceptible of implementation in the coming years (activity 5). Also discussed was a proposal to accelerate the publicity campaign (activity 29), moving it forward from 2001 to 1999;

(e) The representative of UNFPA and representatives of the regional offices of other organizations mentioned that they had followed the development of the Project since the start, when it had been a mere idea presented at the first session of the ESCWA Committee on Social Development, held in 1997, and throughout the process of preparation of the integrated project document in 1998. Most of the speakers lauded the Project and emphasized its importance for the region. They spoke highly of the efforts being made by ESCWA to formulate the group Project and prepare its Work Plan for 1999-2001. They clarified a number of issues which some might have found obscure and which should be stressed inasmuch as they had become self-evident. Reference to them at that point, it was felt, might answer some of the questions that had been raised at the start of the Meeting;

(i) Regional projects such as the Project under discussion were based on what was being carried out at the national level: in other words, no regional action could take place in isolation from the national framework and the national action and efforts of the countries of the region. In that regard, regional organizations could make recommendations, offer advice, advocate, train, coordinate, study and supervise; however, they had absolutely no executing or implementing

power, but must rather leave the process of execution to States and national organizations and institutions;

- (ii) A focus on issues and topics common to the countries of the region, project flexibility and lasting effects and results achieved through regional work and activities were among the most important features of regional projects and must be kept in view;
- (iii) Moreover, any regional project must include an item relating to the evaluation of the implementation process both during the course of execution and at its conclusion;

(f) Some of those present at the Meeting addressed to ESCWA requests for explanations and answers to questions, the most important of which related to the following: whether it would be possible to tie the information system on social development policies in the region to the database on quantitative data and social indicators; whether the database and information system would include policies and indicators pertaining to health, education, population, women and the various other topics belonging to the social sector; whether the database and the system, once completed, would be made available to the Arab States; and whether there would be coordination and cooperation between ESCWA and other organizations in that area, inasmuch as it was well known that a number of organizations were engaged in excellent work in the same sphere;

(g) A number of representatives of States referred in their interventions to national experience relating to the monitoring of the implementation of the programmes of action of the global conferences and the elaboration of national social development strategies, in particular the experience of Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt. They stressed the importance of a favorable environment and the spontaneous ability to carry out, effectively and efficiently, the process of follow-up to the global conferences and actions that would redound to the benefit of the citizens;

(h) During the discussion of the question of project flexibility, it was emphasized that there was no need for all countries to participate in every Project activity; rather, a country might select those activities which suited it and in which it wished to participate;

(i) During the discussion of the activities contained in the Project document, no objection to any activity was forthcoming from the participants, all of whom stressed that those activities were essential and needed to be carried out. A number of questions were raised, however, about the implementation of some activities and about the authorities that would participate in the implementation process, as well as questions regarding the content of specific activities. In all cases the attention of the financing authority was focussed on ascertaining the extent of the change and its place within the national framework;

(j) ESCWA participated intensively in the debates in a variety of ways, answering questions raised, explaining unclear points and indicating its conception of the implementation process from the standpoint of the working mechanisms, the themes on which activities would be focussed and the organizations and institutions with which it would work in the implementation process. In this regard, ESCWA emphasized that it would not be alone in carrying out any activity, but would cooperate and coordinate effectively, and not merely through formal communications, with the League of Arab States, the Economic Commission for Africa and other Arab institutes and institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, striving at all times to ensure that those institutions shared in the work from the start of any activity to the finish, in so far as its budgetary allocations permitted;

(k) Regarding the content of the activities, ESCWA referred, in the review of the Work Plan presented by it at the outset of the Meeting, to all the activities, mentioning what each one included. That had also been made clear in the explanation of the round table discussion on non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society, as illustrating the Commission's conception of the implementation process, in respect of both content and the manner of working, cooperating and coordinating with others. There would ultimately be consultation with national and regional NGOs, academic and research institutes and scientific societies specialized in the field, media institutions, Arab parliamentarians and national committees on population, human development, women and human settlements, as well as with the League of Arab States

and the Economic Commission for Africa. In addition, consultations would take place with the regional offices of United Nations agencies concerned with the subject, such as UNFPA, ILO, UNIDO, FAO, UNESCO, WHO, UNFPA and others. The purpose of such consultations would be to elaborate a technical information note on the theme of the Meeting regarding ways and means of enhancing the role of NGOs and ensuring their greater participation with Governments, based on clearly defined working mechanisms, in the implementation of the recommendations of the global conferences and the monitoring of that implementation at the national and regional levels. On the basis of the final version of the technical information note, ESCWA would work as a team with one or more governmental institutions, one or more NGOs, the League of Arab States and the Economic Commission for Africa, and naturally with UNDP, to finalize the agenda of the round table discussion, select participants for it, entrust the task of preparing the desired studies to experts and invite a number of participating national and regional bodies and institutions to present their experience relating to the participation of NGOs and civil society organizations in development in general and in the monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations of the global conferences and to the machineries used by Governments and community organizations in coordinating their work together in that field. The Committee or the team organized for the round table discussion would then take charge of holding the meeting, supervising its work and evaluating its results in the light of the objectives defined for it in the technical information note. Perhaps the sole limiting factor for such a joint effort was the amount allocated in the project budget for carrying it out;

(l) Regarding the effects and the changes expected from the implementation of an activity such as that referred to or any other activity carried out within the framework of the Project, ESCWA felt that one could not separate or isolate the effects of any given activity from those of similar or subsequent activities. The same could be said regarding the interrelatedness of the effects of the various activities in the Project. In other words, the change would come from the implementation of all the Project activities. It should be stressed, moreover, that such change was a continuous and gradual process. It would be a mistake to imagine that any conference or field work or any limited development activity or publicity campaign would revolutionize policies or legislation or the methods and procedures of Government administration or community action; they could, however, constitute a step forward in the direction of improvement. Inasmuch as all Project activities, as pointed out in the review of the Project and the Work Plan presented by ESCWA, involved advocacy and national capacity-building in the area of follow-up of the recommendations of the global conferences, it would suffice for States to examine each other's experience and learn of the existence of mechanisms for participation and cooperation between Governments and community organizations that were more effective than others and more likely to bring results in the field of follow-up to the global conferences. Studies and enlightened discussion, without a doubt, had a role to play in enhancing the performance of national and regional institutions and organizations, in bolstering their capacities, in providing them with valuable tried and tested methods and know-how in development work and in contributing to the realization of their hopes and aspirations;

(m) More than one remark was addressed to ESCWA in the suggestions and questions raised by the participants. To be sure, one must acknowledge the merit and importance of the suggestions thus made, such as commencing Project implementation with the creation of the database and information system; setting up a network of partners in the implementation process and defining a mechanism for its operation; or using information technology as a means for contact, communication and dialogue rather than holding round tables and conferences. Nonetheless, it was felt that most of those proposals lay outside the defined scope of the Project, whose objective was to advocate and encourage the stepping up of efforts towards implementation of the recommendations of the global conferences and to carry out related activities, such as providing the requisite support and assistance to strengthen national and regional capacities with a view to ensuring success in an efficient and skilfully conducted follow-up process. The creation of national and regional networks and committees to bring together the teams assigned to the process of monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of the global conferences lay outside the purview of the Project. Moreover, the use of information technology as a means of communication and contact implied, first of all, that State institutions, NGOs and the organizations of civil society had such modern technological methods and means at their disposal, which was far indeed from being the case in the countries of the region. As evidence of that, it would suffice to recall that in the Arab region the number of individuals who had personal computers connected to the Internet amounted to no more than five per cent of the population. The infrastructure for carrying out that ambitious proposal was simply not there. The representatives of ESCWA



recalled more than once at the Meeting that ambitious goals and great works required equally great financial means. One must not forget, therefore, that the available financing was modest, amounting to no more than 200,000 United States dollars per year, to be used to carry out yearly activities including publicity campaigns, a regional conference, a round table, the preparation of both electronic and printed information bulletins, the commissioning of researchers and experts to prepare studies, coordination and preparatory operations between ESCWA and partners in the implementation process, from the countries and organizations of North Africa to those of the Arabian Gulf and the Arab East, and so on. A large portion of the financing of those activities would be in the form of non-monetary assistance provided by ESCWA. That was perhaps the reason why the bulk of the preparatory efforts and the work of execution fell to ESCWA, as coming under the programmes of work of the ESCWA substantive sections and units concerned with those activities that had a bearing on follow-up to the global conferences. Indeed, otherwise there could be no question of carrying out the ambitious activities included in the Work Plan;

(n) The representatives of the Arab countries at the Meeting emphasized and repeated in a number of their comments and interventions that the ultimate benefit and the effects or changes that all should hope to observe after the implementation of any Project activity, and consequently all the activities together, was that the Arab countries implemented the recommendations of the global conferences. Moreover, the activities agreed upon in the Work Plan should play a role in bringing about such implementation, starting with increased awareness on the part of officials, leaders of public opinion, legislative bodies, the media and educational and other institutions in the Arab countries and ultimately making available to all of them the tools, means, information and mechanisms used in that process, so that they would undertake the task of genuine implementation of those resolutions within their national programmes and policies. In that regard it must always be borne in mind, however, that the activities included in the Project Work Plan were not the only ones that would help to bring about the change and prepare States, both in their official institutions and in their national organizations, for implementing the recommendations of the international conferences.

26. For those reasons, the representatives of the States, considering that the Work Plan under discussion was sound and that it satisfied their needs in that regard, adopted the Plan and all its activities and appealed to the United Nations organizations concerned with the Project to place greater trust in their countries and institutions and in their genuine intentions regarding the optimum implementation of the recommendations of the global conferences.

### **III. DECISIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE**

27. A number of decisions and recommendations were adopted during the discussion sessions, as follows:

(a) A second meeting of the Steering Committee shall be held in February 2000 for the purpose of follow-up to the process of implementation of the activities of the year 1999; consideration of any modifications of or additions to the Work Plan or the manner of implementation; or adoption of any measure deemed necessary by the Committee in the light of any changes that may have taken place in conditions in the region or its priorities and of the practical experience of implementation of the activities of 1999. Inasmuch as the said meeting of the Steering Committee will constitute an addition to the Work Plan, the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States declares its willingness to agree to any transfer of credits among the budget items needed to provide the necessary funds for the meeting from other sources. In any event, there is no change regarding the second meeting of the Committee, scheduled to be held in 2001;

(b) The Committee adopts the Project Work Plan in its entirety, including all its activities, bearing in mind that the activities of the year 1999 have been subjected to exhaustive discussion in contrast to those for 2000 and 2001, owing to lack of sufficient time. In that connection, the Committee considers that there remains some degree of flexibility concerning the activities of 2000 and 2001, solely for the purpose of introducing any modifications imposed by changes in the region's priorities or the programmes of work of the executing agency for the said years;

(c) The Committee adopts the bases for its work and accepts its terms of reference and mandate in accordance with the provisions of the Project document;

(d) Following an exhaustive discussion of the proposals relating to the combining of the Arab conference on assessing progress achieved in the implementation of plans/programmes of action of the United Nations global conferences (activity 5 in the Project Work Plan 1999-2001) with the round table discussion on partnership between Governments and civil society within the framework of the monitoring of the implementation of the recommendations of the global conferences (activity 4) or to the redundancy of those activities or their being held in succession, the Committee decided to keep them as separate activities, leaving it to the executing agency to choose the most appropriate timing for the round table discussion to ensure that it achieves the desired objectives, being guided in that choice by the requirements of the process of technical and organizational preparation for the two activities;

(e) Considering what is entailed in the process of making changes and the credit transfers among items in the budget attached to the Project that are required when any activity is moved from its current place in the Work Plan to any other place, the accession of the United Nations Development Programme to the Committee's request to permit flexibility in that regard is deemed tantamount to a decision of the Committee;

(f) As the Committee has been apprised, in view of the inclusion of the Project activities for the years 2000 and 2001 in the ESCWA programme of work for the said years, which is adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, any modification of Programme activities introduced by the Committee shall be confined to the content, timing and mechanism of implementation of the activity concerned, and no such activity shall be cancelled;

(g) As the Committee has been apprised, the League of Arab States, which has worked together with ESCWA on the implementation of numerous projects, is entirely willing to cooperate, coordinate and offer support and an Arab political umbrella for any of the Project activities and will strive to disseminate the results of such activities to the Arab States members of the League and the Arab councils concerned;

(h) The Committee accepts the proposal to transfer the publicity campaign planned for the year 2001 to 1999, owing primarily to the fact that carrying out the campaign at an early date will give an initial impulse to the Project and ensure knowledge of its content, its objectives and the activities to be conducted within its framework. Such transfer, however, must not place on ESCWA the burden of additional activities during the first 10 months of the life of the Project or affect the level or quality of its implementation. What is more, conducting the campaign is contingent on the availability of other parties, namely the national and regional institutions expected to take part in it, their willingness and readiness to carry it out in such a short time and, above all, the scientific and media-related material contained in the campaign. For that reason the Committee accords ESCWA the freedom to coordinate with UNDP in taking whatever decision may be deemed fit in that regard.

Annex I

**THE LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

[The list of participants has not been translated]

**A. Representatives of States and Arab regional organizations**

[...]

**B. United Nations agencies**

[...]

Annex II

**MEETING SCHEDULE**

Wednesday, 24 February 1999

9.00 - 9.30 a.m.	Opening
<u>First session</u>	<u>The Work Plan</u>
9.30 - 9.45 a.m.	Presentation of the Project on Integrated Regional Follow-up by the Arab States to United Nations Global Conferences
9.45 - 10.30 a.m.	Presentation of the Work Plan
10.30 - 10.45 a.m.	Break
10.45 a.m. - 12.45 p.m.	Discussion of the proposed Work Plan (including the debate on the objective, activities determined for 1999 and success indicators)
12.45 - 2.00 p.m.	Lunch break
<u>Second session</u>	<u>Institutional arrangements</u>
2.00 to 2.15 p.m.	Presentation of the institutional arrangement for the implementation of the Project
2.15 to 3.15 p.m.	Discussion of the institutional arrangement
3.15 - 3.30 p.m.	Break
<u>Third session</u>	<u>Adoption of the Work Plan</u>
3.30 - 4.30 p.m.	Adoption of the Work Plan and closing of the Meeting