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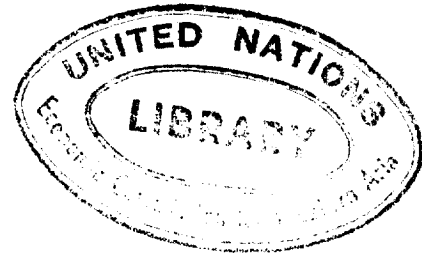
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Item 5 (a) of the Provisional Agenda



PROGRESS REPORT ON  
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

76-475

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION  
OF THE WORK PROGRAMME

1. The period under review is marked by the very sad and unfortunate events in Lebanon with their adverse effects particularly felt throughout the ECWA region. For the Commission, the result has been frequent disruption in its work programme. The difficulties encountered in the recruitment of staff, for the various substantive programmes, have interposed further impediments in the implementation of the Commission's Work Programmes for 1975 and 1976. It is, therefore, hoped that the achievements of the Commission, during the period concerned, will be viewed within the context of these and other prevailing constraints.

2. The following is a brief account of the major activities of the Divisions/Units of ECWA carried out under the various substantive programmes and/or programme components of the Commission since its last session.

A. Development Planning Division

3. During the period under review, the activities of the Development Planning Division (DPD), as envisaged under the detailed 1975 work programme and the programme of work and priorities for 1976-1977, were directed towards assisting regional and national efforts in the fields of general economic and social planning and policy (encompassing development planning, projections and policies, development finance and administration, and labour and employment<sup>1/</sup>) and international trade and development. The following is an account of the major activities carried out under the various substantive programmes of the Division.

4. Under the Development Planning, Projections and Policies Programme, the Division initiated work for the preparation of country profiles in development planning, including the evaluation of the state of plan formulation and implementation in ECWA member countries. Work was also initiated on the development of a conceptual framework for project evaluation for use in assessing development opportunities in Western Asia.

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<sup>1/</sup> The Statistics Programme ceased to be part of the Development Planning Division, with the establishment on September 8, 1975, of a Statistical Unit under the supervision of the Deputy Executive Secretary.

5. At the request of the Government of the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR), an officer from the Development Planning Programme visited the country where he lectured on the financial aspects of project evaluation in connexion with the "Training Seminar on Project Identification, Evaluation and Implementation" organized by the Central Planning Organization, and discussed with the Yemeni officials matters pertaining to development planning and follow-up action. He also visited Democratic Yemen and had discussions with the competent authorities on sectoral plans and project implementation.

6. Assistance was also provided under the Development Planning Programme, at the request of the Jordanian Government, in connexion with the "Euro-Arab Dialogue". This included the preparation of a comprehensive report and the elaboration of proposals on the scope of assistance to be extended to the Arab party to the Dialogue.

7. Work was initiated under the Development Finance and Administration Programme to ascertain and establish "public finance profiles" for ECWA member countries. This exercise entails examination of the budgetary, accounting and revenue systems, their classification, scope and operational procedures, including budget plan harmonization, and the pertinent laws, regulations and implementation procedures. Preparatory work has also been undertaken for the implementation of DPD's 1976-1977 Work Programme in this field, namely, the project "Evaluation of Government Budgetary Systems and Practices in Member Countries of ECWA and the Need for a Methodological framework as a guide to Reform".

8. In the area of development administration, assistance and support were given to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in the formulation of a draft project document for the establishment of a "Regional Centre for Training in the Use of Computers and Computer-based Management Techniques for Development in Western Asia". In this connexion, the Officer of the Programme represented ECWA in separate meetings held with UNDP Headquarters and the Division of Public Administration and Finance of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, both in New York, and with ILO Headquarters, in Geneva, to coordinate efforts.

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Under this programme, the Division fielded, in cooperation with ILO, a joint ECWA/ILO Survey Mission on the Use of Computers and Computer-based Management Techniques, which covered Jordan, Kuwait and the Syrian Arab Republic. The purpose of the Mission was to examine, inter-alia: (a) the need for national policy relating to the application of computer technology for development; (b) assess present and future needs for computer usage in various sectors as related to priority areas envisaged in national development programmes; (c) conduct an inventory of available electronic data processing equipment and related manpower at present and project future needs in these areas; and, (d) determine present and future training needs and examine the adequacy of facilities available at national and regional institutions and to assess needs at these levels. The findings of the Survey Mission are expected to be reflected in the final version of the proposed project document of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic.

9. Under the Labour, Management and Employment Programme of the Division, work continued on the "brain-drain" study.<sup>1/</sup> The original scope of this study has been extended to include all the Arab countries and, as far as possible, the compilation of a roster of all Arab talents residing outside the Arab world. Activities carried out under this project so far include (a) preparation of a detailed outline and its communication to interested regional and international institutions; (b) visits to Democratic Yemen, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Yemen Arab Republic to collect information and to discuss the issues involved; and (c) the recruitment of a consultant to assist in the implementation of the project and the drafting of the study.

programme  
10. The Labour/was responsible, within ECWA, for the preparation and servicing of the Joint ECWA/ILO Seminar on "Manpower and Employment Planning in the Arab Countries" which was held in Beirut from 12 to 24 May 1975. The programme made an effective contribution to the preparation of the final report of the Seminar, and, together with ILO officials, prepared the draft "Plan of Action" which was adopted by the Meeting. As a follow-up to the Seminar, several meetings were held between ILO and ECWA officials, including a visit to Geneva by an Officer from the Programme, to elaborate a common work programme for the implementation

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A progress report on the state of this study is submitted, as a background document under this item of the Provisional Agenda of ECWA's Third Session.

of the agreed "Plan of Action". The Programme also participated with ILO in the preparation of summaries, substantive editing and translation of selected papers from the documentation before the Seminar for inclusion, together with the "Report" and the "Plan of Action", in a publication on the Seminar in both Arabic and English.

11. The Labour Programme participated in the organization of the ECA/ECWA Regional Meeting held in Tunis from 30 April to 3 May 1976, in preparation for the World Employment Conference, and prepared a paper on employment problems in the ECWA region.

12. Under the International Trade and Development Programme, a document entitled "Foreign Trade and Payments Statistics in Countries of Western Asia" was prepared. This document provides basic trade and payments series for the countries of the region, covering the nineteen sixties and the early years of the nineteen seventies. The series provide a picture of the trend in aggregate trade, the geographical and commodity distribution of trade, intra-regional trade flows and the payment and reserves position of member countries.

13. Work has been initiated for the implementation of DPD's 1976-1977 work programme in the area of trade. Preparatory work for the study on the "Liberalization of Non-Tariff Barriers" affecting exports from the region included the drawing-up of a list of products of current or potential export interest to member countries, and the compilation and tabulation of detailed statistics on the value and direction of trade in manufactured and semi-manufactured products, including processed and semi-processed agricultural products from the region.

14. An officer from the International Trade and Development Programme represented ECWA at the "Regional Seminar on Major Issues Relating to Trade and Development within the Context of a New International Economic Order", (Djakarta, January 1976), intended for senior government officials involved in their governments' follow-up on recommendations emanating from the Seventh Special Session of the General Assembly in the field of trade and development. The Officer also attended the first part of the Ministerial Meeting of the Asian Group of 77, held at the level of senior officials (Djakarta, January 1976) in preparation for the Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77 (Manila, January/February 1976) which had before it the whole range of issues before the fourth session of

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UNCTAD (Nairobi, May 1976).

15. At the Divisional level, involving inputs from several programmes, the following main activities were carried out:

16. As per ECWA's commitment to accord a special attention in its work to the problems of the least developed member countries, a Mission <sup>1/</sup> headed by the Chief of the Development Planning Division visited Democratic Yemen in order to discuss the Government's request for short-term Advisory Services in the area of project identification in the various sectors of the Economy. As a result of intensive discussions with the competent authorities, Government requests for expertise emerged in the following problem areas; (a) marketing of fish, (b) manpower planning, (c) economic and financial analysis in the textile industry, (d) demand projection and product mix in textiles, (e) the administration and operation of bus services, (f) financial planning, (g) storage and use of refined petroleum products, (i) establishment of a geological centre, and (j) drying and smoking of fish. ECWA has already prepared the necessary job descriptions and has initiated extensive correspondence with many areas, particularly with the UN agencies and organizations concerned, seeking their assistance in locating the requested experts and possibly in some financial sharing. The same Mission proceeded to the Yemen Arab Republic in order to discuss with the authorities concerned their request in the area of ECWA assistance in the implementation of their Development Planning designed to assist the Government in the preparation of their 1976/1977 - 1980/1981 Plan. The Mission also visited a number of ministries in Sanaa and discussed with them their needs for Advisory Services in various fields of economic development.

17. The Division made an effective contribution towards identifying ways and means by which ECWA could assist the Lebanese Government in its reconstruction efforts.

18. Work was completed for the preparation of the 1975 publication of ECWA entitled "Selected Studies on Development Problems in Countries of Western Asia, 1975". Work in this connexion included selection, finalization and substantive

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More details on the activities of the Mission are given under the report on follow-up action on the resolutions adopted by the Commission (item 5-b of the Provisional Agenda of ECWA's Third Session).

editing of studies, as well as preparation of the Annex, "Sectoral Developments and Development Indicators". This publication contains three studies which were prepared and/or substantively edited and finalized by the Development Planning Division. These are:

- a. "The National Accounts of the Yemen Arab Republic";
- b. "Manpower and Employment Planning in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic";
- c. "The Petroleum Exporting Countries and the Evolving International Monetary System; with Special Reference to the ECWA Region".

In connexion with the Annex, the Division was responsible for the compilation and analysis of indicators in the fields of international trade and public finance, compilation of national income figures and wholesale and retail price indices, as well as for the substantive editing, verification and subsequent consolidation of similar contributions made by the other Divisions of ECWA in their respective fields.

19. The substantive editing and finalization of the consultancy studies on "The Petroleum Exporting Countries and the Evolving International Monetary System; with Special Reference to the ECWA Region", and Inter-Arab Transit Trade: Problems and Prospects" were undertaken in the Division.

- The first study reviews the major developments in the exchange rate and the international monetary system since the Dollar Crisis in August 1971 and examines some of the subsequent moves made towards the reform of the system. It delineates and analyzes the implications, for the ECWA region, of the recent developments in the oil industry. The analysis, in particular, concentrates on the 1973/1974 oil price increases and their corresponding impact on the financial resources of the petroleum exporting countries in general and of the ECWA region in particular; the balance of payments implications (both short and medium-term effects); the problems arising in connexion with investment and portfolio management; and, the role of the petroleum exporting countries in the reform of the international monetary system.

- The second study examines the legal and infra-structure set-up servicing the flow of transit trade in the region, and the cost of conducting transit trade and the inefficiencies involved in current practices, with a view to determining the problems and obstacles which have been impeding a more efficient flow, and suggesting measures susceptible to improving the situation.

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20. The Division prepared the "Medium-Term Plan for 1978-1981" under its four substantive fields: (Development Planning, Projections and Policies Development Finance and Administration Labour, Management and Employment; and, International Trade and Development.

21. During the period reviewed, a variety of contributions were made in support of United Nations technical cooperation activities and advisory services to Governments in the fields of development planning, finance and administration, international trade and labour and employment. In particular, the International Trade and Development Programme of the Division continued to serve as the focal point within ECWA in as far as the operations of the regional project on "Multilateral Trade Negotiations" (MTN) were concerned. In this respect, efforts were concentrated mainly on establishing the project and creating the necessary conditions for its effective operation, mainly through the provision of substantive support and the selection of candidates to staff the project. The Division, in collaboration with UNCTAD and UNDP, finalized arrangements for the extension of the regional project by another year, until the end of 1976. Substantive support to the activities of the regional training programme in Public Finance and Administration (PROPTAD) and other on-going UNDP projects operating in the field of finance and administration at the country and regional levels were also provided under the Development Finance and Administration Programme.

22. In addition to briefing of UN experts assigned to the countries of the region and providing substantive support to their efforts and review of their reports and preparing substantive comments on UNDP projects in the region, the Development Planning Division devoted considerable time to preparations for and active participation in a number of meetings and seminars in addition to those mentioned above as follows:

- ACC Functional Inter-Agency Group Meeting on Employment (Geneva, August 1975);
- Second Arab Conference on Manpower Development in Industry (Baghdad, November/December 1975);
- First International Islamic Economic Conference (Mecca, February 1976);
- Fifth Conference of the Arab Labour Organization (Alexandria, March 1976)
- The Annual Meeting of the Committee for Development Planning (New York, April 1976).

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23. At the request of Governments, the Regional Adviser in Trade Promotion carried out several missions in the region. In Democratic Yemen, assistance was given in connexion with finding export outlets and marketing of fish products abroad. In Iraq, assistance was provided in connexion with the 1977-1981 country programme in the field of foreign trade and export promotion the organization of the Market Research Department of the State Export organization and the assessment of export potential and market surveys for selected products. In Jordan, assistance was provided to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in the re-organization of its Export Promotion Service and in the organization of the Jordan Trade Centres Department and the work programme and activities of commercial representatives abroad. In Lebanon, assistance was extended to the Ministry of Economy in the organization of its foreign trade department, the establishment of foreign trade statistics and information units, and in undertaking market studies on exportable products. In Oman and Qatar, assistance was given to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Ministry of Economy and Commerce, respectively, in setting up, organizing and operating Foreign Trade Departments. In the Syrian Arab Republic, the Regional Adviser's activities included assistance in recruiting a consultant in fairs and expositions, the establishment of a public Export Promotion Organization, undertaking market studies on products of particular interest to the country, training officials in export promotion techniques and in the application of the Generalized System of Preferences. In the Yemen Arab Republic, assistance was extended to the Yemen Salt Mining Corporation in relation to marketing of salt where a project for undertaking a field survey of potential markets in Europe, Japan and the United States was prepared.

B. Joint ECWA/FAO Agriculture Division

24. The activities of the Commission under the Agriculture Programme mainly focus on five major areas of concentration which provide the benchmark for the 1978-81 medium-term programme. These areas are: sector review and monitoring; direct planning assistance and training; regional agricultural adjustment and integration; promotion of multinational investment in agriculture; and, food security.
25. In connexion with the project, entitled "Incentives for Accelerating Cereal and Livestock Production: a short-term approach to the solution of food deficit", a study was completed. The scope and orientation of the study undertaken were modified to meet specific conditions in the ECWA region. The study covers six important agricultural producing countries and include five important food commodities: wheat, rice, sugar, vegetable oils, and red meat. Part I of the study comprises the quantitative framework. First, it ascertains the present food position in the six selected countries and gives an order of magnitude reflecting the scope of the food problem. It then assesses government 1975-1980 medium-term plans for the expansion of food production. This serves as a basis for projecting the 1980 food deficits. Part II of the study concerns short-term possibilities of increasing food production. Attention is focussed on particular policy measures which show promise for an immediate impact. Thus, apart from new policy orientation and pressure mechanisms, new strategies are proposed to combat farmers' aversion to risk, the use of intermediate and modern technologies, and for price adjustments to correct market imperfections.
26. A short study was undertaken in connexion with "Integrated Rural Development", a project envisaged under the 1975 work programme of the Commission. The initial work in this area involved a comparative analysis of the organization and planning of IRD programmes in selected agricultural projects in Jordan, Syria and Yemen Arab Republic. Particular attention has been focussed on the need for effective machinery to co-ordinate the sectoral activities of national departments with those at the project level. A second stage in this area involves the formulation of a comprehensive IRD project for the Tohama Authority in Yemen. Work in this connexion is jointly undertaken with the FAO Near East Regional Office.

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27. At the request of the Jordan Valley Commission, the Division carried out a comprehensive multi-stage study of the East Jordan Irrigation Project. The first stage is a financial analysis of the East Jordan Valley agricultural development plan 1976-82. Particular attention is given to farm business enterprise analysis involving crop profitability and project effects on farm income. The second stage is an economic analysis of the project's returnability. This involves estimation of project costs and benefits and assessment of project's profitability in the light of its present worth and internal rate of return. The third stage of the study is devoted to technical and economic issues relating to the largest component of the project, namely, the Maqrin Dam. A major objective of the Jordan Valley project is to integrate all available water flows for a rational and unified system operation. Accordingly, the analysis of the Maqrin Dam is carried a step further to cover the entire irrigation system. This serves to provide a useful measure of the benefits accruing to the economy in terms of reduced costs through integrated system operation.

28. The Division co-operated with the Kuwait Institute for Social and Economic Development in organizing and implementing the Agricultural Planning Course held in Amman, Jordan, during the period 16 November to 12 December 1975. The course syllabus was given a new practical orientation stressing the preparation and implementation of agricultural development plans. The Division provided a significant share of the required staff input and funded FAO's staff participation from Headquarters and the Near East Regional Office. The course included participants from Iraq, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Arab Emirates, in addition to participants from other Arab countries.

29. The Division initiated work towards developing a framework for sector review and monitoring. The purpose of the framework is to systematize and computerize the agricultural review and monitoring activity for all countries in the ECMA region. It is hoped that the compilation of the data base will be finalized in mid-1976. It will then be put on FAO's Interlink Computer System (ICS) for data processing and computation of the relevant indicators and parameters.

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30. A report, on developments in the field of agriculture during the period 1973-1974 in the region, was prepared. It included the development of elaborate indicators covering various aspects of agricultural development in several countries of the region. The report will be included in the Annex of the annual ECWA publication, "Selected Studies on Development Problems in Countries of Western Asia".

31. The Division participated in the Inter-Agency (WFP/FAO/ILO/ECWA) Interim-Evaluation Mission of WFP-Assisted Project SYR 2018, Development of Fodder Production and Livestock Production in the Syrian Arab Republic. The objective of the mission was to review and evaluate the progress achieved by the project after two years of operation, and, if necessary, to make recommendations for corrective action. The ECWA input consisted of substantive contribution in the evaluation of the economic aspects of the various project components. During the period under review the Division also participated in the following meetings and seminars:

- i) Ford Foundation Workshop on Linear Programming. (Beirut, August-September 1975); the Workshop which was held at the School of Agricultural Sciences of the American University of Beirut, was intended to train participants from the Arab countries in the use of linear programming techniques in agricultural resource planning and policy-making. It included participants from Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. As a follow-up to the Workshop, the Division set up a crop-by crop data base for the application of an LP model in the Bekaa' region of Lebanon;
- ii) The FAO/SIDA Seminar on Agriculture Sector Analysis. (Cairo, October 1975); the Division submitted a paper on "Some Behavioral and Organizational Aspects of Agriculture Sector Analysis"; and

- iii) The FAO Seminar on Agricultural Aspects of Regional Economic Integration; (Rome, September 1975).

C. Joint ECWA/UNIDO Industry Division

32. In the period under review, work under the Industry Programme of the Commission proceeded in the implementation of the projects included in the 1975 work programme and the follow-up to previously initiated activities.
33. As a follow-up action to the joint ECWA/UNIDO meeting on the food processing industry in the ECWA region, held in Beirut in March 1975 under the project entitled "Development of Selected Branches of the Food Processing Industry in the Countries of the ECWA Region", a number of priority areas for technical assistance to the participating countries were identified with the help of the international consultants who participated in the meeting. This in turn led to the formulation of project proposals on a country basis which are being followed-up with UNIDO by the governments concerned. Certain proposals of a regional institutional nature which also emanated from the meeting are being considered by ECWA for possible follow-up with the national and regional bodies concerned.
34. The implementation of the project entitled "Development of the Fertilizer Industry", is proceeding according to schedule as revised and agreed upon between ECWA, UNIDO and IDCAS. Following the approval by the Commission of the 1975 work programme, ECWA concluded an agreement for a joint work-plan for the project with UNIDO and IDCAS in order to co-ordinate the activities of those two organizations with that of ECWA in this field. Phase one of the work plan, consisting of a comprehensive survey of the fertilizer industry in the Arab countries by three teams of experts representing the three organizations, was completed on schedule. The project is now in its second phase with the international consultants engaged in the study of the survey and the formulation of an overall development plan for industry in the Arab countries. The third phase, expected to take place later this year, consists of an inter-governmental meeting jointly sponsored by the three organizations to consider the overall development plan.

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35. Work commenced on the project entitled "Regional Co-operation in Industrial Training" and is continuing. The unexpected slippage behind the original schedule for the completion of this project, for reasons indicated above, has been compensated by expanding its original scope by including inputs from UNIDO and IDCAS. The work-plan for the project as conceived by ECWA includes the following three phases:

- i) A field survey of industrial training facilities and training needs in the countries of the ECWA region;
- ii) The formulation of a regional plan of action for the co-ordination of training utilizing local facilities in the ECWA countries; and,
- iii) The convening of a meeting of government representatives and experts for the consideration of the proposed regional plan of action.

36. Given UNIDO's and IDCAS' interest and work programmes in this field, ECWA sought and obtained the co-operation of these two organizations and the co-ordination of their activities with its own. As a result the scope of the project will in a second stage be expanded to include all the Arab countries through inputs from UNIDO and IDCAS agreed upon between them and ECWA.

37. As part of ECWA's implementation of the project, a questionnaire was prepared and a field survey by ECWA, based on this questionnaire, has so far been conducted in Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the Syrian Arab Republic. Arrangements are being worked out to survey the remaining countries in the ECWA region.

38. At the request of the Governments of Democratic Yemen, Iraq, and the Yemen Arab Republic, advisory services in the field of industry were extended to these Governments. Short-term missions, ranging in duration from one week to two months were undertaken in these countries for the evaluation of vegetable oil processing projects, assessment of food industries, formulation of petroleum derivatives projects, i.e., carbon black, petroleum coke, industrial gases, and others.

39. The regional adviser in industry also participated as a lecturer in a training course in Sana'a on the formulation, evaluation and implementation of industrial

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projects for the technical staff of various ministries in the Yemen Arab Republic and assumed, on an interim basis, the responsibility of managing the Industrial Promotion and Advisory Unit, a UNIDO project in YAR.

40 During the period under review, the Division participated in the International Conference on Petrochemicals, held in Iraq, and in the Second Petrochemical Meeting for Arab States, held in Abu Dhabi.

D. Natural Resources and Science and Technology Division

41. The Division initiated preparatory work under the Energy Component of the Natural Resources Programme, which became effectively operational in the second half of 1975. The preparatory work consisted of compiling an energy bibliography and cardex and developing sets of regional tables covering various aspects of petroleum statistics for the period 1960-1974, such as reserves, production, revenues, prices, refining capacity, etc. The Division also prepared the analytical section and the corresponding statistical tables for inclusion in the Annex, "Sectoral Development and Development Indicators", to the 1975 edition of ECWA's annual publication entitled "Selected Studies on Development Problems in Countries of Western Asia".

42. Work commenced on the implementation of the project entitled "Strategy for Action on Alternative Uses of Oil", included in ECWA's work programme for 1975. In view of the unexpected delays in recruitment, it is now expected that the project will be completed in 1976.

43. The Division initiated work on the implementation of the two projects included in ECWA's Programme of Work and Priorities for 1976-1977, namely, "Basic Energy Statistics and Review of Developments in the Energy and Oil Sector" in the region, and "Medium and Long-term Supply and Demand Projections for Energy".

44. Draft laws on oil and other mineral explorations in the Democratic Yemen and the Yemen Arab Republic were prepared through consultancy services and submitted to the Governments of the two countries.

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45. Under the Energy Component, the Division actively participated in the United Nations Meeting on Co-operation Among Developing Countries in Petroleum (Geneva, November 1975). A short paper entitled "Petroleum Co-operation in the activities of ECWA and in the ECWA Region" was submitted to the meeting by ECWA representative. The Division carried out intensive consultations with the Secretariats of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Energy Agency (IEA), with a view to exploring the possibilities of co-operation between these organizations and ECWA in the field of energy.
46. Under the Mineral Resources Component of the Natural Resources Programme of the Division, work was initiated for the preparation of the country profiles in this field. This entailed fielding missions to Bahrain, Democratic Yemen, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates and the Yemen Arab Republic. In addition to the collection of information on various aspects of mineral resources in the countries of the region, investigations were also made into the need for the creation of a regional mineral resources development council, as specified in the Commission's Programme of Work and Priorities for 1976-1977. As the overall reaction of member governments towards the establishment of such a council was favourable, the Division will prepare a draft status of the council and submit it to the governments for their consideration.
47. Efforts towards the implementation of the project entitled "Regional co-operation in the development of mineral resources" consisted mainly of surveying the situation pertaining to mineral resources development in member countries of the region, collecting information and studying the possibilities of establishing a regional mineral resources development institute.
48. Work commenced on the implementation of the Project entitled "Survey of the situation pertaining to the development of mineral resources" and a preliminary report will be submitted to member countries of the region in the second quarter of 1976, as specified in the Programme of Work and Priorities of the Commission for 1976-1977.

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49. At the request of the Government of the Democratic Yemen, the Division is, currently involved in the preparation of a draft project document for the establishment of a centre for training in geological works and petroleum and mineral exploration.

50. Under the Water Resources Component of the Natural Resources Programme, the Division initiated work towards the implementation of the project entitled "Development of Water Resources" which essentially calls for an appraisal of existing water supplies and assessment of future demand (by the year 2000) in member countries of the region. Work entailed field surveys carried out in all member countries of the region, except the Sultanate of Oman.

51. The Division has been actively involved in work for the Regional Meeting to be held later in 1976 in preparation for the United Nations Water Conference to be held in Argentina in 1977. A note verbale (in Arabic) containing the outline of the proposed country reports was prepared and sent to member countries for their consideration.

52. The Division under the water resources component participated in the following meetings:

- i) Meeting in connexion with the Control of Oil Pollution in the Mediterranean, convened by IOE-UNESCO in co-operation with WHO and UNEP (Malta, September 1975);
- ii) UNEP Meeting on the need to establish an oil combating centre aimed at dealing with the massive oil spills in the Mediterranean (Malta, September 1975);
- iii) The Special Session of the Committee on Natural Resources (New York, February 1976). The participants served as the preparatory committee for the UN Water Conference.

53. The activities of the Division under the Science and Technology Programme, are envisaged in the detailed 1975 Work Programme of the Commission are centered around:

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- Preparations for the Seminar on Co-operative Research and Technology Projects in the ECWA region;
- ECWA's participation in CASTARAB, the Conference of Ministers of Arab States responsible for Science and Technology; and,
- Strengthening of regional integration in the field of science and technology.

54. With respect to the Seminar on Co-operative Research and Technology Projects in the ECWA region, which is scheduled for the third quarter of 1976 and expected to bring together 30-40 experts in a number of fields considered to have priority importance to the region, a number of topics related to national policy and plan, transport, energy and agricultural technology and information technology are envisaged. Expert participants will provide inputs on these topics around the central theme of regional co-operation and co-operative efforts. In order to assist the Commission in the technical preparations for the Seminar, the Secretariat will engage a senior consultant. In addition to the provision of expert reports, the Secretariat is preparing a substantive report on the status of science and technology in the ECWA region. The report will serve as an overview and background document for the Meeting and will particularly be dealing with science and technology parameters, the status of research and technology in selected areas of development and regional co-operative efforts and requirements in the field of science and technology. Country visits were made for the purpose of collecting the necessary information, a preliminary assessment of Research and Development in the ECWA region and the establishment of links with relevant science and technology institutions in the region. Visits to Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic were made in December 1975. The remaining countries of the ECWA region were visited during the first quarter of 1976.

55. The Conference of Minister of Arab States responsible for Science and Technology (CASTARAB) is the last in the series of regional conferences on science and technology organized by UNESCO in co-operation with ALESCO and ECWA. It will be held in Morocco in August 1976 and will have the following as its main theme:

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- Science and Technology Policies in the Arab States;
- Projects of regional co-operation in scientific and technological research; and,
- Measures to be taken for following-up the decisions of the Conference.

56. With respect to activities related to strengthen regional integration, ECWA participated in the 21st session of the U.N. Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development (ACAST), held in Geneva from 17-25 November 1975. For the first time since its existence, this Committee, which advises the Economic and Social Council on all matters pertaining to science and technology, includes well-known personalities from the ECWA region, namely from Iraq and Lebanon. Members from the region have formed the so-called ACAST-ECWA regional group to promote regional co-operation in the field of science and technology. ECWA will function as the Secretariat to the group. The first and constituting meeting of the regional group took place during the 21st session of ACAST in Geneva on 21 November and was attended by ECWA. The work programme proposed by the group and subsequently adopted by ACAST consists of:

- Evaluation of on-going UN activities in the field of science and technology in the ECWA region;
- Suggestions on co-ordination and co-operation of the application of science and technology to development;
- New initiatives in the field of the application of science and technology to development in the ECWA region; and
- Contribution of the ECWA region to scientific and technological progress in other states.

It is envisaged that the first substantive meeting of the group will be held shortly in Beirut or elsewhere in the region.

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E. Population Division

57. The work programme of ECWA in the Population field for 1976/77 was completely revised, at the request of the Second Session of ECWA, to take into account the recommendations of the Post-World Population Conference Consultations for the ECWA region, which was held in Doha/Qatar and concluded in Beirut/Lebanon on 2 May 1975. The revision also took into account the results of the 6th and 7th Special Sessions of the General Assembly. The 1975 work programme of ECWA in the field of population was, in as much as possible, also adjusted accordingly.
58. The demographic socio-economic survey of five cities in Oman proceeded generally according to schedule. The enumeration took place with the direct assistance of ECWA in the period between 10 April and 26 May 1975 and the completed forms were brought to Beirut early thereafter. Since commercial processing facilities in Beirut were closed, arrangements were made with the Department of Statistics of the Government of Jordan to do the processing at their Computer Centre which is assisted by the United Nations. The processing was completed in February 1976. Two trainees from Oman are participating in the analysis of the results.
59. A good deal of effort was spent during the year on the compilation and analysis of demographic and related socio-economic data for the countries of the region. The first demographic socio-economic data sheets for the twelve countries of the ECWA region containing information on about some forty variables, were completed in draft form and distributed to the Statistical Departments of the respective countries for their comments. The final draft of these data sheets will be published in the Population Bulletin of ECWA and disseminated in other suitable forms. Furthermore, work is presently in progress on the preparation of demographic socio-economic country profiles for each of the twelve countries of ECWA in which relevant statistical information will be given as well as a general view of ongoing policies in the field of population.
60. The study on Children and Youth in the Syrian Arab Republic, which was partly financed by UNICEF, was completed in December 1975. This study, of some 140 type-written pages in Arabic and an Annex of some 30 statistical tables, contains up-to-date information on the demographic socio-economic situation of Syria with special reference to questions of children and youth.

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61. Work in the field of Law and Population resulted mainly in a study on the Legal Status of Moslem Women which will be presented to a forthcoming regional meeting on the status of women and published separately. This study gives factual information about laws and regulations governing matters affecting the status of women in the twelve countries of ECMA and is an expansion of an earlier study which was presented to the World Population Conference in 1974.
62. The Seminar on Techniques of Collecting, Evaluating and Estimating Demographic Parameters which was scheduled to be held in Beirut in December 1975 was held in Amman, Jordan from 27 to 31 January 1976. The seminar served to exchange information among the region's Heads of Statistics Departments and Census Operations on difficulties encountered in their respective countries and their possible solutions as well as the exchange of information between them and some leading international experts on methods of data analysis and estimation of population and related parameters from defective data. The report of this seminar containing the recommendations of the group, together with the technical papers prepared by ECMA and the consultants is being published in a separate volume and disseminated inside and outside the region.
63. Issues No.8 and 9 of the Population Bulletin were published and distributed. It will be recalled that since 1974 the Population Bulletin is issued in Arabic as well as in English.
64. A number of short-term missions were undertaken by the Regional Adviser and other staff dealing with population matters for purposes of assisting countries of the region either in the implementation of country projects or in formulating projects in the population field including projects to be financed by UNFPA.

F. Transport, Communication and Tourism Division

65. Work under this Programme of the Commission continued on a consultants' survey report on the Transport Situation in the Region. The report was finalized and sent to member countries for their comments.

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66. The Division also completed a study on "Regional Co-operation in the Promotion of Tourism", covering Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic. It examines the possibilities of promoting co-operation in tourism among these countries.

67. During the period under review, advisory services in various aspects of transport were made available to the following E.C.M. member countries and regional organization:

i) At the request of the Government of the Sultanate of Oman, the Regional Advisor in Transport visited Muscat, in April 1975, to assist the authorities in:

- the evaluation of a consultants' report on the development of transport and communications;
- the preparation of a plan for a network of roads and to define areas where technical assistance could be obtained from the United Nations sources to achieve the Governments' plans in this field; and,
- the preparation of a training programme for nationals in the fields of transport and communications.

The report of the Regional Advisor was sent to the Government of Oman in June 1975.

ii) At the request of the Government of Jordan, the Regional Advisor in Transport visited Amman, from 22 to 29 August 1975, to assist the municipality of Amman in solving problems concerning:

- population growth and the development of road networks; and,
- improvement of the administrative machinery for road construction and maintenance.

The report of the Regional Advisor was sent to the Government in December 1975.

iii) The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic requested the services of the Regional Advisor in connexion with "The Prospects of the Development of Railway Traffic in 1976 and its Implications for the Organization and Operation of the Syrian Railway System (CRS)". The Regional Advisor visited Damascus and Aleppo, from 9 to 30 November 1975, and a report was sent to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in December 1975.

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iv) The Secretariat of the Council of Arab Economic Unit (CAEU) requested ECMA's assistance in the preparation of a paper on the "Improvement of Transport among all Arab Countries". In this connexion the Regional Adviser visited Cairo, from 20 June to 2 July 1975, and, following an examination of the issues involved, submitted an interim report to the Secretary-General of CAEU. The final report was submitted in February 1976.

68. In connexion with the implementation of the Commission's 1976-1977 Programme of Work and Priorities in the field of Transport, Communications and Tourism, the Chief of the Division, accompanied by the Regional Adviser in Transport, and the Expert in Ports and Shipping, visited Kuwait, in February 1976, and held discussions with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development. The discussion centered around finding ways and means of co-operating in the implementation of the following projects envisaged in the 1976-1977 Programme of Work and Priorities of the Commission:

- "Development of Integrated Transport and Communications Network in the ECMA Region";
- "Development of Shipping Services and Port Facilities";
- "Development and Co-ordination of Air Transport"; and
- "Development of Telecommunications Services".

The above subjects form part of AFESD/UNDP Project RBM/74/011/A/01/46, entitled "Programme for identification and preparation of inter-country investment projects and related feasibility studies". Preliminary understanding was reached in the methodology to be adopted in the division of labour. Further discussions will be carried out in order to reach agreement on the utilization of resources and co-ordination of efforts between the Arab Funds and ECMA,

69. The Division participated in the Inter-Agency Meeting on Tourism, held in Geneva in December 1975, to review the on-going programmes in the field of tourism with a view to co-ordinating the activities of the United Nations in this field with those of the World Tourism Organization.

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G. Social Development and Human Settlement Division

70. Under the Social Development Programme, the Division completed a general survey report of the situation of youth in the ECMA region, entitled "Situation of Youth in the ECMA Region". An intensive case study of the participation of youth in development was carried out in Democratic Yemen and the Yemen Arab Republic. The case study involved collaboration with UNICEF and resulted in two reports, entitled "The Needs of Youth in the Yemen Arab Republic" and "The Needs of Youth in Democratic Yemen". The aim of these studies is to assist the governments in planning and implementing programmes for youth. Advisory services on youth matters were provided to the Governments of Jordan, Bahrain, Democratic Yemen and the Yemen Arab Republic. The Division also made preparations for the Second Arab States Conference on Children and Youth in National Planning and Development to be held in Cairo in December 1976. This Conference is being organized jointly by UNICEF, ECMA and the Arab League. It was originally to have been held in November 1975, but events in Lebanon necessitated postponement.

71. In the field of women's affairs, the Division completed a research study, initiated a data bank, and made preparations for a regional seminar on the integration of women in development. The research study is entitled "Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Home-Based Employment Programmes for Lebanese Rural Women". It is a follow-up to last year's case study of "Institutions and Organizations Concerned with the Participation of Lebanese Rural Women in Development". The Division has started the systematic collection of quantitative data (data bank) depicting women's social, legal, educational and employment status in the region. The data bank will monitor progress achieved in the participation of Arab women in socio-economic development. The preparation of individual summary tables, depicting both a regional and a time-series comparison of indicators on the educational and employment status of Arab women is an on-going activity. A list was prepared on ILO conventions on women ratified by Arab countries. The Division is currently preparing a study on the educational and employment status of Arab women in the region. The Division participated in eight meetings of the United Nations Inter-Agency Working Group for International Women's year, aimed at bringing together UN agencies in the Middle East and a limited number of other organizations having regional programmes for women.

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Staff members of the Division attended a UNICEF Meeting on the Role of Women's Organizations in Nutrition Education Programmes held in Damascus, the Syrian Arab Republic from 23 to 31 August 1975. The Division also prepared ECWA's statement for the World Conference of International Women's Year held in Mexico City from 19 June to 2 July 1975. A regional seminar, as a follow-up to the Mexico Conference, is planned for 1976.

72. In the field of integrated rural development, a study entitled "Rural Industrialization Trends and Prospects in Countries of the ECWA Region" was completed. The study analyzes the problems as well as the effects of rural industrialization on development and proposes some policy guidelines, with particular reference to the social aspects. The Division was also involved in conducting, jointly with the Division of Information of FAO, two training and orientation seminars in the field of rural development communication. The workshops were held in Baghdad, Iraq, from 16 March to 3 April 1975 and from 16 October to 13 November 1975. These two workshops, which were attended mainly by agricultural extension workers, are pre-requisites for the establishment of a Rural Development Support Communication Centre by the Iraqi Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform. In co-operation with the joint ECWA/FAO Agriculture Division, a mission to survey needs and possibilities of integrated rural development was carried out at the request of the Government of the Yemen Arab Republic. The mission, of one month duration, concentrated on the Wadi Zabid Project.

73. In the field of developmental social welfare, the Division completed a report on social conditions in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza. Advisory services were offered in co-operation with UNICEF to relief organizations during the Lebanese crisis.

74. Under the Human Settlements Programme, the Division completed a report on "Social Aspects of Housing in the ECWA Region" which was presented to the United Nations Inter-Regional Seminar on the Social Aspects of Housing, in Holte, Denmark, 14-27 September 1975. A report entitled "Survey of the Main Issues of Human Settlements in the ECWA Region" was also prepared for the Regional Preparatory Conference on Human Settlements. A study on rent control policies and practices in the ECWA region was also completed. A study on building costs in the region is underway.

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75 The Division continued its activities in preparing for HABITAT: The United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, to be held in Vancouver, Canada, in June 1976. The Regional Preparatory Conference on Human Settlements for Asia and the Pacific and Western Asia was held in Teheran, Iran, from 14 to 19 June 1975. This Conference was organized by ECWA, ESCAP and the Habitat Secretariat in New York. The Regional Conference marked the first time that the countries of the ECWA region had met to discuss problems of human settlements. The Division continued to collect information and data for the preparation of papers on "Settlement Design and Distribution of Settlements in New Lands" and a "Survey of Housing Conditions in the ECWA Region". In co-operation with UNEP, the Division prepared a project regarding improved housing and environment in uncontrolled urban settlements in Democratic Yemen and the Yemen Arab Republic. In this regard, a sample social survey of the slum dwellers in the First Governorate of Democratic Yemen was carried out and a report completed.

76. At the request of the Governments of Lebanon and the Yemen Arab Republic, the Division provided advisory services and technical assistance in the field of housing aimed at strengthening the Housing Ministry in Lebanon and the Housing Department in the Yemen Arab Republic. The Ministry of Housing in Lebanon was also assisted in carrying out housing projects. Upon the request of the Secretary-General of Habitat, the Division has assisted in the organization of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements, to be held in Vancouver, Canada, in 1976. Officers of the Division travelled to most of the ECWA countries in order to assist in the preparation of this Conference.

77. The Division participated in an Inter-Agency Meeting on Housing and Urbanization held in Geneva, from 8 to 10 October 1975; the 9th Committee on Housing, Building and Planning, from 17 to 24 October 1975; and, an Expert Group Meeting on Human Settlement Technology held in Nairobi, from 2-6 February 1976.

#### H. Statistics Unit

78. The Statistics Unit became operational on 8 September 1975 and is charged with the implementation of the Statistics Programme of the Commission. The Unit's activities in this field are largely centered around:

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- the development of national and regional statistics;
- the preparation of an Annual Statistical Abstract of the Arab World; and,
- the study of the comparative costs of living in the ECMA countries.

79. With regard to the development of national and regional statistics, the Unit initiated work on the application of the Arabic System of National Accounts which is based on the United Nations System of National Accounts, to the National Accounts of the Yemen Arab Republic. In collaboration with the Central Planning Organization in Sana'a, the Unit completed the National Accounts of the Yemen Arab Republic and were issued in both Arabic and English.

80. The Unit is presently conducting a survey of the current practices in ECMA countries regarding the compilation of national accounts data, i.e. accounting systems and estimation methods. Work in this area is progressing and has, so far, covered five countries, namely, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Yemen Arab Republic. The survey is expected to cover all the countries by the end of 1976, and a report, entitled "National Accounts Statistics in the ECMA Countries", will constitute a background paper for the "Working group on production accounts, commodity balances and input-output analysis at current and constant prices" which will be held in Beirut in 1977.

81. The Unit has initiated work on the assessment of current practices in collecting statistics on prices and compiling index numbers. Contacts have been established with the National Statistics Departments of member countries in order to standardize the method of gathering prices and to study the available collected prices and price indices and the actual compiling procedures. So far, eight countries of the region have been covered. The assessment of gathering the representative series of price indicators is based on the following criteria:

- procedures of selection of respondents from the business establishments: choice of the establishment of sample;
- procedures of selection of commodities: choice of commodities samples;
- frequency of collection;
- procedures used for maintaining the representativeness of indicators;
- procedure of adjusting series for differences in quality;
- the available price index numbers formulae.

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A paper is expected to be issued on this subject in September 1976.

82. Preparations for the Annual Statistical Abstract of the Arab World started late in 1975. It is intended to publish annually two volumes of the Abstract. The first volume will be a statistical country profile and the second volume will be a sector profile. Since all Arab countries, some of which are members of the Economic Commission for Africa, will be included, ECMA plans to organize a system of co-ordination between the two Commissions. In the meantime, work is underway for the preparation of a provisional draft of the Abstract, using statistical data available to ECMA up till 31 March 1976, to be presented to the Commission as well as the National Statistics Departments for comments and suggestions. During the forthcoming mission to Kuwait, the Arab Fund will be contacted for discussions on the economic and social indicators to be incorporated in the Statistical Abstract. During the period July through October, the presentation will be modified, more recent figures will be added and the finalized first issue of Volume 1 of the Abstract will be published. Volume 2 will follow at a later stage.

83. It should be pointed out that this activity is financed in part by regular ECMA budget and in part by extra-budgetary resources from the Arab Fund. Since this activity is of a continuing nature, adequate resources will have to be made available to ensure its continuity.

84. Work has commenced on the "Study of the Comparative Costs of Living in the ECMA Countries" and is proceeding according to schedule. The purpose of the study is to compare the gross domestic products and their common unit values and the purchasing power of currencies in the ECMA countries. The study has been closely co-ordinated with the International Comparison Project (ICP) which is being carried out by the Statistical Office of the United Nations, IBRD, and the University of Pennsylvania with the possible involvement of the Regional Institute for Research and Training in Statistics for the Near East, in Baghdad.

85. The current UN International Comparison Project (ICP) started its first stage with 1967 data covering seven countries of the world: Columbia, Hungary, India, Japan, Kenya, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. At

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its second stage, in 1970, the ICP increased the number of countries to ten by adding France, Federal Republic of Germany and Italy. The ICP is now proceeding to a third stage and extending its geographical coverage by adding more countries to the study. The Syrian Arab Republic has been chosen to be among the selected group of countries for this study. The Statistics Unit maintains close contacts with UN Statistical Office and the Central Bureau of Statistics of the Syrian Arab Republic in order to ensure involvement in the third stage of the ICP study and awareness of the details of its implementation.

86. At the request of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, regional advisory services were made available to the Central Bureau of Statistics to assist in finalizing the Syrian System of National Accounts which was completely derived from the UN System of National Accounts. The system was applied to the 1972 national accounts data and the results were published in the 1975 Statistical Abstract of the Syrian Arab Republic. The Unit also applied the new system to a series of national accounts covering the period 1956-1972. The results have been submitted to the Syrian Central Bureau of Statistics.

87. The Unit actively participated in the "Interregional Seminar on a Revised System of National Accounts for the Developing Countries", held in Caracas, Venezuela, from 8 to 19 December 1975. In this connexion, and at the request of the United Nations Statistical Office, the Unit prepared the following two papers:

- Country Experience in Using the Revised System of National Accounts: practices, difficulties and problems and solutions in the use of concepts, definitions, classifications, etc.
- Selected aspects of the revised SNA: practices, difficulties and solutions in the case of agriculture, industry, distributive trades and services, household and non-marketed production, public sector, external transactions, gross capital formation, etc.

#### I. Documentation Centre

88. Work commenced in the implementation of the project on the establishment of a Documentation Centre and is proceeding according to schedule. The plan of operation consists of three phases.

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Phase one comprises a survey which is being conducted in all the Arab countries in co-operation with the Economic Commission for Africa, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. The purpose of the survey is to:

- a) identify, evaluate and enumerate the existing library, documentation and information centres and other research organizations in the economic and social field;
- b) survey the number and type of users, infrastructure, holdings, personnel and related services, functions and future plans of these organizations in order to fill the gaps by including the needed services under the work plan of the documentation centre; and,
- c) identify the producers of the literature in the socio-economic fields, particularly those producers who operate within the government framework.

89. The survey mission, comprising two consultants, has already covered Bahrain, Democratic Yemen, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Sultanate of Oman, the Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates, and the Yemen Arab Republic. The Arab countries of North Africa will be surveyed later after an agreement is reached with EC.A.

#### J. Technical Co-operation Unit

90. During the period under review, the Unit continued to provide technical assistance and supporting services to the five ongoing UNDP national and regional projects decentralized to ECMA, namely the Arab Institute for Economic and Social Planning in Kuwait; the regional training programme in Public Finance and Administration (PROPFAD); Assistance in Development Planning and Execution (Baghdad); the Planning Institute for Economic and Social Development (Damascus); and, the Multilateral Trade Negotiations (Beirut). The Unit participated in the UNDP Evaluation Mission involving the Arab Institute for

Economic and Social Planning and also represented ECWA at the last meeting of the Institute's Board of Trustees.

91. In connexion with regional advisory services, the Unit rendered the necessary administrative and supporting services with a view to enabling the regional advisers attached to the various substantive programmes to effectively serve the countries of the region in their respective fields, i.e., social development, social development aspects of population policies, transport and communications, industrial development, trade promotion, and population statistics.

#### K. Information Services

92. During the period under review, ECWA Information Services intensified efforts through press, radio and television network to achieve a wider dissemination, within the region, of information on the activities of the Commission and on those carried out at the international level concerning such issues as the International Women's Year, Human Rights Day, Habitat, the New Economic Order, Development and International Economic Co-operation and others.

93. In order to promptly and adequately serve all member States of the Commission, the Information Services concentrated efforts on ascertaining the needs and facilities of each member State through direct contacts with the information ministries and persons active in the media. Necessary working arrangements have been made with national news agencies of each country in order to ensure speedy despatch of information pertaining to the country concerned. Radio and TV networks in the region have been approached with a view to facilitating their use of ECWA related items. Specific proposals are being prepared to this effect in co-ordination with the UN Office of Public Information.