

**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

Statistical Committee
Eleventh session
Amman, 4-5 February 2015

ADVISORY GROUP ON ECONOMIC STATISTICS IN ARAB REGION**TERMS OF REFERENCE****Background**

1. The UN-ESCWA Statistical Committee at its ninth session, Beirut, 13-15 October 2010 considered and agreed the “*Strategic issues related to official statistics in the Western Asia Region*”.¹ That document highlighted a number of priority areas including managerial and strategic issues relating to official statistics. It also stressed the importance of coordinating data collection and dissemination in ESCWA region to ensure consistency of production and dissemination of data.
2. The UN-ESCWA presented a report on “regional statistical development in Western Asia, to the UN- Statistical Commission at its, forty second session, New York 22-25 February 2011.”² The report discussed the priorities for official statistics in the region and the challenges facing the statistical development in the region.
3. The crucial role of economic statistics for policy, business and other analytical uses has been recognized by ESCWA member countries in many occasions including intergovernmental and expert group meetings. It has been confirmed that the development of economic statistics in ESCWA region is about the use of international standards, classifications, concepts and definitions in compilation and dissemination of such statistics. Institutional arrangements are identified as one of the key issues to ensure consistency and avoid discrepancies in economic statistics disseminated at national, regional and international level.

Objective

4. The objective of the advisory group on economic statistics is to improve the availability of quality economic statistics and metadata in accordance with international standard and enhance the coordination and the collaboration at national, regional and international level with a view to producing and disseminating timely data to meet various users’ needs including policy makers.

¹ ESCWA/SD/2010/IG.1/4(Part I).

² E/CN.3/2011/20.

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Key Functions and Activities

5. The key functions and activities of the advisory group on economic statistics shall be:

(a) Formulate a regional program for economic statistics in coordination with ESCWA secretariat on the basis of short and long term priorities of ESCWA member countries;

(b) Promote and ensure the implementation of international standards and methodologies in compilation and dissemination of economic statistics;

(c) Contribute to the coordination of statistical activities related to economic statistics for consistency of compilation of data, minimizing duplication and reducing burdens on member countries;

(d) Develop regional guidelines, recommendations and handbooks on methodologies on compilation and dissemination of economic statistics;

(e) Promote knowledge sharing including identifying and collecting national, regional and international best practices on issues related to economic statistics;

(f) In consultation with ESCWA secretariat, identify capacity building areas on economic statistics and coordinate related efforts and combine resources at regional and international level;

(g) Provide substantive input and working papers on the agreed priority;

(h) Support the dialogue of producers and users of economic statistics by creating joint forums;

(i) Invite relevant organizations, academia, research centers and independent experts in economic statistics to participate and contribute to the meetings of the advisory group;

(j) The advisory group on economic statistics will meet annually and will report to ESCWA statistical committee during its meetings. The group will work in the period between the meetings using the means of electronic communication;

(k) The Chairmanship of the advisory group will rotate among the members every four years.

Members of the Advisory Group

6. The membership of the advisory group on economic statistics shall consist of national, regional and international economic statisticians. A proposal is attached to this document.

7. The national experts in economic statistics shall represent their respective ESCWA member countries. The regional and international experts in economic statistics shall represent organizations whose mandate includes the development of economic statistics in accordance with agreed international standards.

8. UN-ESCWA Statistical Committee shall decide the size of the advisory group.

Selection of Members

9. UN-ESCWA Statistical Committee and in support of ESCWA secretariat, shall decide on the selection of the members of the advisory group, taking into consideration the qualifications and geographical balance.

10. The advisory group shall be appointed for the period of four years. The re-appointment or new members shall be during the sessions of UN-ESCWA Statistical Committee.

11. Members of the advisory group shall commit to devote adequate time to perform the duties assigned to them.

12. Representative of the advisory group should be at the level of Director, highest statistical level or equivalent to ensure the effectiveness of the advisory group work.

Management and organization

Chairs

13. The Chairperson and Deputy shall be elected to serve for 4 years term.

Functions

14. The functions are to:

(a) Decide on the agenda in consultation with ESCWA secretariat , taking into account decisions of the previous meetings as well as requests from member countries;

(b) Facilitate the sessions during the meetings of the advisory group, summarize the discussions and prepare the report;

(c) Request members and non-members to make contributions to the work program of the meeting based on the issues to be presented.

Secretariat

15. The ESCWA Statistics Division (SD) shall serve as the secretariat of the advisory group.

16. The Secretariat will provide support in the preparation of the agenda of the meetings of the advisory group and the documentation needed and follow up on all other organization issues.

Reporting

17. The advisory group shall report on regular basis to UN-ESCWA Statistical Committee during its sessions.

Review of the terms of reference

18. The advisory group shall review the terms of reference in consultation with the UN-ESCWA Statistical Committee every 4 years to ensure the relevancy and efficiency of its functions.

Annex**PROPOSED MEMBERSHIP OF THE ADVISORY GROUP**

	Name	Organization
1	Jordan	NSO
2	Egypt	NSO
3	Lebanon	NSO
4	Oman or Qatar	NSO
5	Saudi Arabia	NSO
6	UAE	NSO
7	Sudan	NSO
8	Yemen	NSO
9	Tunis	NSO
10	Morocco	NSO
11	Palestine	NSO
12	GCC	Director/ statistics centre
13	AITRS	Director/Statistics Dept
14	LAS	Director/Statistics Dept
15	AMF	Director/Statistics Dept
16	IsDB	Director/Statistics Dept
17	SESRIC	Director/Statistics Dept
18	GOIC	Director/Statistics Dept
19	AfDB	Director/Statistics Dept
20	ALO	Director/Statistics Dept
21	ILO	Regional Office
22	METAC	Director
23	UNDP	Regional Office
24	FAO	Regional Office
25	Academic Institutions and research centres to be identified later	
