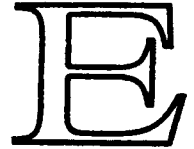




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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

**FOLLOW-UP OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FIRST  
SESSION OF THE ESCWA STATISTICAL COMMITTEE**

1. The first session of the ESCWA Statistical Committee was held in Amman from 6 to 9 November 1995. A final report was issued at the end of that session and included a number of recommendations. Following is a review of those recommendations that ESCWA was requested to follow up, together with a review of the efforts made by ESCWA in that regard.

A. Recommendations 2 (a) and (c)

2. Recommendations 2 (a) and (c) stated that:

“(a) The importance of the cooperation between ESCWA and the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO) in issuing the Bulletin of Industrial Statistics for the Arab Countries, 1983-1993, and organizing the Training Workshop on Industrial Statistics, held in Damascus in November-December 1994, should be emphasized. It is hoped that such cooperation would continue and be intensified in the future and extended to other relevant organizations;

“(c) The Statistical Newsletter of the ESCWA Statistics Division should be issued every six months.”

Follow-up action

3. With regard to recommendation 2 (a), ESCWA and the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization agreed to continue their cooperation by publishing the third issue of the Bulletin of Industrial Statistics for the Arab Countries in 1997 and holding a Workshop on Industrial Surveys and the Requirements of the 1993 System of National Accounts, scheduled for the second half of 1997.

4. As for recommendation 2 (c), the Statistics Division's 1998-1999 subprogramme provides for issuing the Statistical Newsletter once every six months. The second issue of the Newsletter was published in 1996 and the third issue is expected to be published during the first quarter of 1997.

B. Recommendations 3 (a) and (b)

5. Recommendations 3 (a) and (b) stated that:

“(a) Support for advisory services of ESCWA to the member States should continue to increase in the fields of national accounts and economic statistics, household surveys and electronic data processing;

“(b) ESCWA should be called upon to make efforts in providing advisory services in sampling and environmental statistics and to continue its attempts to secure two posts for experts on sampling and environmental statistics.”

Follow-up action

6. With regard to recommendation 3 (a), ESCWA carried out a number of activities in this field as can be seen in the report on “Technical cooperation in statistics” (E/ESCWA/STAT/1997/IG.1/13).

7. As for recommendation 3 (b), ESCWA was unable to secure two posts for experts on sampling and environmental statistics owing to the current financial constraints of the United Nations and a decision to reduce the number of posts in the Organization.

C. Recommendations 4 (a) - (f)

8. Recommendations 4 (a) - (f) stated that:

“(a) The importance of the services offered by the Regional Household Survey Project should be emphasized and the orientation of the project work until the end of 1998 should be approved;

“(b) AGFUND [Arab Gulf Programme for the United Nations Development Organizations] should be called upon to participate in financing the regional project to strengthen the capabilities of national cadres in informatics. The aim of the project is to develop the human resources in this area, in particular those involved in household surveys concerned with special population segments, namely children, mothers, the disabled and the ageing, in household health surveys;

“(c) The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) should be invited to provide financial and technical support to conduct environmental household surveys through a regional project presented by ESCWA to the two organizations;

“(d) The importance of the Geographical Information System (GIS) should be stressed in developing and supporting statistical work at the Central Statistical Organizations. Appreciation should be expressed to the University of Qatar for participating with ESCWA in organizing training programmes in statistics and GIS, and the University should be invited to continue to participate,

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financially and technically, in organizing these programmes. ESCWA should be called upon to work towards the preparation of a regional training project on GIS and building up cadres in this field;

“(e) The importance of making use of the advances in computer technology should be stressed in improving the collection of household survey data, using notebooks as an alternative to the more traditional questionnaires. In this context, the Regional Household Survey Project should be called upon to contact funding entities to support this development process, to provide the necessary computer equipment and software, to test their use in certain household surveys and to evaluate the results with a view to disseminating their use in this field;

“(f) The United Nations Statistical Division<sup>1</sup> and WHO should be invited to participate with ESCWA in organizing a training workshop on household surveys for the disabled and the ageing. Similarly, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) should be invited to participate with ESCWA in developing the uses of household survey data and results relating to expenditure and income in food and health studies.”

#### Follow-up action

9. ESCWA carried out a number of activities in this context as can be seen in the above-mentioned report on “Technical cooperation in statistics”.

#### D. Recommendations 6 (a) and (b)

10. Recommendations 6 (a) and (b) stated that:

“(a) The adoption of the recommendations made by the ... Western Asia Workshop on Strategies for Accelerating the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems should be stressed;<sup>2</sup>

“(b) The five-year period 1996-2000 should be declared as a time-frame for the adoption of strategies and plans for the promotion of civil registration and vital statistics in the region.”

#### Follow-up action

11. The ESCWA Statistics Division undertook official missions to a number of member States and found that Egypt, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen had all made improvements in their civil registration and vital statistics systems.

12. The financial crisis of the United Nations prevented ESCWA from holding a meeting for the Regional Committee on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics. However, a meeting of the Committee is planned within the 1998-1999 programme of work.

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<sup>1</sup> Now the United Nations Statistics Division.

<sup>2</sup> See E/ESCWA/STAT/1997/IG.1/8.

E. Recommendations 7 (c) and (d)

13. Recommendations 7 (c) and (d) stated that:

“(c) The scope of the pilot project for Jordan to implement the 1993 SNA [System of National Accounts] should be broadened in order to encompass the Syrian Arab Republic and Egypt in addition to Jordan;

“(d) To call on Arab and international funds and organizations to provide the required financial support to implement this project;”

Follow-up action

14. ESCWA prepared the expanded project for the implementation of the 1993 SNA and presented it to regional and international funding institutions but has not received a positive response as to its funding. Nevertheless, Egypt and Jordan, in cooperation and coordination with ESCWA, decided to start implementing the project using their own resources and with the technical support of ESCWA. ESCWA is currently providing the two countries with technical support in this field.

F. Recommendation 8 (d)

15. Recommendation 8 (d) stated that:

“(d) Countries participating in the ICP [International Comparison Programme] should hold a seminar to assess the results of this first phase of ICP implementation.”

Follow-up action

16. ESCWA, in cooperation with the World Bank, organized the Seminar on the International Comparison Programme in the ESCWA Region, held in Amman from 21 to 23 October 1996. Document E/ESCWA/STAT/1997/IG.1/9 includes a report on ESCWA activities with regard to the ICP.

G. Recommendation 9

17. Recommendation 9 stated that:

“The ESCWA future plan should be adopted to develop national gender statistics, and Arab and international funds and concerned organizations should provide adequate financial support for the implementation of the plan.”

Follow-up action

18. The ESCWA Statistics Division prepared a project document aimed at securing the necessary funds to cover the expenses of the activities included in the ESCWA plan for developing national gender statistics in the Arab region. The project document was presented to several funding agencies, which expressed willingness to finance the ESCWA project. Among them were the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States

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at United Nations Headquarters in New York, the International Development Research Centre in Canada and the United Nations Children's Fund (Regional Office). The ESCWA Statistics Division initiated the necessary procedures for implementing the project at the beginning of 1997. The duration of the project will be around two and a half years.

19. The ESCWA Statistics Division also prepared project documents for Jordan, Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen to secure the necessary funds to cover extensive activities in the area of national gender statistics.

#### H. Recommendations 10 (a) - (c)

20. Recommendations 10 (a) - (c) stated that:

“(a) To endorse the orientation of the ESCWA subprogramme on statistics within the framework of the medium-term plan 1998-2001;

“(b) To give special importance to training activities and to the development of human resources in the field of statistics within the subprogramme;

“(c) To establish cooperation between ESCWA, the League of Arab States and concerned Arab organizations as regards the standardization of Arabic terminology used in the field of statistics.”

#### Follow-up action

21. The ESCWA programme of work for 1998-1999 includes a number of activities for training and developing human resources such as training courses and workshops in the areas of national accounts, international comparisons and social and economic statistics. Continued emphasis will be placed on training in the programme of work for 2000-2001 as well.

22. With regard to the standardization of Arabic terminology used in the field of statistics, ESCWA contributed to the dissemination and standardization of statistical terminology through the training courses organized by the secretariat and through the translation into Arabic of some of the international statistical systems. ESCWA is continuing its work in this field in order to find other ways that lead to the standardization of Arabic terminology in the field of statistics.

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