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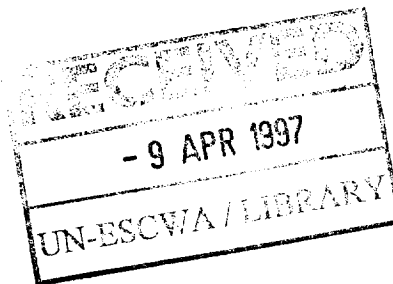
ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

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PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
WORK PROGRAMME

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1. The implementation of the 1976-1977 Work Programme of the Commission continued to be adversely affected by the prolongation of the civil war in Lebanon during much of the period under review. The consequential extended evacuation of staff members and the freeze on further recruitments impeded the desired pace of progress in the implementation of the work programme. Some deviations from the work programme were, therefore, inevitable resulting in the carryover of some projects into the next biennium (see document E/ECWA/44). In spite of the difficulties encountered under these circumstances, efforts have succeeded in making a significant headway under most of the substantive programmes of the Commission.

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

A. Development Planning Division

3. During the period under review, the major activities undertaken within DFD's four programmes are presented below.

4. Under the Development Planning, Projections and Policies Programme (DPPP), the Division prepared the outline of the regional report on the third biennial Review and Appraisal of Progress in the Implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade (project 4.1.3., E/ECWA/28). In addition to making substantive contributions under its four programmes to the report, the Division was responsible for the substantive editing and consolidation of the above report, by incorporating the contributions from the various ECWA substantive divisions (see E/ECWA/49).

5. In response to General Assembly resolution 3508 (XXX), and in co-operation with the United Nations Department of Economic Affairs (ESA) at Headquarters, ECWA has already started to prepare "studies on the long-term trends in, and forecasts of the economic development", of the ECWA region. The preparation of such long-term trends for the region is also of considerable importance to the Committee for Development Planning (CDP) and for the "Project

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2000", initiated by ESA under the supervision of Prof. Leontief. Both the twelfth session of the CDP (29 March - 7 April 1976) and the Leontief Seminar (October 1976) at UN Headquarters were attended by the Chief of the Development Planning Division.

6. Work is in progress on the Brain Drain project, both in ECWA and the ECA regions. Arrangements have been made with ECA secretariat for the coverage of the Arab countries in Africa. (see E/ECWA/45/Add.1).

7. As a follow-up action to ECWA's first report to the Third Session of the Commission, and as required in the Commission's resolution 23 (III) on Euro-Arab Dialogue, extensive discussions were carried out with the secretariat of the League of Arab States on possible areas of ECWA's assistance and the ways and means of co-operation between the two organizations in matters related to the Dialogue. The discussion concentrated on three main areas of importance, namely, trade, transfer of technology, and transport. Discussions were also carried out in this respect with the corresponding Divisions of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, with a view to co-ordinating efforts in various areas related to the Dialogue (see E/ECWA/45/Add. 1).

8. DPD actively participated in the Jordan Development Conference, by presenting a paper on the Five-Year Plan (1977-1981) of Jordan, served as the rapporteur of the Economic Committee of the Conference, and prepared the report of the Committee.

9. The staff member under the DPPP programme has been serving as a member of the task force established at ECWA for the implementation of Commission resolution 27 (III) on the "General Study of the Economic and Social Situation and Potential of the Palestinian Arab People", and ECOSOC resolution 2026 (LXI) on "Assistance to the Palestinian People" (see E/ECWA/43).

10. A brief for the January 1977 Session of the Executive Secretaries Meeting was prepared which dealt with the review of recent developments within and outside the United Nations system in the establishment of the new international economic order.

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11. Under the International Trade and Development Programme, the Division served as the focal point within ECWA in as far as the operations of the regional project on "Multilateral Trade Negotiations", including the provision of substantive support.
 12. Within the framework of the Multilateral Trade Negotiations (MTN), a paper analyzing the "Structure of Trade Barriers Facing Products of Export Interest to the ECWA Countries in Three Developed Markets" was prepared. The project has been extended through 1977. A regional seminar is envisaged within the context of this project during the first half of 1977.
 13. The compilation, tabulation and analysis of trade and payments flows in member countries continued. A progress report on the achievement, by the countries of the region, of the goals and objectives of the International Development Strategy for the Second Development Decade in the field of trade was prepared in connexion with the third biennial review and appraisal of progress in the implementation of the strategy (see E/ECWA/49).
 14. Work is in progress on the study on the "Liberalization of Non-Tariff Barriers" affecting exports from the region. Work is also expected to be carried out on the study of "Trade Expansion and Economic Integration", mainly as it relates to the identification and analysis of existing bilateral and multilateral trade agreements in the region.
 15. Under the Development Finance and Administration Programme, work continued on the preparation of the public finance profiles of ECWA member countries and on the implementation of the project "Evaluation of Government Budgetary Systems and Practices in ECWA Member countries and the Need for Reform" (Item 4.2.2(a), E/ECWA 28). Preparations are underway for a regional survey to be conducted in connexion with this project in the latter part of 1977.
 16. In connexion with item 15 above, and as a part of the requirements of project 4.2.4 in DPD's Work Programme in this field (E/ECWA/28), a detailed project document for DPD's forthcoming "Working group meeting on budget classification, budget-plan harmonization and management in countries of Western Asia" was prepared. The project document has been submitted for extra-budgetary financing by the "Danish International Development Agency
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(DANIDA)." Work is underway for the preparation of the meeting to be held early next year.

17. A detailed note on "Major problem areas in Lebanese development finance and administration systems", was prepared for consideration and inclusion in post-civil-war reconstruction programme for Lebanon.

18. At the request of the Government of Lebanon, advisory services and assistance were extended in connexion with the preparation of the law for the establishment of the "Development and Reconstruction Council of Lebanon" within the framework of Government machinery replacing the Planning Ministry.

19. The over-all survey report on the use of computers and computer-based management techniques in countries of Western Asia was completed for a joint ECWA/ILO submission to the three countries concerned, namely, Jordan, Kuwait, and the Syrian Arab Republic. In order to develop a complete regional picture, assess over-all national and regional needs and develop the necessary related activities in this fast moving field, ECWA, under its appropriate programmes, is studying the extension of the scope of the survey to also cover other countries of the region.

20. The Division, under this programme represented ECWA Secretariat in the sixteenth session of the Committee for Programme and Co-ordination, which examined, among others, the 1978-1981 Medium-Term Plan of the Commission and prepared ECWA's part of the "special analysis" in Volume I of the United Nations Medium-Term Plan for the period 1978-1981, which was subsequently issued as document A/31/6/Add.1/Corr. 5.

21. ECWA's background paper on promoting Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries (ECDC) was prepared in connexion with the Manila Declaration and the development and implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the Third Ministerial Meeting of the "Group of 77" for promoting ECDC. The paper identified and proposed various areas and corresponding specific projects for promoting economic co-operation among the countries of the region and between them and other developing countries.

22. The Division, under the programme, represented ECWA in the meeting of the Regional Commissions' Representatives at UN Headquarters and participated

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in the preparation of the joint position paper entitled "The Programme of Action for Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries: contribution of the United Nations regional commissions". The paper was subsequently submitted, by the Executive Secretary of ECLA on behalf of the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions, to the Conference of the "Group of 77" on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries, held in Mexico City, September 9 to 21, 1976.

23. Under this programme, DPD assisted the Programme and Co-ordination Unit in, inter alia, the over-all presentation, co-ordination and finalization of the Programme of Work and Priorities of the Commission for the period 1978-1979, which is presently presented to the Commission under document E/ECWA/44 and E/ECWA/44/Add.1). The various substantive Divisions of the secretariat have been fully involved in the preparation of their respective substantive programmes, following the secretariat's temporary stationing in Amman, Jordan.

24. The Division, under this programme also participated in, and supervised ECWA's preparatory work related, to the forthcoming ECWA regional meeting on Technical Co-operation among Countries of Western Asia, in preparation for the 1978 global Conference on the subject. Work carried out includes preparation of the detailed outline of the major background paper prepared by a consultant for the regional meeting, scheduled to be held in Kuwait in May 1977, and review of the first draft of the document.

25. The Division prepared the substantive briefs for the January 1977 meeting of the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions, covering such topics as co-operation (both Economic and Technical) among developing countries, interregional co-operation concerning the Programme of Work in the field of transnational corporation and co-operation between regional commissions' secretariats in carrying out General Assembly resolution 3508 (XXX).

26. The Regional Project for Public Finance and Administration (PROPFAD), was able in spite of the circumstances in Lebanon, to successfully continue its activities during the period under review. Its international Staff, endeavouring to fulfil its aims, kept working first in Beirut and then in neighbouring Damascus making it thus possible to accomplish the following:

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(a) Training Programmes:

(i) Centrally-based programme:

PROPFAD arranged for a centrally-based training programme in Damascus from 1 May to 30 June 1976. The central programmes are designed to acquaint finance officials at the decision-making level with the fundamentals of Public Finance and the relevant practical problems thereof.

Senior Finance Officers from the three beneficiary countries of the region, namely, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, the Yemen Arab Republic and the Sultanate of Oman, plus the Finance Officers from the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain participated in the programme. It is to be noted that participants from the latter two countries were financed by their own Governments. The courses given were: Introduction to Public Finance, Government Budgeting, Public Revenues, Taxation, Tax Administration, Government Accounting, Business Accounting, Public Utilities and Enterprises, Public Debt, Principles of Economic Development and Principles of Planning.

Appropriate workshops and seminars were also arranged during the programme. Ten well known experts in the field of Public Finance assisted PROPFAD's own experts in carrying on the training programme.

(ii) Country-based Training Programmes:

These programmes are specially tailored to meet local needs and are mainly devoted to operational activities in the field of Public Finance in each of the countries served by PROPFAD. Three such programmes were organized, during the period under consideration, as follows:

- Aden-based Training Programme:

A training programme in Aden was arranged for the period 26 February - 5 April 1977. Upon the request of the Ministry of Finance, this programme was wholly devoted to customs

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legislation and administration. Thirty-five employees working at the supervisory level in the Ministry of Finance and the General Directorate of Customs have participated in the programme which covered the following courses: customs legislation, customs duties, customs contested cases, customs regulations, by-laws of customs administration, by-laws and regulations of customs force, free-zone regulations, customs tariff and related explanatory notes.

- Muscat-based Training Programme

A training programme in Muscat has been arranged during the period April 9 through May 18, 1977. The programme covers four subjects: the public budget, government accounting, business accounting and government stores and purchases. Fifty-five trainees are participating in the programme; twenty out of them were chosen from the supervisory level and thirty-five from the sub-supervisory one. Each group, however, is having separate classes and different treatment of the subjects.

- The Sana'a-based Training Programme:

A training programme in Sana'a has been arranged for the period April - May 1977. The subjects covered are: taxation, government accounting, business accounting and government stores and purchases. Thirty-five trainees from the supervisory level and thirty-five from the sub-supervisory level are participating in the programme. Each group, however, is having separate classes and different treatment of the subjects.

(b) Field trips

PROPFAD experts made field trips to all the three countries served by the project, during the last quarter of 1976. They visited different departments in the Ministries of Finance and Civil Service Authorities seeking first hand knowledge of the local problems and collecting necessary data. They met with top officials discussing the findings and arranging for the expected training programmes and advisory services.

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(o) Advisory services:

- (i) Upon the request of the Ministry of Finance in PDRY, PROPFAD rendered advisory services in the field of customs legislation and administration in early March 1977. These services were a follow up and a completion to the services rendered a year ago in the same field.
- (ii) Upon the request of the General Directorate of Finance in the Sultanate of Oman, PROPFAD started in April 1977 a study of the present situation of the General Directorate of Finance and an assessment of its role and activities in the light of the new Fiscal System in the Sultanate. These services are to be taken up again in the last quarter of 1977.

27. Under Labour, Management and Employment Programme, the Division prepared and serviced the joint ECA/ECWA Preparatory Meeting for the World Employment Conference which was held in Tunis from May 4 to 7, 1976.^{1/} This included the preparation of a paper on "Selected Employment Problems in Countries of Western Asia", which was submitted to the meeting, as well as participation in the preparation of the final report which included the meeting's recommendations to the Tripartite World Conference on Employment, Income Distribution and Social Progress and the International Division of Labour. This Conference, which was held in Geneva from June 2 to 17, 1976 and prepared a "Declaration of Principles and Programme of Action", was attended by a staff member of DPD.

28. At the request of the Government of Lebanon, assistance is being extended, within the area of competence of the programme, to the Government. A member of the Programme staff has been designated as ECWA's representative to the High Commission for Relief established by the Lebanese Government.

29. The Division, under this programme represented ECWA in the Sixth Annual Conference of the Arab Labour Organization, held in Alexandria (Egypt) from March 6 to 15, 1977. It also participated actively in the Seminar on

^{1/} This activity was not fully reported to the Commission Third Session as it immediately preceded it.

"Population, Employment and Development", held in Amman from April 4 to 7, 1977, and co-sponsored by the National Council for Planning in Jordan and the International Labour Organization (ILO) with the participation of delegates from Jordan, Iraq, Syria and other international and regional organizations. A paper on "Employment and Development" was prepared and submitted to the Seminar for its consideration.

30. As part of the continuing process of monitoring developments in the region, DPD, among other activities, prepared a report reviewing economic and social conditions in the ECWA region with particular emphasis on the recent period and covering growth of output, prices, sectoral developments (agriculture, manufacturing and petroleum), external trade and payments, planning, the social situation and regional and interregional co-operation. In addition, a brief on economic and social conditions on the ECWA region was prepared in connexion with the meeting of the Executive Secretaries in July 1976.

31. The Division, under very difficult conditions, arranged to have three experts (one in development planning, one in the establishment of training institutes for mineral resources, and one in the export of sea products) go to Aden, at different times and for different periods, in order to advise the Government on proper action in these three fields.

32. An agreement was signed between the Executive Director of the Centre on Transnational Corporations and the Executive Secretary of ECWA, with a view to establishing a Joint Unit on Transnational Corporations. The size, composition and work programme of this Unit have already been agreed upon. The resources required for its activities will be provided by the Centre at Headquarters, (see E/ECWA/44/Add.1). The Unit will operate within the structure of the Development Planning Division, the Chief of which had already attended an inter-agency meeting on the subject at New York Headquarters last November.

33. The Executive Secretary, working in harmony with ECWA resolution 24 (III), took immediate action, as soon as hostilities stopped, in order to "extend all possible assistance for the co-ordination of efforts made for the reconstruction

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and development of Lebanon". In response to the request of the Lebanese Government, the Executive Secretary strengthened ECWA staff in Beirut by moving the Development Planning Division back to Beirut in order to facilitate the rendering of advisory services officially requested by the Lebanese Government within the framework of the assistance to Lebanon by the United Nations system.

34. The Executive Secretary, along with the Chief of DPD, entered into intensive substantive consultations with the Lebanese Government, with a view to extending immediate and urgent assistance to Lebanon. Upon the request of the Prime Minister, the Chief of DPD prepared a request (project document) for a United Nations Inter-Disciplinary Advisory Team to Lebanon which is expected to (a) conduct quick surveys and position papers for urgent policy decisions on the economic and social problems pre-occupying the Lebanese authorities; (b) serve as the nucleus for the preparation of Lebanon's comprehensive medium-term plan; and (c) prepare the ground for studies on the long-run development prospects of Lebanon and the broad options available to it for growth, under conditions of economic and social stability. Through its staff and regional advisors, and working under the supervision of the Chief of DPD, ECWA was also able to assist in the establishment of the Housing Bank and the Reconstruction and Development Council. In the latter case, a senior staff from ESA at UN Headquarters also joined to extend the necessary advice. Moreover, ECWA extended advice on the rehabilitation and construction of Lebanon's railroad system and is continuing advisory services through membership in Lebanon's Relief Committee and in the Preparatory Committee related to the operations of the Housing Bank. Finally, as per the instructions of the Executive Secretary, and operating within its resource constraints and the requirements of its programmes, ECWA will continue to give Lebanon priority considerations (see E/ECWA/48).

B. Joint ECWA/FAO Agriculture Division

35. Activities under the Agriculture Programme of the Commission were concentrated mainly on the following five subprogrammes:

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36. Establishment of a reliable data system: In this connexion, efforts were confined to the preparation of the annual review and appraisal of agricultural development in the region. The framework designed by the joint division for sector review and monitoring could not be implemented owing to prevailing circumstances.

37. Improvement of agricultural planning: Under this subprogramme, progress achieved include:

(a) A study of the long-term agricultural potential for East Jordan. This study was undertaken in response to a special request from the National Planning Council. It involved a reconsideration of agricultural development strategies in the context of long-term perspectives reflecting the country's maximum resource potentials. The study adopted a new approach based on sector segmentation and considered alternative development strategies geared to specific ecological zones in rainfed areas and to identified segments of irrigated agriculture. The scope of the study covered mainly crop production and livestock enterprises, giving particular attention to desirable structural changes in land use and range management.

(b) A policy framework for irrigation water charges in the Yemen Arab Republic. This study was carried out at the request of the Government and in close co-operation with the Tihama Authority which administers the Wadi Zabid irrigation project.

The study outlined a policy framework for incorporating distributional and other activities in the assessment of water charges and benefit taxes, and also for determining the desirable level of rent and cost recovery in that region.

(c) Participation in the FAO Country Programming Development Mission to Iraq (December 1976). The contribution of the joint division concerned specifically the preparation of a project document on the improvement and development of industrial crops such as oilseeds, cotton, tobacco, and sugarbeets. All these crops presently fall short of Iraq's requirements and the deficit is met by imports. The proposed project gives special attention to new oilseeds such as sunflower, soybean, linseed, rape and mustard, safflower, and sesame seed.

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38. Enhancing food security: Work under this subprogramme involved expanding the scope of the study on short-term possibilities for expanding food production in selected countries of the ECWA region, initiated in 1975. This has been in direct response to increasing interest in food policies and to growing concern about food security in various countries of the ECWA region.

39. It was also possible to complete a pilot study on Food Security: the case of wheat in East Jordan. This represents the first pilot work concerned with risks and uncertainties related to fluctuating annual rainfalls and their adverse effects on cereal production under dry farming conditions. One objective of the study is the development of an early warning system based on the intensity of early rainfalls. Another major objective is the design of well-conceived policies on stock reserves, together with their respective probabilities of success or failure. Apart from its usefulness to the country concerned, the study has made a positive contribution by developing a methodology which can be used under similar conditions prevailing in other countries of the ECWA region.

40. Promotion of Agricultural Integration: Two important contributions were made under this subprogramme. The first involved a direct heavy input to the UNDP/Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU) project relating to the seminar on agricultural integration among Arab countries (to be held in Cairo from 2 - 7 April 1977). The input was in the form of 12 man-months contributed by officers from the joint division and was manifested in the preparation of several technical papers on various aspects of agricultural integration in the Arab region. The seminar reflects a joint FAO/ECWA/CAEU effort which should open the way toward an action-oriented programme for agricultural integration based on the comparative advantages of member states.

41. As one of the pre-requisites for the above-mentioned seminar, the joint division collaborated with FAO Headquarters and its Cairo regional office in the preparation of comprehensive agricultural trade matrices covering all countries of the ECWA region as well as other Arab countries,

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and canvassing a wide range of agricultural commodities. The trade matrices are both in quantity and value units for the period of 1971-73. Preliminary analysis of the computer printouts has already started and a position paper is under preparation. Among other things, it includes an intraregional analysis of agricultural trade flows, an examination of terms of trade, implications for food security and self-sufficiency, and possibilities for expansion of intraregional trade through the diversion of trade flows. The position paper should identify major problem areas meriting further study and providing the background material for an intergovernmental meeting on agricultural trade flows and food security issues which is planned for latter part of 1977.

42. Identification of Investment Opportunities: Achievement under this subprogramme was limited to participation in an identification mission launched by the FAO/IBRD investment centre to study the further development of the Wadi-Tuban irrigated region in Democratic Yemen. Particular stress in that mission was put on the development of suitable cropping patterns reflecting higher intensity and the introduction of new crops. Later in 1976, this effort was followed by a project formulation mission.

43. Among other activities, the joint division played the catalytic role in the preparation of ECWA's contribution to the United Nations Conference on Dessertification (UNCOD). This involved co-ordinating the work related to three country case studies in the ECWA region, and also the finalization of a study on the socio-economic effects of dessertification.

44. The joint division participated in a training course on agricultural planning organized by the Arab Planning Institute for Social and Economic Development. This participation included lectures on plan implementation and monitoring of agricultural projects.

45. The joint division took part in the workshop on perspective planning which was organized by FAO in collaboration with the Government of Pakistan and held in Islamabad in January 1977.

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C. Joint ECWA/UNIDO Industry Division

46. Efforts under the Industry Programme of the Commission were mainly focused on the implementation of the joint IDCAS/UNIDO/ECWA "Techno-economic study for the Development of the Fertilizer Industry in the Arab World." Work on the study proceeded according to schedule, as revised and agreed upon by IDCAS, UNIDO and ECWA. The second phase of the study was carried out and completed by international consultants. Work under this phase, which was financed by IDCAS, consisted of an analytical assessment of the survey completed as part of the first phase and of the formulation of an over-all development plan for fertilizer industry in the Arab countries.

47. Preparatory work is underway for the implementation of the third phase of the project which consists of an intergovernmental meeting to be jointly sponsored by the three organizations concerned. The meeting will be held during the second half of 1977 and will, inter alia, examine the document prepared by the international group of consultants under phase two of the project.

48. At the request of the Government of Iraq, short missions were undertaken, by the Regional Adviser in the Formulation of Industrial Projects, to Iraq in order to assist the Government in the evaluation of specific projects with a view to preparing a master plan for the chemical industry. At the request of the Government of Jordan, advisory services were rendered in connexion with the assessment and formulation of export-oriented industries. In both cases, the advisory services also covered preparation of drafts, outlining the terms of reference for engaging management and/or engineering consultants for specific jobs, setting-up a plan of action for the implementation of specific projects, etc.

49. At the request of the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Regional Adviser assisted in drawing-up a programme and the terms of reference for consultant who is to carry out a detailed study of the Regional Farm Machinery Project.

50. The Regional Adviser also represented ECWA in the Arab Second Seminar on Petrochemicals, held in Abu-Dhabi, the seminar on Industrial Development in Kuwait, the seminar on the Sugar Industry in Iraq, and the First Consultation Meeting on Fertilizers Industry, held in Vienna.

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D. Natural Resources, Science and Technology Division

51. Under the Water Resources subprogramme of the Division, work continued on the implementation of the remaining part of the 1975 as well as the 1976-1977 work programmes. In this respect, the first basic study on the project entitled "Development of Water Resources in the ECWA Region" was completed. This project was included in the 1975 work programme and work on it was initiated late in 1975 but its actual implementation was carried out in 1976. For this purpose, visits to all member countries were organized by the Division under the water resources subprogramme with a view to collecting the necessary technical and statistical data on water resources development.

52. The study tackles the following aspects of water resources development in the ECWA region:

- (a) Projections of demand for water in agriculture, industry and household use until the year 1990 in all countries of the region;
- (b) stock taking of present and expected availability of surface and underground water; and,
- (c) ways and means of bridging the water gap in 1990.

53. Certain aspects of the above mentioned project, namely, the projections of water demand for the region until 1990, were implemented by a highly experienced consulting firm, which is developing a suitable model for the region to be used for future water demand projections. The model was actually prepared and the projections published as part of a more general report entitled "Preliminary report on the development of water resources in the ECWA region".

54. It should be noted, however, that these projections are only tentative and will be revised in light of the improvements and refinements that will be introduced to the model on the basis of new additional and more reliable data expected to become available from different sources particularly from water resources authorities of member countries and regional and international organizations concerned with water resources development.

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55. Only one aspect of this project, falling under item (c) and concerned with indicating the order of magnitude and priorities for the investment that may be needed to cope with the water gap problem, could not be implemented due to shortage of time and lack of adequate expertise.

56. The final output of the above mentioned activity consisted of "A preliminary report on the development of water resources in the ECWA region." The report was revised in the light of additional information obtained from country reports and various sources as well as the comments and suggestions received from water experts. It has been circulated to member countries with a view to disseminating information on water resources development and providing member governments with guidelines on the present and future situation in some aspects of water resources development in the ECWA region.

57. The idea of a United Nations Water Conference was first brought to the consideration of ECOSOC's Committee on Natural Resources at its first session (1971). Recognizing the vital role that water plays in the economic development of nations and the range and future implications of the water problems confronting mankind, the United Nations Economic and Social Council endorsed, in May 1973, a resolution to hold a United Nations Water Conference in Argentina in 1977. The resolution requested the Secretary General of the United Nations to explore the possibility of covering regional preparatory meetings under the auspices of the regional economic commissions.

58. ECWA secretariat, accordingly, contacted all member governments exploring the possibility of having one of them host the meeting for the ECWA region. The only offer came from the Government of Iraq expressing its willingness and readiness to host the meeting which was then convened in Baghdad, Iraq.

59. The substantive preparations of this meeting include the preparation of country reports along a suggested outline drawn by the secretariat of the United Nations Water Conference. Member governments were expected to prepare their own country contribution. However, in a number of cases, assistance was provided to member countries by the staff of the water resources sub-programme and through a highly experienced consultant recruited by the secretariat for the preparation and finalization of the above mentioned reports. With the close collaboration of water resources staff, the consultant also prepared a draft regional report, for the preparatory meeting of the United

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Nations Water Conference which also included, a chapter comprising recommendations at the national, regional and international levels, and which was submitted subsequently to the ECWA regional meeting for discussion and adoption.

60. The meeting took place in Baghdad, Iraq, December 11 - 16, 1976 and was attended by all member countries of the ECWA region with the exception of the United Arab Emirates. It was also attended by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Water Conference, representatives of the Centre for National Resources, Energy and Transport (CNRUET), United Nations specialized agencies, intergovernmental organizations and observers from both USSR and Iran. Invitations, to this meeting, were also extended to five international water experts in their own personal capacity. This latter procedure proved extremely useful to the meeting in view of the valuable comments and suggestions that the five experts made on the various papers that were circulated in the meeting and their active participation in the discussions that took place on various aspects of water resources development. Furthermore, the regional water meeting contributed significantly to the establishment and strengthening of new and existing contacts between the ECWA staff of the water resources programme and senior water experts of member countries, universities and regional and international organizations.

61. The draft regional report, including the draft recommendations was, with few amendments, unanimously adopted by the participating countries. The final regional report was then circulated to member countries and forwarded to the United Nations Water Conference. It is being presented to this session under document E/ECWA/42/Rev.1. In this connexion, the division, under the Water Resources subprogramme, will participate in the United Nations Water Conference to be held in Mar Del Plata, Argentina, between March 14 and 25, 1977.

62. The first draft of the 1978-1979 work programme in the field of water resources was also prepared by the secretariat and presented to the regional water meeting for discussion. The views of delegates of member countries and the substantive comments of the five international water experts were taken into consideration in formulating the revised (1978-1979) water resources work programme. The activities under the revised 1978-1979 work programme are designed to implement the recommendations of the regional water meeting in the ECWA region. Furthermore, the selection of some of the

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activities was based on informal discussions between members of the secretariat and authorities concerned in the countries of the region which revealed that most of these countries suffer from lack of hydrometeorological as well as hydrogeological data, trained indigenous manpower and the absence, in most cases, of an administrative and legislative infrastructure to implement water resources policies.

63. The division under the water resources subprogramme participated actively in:

- (a) the meeting which was held in Rome, April 26 - May 01, 1976 to discuss the present and future activities of the United Nations System in water resources development. The meeting was sponsored by the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination. One of the main goals of the meeting was to identify gaps and overlapping of activities;
- (b) the Special Session of the Sub-Committee on water resources development of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC) which was held in United Nations Headquarters from October 26 to 29, 1976;
- (c) the meeting of experts sponsored jointly by UNEP/ESA and convened in Kuwait, December 6 to 10, 1976, at the invitation of the government of Kuwait. The purpose of the meeting was to lay the foundations of a plan of action for the development of the coastal area of the Arabian Gulf and the protection of the marine environment; and,
- (d) the second special session of the Committee on Natural Resources which was held in New York, January 3 to 7, 1977, to discuss the preparatory work for the United Nations Water Conference.

64. Under the Mineral Resources Subprogramme, progress achieved included the completion of a survey report on the situation pertaining to the development of mineral resources in the countries of the region. In this connexion, fact finding missions were organized by the staff of this subprogramme to almost

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all member countries with a view to collecting the necessary information to be used as inputs for the project.

65. The above survey report deals with the following aspects of mineral resources development:

- (a) General geological features determining the location of various kinds of mineral deposits and occurrences in the region;
- (b) Economic assessment of the mineral resources endowment and development of member countries. This part of the study covers the most important metallic and non-metallic raw materials in the region and deals with the description of such mineral deposits and occurrences in Western Asia, their geologic features, characteristics of their ores, evaluation of their reserves and an analysis on their present and future utilization.
- (c) Administrative and institutional machinery responsible for the development and management of mineral resources in the region;
- (d) Mining legislation in the countries of the ECWA region;
- (e) Possibilities for regional co-operation in the development of mineral resources in Western Asia;
- (f) Recommendations at both the national and regional levels.

66. The output of this project which consists of a preliminary report entitled "Survey of the Situation Pertaining to the Development of Mineral Resources in Countries of the ECWA region", was completed in February 1977 and sent to member countries with the view to contributing to the dissemination of information on mineral resources in the ECWA region and providing member states with up-to-date analyses on mineral resources endowment and development at both the national and regional levels in the ECWA region.

67. Under the Energy Resources Subprogramme of the Division, the project on "Basic energy statistics and review of developments in the energy and oil sector in the ECWA region", was implemented in a somewhat modified version. To this end, a fact-finding regional survey was undertaken in 1976 through

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visits to member countries, with a view to collecting the information, pinpointing and identifying priorities and problem areas in energy resources development, and discussing energy policies. The information thus collected was revised and processed, before being published in the "Statistical Abstract of the Arab World." The second part of the project, namely, the review of energy and oil developments, was prepared in a much less extensive manner than was originally planned, and was published as a part of the third review and appraisal of progress in implementing the International Development Strategy in the ECWA Region, presently submitted to the session under document E/ECWA/49.

68. These changes in the project relative to the original version as outlined in document E/ECWA/28 under activity 2.1.2, were brought about in the context of a comprehensive reconsideration of the energy work programme for the coming few years, which took place towards the end of 1976 on the occasion of the preparation of the 1978-1979 work programme. Such reconsideration was done with the help of a consultant (Professor Edith Penrose of London University) who is a world-renowned expert in the energy affairs of the Middle East. This arrangement contributed substantively to the revision of the 1976-1977 energy work programme and the preparation of the 1978-1979 work programme under the energy subprogramme which is incorporated in document E/ECWA/44, presently submitted to the Commission for its consideration.

69. Intensive consultations were carried out with the secretariats of each of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Energy Agency (IEA), and the Commission of the European Communities (CEC), with a view to establishing effective co-operation and co-ordination links between these organizations and ECWA in the energy field.

70. In the case of OAPEC, co-operation and co-ordination are underway in view of a joint implementation efforts of the activity concerning the collection, processing and dissemination of basic energy statistics and other

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related data for the countries of the region and the Arab World. The specific lines of such co-operation and co-ordination are expected to be agreed upon in 1977.

71. In line with the relevant recommendations of the third session (see document E/5785, in particular para. 54), close links were established with the United Nations Secretariat Representation Office in Paris, which covers the work of the Conference on International Economic Co-operation (CIEC) and its four commissions. In this connexion, the Division under the Energy Resources Subprogramme attended some of the meetings of the Energy Commission of the CIEC in Paris.
72. Consultations were also held in Vienna with members of the secretariat of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), on questions relating to non-energy uses of oil.
73. At the request of the Ministry of Industry and Planning in Democratic Yemen, advisory services were provided through a private consultant on legal aspects of oil refining.
74. Under the Science and Technology Programme, the Division was involved in the preparation of the report on the review of the status of science and technology in the ECWA region. This review was initiated with the collection of information and data during visits to all member states in the region in late 1975 and early 1976. During the period under review, activities for the preparation of the review - analysis and synthesis - were continued. The report contains a review of:
- (a) the socio-economic setting of science and technology in the ECWA region;
 - (b) the transfer of technology processes in the ECWA region;
 - (c) Science and technology in the development process in the ECWA countries;
 - (d) selected technology applications; and,
 - (e) regional co-operative efforts in the ECWA region.

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75. The review along with relevant recommendations will be discussed at the Seminar on "Technology Transfer and Change in the ECWA region" to be organized by ECWA (from October 9 to 14, 1977).

76. Progress was also made in connexion with the preparatory work for the Seminar on Technology Transfer and Change in the ECWA region. This Seminar, previously entitled Expert-Meeting on "Co-operative Research and Technology Projects in the ECWA Region", was scheduled for July 1976. Due to the temporary disruption of ECWA activities and the need for adjustment, the Seminar will now take place from October 9 to 14, 1977. Preparations for the Seminar, undertaken with the assistance of a consultant, are proceeding well. Approximately 40 experts in various fields of science and technology from within and outside the ECWA region are invited to participate in this activity. The objectives of the Seminar are essentially technical i.e., to present descriptions and analyses of how activities are performed, to indicate existing and relevant opportunities for rendering some functions more effective and productive and to relate technologies to instruments and policies. Scientific papers currently under preparation will focus on:

(a) Channels for technology.

This subject will include the following tentative topics:

- Establish patterns of technology acquisition in the region.
- Possible processes for technology transfer.
- Impediments to the technological development of the oil sector and natural resources.
- The role of engineering firms in technology transfer.
- Transfer of technological skills to labour force.
- A technology package for a rural community (to tackle agricultural impediments, food storage, water purification, sewage disposal, housing and road construction).
- Impediments to the technological development of Middle Eastern Agriculture.

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(b) The acquisition of specific techniques and technologies in selected areas such as agriculture, water and transport.

Under this heading, the following topics will be considered:

- Water Desalinization Technologies.
- Agricultural Water use.
- Water conservation (Surface retention, storage, aquifer recharge).
- Regional basin monitoring system.
- Impact of agricultural policies on technology acquisition.
- Relevance of agricultural research in the region to agricultural problems.
- Agricultural tools, implements, seed, machinery: present status, opportunities for change and needs.
- Desertification and climate changes.
- Transportation: problems and alternatives for the future.
- Harbours: Cargo handling, processing and management.
- The production, acquisition and diffusion of technological information in the region.
- Engineering industries with emphasis on agricultural equipment, desalinization plants and transport vehicles.
- The prospects and scope for solar energy.
- Project management and technology transfer.
- Values, social organization and technology changes.
- Review of the Status of Science and Technology in the ECWA region.

(c) ECWA country experiences in the application of technologies.

Regarding this subject, the major topics will include:

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- Review of desalinization experiences of Kuwait.
- Review of irrigation practices in UAE.
- Experiments on new sources of energy.
- Transportation bottlenecks.
- Impact of technical education during the past ten years on technical change in some specific sector.
- Availability of information for decision making, use, exchange, and flow of information.
- Government plans and policies regarding science and technology.
- Current research projects and future expectations.
- University curricula in relation to technology change.
- The role of labour unions/or professional organizations in the transfer of skills to members of the union.
- Role of engineering firms in technology transfer.

77. Specific activities in the different areas of development and management of land and water resources have only started in January 1977 following the recruitment of a Senior Scientific Affairs Officer. A review, analysis and assessment of the various prospects and appropriate technologies in the development and management of land and water resources in the ECWA region is being conducted. Field trips and discussions with those concerned in the countries of the region are carried out. Co-operation, in and co-ordination with, the relevant activities of international, regional and national institutions are maintained. The output of the Seminar on "Technology Transfer and Change in the ECWA Region" will provide specific lines of action and some definite appropriate technologies in this field for application in the countries of the region.

78. The promotion of technology transfer was pursued on both the international and the regional level. At the international level, ECWA participated and contributed in the activities of the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force

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on Information Exchange and Technology Transfer. In this respect an Expert-Group met in Vienna from April 12 to 16, 1976 and discussed guidelines for the establishment of a world-wide network for the exchange of technological information. Subsequently, the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force in its second and third session, respectively held in Geneva from May 10 to 13 and November 29 to December 3, 1976, formulated a programme for getting up the proposed network at both the international and regional levels. At the regional level, ECWA initiated also a co-operative programme with UNCTAD in the field of technology transfer leading eventually to the possible establishment of a centre, network or any other appropriate mechanism for the efficient transfer of technology to and within the ECWA region. Details of this programme are outlined in the special paper on "Possible Arrangements for Strengthening Co-operation among Arab Countries in the field of Transfer and Development of Technology".

79. The promotion of the application of computer technology and its diversification was initiated with "A Survey of the Use of Computer Technology in the ECWA Region", conducted by the Development Planning Division of ECWA and ILO. ^{incomplete} An/ILO version of the report was issued in June 1976. The survey which covered only three countries namely, Syria, Jordan and Kuwait, will be expanded to include other countries in the region. Following this survey, a more clear picture will emerge with regard to prospective field of computer application in the various countries of the region and possibilities for co-operative programmes in co-operation with international computer centres, will be identified. ECWA's participation in, and contribution to the United Nations AD HOC Working Group on Computer Technology, will continue with view of promoting international co-ordination and planning in this field. The inputs of ECWA in this field will increase with the addition of an expert on the subject to its staff.

80. ECWA through its science and technology programme, participated in the Conference of Ministers of Arab States responsible for the Application of Science and Technology to Development (CAST ARAB), held in Rabat from August 16 to 25, 1976. Follow-up to decisions taken by this conference pertaining to the member states of the region will be carried out by ECWA in co-operation

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with UNESCO and the Arab League Educational Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO).

81. ECWA also participated in the 22nd session of the Advisory Committee on the Application of Science and Technology to Development (ACAST), held in Geneva from November 22 to December 3, 1976. In the context of this session, a meeting of the ACAST Western Asia regional group was held to discuss problems relevant to the region. During the same period and in Geneva, ECWA attended the twenty-third session of the Sub-Committee on Science and Technology of the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination (ACC), which discussed the possibility of joint planning in the area of technology transfer, development and adaptation within the United Nations system.

82. ECWA also attended, under the Science and Technology Programme, the special session for the preparatory work to the second United Nations Conference on Science and Technology which was held in New York from January 31 to February 11, 1977, the fifth session of the Inter-Agency task force on information exchange and technology transfer, held in New York from February 14 to 18, 1977, and the ACC Sub-Committee on Science and Technology.

83. At the request of the Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, the Chief of the Natural Resources and Science and Technology Division visited PDRY, between January 26 and February 3, 1977, to advise them on certain economic policies.

E. Population Division

84. The Population programme of ECWA covers the following areas of activity: (a) population data collection; (b) compilation and analysis of demographic and related statistics of the region; (c) research into interrelations between population and development; (d) activities dealing with formulation, implementation and evaluation of population policies; and, (e) training, advisory services and dissemination of information.

(a) Data collection: the results of the socio-demographic survey of five cities of Oman, the field work of which was terminated in 1975, were

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processed and analysed in Amman, Jordan with the co-operation of the Deputy-Director of the Department of Statistics of the Sultanate of Oman and presented to the Government in September 1976. On the other hand, the preparatory expert group meeting on the survey of Palestinians which was scheduled in 1976 is expected to take place in May 1977 and preparations are also underway for holding the preparatory meeting for the Survey of Arab Scholars.

(b) Demographic analysis: A good deal of effort was spent during the period on the compilation and analysis of demographic and related socio-economic data for the countries of the ECWA region (which is now a continuing activity under the ECWA Population Programme). The first demographic socio-economic data sheets containing recent and most reliable data on 53 indicators (relating to population, labour force and education) for each country of the region were reproduced and widely disseminated. This information now forms part of the data collection and projection activities of the United Nations system. Work is underway on updating the information, expanding its coverage and estimating the values of the missing parameters. A set of demographic socio-economic country profiles is under preparation for each of the twelve countries of the ECWA region and will contain, in addition to the relevant statistical information, information on population policies based largely on the results of the Third Inquiry among Governments on Population and Development which was effected by the United Nations Headquarters in co-operation with the regional economic commissions.

(c) Population and development: Two research projects on the inter-relations between population and development are contained in the 1976-77 population programme of work of ECWA, namely, a study of the correlates of the differential morbidity and mortality in selected countries and research into the socio-economic determinants of desired family size and fertility in the ECWA region. Both studies have been initiated and are expected to be completed, at least in draft form, by the end of 1977.

(d) Population policies: One of the continuing activities of ECWA in the field of population policy is its participation, within the framework of the United Nations system, in the monitoring, review and appraisal of the

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implementation of the World Population Plan of Action and the recommendations of the Post-World Population Conference consultations. The first report on monitoring was presented to the Population Commission in January 1977 and contained the contributions of all organizations of the UN including the regional contribution of ECWA. This report will be presented to the Economic and Social Council in the summer of 1977. Furthermore, active preparations are now underway for preparation of reports on the review and appraisal which will be undertaken by ECOSOC in 1979. The two research studies on population policy contained in 1976/77 programme of ECWA, namely, the study on integration of population goals and inputs in development plans and programmes and the study on decision-making in population policy have been initiated in 1977 as envisaged in the programme of work. These studies are expected to be completed on schedule in late 1977 and early 1978.

(e) Training, advisory services and dissemination of information: In the area of training and dissemination of information, the two major activities that were envisaged in the programme of work have been undertaken. First, a seminar on demographic data collection and analysis (previously named regional training course on demographic data collection and evaluation) was held in Amman, Jordan from 30 October to 10 November 1976. In addition to country representatives, the seminar was attended by faculty members of several universities of the region, and open lectures were organized in which participation was extended to still other individuals interested in the field of population and development. A number of internationally recognized scholars from within and without the region presented the papers on the various topics of the seminar and these contributions are being published in book form in both Arabic and English. This publication will be widely disseminated with special concentration on technicians working in the region and on social scientists in the universities and institutes of the region who are interested in training and research in demography and population studies.

85. Second, a special issue of the Population Bulletin of ECWA, comprising issues Nos. 10 and 11, is scheduled to appear in March 1977 in both Arabic and English. This special issue contains 20 scientific papers on various

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aspects of demographic data collection and estimation with special reference to methods of estimating demographic parameters from defective statistics. These papers were prepared by internationally recognized experts from inside and outside the ECWA region and presented to the ECWA regional seminar on techniques of collecting, evaluating and estimating demographic parameters which was held in Amman, Jordan from 27 to 31 January 1976. In addition to its usefulness for population researchers and technicians, this volume may be considered the first up-to-date textbook in Arabic in this field and will therefore be distributed in sufficient quantities to the universities and institutes of the region dealing with demographic and related training, as well as to the two thousand, or so, social scientists and institutes around the world who are on the mailing list of the Population Programme of ECWA.

86. Finally, two advisory missions have been undertaken, so far, the first to the Syrian Arab Republic and the second to the Yemen Arab Republic. These missions, which were undertaken at the request of the two Governments, assisted in the evaluation and streamlining of the national population programmes and in formulating project requests for possible financing by UNFPA.

F. Transport, Communications and Tourism Division

87. Under the Transport, Communications and Tourism Programme of the Commission, efforts were directed at completing a preliminary survey of the port facilities in the ECWA region. The survey covered nine ECWA member countries. Lebanon, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia could not be included due to the prevailing situation in Lebanon and lack of time available for the latter two countries. The survey includes stock-taking of existing port facilities, expansion work underway and ports' operations. The survey report has been circulated to member governments for comments, updating and supply of additional information, as required, before its finalization. The survey report, when finalized, is expected to provide a useful input to studies on integrated transport and development of shipping services in the region.

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88. During the period under review, the following advisory services were rendered to member countries, in the field of transport, communications and tourism:

(a) At the request of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, the Regional Advisor in Transport and Communications visited Aleppo in July 1976, to advise the Syrian Railways Organization (CFS) on strengthening the railways operations department and on training the various cadres of staff, to enabling them to cope with the greatly expanded traffic expected to be served on the newly completed line linking Lattaquie, Aleppo and Qamichlie.

(b) At the request of the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Regional Adviser rendered, in August 1976, advisory services to the Government agencies on the following projects:

(i) Municipality of Amman

- Undertook a feasibility study on improvement of road maintenance, strengthening of staff of the Road Department and modernization of road maintenance equipment. On the basis of the feasibility study thus produced, the Municipality obtained the release of JD. 360,000.- (\$ 1,081,500.-) from the Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development, to purchase the new equipment required.
- Assisted the Municipality of Amman in formulating a UNDP supported technical assistance project and to provide advisory services in operating and servicing the road maintenance equipment and training of local personnel, in connection with the project.

(ii) National Planning Council, Jordan

- Appraised a feasibility study report prepared by a Consultant on the construction of a third highway, linking Amman to the Syrian border and to be connected with the proposed new highway in the Syrian Arab Republic from Damascus to the Jordanian border. The appraisal led to a recommendation for the

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consultant to revise substantially his traffic projection, route assignment and, subsequently, the over-all project implementation phasing.

- Evaluated and revised another consultant's feasibility study report on the construction of a new regional highway in the Aqaba region, to provide for road traffic serving the new industrial zone near the Saudi Arabian border so as to avoid heavy tracking along the existing coastal highway, which has been earmarked for tourism development.
- Advised on terms of reference for a feasibility and engineering design study, with respect to the proposed third bulk berth in the port of Aqaba, which will cater for the steady increase of phosphate exports.

(c) At the request of the Government of Lebanon, the Regional Adviser rendered advisory services to the Ministry of Planning on revising and modernization the railroad system of the country, for the specific purpose of suburban passenger traffic, the demand for which has greatly increased due to the migration of population from one area to another. The civil war has made it impossible to run essential services and industrial plants located in the different parts of the inflicted areas.

(d) At the request of the Abu Dhabi Fund for Arab Economic Development, advisory services were provided on the feasibility and evaluation of a port project in the Comores Islands, with a financial outlay of \$10 million.

(e) Advisory services were also rendered to the Government of the Yemen Arab Republic on maritime national policies.

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G. Social Development and Human Settlement Division

89. In the field of Social Development, work continued on the following projects from the 1976-1977 work programme:

90. In connexion with the project on the preparation of Youth for Development (item 6.1.2. E/ECWA/28), the Division completed the case study of youth in Democratic Yemen and the Yemen Arab Republic. The final report of the study is entitled "The Situation and Needs of Youth in Democratic Yemen and Yemen Arab Republic". The study included a survey of youth's opinions and experiences. Recommendations based on the findings of the study include the formulation of a national policy on youth, development of policies on manpower and migration, and the need for plans for in-country training. The Division initiated a survey of planning for youth in the ECWA region, with special reference to national development plans. The study will pay special attention to educational, training and employment opportunities for youth.

91. The Division continued to work on the Participation and Integration of Arab Women in Industrial Development (item 6.1.3., E/ECWA/28) by collecting quantitative data aimed at depicting women's educational, social, legal and employment status in the region. The Division participated in the resumed 26th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, held in Geneva from 6-17 December 1976. Advisory services were provided to the Government of the Yemen Arab Republic with regard to development of women's associations and programmes for women. The Division also participated in the FAO Regional Training Course in Home Economics Extension/Family Life Education (Rural Women Programmes) held in Iraq from 6-20 November 1976.

92. In connexion with the project on Social Welfare Planning and Programming (item 6.1.4.), the Division initiated a study on social welfare planning and programming in Lebanon and Kuwait, with an additional country to be selected. A related survey of voluntary programmes in Jordan and their role in social development was carried out as preparation for a national seminar on this subject. The report was completed and will be

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presented to the seminar in April 1977.

93. The Division participated in an inter-agency meeting on the rehabilitation of the disabled, held in Geneva in December 1976. It is planned to provide advisory services to the ECWA countries in the field of rehabilitation, especially to Lebanon.

94. Activity on the Drug Abuse and Drug Control project (6.1.5.) has been suspended, pending the results of a search for extra-budgetary funds to support the project. Consultations were held with the UN Division of Social Affairs in Geneva, with the Division of Narcotic Drugs and with the UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control, with a view to securing these funds.

95. Under the Social Aspects of Integrated Rural Development (item 6.1.6.) the Division completed a study entitled "Social Aspects of Integrated Rural Development Projects in Democratic Yemen and Yemen Arab Republic". The study surveys: (a) incentives for mobilizing popular participation in rural development projects and programmes, and (b) the main problems confronting the two Governments in the implementation of rural development programmes and projects. The Division assisted the University of Jordan in two socio-economic surveys of the North-eastern Badia region of Jordan. The aim of the two surveys is to identify the problems and needs of the nomadic population in these regions with a view to formulating an integrated development plan. The expected completion date of the two surveys is late 1977. The Division has initiated a survey of rural development programmes in the ECWA region. The aim of this study, which is to be completed at the end of 1977, is to investigate the extent to which the integrated approach to development is being followed in the implementation phase. At the FAO Regional Training Course (referred to under 91), four lectures were presented, prepared by the Division, on topics in the field of agricultural extension.

96. The Division prepared a report on training and research for social development in the ECWA region, as part of the preparation for the projected Regional Centre in Social Development.

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97. The Division participated in the Working Party on the Migration of Trained Personnel, held in Geneva in December 1976; and the Fourth World Congress for Rural Sociology, held in Torin, Poland, in August 1976.

98. Among the advisory services provided by the Division were the following: to the Government of Bahrain, on the formulation of a project for the study of the needs of children and youth; to the Government of Iraq, on the socio-economic returns of national literacy; to the Government of Jordan, in the planning of the newly constructed Centre for Community Development in Allan. A pilot project for training, research and the provision of community services was prepared. Advisory services were also provided to the Government of Oman, in formulating and implementing a pilot programme in community development, in collaboration with UNICEF; also in revising curriculum for primary schools; to the Government of Qatar, on ways to improve the social services in the country and to make professional social workers fully aware of local culture needs; also regarding the role of sociological studies and social work in the Gulf countries and in supporting development plans; to the Government of Saudi Arabia, on the need for establishing day care centres for pre-school children in urban cities; to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, on areas of their interest related to population issues, family planning and responsible parenthood. Advisory services were also provided on the organization and implementation of two training programmes in social welfare. Advisory services were provided to the Government of the United Arab Emirates, on instruction in a regional training seminar on social planning for the Gulf States. The seminar was organized jointly by the Government and by UNICEF.

99. Advisory services were also provided to the following regional and inter-governmental organizations: to the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development with regard to the preparation of educational television programmes for children, of children's books, of educational textbooks for post-secondary education and vocational training, also in planning an open-university project for the Palestinian people; to the World Bank Technical Assistance and Special Studies Division in connexion with the

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Bank's literacy project in Saudi Arabia; to the Arab Planning Institute in Kuwait, presenting a course on manpower and educational planning as well as assistance in revising curricula in the field of social development planning; and to the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, through membership in its Board of Advisers. The Division also participated in the following meetings: the Conference of African Ministers of Social Affairs, held in Alexandria, Egypt; the League of Arab States Seminar for Arab Ministers of Social Affairs, held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; the Second Conference of Deans of Schools of Social Work in Arab Countries emphasizing developmental social work practice; and the Arab Expert Group Seminar, held in Kuwait, on problems of Youth and School Leavers in Arab Countries.

100. Under the Human Settlement Programme of the Commission, the Division initiated work on a study evaluating housing finance in the ECWA region, with particular reference to the Syrian Arab Republic and Jordan.

101. A project document was prepared for a regional institution for urban development in the Arab states. Discussions were carried out concerning this project with UNCHBP and the Governments of the ECWA region. Discussions and preparatory work were also carried out for the UN project for metropolitan planning for the city of Amman. This project may be part of a much larger project involving bilateral assistance to Jordan.

102. At the request of the Government of Lebanon assistance was provided on reconstruction activities in the field of housing, building and planning. This assistance is expected to continue throughout 1977.

H. Statistics Unit

103. Under the Statistics Programme of the Commission, the Unit initiated work related to the 'Study of Comparative Real Income in ECWA Countries' (4.3.1) and the 'Comparative Costs of living in ECWA Countries' (4.3.2).

104. In view of the importance attached to these activities and despite lack of funds, the Unit has followed up a preliminary study on prices essential to these activities which it had initiated earlier. After careful examination of the national accounts and price statistics of the ECWA Member States, a peculiar phenomenon characterizing these States was observed. This phenomenon is the fact that their economic structure and prosperity depend in the most part on the price level of their exports, and their consumption depends largely on their imports. For some ECWA countries exports represent almost one hundred per cent of the gross domestic product, whereas imports represent an unusually high percentage of the private final consumption expenditure. Most of the ECWA countries depend on imports for food. The degree of this dependence is steadily on the rise due to the rise in the level of living. Thus, the economy of these countries is governed by two opposing factors: prices of imports and prices of exports. These factors, especially the latter, also play a big role in determining the prices of local products.

105. The unusual high rise in prices in the ECWA countries during the past few years and its corresponding effect on the magnitude of the gross domestic product estimates has rendered the classical time-to-time comparisons, for assessing economic growth, of the gross domestic products of any one country quite misleading. The use of these estimates for country-to-country comparisons has been even more misleading since the problem is further complicated by the use of official exchange rates, which usually do not reflect the relative purchasing powers of currencies, in converting estimates from one national currency to another.

106. Furthermore, the unusual high rise in prices in the ECWA countries, whose major population consist of traditional farmers, labourers and white collar city workers, has led many governments to intervene by fixing the prices of essential food commodities and gasoline. Thus, a good part of their budgets went for subsidies, and prices lost their meaning. With the lack of adequate studies on prices and the effect of their fluctuation, governments adopted spontaneous unplanned economic policies with

undesirable effects.

107. This situation calls for a carefully planned co-ordinated system of price and quantity statistics as well as a system of reasonably accurate comparisons of inter-country differences in production, incomes and purchasing power of currencies. The Statistics Unit, in an effort to help the Member States adopt sound pricing policies and obtain international real product and purchasing power comparisons is now in the process of drafting a paper, to be submitted to the National Statistics Departments of the Member States for comments and suggestions, entitled "Towards an Integrated System of Price and Quantity Statistics and a System of International Comparisons of Gross Product and Purchasing Power in the ECWA Region".

108. The study will contribute to the above two activities of the work programme by presenting a summary of "A System of International Comparisons of Gross Product and Purchasing Power". This system has been applied by the UN International Comparison Project which, in its second phase covered ten countries from different continents and has proceeded to the third phase 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 phase.

109. In addition to its contribution to the above two activities, the study will assess the existing price and quantity statistics and their coverage in each of the ECWA countries and will suggest necessary changes and improvements after introducing the principles underlying the system of price and quantity statistics. Thus, this study is also a partial fulfillment of the activity discussed under paragraph 110.

110. Assistance has been rendered to several ECWA countries in the implementation of United Nations System of National Accounts. The Statistics Unit helped in setting up the 1974 national accounts of Syria and in the establishment of the balance of goods and services (supply and disposition of goods and services) for 1500 groups of commodities. Assistance was also rendered in revising the national accounts of the Yemen Arab Republic and establishing the national income at current and constant prices for the period 1969/1970 through 1975/1976. Moreover, the Statistics Unit has been co-operating since October 1976 with the National Accounts Section of the Department of Statistics in Jordan in introducing the new System of National Accounts to Jordan by setting up the national accounts of the East Bank of Jordan for the year 1975 in the frame of the new SNA. This activity will continue and will cover more years.

111. Work on the Annual Statistical Abstract of the Arab World was resumed in Amman in October 1976. Since this activity leans heavily on the national and international statistical publications usually available in the ECWA library, work on it has been greatly hampered by the fact that the acquisitions, by ECWA in Amman, of statistical publications are very few. Work has, moreover, been hampered by the fact that the Unit has not received the statistical information on some of the African Arab countries from the Economic Commission of Africa with whom it has been co-ordinating this activity.

112. In view of the above, only a draft of volume I of the first issue of the Abstract will be ready at the date of the fourth session of the Commission. The final version will be published later in the year after studying and incorporating the comments and suggestions received from Member States, Regional Institutions and the substantive Divisions of ECWA. Volume I is a statistical country profile of the Arab World, whereas Volume II, which is expected to be ready at the end of this year, is a regional sector profile covering all sectors of the economy.

113. After consultation with the Arab Fund, the Abstract shall cover all the Arab World and shall include indicators on energy and primary commodities, industry, construction, international trade, prices and finance, national accounts, housing, labour, education, health and population.

114. Preparatory work for the Working Group on Production Accounts, Commodity Balance and Input-Output Analysis at Current and Constant Prices is in progress. The Working Group which will be held in Amman, Jordan from 15 to 19 October 1977, is aimed at helping national accountants of the Member States to review the state of national accounting in the countries of the region, to study the nature of the production, consumption and capital formation accounts and tables of the SNA, and to discuss the compilation of the accounts and tables at current prices. The long-range objective is to provide Member States of the Commission with an indispensable tool for the elucidation of many problems of development planning. In particular, contribution will be made towards obtaining useful information on an equilibrium between available resources and their uses and towards a balanced growth in all sectors of the economy.

The Working Group will be concerned mainly with the following three items:

1. Scope and structure of the United Nations System of National Accounts (SNA).
2. Formation and compilation of the production, consumption expenditure and capital formation accounts of the SNA at current prices; and
3. Country experience (practices, difficulties, problems and solutions) in setting up the accounts in 2 above in the case of
 - (a) agriculture, industrial activity, distributive trades and services;
 - (b) non-marketed production; and
 - (c) the public sector: enterprises and public corporations and Government services.

Invitations have been submitted to the Member States for participation and preparation of "country papers". Consultants have been asked to also prepare papers on the experience of some countries of the region which have applied the SNA. The FAO has been asked to submit a paper while another paper shall be prepared by the United Nations Statistical Office. The Statistics Unit is preparing a paper examining the regional experience in setting up the production, consumption expenditure and capital formation accounts at current prices, discussing problems and difficulties encountered and suggesting solutions.

I. Technical Co-operation Unit

115. Notwithstanding the events in Lebanon during 1976, the Unit continued to provide technical assistance and supporting services to the countries of the region and to the projects decentralized to ECWA. UNDP assistance to two of these projects has ceased, namely, the Assistance in Development Planning and Execution (Baghdad) as of July 1976, and the Planning Institute for Economic and Social Development (Damascus) as of 1 January 1977. Terminal Reports for these projects are under preparation and will be completed shortly.

116. The UNDP assistance to the Arab Planning Institute, ^{Kuwait} under Phase I was concluded in August 1976. A UNDP/UN/ECWA evaluation mission was mounted in November 1975 in which the Unit participated on behalf of ECWA. The evaluation mission recommended the continuation of UNDP assistance to the Arab Planning Institute for a further period of five years. Due to the current financial difficulties of UNDP, an arrangement was reached between the Institute and the UNDP whereby the latter's assistance will be extended through June 1977 pending negotiations for a further assistance through June 1981. The relationship between ECWA and the Institute is the consequence of the UNDP assistance. ECWA was asked to execute the UNDP assistance on behalf of the United Nations during Phase I of the project operation. In that capacity, ECWA has become a member of the Board of Trustees of the Institute. The Board recommended in its meeting in January 1977 that ECWA continue its role as Executing Agency for the Phase II of UNDP assistance to the Institute, i.e. for the period 1977-1981.

117. The question of the regional commissions becoming executing agencies for regional projects is gaining support and various resolutions were passed by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, the latest being ECOSOC Resolution 2043 (LXI) which dealt with this subject and more generally with ways and means of strengthening the secretariats of the regional commissions. However, the question has not been definitively resolved and the attention of the Governments of the ECWA region is drawn to its importance in order for them to take whatever action they deem suitable at the level

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of the Commission and through their representatives in other UN bodies particularly the UNDP Governing Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Moreover, this question should be tackled at the national level in as much as the Governments who participate in a regional project are also a party to the decision concerning the designation of the executing agency for that project. Thus, the Regional Institute for Training and Research in Baghdad, was established in 1976 and the United Nations Secretariat in New York was designated the Executing Agency. The ECWA and the United Nations Secretariat are negotiating the question of decentralization of the executing responsibilities. It is also essential to know the views of the governments participating in the project on this matter. In line with the policy of co-operation with regional institutions, ECWA is responding favourably to requests for assistance from the Institute. It has loaned the services of its Regional Adviser in Statistics for a period of two months from 20 February 1977.

118. The Programme for Public Finance and Administration (PROPFAD) continued to provide training and advisory services to the three beneficiary countries, namely, Sultanate of Oman, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and the Yemen Arab Republic. The Unit was in touch with UNDP and the UN/OTC, in pursuance to ECWA resolution 26 (III) of 14 May 1976, concerning the possibility of obtaining adequate funds from UNDP to enable the Programme to continue its services to the above-mentioned countries. Our discussions with UNDP on this matter did not produce the desired results. UNDP (i.e. the Bureau for Europe, Mediterranean and the Middle East) informed us that because of their current financial difficulties and the fact that Public Finance is not a priority area in the regional programmes for the 1977-1981 cycle, they will not be able to assist this project. On the other hand, the United Nations (OTC) was agreeable to maintain its annual assistance of US \$ 200,000 from the Regular Budget for 1977 without any promise for the years to come. The assistance from the United Nations is appreciated, but does not offer a firm prospect for continuity. The matter is, therefore, referred to the Member States of ECWA for appropriate action.

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119. Advisory services continue to be an important aspect of direct technical assistance to the countries of the region. Experience has shown that with the proper selection of the adviser and of the field of activity, this type of assistance can be very effective in terms of contributing to the solution of specific problems. The services rendered during the period under review were described under the performance of the different substantive divisions at ECWA. It is, however, useful to mention here that ECWA has regional advisers in the following fields: regional adviser in Human Resources Development (Mr. Hamed Ammar); Regional Adviser in Statistics and National Accounts (Mr. Adel Al-Akel, recruited in February 1977); Regional Adviser in Transport and Communication Development (Mr. Tran Le Quang); Regional Adviser in Population Statistics (Mr. Mohamed Hanif Khan); Regional Adviser in Social Aspects of Population Policies (Mr. Ali Fuad Ahmed); Regional Adviser in Industrial Project Formulation and Evaluation (Mr. Tareq Al-Khudayri).

120. The following regional advisers posts are vacant and candidates are being sought: Regional Adviser in Development Planning; Regional Adviser in Public Finance and Administration; Regional Adviser in Statistics; Regional Adviser in Ports and Harbours Development; Regional Adviser in Agricultural Projects Formulation and Evaluation; and, Regional Adviser in Demography.