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**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL**

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**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA**

Expert Group Meeting on Scientific  
and Technological Co-operation  
Among Western Asia Countries.

1-3 October 1985

Baghdad

FINAL REPORT



## I. Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) organized an Expert Group Meeting on Scientific and Technological Co-operation Among Western Asia Countries. The meeting was held from 1 to 3 October 1985, at ESCWA headquarters in Baghdad.

It was attended by delegates from scientific and research centres from five Arab countries: Iraq, Jordan, Arab Republic of Egypt, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. It was also attended by observers from the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils, the Federation of Arab Engineers, and some regional and internal bodies as indicated in annex I.

## II. Opening meeting

2. The meeting was opened at 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday 1 October 1985, by Mr. Amir Al-Khishali, Deputy Executive Secretary of ESCWA. He delivered a speech in which he welcomed the delegates and those attending the Meeting, and noted that the purpose of the Meeting was not to reach an agreement on fundamentals in the field of co-operation. These have already been accepted. It was to reach an agreement on scientific research projects which should be given priority in the implementation; to identify modalities of implementation; and methods of financing (see annex II).

3. Meeting elected:

- Mr. Najeh Mohammed Khalil  
(President, Scientific Research Council  
Baghdad, Iraq) as President;

- Mr. Aboul Fotouh Abdel Latif  
(Vice-President, Academy of Scientific Research and Technology, Cairo-Egypt) as Vice-President; and
- Mr. Sami Nsour  
(Director, Department of Science and Technology, Ministry of Planning, Jordan) as rapporteur.

4. The following agenda was adopted:

- (1) Current co-operation in the field of scientific and technological research.
- (2) Research projects for joint implementation.
- (3) Strategies for the implementation of joint research projects.
- (4) Adoption of the final report.

5. The following time schedule was agreed for the meetings.

First session: 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Break: 11 a.m. - 11.30 a.m.

Second session: 11.30 am - 1.30 p.m.

Programme of work

First day: 1 October 1985

Meeting: 11 a.m. - 1.45 p.m.

- 1- Review of current co-operation in the field of scientific and technological research.

Mr. Zeki Fattah, the Officer responsible for the Science and Technology Programme, Division of Natural Resources, Science and Technology, made on behalf of the Commission a statement in which he explained the aims of the Meeting; the method of preparation and financing the meeting; and the main concern of the Meeting. He explained that the preparation for the Meeting was made at three stages:

(a) firstly, a number of scientific research centres and institutions capable of implementing joint scientific research projects were selected;

(b) secondly, each centre, or institution, which showed interest in joint scientific research projects, was asked to prepare a position paper discussing the research it selects for co-operation and the method of the implementation;

(c) finally, the present meeting which has been held to select priority research projects, and agree on the method of implementation.

Five main scientific research centres agreed to prepare position papers, and attend the meeting to discuss them.

In the meeting the delegates from the five participating centres reviewed the contents of the paper they have prepared, and discussed the activities and areas, which are covered by their institutions. They also informed the meeting about the research activities which are currently implemented through co-operation. The General Secretary of the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils also reviewed the various activities of the Federation in this field.

The meeting identified the following subjects as areas for scientific research of mutual interest;

1. Petrochemicals;
2. Nutrition;
3. Energy;
4. Industrial development;
5. Desertification;
6. Environment (Pollution);
7. Natural Resources;
8. Electronics;
9. Oil;
10. Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology;
11. Informatics.

The second day: 2 October 1985

First session : 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Research projects for joint implementation

The participant, after in-depth discussions agreed to suggest the following areas and subjects for joint scientific co-operation before setting out the priorities:

- Agriculture
  - Wheat;
  - Fish Farming;
  - Animal Production (sheep).
  
- Industry
  - Corrosion
  - Petrochemicals.
  
- Natural Resources
  - Groundwater.
  
- Energy
  - Solar energy.

- Transport and Communications
  - The economics of road paving;
  - Analysis of traffic accidents.
- Health and nutrition
  - Diseases common to human and animals;
  - Nutritional value of the Arabic foods.
- Environment
  - Desertification;
  - Environment pollution.
- Housing
  - Development of methods and patterns of building houses in the Arab world.

The participants agreed to consider the subjects listed below as areas of interest for joint Arab action, and to prepare feasibility studies, or, establish regional centres to deal with them. These subjects may also be considered as the object of activities aimed at developing and supporting national centres in order to raise their capabilities to the regional or Arab levels.

Second session: 11.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m.

The participants continued their discussions on the priority areas and topics within each area. It was agreed to organize the topics for joint scientific research in the following three topics.

The first group included

- Food security/Wheat;
- Energy/Solar energy;
- Natural Resources/Water resources;
- Environment/Desertification.

- The second group included
  - Agriculture
    - Fish Farming;
    - Animal/Sheep production.
  - Industry
    - Corrosion
    - Petrochemicals.
  - Transport and communications
    - Diseases common to human and animals;
    - Nutritional value of Arab foods.
  - Environment
    - Environment pollution
  - Housing
    - Development of ways and patterns of building in the Arab world.

And finally the third group; includes

- Remote sensing;
- Genetic engineering and biotechnology;
- Electronics, robotics and lasers;
- Co-ordination among national information network;
- Scientific management;
- Maintenance and management of scientific systems and equipment.

The participants then discussed the issues relating to the methods of implementing the scientific research projects which have been selected for joint implementation.

1. Method of preparing documents related to joint research projects.

It was agreed that ESCWA should send the list of the agreed projects to the participating countries, members, and



concerned scientific organizations in the region to inform them about the subject to solicit their participation in the implementation of the joint research projects, especially the first group, the participants will be asked to contribute by providing the necessary expertise in preparing the detailed documents of the projects. These documents will be presented to Arab, regional and international institutions for financing and support.

2. Method of operation and follow up on the joint research project.

The participants agreed that the joint research projects should be implemented by assigning a co-ordinator from one of the participating centres or institutions for each joint scientific research project. The co-ordinator will carry out the focal point role to co-ordinate between the executing agencies and will systematically present periodic progress reports of the projects to the parties involved.

The Meeting was concluded by thanking the Government of the Netherlands for providing the financial support for the project; the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia for preparing the documents and organizing the meeting. The participants also sent a cable to His Excellency Saddam Hussein, President of the Republic of Iraq, on the occasion of the conclusion of the Meeting.

Annex No.I List of Participants

A - ESCWA MEMBER STATES

1. Mr. Aboul Fotouh Abdel Latif  
Vice-President  
Academy of Scientific Research  
and Technology  
Cairo - Egypt
  
2. Mr. Ahmed Naguib  
Under Secretary of State for  
Specialized Research Councils  
Cairo - Egypt
  
3. Mr. Najeh Al-Rawi  
President, Scientific Research Council  
Baghdad - Iraq
  
4. Mr. Suham Al-Madfai  
Director General of Petroleum  
Research Centre,  
Scientific Research Council  
Baghdad - Iraq
  
5. Mr. Zohair H. Mohsen  
Director General of Scientific Affairs Office  
Scientific Research Council  
Baghdad - Iraq
  
6. Mr. Mohammed Al-Azzawi  
Director of Scientific Relation Department,  
Scientific Affair Office,  
Scientific Research Council  
Baghdad - Iraq

7. Mr. F.A. Daghestani  
President,  
Royal Scientific Society  
Amman - Jordan
  
8. Mr. Mohammed Smadi  
Director of Economic Research Department  
Royal Scientific Society  
Amman - Jordan
  
9. Mr. Sami Nsour  
Director of Science and Technology Department  
Ministry of Planning  
Amman - Jordan
  
10. Mr. Mohammed Al-Turaiki  
Assistant Professor  
Directorate of Scientific Research  
Saudi Arabia National Centre for Science  
and Technology  
Riyadh  
Saudi Arabia
  
11. Mr. Mohammed Hasan Al-Attar  
Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research  
Kuwait

B - Observers

1. Mr. Mohammed Osman Khider  
Secretary General  
Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils
  
2. Mr. Nour El-Den Al-Rubaie  
Director of Industry and Energy  
Research Department  
Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils

3. Mr. Mohammed Tahseen Al-Koudsi  
Programme Specialist, Regional Office for  
Science and Technology in the Arab States  
United Nations Educational Scientific and  
Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
  
4. Mr. Talib H. Al-Talib  
Secretary General  
Federation of Arab Engineers
  
5. Mr. Abdul-Wahid Al-Ani  
Advisor  
Federation of Arab Engineers
  
6. Mr. Gazi Derwish  
Expert in the Ministry of Industry and Minerals  
Baghdad - Iraq
  
7. Mr. Mahmood Shakir Mahmood  
Chief, Population Statistics Division  
Central Statistical Office  
Baghdad - Iraq

C- ESCWA Secretariat

1. Mr. Mundhir Abdul Salam  
Officer-in-Charge  
Natural Resources,  
Science and Technology Division  
E S C W A
  
2. Mr. Zeki Fattah  
First Economic Affairs Officer  
Science and Technology Programme  
Natural Resources,  
Science and Technology Division  
E S C W A
  
3. Ms. Wasan Al-Joudi  
Research Assistant  
Science and Technology Programme  
Natural Resources,  
Science and Technology Division  
E S C W A

Annex No. II

SPEECH BY MR. AMIR AL-KHISHALI  
DEPUTY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Co-operation in the field of scientific research is not a recent development; nor is it confined to limited areas of specific management systems. It exists among enterprises, universities and in many productive and scientific research activities both in public and private sectors in the industrial countries. There are many examples to show how several governments and research establishments in the developed countries have succeeded in utilizing and orienting some of their scientific capabilities and material potentials in specific research areas. The European Centre for Nuclear Research in Geneva, the Joint Institute of Nuclear Physics Research in Dubna, near Moscow, are only two of the many examples in this field.

In the developing countries, although there are fewer examples of co-operation in scientific research, yet, there is however a growing awareness of its importance. Recently some research institutions in the developed countries have begun to assist the developing countries by co-operating with them in the field of scientific research. The examples here include the International Centre of Theoretical Physics and the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology. However, most of the developing countries will tend to conclude bilateral agreements in the field of scientific research.

In the ESCWA region, there have been some successful attempts to achieve bilateral and multilateral co-operation in scientific research, and various activities of scientific research are also

conducted in collaboration with scientific institutions in developed countries with a view to upgrade the scientific efficiency and expertise of the researchers, and to the advantages of both parties. The Arab region has also witnessed concrete developments in scientific co-operation. Examples of these developments are the Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands, as well as the North African Green Belt Project and the Red Sea Programme, both cosponsored by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme. In addition, the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) has established the Regional Organization for the Protection of the Marine Environment, competent bodies in GCC undertake the preparation of joint research between member States.

Furthermore, the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils has identified no less than 35 scientific projects for co-operative research in the Arab countries. The implementation of these projects is still under consideration and some are encountering various difficulties which need to be eliminated.

Most of the ESCWA countries are aware of the great advantages of implementing joint scientific research projects, they are also aware of the many problems related to the environment; to the exploitation of natural resources and to the economic and social developments; problems which transcend national frontiers and need concerted efforts and mobilization of all scientific capabilities in order to deal with them. They are, further, aware that some important areas which are necessary for the process of progress and development require more scientific skill, expertise and equipment than can be provided by scientific research institutions in a single country, especially in the fields of:

- Remote Sensing
- Nuclear Engineering and Nuclear Physics
- Water Desalination
- Extended Application of Solar Energy

- Biology Research
- Research in the field of New and Renewable Sources of Energy
- Petrochemicals

The advantages and benefits of co-operative scientific research have become apparent to all countries. Experience has shown that it is always better to follow many approaches in tackling scientific and technological problems, because this is the certain way to attain the optimal path in solving problems and in disseminating results, in addition to exchange of experience among the researchers and the institutions.

Papers prepared by your esteemed scientific councils confirm the importance of co-operative research and emphasize the necessity to continue the Arab scientific co-operation which started in the 1970s. They also confirm the willingness of the scientific research centres to support and develop means to strengthen Arab scientific co-operation. The centres concerned agree that there exist many scientific and technological projects which necessitate co-operation and co-ordination. They submit comprehensive lists of these projects.

The scientific centres and institutions present at this meeting are convinced of the necessity to agree on specific means to co-ordinate Arab co-operative research in order to achieve a fuller utilization of the existing scientific research potentials.

These papers unanimously agree that the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils should be the specialized Arab organ entrusted with the co-ordination among scientific research centres in the Arab countries. We, on our side, support this trend and will do our best to maintain the present collaboration with the Federation.

While the papers prepared for this meeting endorse the necessity to identify mechanisms confined to the implementation of co-operative research, they also admit that there is not one single formula or mechanism for co-operation in the area of joint scientific research. Co-operation can take many aspects and it is left to your meeting to identify these aspects.

Furthermore, the papers presented to this meeting suggest a number of joint steps and regulation which should be followed in implementing any of the joint scientific research project suggested.

We believe that this is indicative of your willingness to co-operate and we are confident that with this willingness and your awareness of the importance and advantage of joint scientific research, your work will be a success and your goal will be achieved.

We consider that the aim of this meeting is not to reach an agreement on the fundamentals, because these fundamentals already exist, but rather to reach an agreement on scientific research projects which should be given priority in implementation, and to agree on identifying the modalities of the implementation, as well as the methods of work and financing.

In conclusion I wish to thank all who have given special attention to this vital issue through their attendance, notwithstanding their many occupations, through their active contribution in preparing the papers and crystallizing many proposals which, we believe, will be of a particular importance in enhancing regional co-operation in the field of scientific research. We also wish to express our special thanks to the Government of the Netherlands for financing this project.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish you success.