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**IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STATISTICAL COMMITTEE OF MEETINGS
OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL BODIES****OUTCOME OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF ESCWA
IN THE FIELD OF STATISTICS****Summary**

This document highlights the statistical implications of the twelve resolutions adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) at its twenty-seventh session (Beirut, 7-10 May 2012). The implications relate to the following: the need for specific statistical data; partnerships and coordination; and programmatic aspects of statistical activities.

The Statistical Committee is invited to review those implications and provide guidance as appropriate.

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Introduction

1. The twenty-seventh session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) was held in Beirut from 7 to 10 May 2012 and adopted twelve resolutions. Most of the resolutions have implications on the statistical work of ESCWA.

2. The Statistical Committee of ESCWA has a steering role in the process of implementing ESCWA statistical activities. Therefore, the Committee is invited to consider statistical implications of the resolutions and provide views and guidance on how these should be reflected in the statistical activities of ESCWA.

I. RESOLUTIONS OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION AND THEIR STATISTICAL IMPLICATIONS

302 (XXVII). Requests from Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia to become members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

3. Libya, Morocco and Tunisia became members of ESCWA and will be included in statistical capacity-development activities. Statistical bulletins, compendia and databases will be expanded to cover the new countries. Coordination will be needed with the African Centre for Statistics of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa to achieve consistency of data and limit the response burden created by United Nations regional commissions.

4. From the statistical viewpoint, the enlarged region of ESCWA (17 countries) covers approximately 71 per cent of the surface area of the Arab states (22 countries), over 72 per cent of the population and over 91 per cent of the gross domestic product. Taking into account this proportion, the secretariat has considered replacing the designation “ESCWA region” with “Arab region” in ESCWA publications and databases.

303 (XXVII). Towards enhancing the macroeconomic policy in ESCWA member countries

5. The resolution recognized “that inadequate macroeconomic policies have strong adverse effects on regional, national and human development.” The task of improving such policies calls for stepping up the process of implementing the 2008 System of National Accounts and improving the capacity for collecting and disseminating economic statistics. A particular requirement of the macroeconomic model is the ability of member countries to produce Social Accounting Matrices (SAM).

304 (XXVII). The role of participation and social justice in achieving sustainable development

6. The resolution identified priority areas of social justice that will increase the demand for data on social security systems, employment, gender statistics and statistics of social groups of special interest (older persons, youth, etc.), statistics on participation in decision-making, human rights, social development, poverty and social services.

305 (XXVII). Sustainable development in the region and follow-up and implementation of the decisions of the Rio+20 Conference

7. The resolutions requested “the secretariat to prepare a report on the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference including proposals regarding matters of concern to the region”. Consequently, data on water, energy and environmental sectors will be needed to substantiate the findings of the report.

306 (XXVII). Development of the Arab Internet Governance Forum process and sustaining efforts in the Arabic domain names field

8. This resolution primarily calls for establishing a Forum for Arab Internet Governance. Its anticipated impact on official statistics is the need for data related to the Internet, such as penetration, usage and access, but also in governing the statistical information made available on the Internet.

307 (XXVII). Support for the Palestinian people

9. The resolution calls for support for the membership of Palestine in international forums, organizations and bodies, building and reinforcing Palestinian institutions and monitoring and documenting the practices of the Israeli occupation. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics is fully integrated into and respected by the international statistical community. The Bureau needs the continued support of the ESCWA Statistics Division and strengthened partnerships with other national statistical offices in the framework of the Statistical Committee.

308 (XXVII). The regional dimension of development

10. The resolution called for “consultation with regional and subregional organizations” to ensure “a larger comprehensive approach in support of regional integration efforts”. In the case of statistics, the implementation of the resolution requires strengthened partnerships between the Statistics Division of ESCWA and the Statistics and Databases Department of the League of Arab States, the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization, the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS), the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

309 (XXVII). Adoption of the amendments introduced to the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013

11. This resolution did not have specific implications for the statistics subprogramme of ESCWA.

310 (XXVII). Adoption of the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015

12. The draft strategic framework for 2014-2015 was circulated to member countries during the fifth meeting of the Working Group of the Statistical Committee (Beirut, 14-15 February 2012), prior to the twenty-seventh session of ESCWA. The adopted version of the strategic framework serves as a basis for the proposed programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015 in the field of statistics presented to the Committee in document E/ESCWA/SD/2012/IG.1/6

311 (XXVII). Adoption of session reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

13. ESCWA adopted the report of the ninth session of the Statistical Committee. No follow up is required by the Committee.

312 (XXVII). Evaluation of the work of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

14. Subprogramme 5 on statistics for evidence-based policymaking served as a pilot for the external evaluation of the work of ESCWA which was published in document E/ESCWA/2011/C.5/CRP.1. Similar Evaluations will be carried out periodically, and national statistical offices are encouraged to share their views, concerns and recommendations with evaluators and to provide them with the information they require.

313 (XXVII). Frequency of sessions of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development in the Countries of the ESCWA Region

15. ESCWA approved an annual frequency of sessions of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development in the Countries of the ESCWA Region. Taking this as a precedent, the Statistical Committee may consider re-submitting its proposal for a modified frequency of its sessions.

II. ACTION REQUIRED BY THE STATISTICAL COMMITTEE

16. The Committee is invited:

(a) To take note of the resolutions adopted by ESCWA at its twenty-seventh session and their statistical implications;

(b) To consider implications of the enlarged membership of ESCWA on statistical activities, in particular with respect to the collection and dissemination of statistical data and the coordination of data work;

(c) To consider whether to re-submit a proposal for annual sessions of the Committee, following the precedent of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development in the Countries of the ESCWA Region;

(d) To consider ways for strengthening partnerships between the Committee and other statistical bodies in the region;

(e) To provide guidance, when applicable to ESCWA on statistical implications of its resolutions.
