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**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

Committee on Social Development  
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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

**Implementation of social development-related activities  
and recommendations since the ninth session  
of the Committee on Social Development**

**Summary**

Since the ninth session of the Committee on Social Development, which was held in Amman on 12 and 13 October 2013, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) has carried out a number of activities under subprogramme 2, "Social development", of its programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015. This included activities undertaken in implementation of the recommendations made by the Committee on Social Development at its ninth session.

Focused on national capacity-building and the provision of advisory services in the area of social development, studies, guides, technical material and field projects were implemented, and consultations with member States on strategies for designing integrated social policies were held.

This document reviews progress made in the implementation of these outputs within the framework of the 2014-2015 ESCWA programme of work. It also features activities that were implemented in 2013 and were not included in the reports submitted to the ninth session of the Committee on Social Development. Participants are invited to take note of the information presented in this document and make comments and suggestions on follow-up actions.

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## Introduction

1. The Social Development Division (SDD) of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is responsible for the implementation of subprogramme 2, “Social development“, of the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015. The objective of the subprogramme is to enhance the capacity of member States to adopt social policies and institutional mechanisms that lead to an equitable and inclusive process of socioeconomic development, taking into consideration regional specificities.
2. ESCWA seeks to achieve that objective through the following: (a) conducting social policy research and analysis, and monitoring social development trends in the region; (b) building the capacity of member States to implement equitable, inclusive and participatory policies that lead to social justice; (c) strengthening partnerships with key players in order to further social development in the Arab region; and (d) informing regional and global processes and serving as a regional platform for the exchange of knowledge, experiences and good practices to support social development.
3. This document is a review of progress made in the implementation of social development-related activities under the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015. It also features the outputs implemented in 2013 that were not covered by the reports presented to the ninth session of the Committee on Social Development, which was held in Amman, on 12 and 13 October 2013.

### I. IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES UNDER THE ESCWA PROGRAMME OF WORK SINCE 2013

#### A. MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

*Civil society dialogues: Exploring new frontiers*  
(Beirut, January, March, April, May and July 2013)

4. In the context of the popular uprisings and as a result of a seemingly changing role of civil society, ESCWA launched in January 2013 a series of civil society dialogues under the title “Exploring new frontiers”. A total of five dialogue sessions were held from January to July 2013, in which around 35 civil society activists and scholars from Egypt, Lebanon, Libya, Oman, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen took part. These dialogues primarily addressed the political aspects of transitions, the emergence of new social movements and new ways and tools of participation in decision-making. Focusing on transitions in Egypt, Libya, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, they tackled the roles of, and challenges faced by, civil society organizations (CSOs) in reinforcing national dialogue, supporting the victims of war and instigating constitutional reform processes.

*Civil society consultation meeting on the post-2015 United Nations development agenda*  
(Beirut, 14 March 2013)

5. As part of its commitment to promote partnerships between civil society and member States on policymaking and development issues, and in close collaboration with the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND), ESCWA organized a regional civil society consultation meeting on the post-2015 United Nations development agenda on 14 March 2013. The meeting was aimed at identifying the views of civil society representatives on regional priorities for the post-2015 agenda and ways in which civil society can contribute to the implementation and monitoring of the post-2015 development agenda in the region, in coordination with the United Nations. This consultation, which was attended by representatives of CSOs from Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen, resulted in a “Declaration of Civil Society Organizations from the Arab Region on the Post-2015 Framework” (available from <http://pdwa.escwa.org.lb/uploads/nv9744538.pdf>). Participants called for a comprehensive approach to development that takes political, social, economic, environmental and cultural rights into account, and for a new citizen-centered development paradigm that tackles governance issues and creates

coherence between policies and principles of human rights. They also stressed that the end of occupation should be a distinct goal of the post-2015 agenda.

*WPAY in the Arab Region: Towards Formulating an Enabling and Empowering Youth Policy*  
(Dubai, 3-4 April 2013)

6. This regional workshop was held in partnership with the General Authority of Youth and Sports Welfare of the United Arab Emirates. It examined the state of youth policies in the Arab region and included a discussion on approaches to address the challenges facing youth development. The workshop included a presentation and discussion of the ESCWA technical toolkit for national youth policy, which comprises a reference manual for the development and implementation of national youth policies; a thematic guide on policy options based on the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY); a technical report on youth issues, priorities and policies in selected Arab countries; and a booklet on guiding principles targeting policymakers at a senior level.

*Regional Workshop on Pro-poor Urban Development Strategies in the Arab Region*  
(Doha, 15 May 2013)

7. This workshop was organized in the context of the memorandum of understanding between the Arab Towns Organization and ESCWA, which aims at enhancing joint cooperation in addressing the challenges of sustainable development. The event was held on the sidelines of the sixteenth General Conference of the Organization and was attended by around 100 participants from all Arab countries, including high-level officials, in addition to experts in urban development and representatives of United Nations agencies and of other international and regional organizations. The workshop comprised the following four thematic sessions: (a) a presentation of the ESCWA report entitled “Bridging the Urban Divide in the ESCWA Region: Towards Inclusive Cities”; (b) a discussion of the role of housing and education services under the theme “Pro-poor urban policies and strategies”, featuring participants from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD); (c) a presentation of the urban development index developed jointly by ESCWA and the Arab Urban Development Institute; and (d) four presentations on experiences in strengthening the role of municipalities and local authorities in the formulation and implementation of pro-poor policies in the cities of Aden, Beirut and Hebron and Rabat.

*Regional Consultative Meeting on Migration and Development in the Arab Region*  
(Cairo, 4-5 June 2013)

8. This consultative meeting was held in preparation for the second high-level dialogue on international migration and development. It covered the following themes: (a) overview of migration and development challenges in the Arab region; (b) rights and working conditions of migrant workers in the region; (c) potential developmental role of expatriate communities of Arab origin; (d) supporting mutual development through regional and international labour mobility; and (e) partnerships and cooperation on international migration at the regional and global levels.

*Expert group meeting on the Development Policy Implications  
of Age-structural Transitions in Arab Countries*  
(Beirut, 13-14 June 2013)

9. This expert group meeting was held to examine some of the key references on age-structural transitions in Arab countries, and identify specific gaps in knowledge that could be addressed through a dedicated publication on the subject. The meeting was also an opportunity to discuss the potential economic and social implications of such transitions and put forward proposals to advance development in the concerned Arab countries.

*Capacity Development Workshop on Youth Policy in Palestine*  
(Amman, 16-19 June 2013)

10. This workshop, organized in partnership with the Government of Palestine and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)/Palestine, focused on building the capacity of technical officials from the Higher Council for Youth and Sports of Palestine to operationalize the national youth strategy. The following issues were discussed: developing sectoral and cross-sectoral national programmes of action along the pillars of the strategy; identifying potential activities and outputs; developing performance benchmarks; and establishing the needed operational procedures for implementation.

*Regional Conference on Population and Development in the Arab States*  
(Cairo, 24-26 June 2013)

11. This major event, organized in partnership with the League of Arab States, UNFPA Arab States Regional Office and the Economic Commission for Africa, concluded the ESCWA-led review process of the implementation of the 1994 Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in the Arab region. Key findings and conclusions were presented and discussed to set the future agenda for issues relating to population and development in the Arab region. Participants adopted the Cairo Declaration for ICPD beyond 2014, entitled “Development Challenges and Population Dynamics in a Changing Arab World”, making recommendations on the subjects of dignity and equality, health, environmental sustainability and governance (available from [http://arabstates.unfpa.org/webdav/site/as/shared/docs/2013\\_Cairo\\_Declaration\\_English.pdf](http://arabstates.unfpa.org/webdav/site/as/shared/docs/2013_Cairo_Declaration_English.pdf)).

*Consultative Workshop on Youth Policy in Iraq*  
(Amman, 17-20 September 2013)

12. This workshop was organized in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sports of Iraq and UNFPA/Iraq to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework in support of the implementation of the national youth strategy. Representatives of 11 government agencies participated in the event, which resulted in the development of a standardized framework, tailored to the outputs and expected outcomes of the national youth strategy.

*Conference on the Arab Decade for Persons with Disabilities and Beyond: Enhancing the Knowledge and Policy Infrastructure for the Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the Arab Region*  
(Cairo, 30-31 October 2013)

13. This conference was co-organized by ESCWA and the League of Arab States, and included participants from Arab Governments, United Nations organizations and civil society. Key issues, lessons learned and good practices related to the implementation of the Arab Decade for Persons with Disabilities (2004-2013) were discussed, in addition to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. An outcome statement was adopted at the end of conference; it stressed the region’s commitment to the inclusion of persons with disabilities, and to the protection and promotion of their rights. Follow-up actions were recommended, including improving the evidence base on disability and developing a regional strategy and monitoring framework to support the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Arab countries.

*Subregional Workshop on Capacity-building for Partnership in Democratic Governance*  
(Beirut, 5-8 November 2013)

14. This workshop, which was attended by government and civil society representatives from Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Yemen, provided participants with technical knowledge on essential strategies to develop a participatory approach to democratic

governance. Experiences of participatory tools in public policymaking were discussed, as well as skills and techniques to effectively manage the transition period. During the event, the ESCWA manual on capacity-building for partnership in democratic governance was launched (E/ESCWA/SDD/2012/3/Manual, Arabic only).

*Empowering Youth in Arab Countries: Rethinking Youth Employment Policies  
in Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, Tunisia and Yemen  
(Beirut, 6-7 November 2013)*

15. This workshop was added to the work programme upon the request of member States, following a first event on Youth Issues and Priorities held in Beirut, from 16 to 18 October 2012. The workshop included an in-depth discussion of the various developmental policies implemented in the five countries and their impact on youth employment. Policies and programmes that promote youth employment were highlighted, and some deficits in the design of national policies that focus on promoting youth employment were underlined.

*Regional Workshop on Youth Empowerment in the Post-2015 Agenda  
(Tunis, 13-14 December 2013)*

16. This workshop, organized in partnership with the National Youth Observatory of Tunisia, focused on the empowerment of youth through their participation in decision-making processes, particularly in the design of national development policies and strategies. It discussed the role that Arab Governments could play in influencing the global youth development agenda and highlighted the need for youth-centred international development frameworks. The workshop also enabled an exchange of views on the future of youth policy in the region and provided an opportunity for a number of young leaders to express their opinions and priorities vis-à-vis the post-2015 development agenda.

*Launching of The Promises of Spring: Citizenship and Civic Engagement  
in Democratic Transitions  
(Beirut, 17 December 2013)*

17. ESCWA organized an event to launch its publication entitled “The Promises of Spring: Citizenship and Civic Engagement in Democratic Transitions”. Thirty high-level experts, policymakers, civil society actors and academics from Bahrain, Egypt, Lebanon, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen engaged in discussions on issues related to citizenship, civic engagement, reform processes and the challenges facing Arab countries in transition. Means for operationalizing some of the publication’s key recommendations were also debated. The event offered a platform for young activists to provide their individual and field-based critical views of the trajectories that Arab uprisings have taken in different countries.

*Regional forum on Addressing Social and Economic Inequalities:  
The Need for a New Development Paradigm  
(Beirut, 14-16 June 2014)*

18. The regional forum was organized in collaboration with ANND, the Arab Administrative Development Organization, the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation and the Ford Foundation. Discussions centred on socioeconomic trends and challenges in the Arab region in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. The following themes were specifically debated: (a) investment policies and sustainable development goals; (b) tax policies and fair redistribution of income; and (d) social protection policies with an emphasis on social protection floors. A number of concrete policy recommendations were made in view of the formulation of a new regional development paradigm where human rights, democracy, participation and social justice are key components. The forum’s outcome document contributed to ongoing regional and global discussions on the post-2015 development agenda (available from <http://www.socialwatch.org/node/16601>).

*Training workshop on International Migration and Development*  
(Cairo, 15-18 September 2014)

19. This training workshop was undertaken in partnership with the League of Arab States and the International Organization for Migration. It aimed at raising awareness and building knowledge among participating officials in the following areas: (a) developmental impact of migration; (b) socioeconomic dimensions of migration; and (c) migration and development policy and planning. International experiences and practices related to maximizing the development gains from migration were also reviewed.

*Social Justice in the Policies of Arab States: The New Development Approach*  
(Tunis, 17 September 2014)

20. During the ministerial segment of the twenty-eighth ESCWA session, held in Tunis on 17 and 18 September 2014, four panels on the theme of “Social justice in the policies of Arab States” were organized. The first one, on “The new development approach”, provided former ministers, prominent academics and United Nations officials with the opportunity to discuss the concept of social justice, in addition to specific policy options for incorporation into national and regional development plans. Participants also made recommendations on the future normative work of the Commission in the area of social development. At the end of the session, an outcome document, titled “Tunis Declaration on Social Justice in the Arab Region”, was adopted by member States, in which they reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring a dignified and prosperous future for their peoples (available from [http://www.escwa.un.org/main/docs/Tunis\\_Declaration.pdf](http://www.escwa.un.org/main/docs/Tunis_Declaration.pdf)).

*Expert group meeting on Inclusive Social Development in the Arab Region*  
(Beirut, 4-5 November 2014)

21. The meeting, which brought together government representatives, academics and experts from international and civil society organizations, was aimed at evaluating the concept of inclusive social development and its relevance for the Arab region, and identifying regional priorities in the context of the post-2015 agenda. The topics of inclusive labour markets, social protection in the informal sector and equitable access to public services were also discussed, in addition to the ongoing attempts to formulate a social pillar for the sustainable development goals. The meeting found that social development in the Arab region should be based on a more holistic, integrated approach, in order to achieve inclusiveness.

*Regional Conference on Social Protection and Development*  
(Riyadh, 24-26 November 2014)

22. Organized in collaboration with the League of Arab States and Naif Arab University for Security Sciences, this regional conference provided a platform for dialogue on synergies between available social protection programmes in the region. It was attended by high-level representatives from Arab States, policymakers, experts, academics, representatives of United Nations entities and civil society actors engaged in the provision of social protection services. During the conference, ESCWA presented a paper on “Participation and social protection in the Arab region”, which examines various participatory approaches to promoting social protection and concludes with a number of social protection policy recommendations adapted to the Arab context and priorities (E/ESCWA/SDD/2014/Technical Paper.7).

*Regional Consultation Meeting on ICPD beyond 2014 and the post-2015 Agenda:  
Strengthening the Role of National Population Councils*  
(Beirut, 26-27 November 2014)

23. This event focused on expanding the knowledge of national population councils on ICPD beyond 2014 and the post-2015 agenda as two overlapping international development frameworks. Areas of convergence

between these frameworks were highlighted, and the role of national population councils in negotiating national, regional and international goals and targets to guide both agendas was stressed.

*Observance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities*  
(Beirut, 3 December 2014)

24. ESCWA organized an official observance of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 3 December 2014, in partnership with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UNESCO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The event focused on the theme "Persons with disabilities in emergencies: building resilience, protecting rights". Over 100 participants attended a panel with speakers working in the field. A photography exhibition and an art fair were also organized, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations working with persons with disabilities.

B. REPORTS, STUDIES AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

*A Regional Perspective on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda*  
(E/ESCWA/OES/2013/2)

25. As part of its contribution to the ongoing global debate on the post-2015 United Nations development agenda, ESCWA coordinated the production of this report, which was prepared jointly by the five United Nations regional commissions. The report underlines the need to adapt global goals to regional and national ones, and to adopt a nuanced approach that addresses regional specificities. It identified several regional priorities and delivered the following key messages to inform the global debate: (a) employment generation should be placed at the centre of the post-2015 agenda; (b) more effective approaches should be found to tackle inequality; (c) a more comprehensive approach to environmental sustainability should be adopted; and (d) democratic governance should be integrated into the post-2015 debate. The report also included key recommendations and suggestions for the implementation of the post-2015 development agenda, which were subsequently considered in other key processes and publications.

*Social Development Bulletin No.3: The Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/Technical Paper.3)

26. The bulletin reviews the process of global inter-agency preparations for the post-2015 development agenda. It highlights the main recommendations of the report entitled "Realizing the Future We Want for All", which was presented by the United Nations System Task Team to the Secretary-General in June 2012; it also discusses the main findings and recommendations of the report entitled "A Regional Perspective on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda", which was prepared by the United Nations regional commissions; and it finally reviews the main findings of the Arab civil society consultation on the post-2015 agenda, which was undertaken by ESCWA in close collaboration with ANND in March 2013.

*Promoting the Empowerment of Marginalized Social Groups in the Arab Region*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2014/Pamphlet.1)

27. ESCWA presented this pamphlet as a contribution to the fifty-second session of the Commission for Social Development, which tackled the priority theme "Promoting empowerment of people in achieving poverty eradication, social integration and full employment and decent work for all" (New York, 11-21 February 2014). The pamphlet examines key issues related to the empowerment of three marginalized social groups in the Arab region, namely youth, older people and persons with disabilities, with a view to informing the intergovernmental debate at the global level.



*The Promises of Spring: Citizenship and Civic Engagement in Democratic Transitions*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/3)

28. This publication offers a critical analysis of the Arab uprisings, their possible triggers and potential trajectories. It considers citizenship as an essential factor not only in the struggle against inequality and exclusion but also in widening the concept of politics itself. From this perspective, the publication focuses on three entry points for maintaining social cohesion and supporting political transitions: (a) building consensus around definitions of the “civic” nature of the state in new constitutions; (b) addressing social justice and inequities and promoting transitional justice mechanisms; and (c) shedding light on the dynamic role of civil society in effecting change during transition. The study concludes with an assessment of possible trajectories for uprising countries and offers recommendations to Governments and CSOs.

*Social Justice: Concepts, Principles, Tools and Challenges*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/Technical Paper.9)

29. This paper sheds light on some of the underlying theories and fundamental elements of social justice. It focuses on the principle of participation given its centrality to a number of tools that are conducive to the implementation of the social justice agenda. The covered tools include the following: (a) social policy, and social protection and taxation systems; (b) inclusive economic growth; (c) participatory spatial planning; (d) socially responsible corporate behavior; and (e) communitarian ethics and civic engagement. The paper also underlines some key challenges to achieving social justice in Arab countries, particularly the challenges of integrating the social and economic dimensions of development and implementing governance reforms.

*Women and Participation in the Arab Uprisings: A struggle for Justice*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/Technical Paper.13)

30. This paper explores the gender dimension of the popular movements that have swept Arab countries since the end of 2010. It analyses the different facets of women’s participation before and during the protests; it also details the mechanisms used by women to mobilize in different countries and the challenges that they faced during that process. Using specific examples, the paper explores the different means utilized by previous and emergent regimes to contain the presence of women in public spaces and to focus discourses around morality. The paper also discusses the different approaches used by women to fight against the injustices that they suffered during and after the Arab uprisings.

*Policy Brief: Participation and Transitional Justice*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/Technical Paper.5)

31. This brief discusses the central role of civic engagement and civil society in forging transitional justice mechanisms. Using international case studies, it outlines the general instruments of transitional justice and describes the role that civil society has played in this process. Case studies of different transitional justice programmes in Arab countries are provided, and the different approaches adopted are highlighted. The brief concludes with a list of recommendations for policymakers and civil society entities, underscoring the need for an active civil society participation to achieve successful transitional justice processes.

*Policy Brief: Social Justice and Participation*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/Technical Paper.12)

32. This brief lays out the definition and principles of social justice and discusses relevant global examples of effective mechanisms and tools to achieve a just society, based on the premise that social justice is a normative concept centered on the notion of “fairness” and the principles of equality, equity, rights and participation. It also discusses challenges to social justice in the Arab region and the policy implications of some needed reforms, such as combating corruption and widening participation.

*Information Kit: Effective Indicators to Measure Public Civic Participation*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/Technical Paper.6)

33. This information kit highlights three major indicators for measuring public civic engagement: community civic engagement, electoral indicators and political voice indicators. It also introduces a relevant emerging indicator, namely the use of information and communications technologies and social media for political participation. Examples on all four indicators are then provided from the Arab region, and a set of actions for assessing levels and gaps in public civic participation is proposed.

*ESCWA Country Brief 2013*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/Technical Paper.7)

34. This set of country briefs presents the socioeconomic, political and developmental challenges facing three countries in transition, namely Libya, Tunisia and Yemen. It reviews the causes of economic grievances and vulnerability in those countries; it also highlights the role of civil society in transitions, shedding light on women's rights and stressing the importance of participatory politics. A way forward towards a successful transition is finally highlighted for each of the three countries.

*A Review of Literature on the Changing Role of the Family in Care Provision in Arab Countries*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/WP.1)

35. This paper reviews available literature on the changing role of families in the Arab region. It presents the social developments that have impacted family composition and gender roles, and explores the various responsibilities of the family in the areas of child care, care for ill family members or for those living with disabilities and care for the elderly. The paper also highlights family-oriented policies in Arab countries and makes suggestions for future research work.

*Fiscal Space for Social Protection in the Arab Region*  
(E/ESCWA/OES/2013/WP.4)

36. This paper explores the concept of fiscal space and provides an application of the concept to Arab countries, with the underlying assumption that the created budget surplus will be used for social policy, and more concretely for the social protection floor.

*Integrated Social Policy Report V: Towards a New Welfare Mix?  
Rethinking the Role of the State, the Market and Civil Society in the Provision  
of Social Protection and Social Services*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/1)

37. Welfare systems in the Arab region are currently stretched due to social and economic challenges, a trend that has led to the increased involvement of a multitude of actors in the social landscape. This publication takes a systems approach to social welfare and looks at the provision of social protection and social services from a rights-based perspective on quality, equity of access, coverage and sustainability of services. It highlights the most salient features of the existing welfare mix in Arab countries, recommending a number of actions to promote a more effective government role in shaping welfare policies, in order to improve the provision of social protection and social services.

*Provision of Basic Health-care Services by Non-state Actors in Arab Countries: Benefits and Risks*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/Technical Paper.4)

38. This paper explores the current role of non-state actors, both private sector and civil society, in the provision of health care in the Arab region. It outlines the various forms of non-state engagement in the

health sector and highlights the benefits and risks of these institutional arrangements. It largely draws on case studies from Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, the Sudan and Tunisia.

*Interregional Report on Labour Migration and Social Protection*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/Technical Paper.2)

39. This interregional report is the result of a research collaboration between ESCWA and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). The report examines migration flows and trends between and within these two regions, and particularly considers the following issues: (a) protection of the rights of migrants; (b) migration governance in both countries of origin and destination; and (c) the situation of domestic workers in Arab countries. The report presents a number of case studies on key legislative, policy and practice issues and gaps that tax the well-being of migrant workers, such as the regulatory framework governing migration in Bangladesh; the *Kafala* system in countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council; and the migratory experience of Indonesian domestic workers. The report concludes with recommendations for both regions.

*Social Development Bulletin on Migration and Youth*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/Technical Paper.10)

40. This bulletin provides a brief overview on youth and migration in Arab countries. It provides a statistical account of youth migration flows, highlighting the central role of labour migration in influencing migration trends. The bulletin also tackles the issues of forced migration, family migration and migration for higher education. It underlines the development implications of the outward migration of youth and provides a number of recommendations related to emerging trends of youth migration.

*Policy Brief: Migration and the Post-2015 Development Agenda*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/Technical Paper.11)

41. This brief examines the issue of migration in existing international development frameworks, such as the 1994 Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Millennium Development Goals. It identifies shortcomings within both development frameworks and provides a number of suggestions to address these shortcomings within the post-2015 development agenda, examining their relevance to Arab countries.

*Population and Development Report, Issue No. 6: Development Policy Implications  
of Age-structural Transitions in Arab Countries*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/2)

42. This publication examines ongoing age-structural transitions in the Arab region and highlights some of the key population dynamics for children and youth, the working-age population and older persons. The report includes an in-depth examination of the economic and social implications of these transitions, and proposes a set of recommendations to help Arab countries maximize the development benefits of demographic changes. The publication also includes a number of policy examples and case studies, illustrating the potential gains of adopting a population-centred approach to development, and a review of population development policies in internationally agreed development frameworks and the post-2015 development agenda.

*Technical toolkit on national youth policy*

43. The technical toolkit on national youth policy includes four publications: (a) a technical report on youth issues, priorities and policies in selected Arab countries (E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/4/Manual); (b) a reference manual and a booklet on guiding principles for national youth policy (both under the symbol E/ESCWA/SDD/5/Manual); and (c) thematic examples of national youth policy within the framework of

WPAY (E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/7/Manual). This toolkit was designed to serve as a reference for technical-level policymakers working on the development and implementation of national youth policies and programmes of action in Arab countries. It was developed in a participatory manner, involving experts and officials from the region, with the dual purpose of expanding the regional knowledge base on youth issues and youth policy development, and building the capacity of government officials working in that field. The toolkit was piloted in Iraq, Palestine, Tunisia and Yemen (Arabic only, available from <http://www.escwa.un.org/divisions/otherdetails.asp?id=1637>).

*Demographic Profile of the Arab Countries*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/Technical Paper.14)

44. This publication includes a comprehensive account of population demographics in all Arab countries. It includes a statistical account of population size, growth and distribution; fertility and mortality levels and trends; and migration stocks. The report also includes a demographic analysis of population age and structure across the Arab region and highlights a number of important, emerging issues related to demographic trends and population dynamics in the Arab countries.

*Ageing in the Arab Region: Trends, Implications and Policy Options*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/Technical Paper.15)

45. This report provides an overview of population ageing in the Arab region. It adopts the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA) as a research framework to examine the situation of older persons and institutional arrangements and policies adopted in Arab countries on ageing. The report is structured around the three priority areas of MIPAA, namely older persons and development; advancing health and well-being into old age; and ensuring enabling and supportive environments. The report also provides a number of recommendations to improve the well-being of older persons in the region.

*Manual on capacity-building for partnership in democratic governance*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2012/3/Manual)

46. Grounded in the realities of the Arab region and referencing regional and international experiences, this manual offers stakeholders involved with ongoing political transitions an opportunity to develop the skills needed for participatory democratic governance. The manual explores nine competencies that can support political leaders, civil society actors and various stakeholders involved in the course of the transition process, namely practicing just and good leadership; engaging civil society in the reform process; building alliances for public policymaking; building public institutions; upholding accountability and transparency; promoting dialogue and building consensus; designing public policies based on the principles of equity and social justice; promoting local development; and developing communication and social media strategies (Arabic only).

*E-seminar on integrating social justice in national reform plans*  
(July-September 2014)

47. The e-seminar was conducted from July to September 2014 with a view to triggering a broad-based discussion on the multidimensional aspects of social justice and on its integration in national development plans, based on the four pillars of equity, equality, rights and participation. This open discussion brought together experts, policymakers, civil society actors and activists, particularly young ones, from the Arab region and beyond. The inputs and recommendations of participants fed into a report that captured key findings drawn from the e-discussions. These outcomes will contribute to the normative work of ESCWA on social justice.

*Social Justice in the Policies of Arab States*  
(E/ESCWA/28/8)

48. This paper highlights linkages between social justice, sustainable socioeconomic development and broad-based participation, and sheds light on social justice deficits in the Arab region. It suggests measures to bridge social justice gaps and concludes with questions aiming at building consensus on the required tools and policies to mainstream social justice principles in national development strategies and plans. The paper was presented for discussion at the twenty-eighth ESCWA session.

*Policy Brief: Emerging Channels of Public Participation after the Arab Uprisings*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2014/Brief.3)

49. Governments and civil societies play vital and interconnected roles in facilitating the participation of citizens and their productive engagement in post-uprising political environments. This brief explores the transformation of civic engagement and participation leading up to and following the Arab uprisings. Experiences across the region reveal the challenges and potential of emerging new channels of citizen engagement in the wake of these uprisings

*Policy Brief: Social and Solidarity Economy as a Tool for Social Justice*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2014/Brief.4)

50. This brief aims at building the capacity of member States to adopt social policies and institutional mechanisms for equitable and inclusive socioeconomic development. It defines the concept of social and solidarity economy and displays the links between such a system and social justice. It also provides international and regional examples of social and solidarity economy as a tool for enhancing social justice.

*Social Justice in the Arab World*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2014/Background Paper.1)

51. This paper reviews the evolution of the concept of social justice and its definitions according to several international organizations working in the social field. It then attempts to assess the level of social justice in the Arab region, and suggests a set of actions to advance its realization, including developing social policy and social protection mechanisms; reforming taxation systems; and promoting inclusive economic growth policies. The paper concludes with observations on building an Arab index for social justice.

*Social Justice in Arab Countries: Challenges and Recommended Courses of Action*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2014/Technical Paper.2)

52. This paper is an overview of some of the current political, social, economic and institutional challenges facing Arab countries in moving towards socially motivated patterns of economic growth and human development. It calls for the adoption of strategies to improve social protection, promote youth and women's employment, build civic engagement, combat corruption and reform existing systems of governance. The paper elaborates on the need for new social protection systems in the Arab region, however stressing that social protection is not enough to alleviate poverty and remove social inequalities. Planning strategies that foster equity and participation and promote equal access to development as a human right are also needed. The paper thus underlines the linkage between social justice, fiscal stability, governance reforms and a more equitable redistribution of national wealth.

*Civil Society Development in Transition: Lessons from Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Yemen*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2014/Pamphlet.3)

53. This publication highlights contemporary civic engagement and participatory development initiatives in Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Yemen, which have seen radical shifts in political and social participation since the beginning of the uprisings. It reviews challenges and opportunities of civic engagement, showing that engaging all parts of the population in political and social development requires concerted efforts on the part of both Governments and civil society groups.

*Disability in the Arab Region: An Overview*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2014/Technical Paper.1)

54. One of the biggest challenges to the social inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Arab region is the lack of accurate and reliable data. In response to this knowledge gap and in partnership with the League of Arab States, ESCWA undertook an extensive research project aimed at collecting quantitative and qualitative data on disability for all Arab countries. This report was the result of this project and represents the first compilation of baseline information on disability for the Arab region. The report also analyses key trends related to persons with disabilities and provides tools to support national-level implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

*Social Development Bulletin: Persons with Disabilities in Emergencies (Vol. 5, Issue No. 1)*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2014/Pamphlet.4)

55. This bulletin, which focuses on the theme of persons with disabilities in emergencies, shows that these persons are disproportionately affected by humanitarian crises and that they often lack access to assistance and essential services in the aftermath of a disaster event. The bulletin outlines the strong commitment of Arab States to adopting and implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which plays a key role in ensuring the safety, dignity and well-being of persons with disabilities in situations of risk. Moreover, the bulletin identifies ways for promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian response and recovery efforts, including: (a) improving baseline disability data; (b) ensuring the participation of persons with disabilities in all phases of emergency management; and (c) adopting a twin-track approach in humanitarian and development efforts.

*Report on youth indicators in the Arab region*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2014/WG.3/Report)

56. This report, developed in partnership with the League of Arab States Pan-Arab Project for Family Health (PAPFAM), examines the availability of data on youth in the Arab region. It proposes a comprehensive list of indicators that can inform policymakers and stakeholders on the developmental position and progress of youth in each of the priority areas of WPAY (Arabic only).

*Policy Brief: Reaping the Rewards of Demographic Transitions: Investing in Arab Youth*  
(E/ESCWA/SDD/2015/Brief.7)

57. This policy brief focuses on the urgency of investing in youth development in order to reap the rewards of the demographic dividend in many Arab countries. It discusses the tools and policy options that can be instrumental in facilitating youth development, noting the dynamic nature of demographic transitions and the declining fertility rate in the Arab region. The brief confirms the important role that WPAY can play in guiding the development of cross-sectoral national youth development policies and programmes of action.

## C. TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICES

58. ESCWA continues to respond to the requests of member States by providing advisory and technical support services in participatory democracy, civic engagement and consensus-building. In the context of preparations for the tenth development plan of Saudi Arabia (2015-2019), a two-day mission was conducted to Riyadh for the presentation of a concept note on Saudi civil society to the Ministry of Planning. The note included a set of recommendations, including on the generation of reliable data on Saudi civil society and on the need for additional research and field studies.

59. ESCWA also provided technical advisory services to the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Iraq for the establishment of a digital information management system in support of the National Youth Strategy. As a result of these services, an action plan for the implementation and processing of the needed system was formulated and adopted.

60. At the request of the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security of the Sudan, ESCWA provided technical assistance in launching the first consultative forum to establish a national integrated social strategy, including through missions to Khartoum from 12 to 23 November 2013 and from 13 to 19 December 2014. Poverty mapping techniques and methods were introduced and areas for further capacity-building were identified. These services have contributed to the launch of the first national social dialogue in the Sudan. Key highlights and social policy recommendations resulting from these missions also include: (a) a more efficient redistribution and use of available resources to improve service delivery; (b) promotion of rights-based social protection programmes and of the expansion of social protection to the informal sector; (c) adoption of measures to promote balanced urban and rural development; (d) enhancement of the quality of health-care and education services at national and local levels; and (e) youth inclusion in social, economic and political affairs.

61. In addition, ESCWA assisted in building the capacity of close to 136 government officials in the areas of policy formulation and implementation, in order to improve the management and performance of public programmes and fundraising strategies and better address public needs. Through missions, technical advisory services and capacity-building workshops, ESCWA provided institutional strengthening and technical capacity development to Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine and the Sudan, with a view to developing a more strategic and informed social policymaking; a results-based management of public programmes; and a systematic, impartial and evidence-based monitoring and evaluation process.

62. Specifically, ESCWA undertook the following activities:

(a) A training workshop on programme cycle management and project proposal writing (Beirut, 21-25 October 2013);

(b) A training workshop for senior staff of Sudanese ministries on social and economic programme cycle management, proposal writing and fundraising (Khartoum, 10-16 May, 2014);

(c) National workshops for senior civil servants from Sudanese ministries on strategic planning and evaluation (Khartoum, 15-17 April 2014), which were replicated at the State level for staff of the General Secretariat of Strategic Planning and various State officials in the Blue Nile (Khartoum, 7-12 December 2014);

(d) A technical workshop on expanding social protection programmes to rural workers in the informal sector in the Sudan, organized in partnership with the Ministry of Welfare and Social Security (Khartoum, 21-27 February, 2015);

(e) Advisory service meeting with the Ministry of Social Development of Oman to identify the priorities and needs related to the country's Social Work Strategy 2016-2025. An action plan for the formulation of the strategy was developed (Muscat, 4-7 January, 2014);

(f) A training workshop for senior staff of the Higher Council for Youth and Sports of Palestine on strategic planning, public policymaking, monitoring and evaluation (Ramallah, 18-25 February 2014);

(g) A training workshop for senior staff of the Ministry of Social Affairs of Palestine on programme cycle management, proposal writing and fundraising strategies, which was part of advisory services delivered to improve the standardization of social services in the country (Ramallah, 12-22 October 2014);

(h) A training workshop on participatory community development and change management from a gender perspective, organized jointly with the ESCWA Centre for Women (Amman, 19-23 January 2015). Twenty-eight women leaders from local gender units, community development institutions and national women organizations from Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, the Sudan and Yemen were trained during the event.

#### D. PROJECTS

##### *Operationalizing the ESCWA participatory approach in public policy processes*

63. This field project aims to support effective collaboration between government and civil society organizations in public policymaking processes. It seeks to facilitate partnerships between citizens and the State and to improve individual and institutional capacities in public civic partnerships by providing knowledge and skills in leadership; participatory public policymaking; transparency and accountability; reform strategies; effective networking; trust-building; dialogue; and consensus-building. So far, the project has generated a practical manual for policymakers on how to effectively engage in public policy processes; and a training toolkit to demonstrate the practical application of participatory-based mechanisms towards effective governance. Four capacity-building workshops for participants from Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen were also implemented on good governance competencies and participatory tools in public policymaking. As a result of this project, two national committees of practice will be set up in Iraq and Yemen by the end of 2015. A final report on the project will follow, highlighting success stories and best practices for replication in the region.

##### *Strengthening social protection in Asia and the Pacific*

64. This United Nations Development Account (DA) project was implemented jointly by four regional commissions of the United Nations, namely the ESCAP, the Economic Commission for Africa, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) and ESCWA. It aimed at strengthening national capacities to develop effective policies and programmes that expand the scope of social protection and include the informal sector in its coverage. The project also aimed to promote the use of innovative tools and approaches to tackle emerging social challenges.

65. Under this project and in collaboration with the International Labour Organization, ESCWA held two meetings on social protection. The first was a subregional consultation on labour-intensive work programmes as a tool for extending social protection (Tunis, 25-26 September 2013); the second was on microinsurance as a mechanism for social protection in the agricultural sector in Lebanon (Beirut, 1 October 2013). Both meetings represented important platforms for enhancing cooperation among stakeholders in the provision of social protection and identifying recommendations for future regional efforts.

66. In the same context, ESCWA produced a paper on microinsurance in Western Asia, which discusses the relevance of microinsurance for strengthening social protection in the region, and a study on the labour-intensive work programme in Yemen, which discusses its impact from a social protection perspective.



*Time for equality: strengthening the institutional framework of social policies*

67. Three regional commissions, namely ECLAC, ESCAP and ESCWA, are cooperating in the implementation of this DA project, which aims at promoting social protection policies and institutional arrangements that contribute to reduce poverty, inequality and social exclusion, in accordance with the first Millennium Development Goal. The project is expected to achieve the following: (a) strengthening the capacity of Governments to implement and sustain effective, long-term social policies as part of inclusive social protection systems; (b) enhance knowledge and cooperation on tools for the monitoring and evaluation of social policy and social protection reforms; and (c) provide the support required for such reforms, including through the exchange of experiences and good practices among member countries of the commissions.

*Strengthening capacities of policymakers in the ESCWA region to formulate national youth policies and plans of action: responding to the World Programme of Action for Youth*

68. In the framework of this DA project, which was implemented during the 2012-2013 biennium, a range of technical materials were developed to build the capacity of policymakers to formulate informed, responsive and implementable national youth policies and programmes of action. The project also included targeted technical assistance for Iraq, Palestine, Tunisia and Yemen.

## **II. IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AT ITS NINTH SESSION**

69. At its ninth session held in Amman on 12 and 13 October 2013, the Committee on Social Development issued recommendations addressed to ESWCA member States and others to the ESCWA secretariat. The below table lists the main activities and follow-up actions undertaken by the secretariat to implement the recommendations pertaining to its work. It refers to activities by indicating the relevant paragraph (para.) numbers of the present document.

| <i>Recommendation</i>   | <i>Related activity</i>                         |
|---|---|
| (a) Focus on promoting the various dimensions of social justice in public policy with a view to establishing a just society, through secretariat programmes and activities  | Paras. 20; 22; 48; 50; 51; 52; and 63           |
| (b) Launch a series of international and regional dialogues to build partnerships with social actors and civil authorities, so as to develop models of integrated social policy that contribute to achieving the principles of social justice. Such dialogues should be the foundation of a regional forum to exchange experiences in this area | Paras. 18 and 20                                |
| (c) Support the efforts of member countries by focusing research on the achievement of social inclusion, especially for persons with disabilities, and the means to extend social protection to those working in the informal sector  | Paras. 13; 21; 22; 24; 54 ; 55 ; 64-66 ; and 67 |
| (d) Provide technical support to member countries to enable them to formulate integrated social policies through the preparation of regional and national studies, and prepare a technical manual on building national capacities to develop such policies and offer training programmes to member countries who wish to apply it               | Paras. 56; 60; 63; 65; and 68                   |

| <i>Recommendation</i>  | <i>Related activity</i>  |
|--|--|
| (e) Offer technical support to member countries by preparing studies on the development of legal infrastructure, consistent with the activities of civil society   | Paras. 17; 49; and 53  |
| (f) Provide cognitive and technical support and enhance the capacities of member country Governments to face the economic and social challenges that impede the economic, social and political empowerment of young people, by developing comprehensive and integrated policies, work programmes and participatory mechanisms that contribute to improving the quality of services available to young people   | Paras. 15; 16; 56; 57; 64; and 68  |
| (g) Collaborate with the secretariat of the League of Arab States to promote youth and civil society forums in the Arab region, especially preparatory forums for the fourth Arab Economic and Social Development Summit   | Activities undertaken in implementation of this recommendation will be presented to the Executive Committee of ESCWA at its first session (June 2015) and to the twenty-ninth ESCWA ministerial session (2016) |
| (h) Continue participating in global dialogues on the United Nations post-2015 development agenda by monitoring, analysing and participating in regional and international discussions, especially focusing on a comprehensive development approach that entails economic, social and political rights and security for individuals and society as a whole   | Paras. 18 and 21   |
| (i) Work on providing a practical Arab regional framework as a follow-up to the United Nations post-2015 development agenda, whose goals are consistent with international goals and whose implementation mechanisms comply with national and regional development priorities and needs  | Para. 21   |
| (j) Continue efforts, in collaboration with the League of Arab States, to develop a regional Arab perspective for participation in the international dialogue on the United Nations post-2015 development agenda, and cooperate with the secretariat of the Council of Arab Social Affairs Ministers in the development of an Arab position on the Agenda to be presented to the fourth Arab Economic and Social Development Summit, to be held in Tunis in January 2015 | Activities undertaken in implementation of this recommendation will be presented to the Executive Committee of ESCWA at its first session (June 2015) and to the twenty-ninth ESCWA ministerial session (2016) |

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