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Item 11 of the provisional agenda

ESCWA WORK PROGRAMME IN THE FIELD OF STATISTICS, 1996-1997

1. The 1996-1997 work programme will contribute towards developing timely, reliable and relevant comparable statistics in the ESCWA region, in cooperation with the national, regional and international bodies concerned. It will focus on (a) setting up and developing of the regional economic and social information system, and (b) training activities and support to central statistical organizations in national accounts, economic and social statistics. It includes the following activities:

1. International cooperation

(a) External relations

Cooperation with governmental and regional institutions, particularly the League of Arab States (LAS) and its Standing Committee on Statistics, the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO), the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics, the Statistical Committee of the Council for Arab Economic Unity, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR), the Arab Gulf Programme for the United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND), and the International Statistical Institute in the development and coordination of statistical activities in the region. Cooperation with member States in the development of national statistics as required for the implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA). Cooperation with member States will also include the issuance of a statistical newsletter covering the latest developments in statistics in the region and in the United Nations System.

2. Parliamentary services

(a) Parliamentary documentation

Six reports to the ESCWA Statistical Committee (third quarter, 1997):

- (i) Progress report on statistical activities during the biennium 1996-1997;
- (ii) Report on activities for the biennium 1998-1999;
- (iii) Report on the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001;
- (iv) Report on the Regional Household Survey Project;
- (v) Report on the implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts;

- (vi) Report on the recommendations adopted by the seminars and workshops convened during the 1996-1997 biennium.

(b) Substantive services

Second session of the ESCWA Statistical Committee (biennial).

3. Published material

(a) Recurrent publications

- (i) and (ii) Statistical Abstract of the Region of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Nos. 16 and 17 (fourth quarters, 1996 and 1997) (annual);

- (iii) and (iv) National Accounts Studies of the ESCWA Region, Bulletin Nos. 16 and 17 (fourth quarters, 1996 and 1997) (annual);

- (v) External Trade Bulletin of the ESCWA Region, No. 8 (fourth quarter, 1996) (biennial);

- (vi) and (vii) Bulletin on Prices and Index Numbers in the ESCWA Region (fourth quarters, 1996 and 1997) (annual);

- (viii) Bulletin of Industrial Statistics for the Arab Countries 1997, No. 3 (fourth quarter 1997) (biennial);

- (ix) Compendium of Social Statistics and Indicators (fourth quarter, 1997) (once every four years).

(b) Technical material

- (i) Development and maintenance of databases on (continuous):

- a. Labour force statistics
- b. Social statistics
- c. Gender statistics and indicators
- d. Industrial statistics
- e. Financial statistics
- f. Energy statistics
- g. National accounts

- (ii) Establishment of an ESCWA Statistical Information System (to start in the first quarter 1996).

4. Ad hoc expert groups and related preparatory work

- (a) Seminar on the 2000 Round of Population and Housing Censuses (second quarter, 1997);

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- (b) Seminar on industrial surveys and the requirements of the 1993 SNA (fourth quarter 1997), in cooperation with the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO);
- (c) Expert Group Meeting on Poverty Measurement (third quarter, 1997).

5. Operational activities

- (a) Advisory services
 - (i) Advisory services to central statistical organizations of member States on development of gender statistics, civil registration and vital statistics;
 - (ii) Backstopping of advisory services on national accounts and economic statistics, data-processing and household surveys.
- (b) Group training
 - (i) Workshop on the implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts (third quarter of 1996);
 - (ii) Arab workshop on gender statistics (fourth quarter 1996). In cooperation with the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR).

6. Coordination, harmonization and liaison

Coordination with the World Bank and the statistical offices of specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations in all statistical activities, including the implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts, the International Comparison Programme and the 2000 Round of Population and Housing Censuses; participation in the United Nations Statistical Commission, the ACC Subcommittee on Statistical Activities and a number of inter-secretariat working groups for coordinating statistical activities at the international level.

