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Second Meeting of the Consultative Committee for Non-Governmental Organizations at ESCWA

Item 8 on the provisional agenda

PROPOSED STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK OF THE CENTRE FOR WOMEN FOR THE BIENNIUM 2006-2007

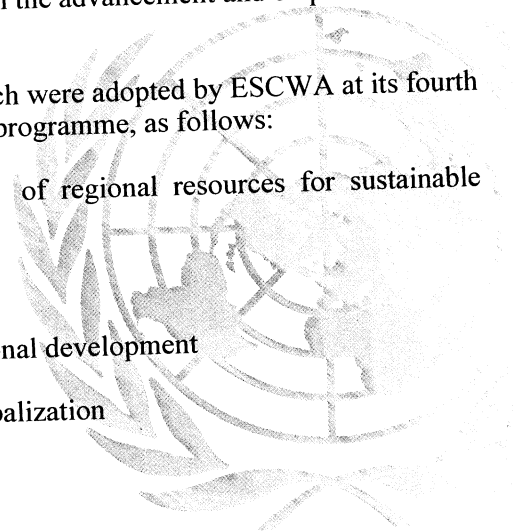
SUBPROGRAMME 7. ADVANCEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN

Under this agenda item, the Committee on Women has before it for consideration the subprogramme on women as outlined in document A/59/6(Prog.18) containing the proposed strategic framework for the period 2006-2007, which consists of two parts, namely, (a) overall orientation and (b) biennial programme plan. The proposed strategic framework supersedes the current four-year medium-term plan.

The proposed strategic framework of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) was presented to the Committee on Programme and Coordination (CPC) in New York at its forty-fourth session held from 7 June to 2 July 2004. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/269 of 23 December 2003 entitled "Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change", the proposed strategic framework will be submitted to the General Assembly as amended by CPC member States. Resolution 58/269 requested the Secretary-General to prepare a tentative framework to be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. The paper submitted to the present conference is an excerpt from document A/59/6(Prog.18) and includes the overall orientation of Programme 18, which deals with economic and social development in Western Asia and Subprogramme 7 on the advancement and empowerment of women.

Programme 18 consists of seven subprogrammes, six of which were adopted by ESCWA at its fourth special session held in March 2002, as well as an additional new subprogramme, as follows:

- Subprogramme 1. Integrated policies for the management of regional resources for sustainable development
- Subprogramme 2. Integrated social policies
- Subprogramme 3. Economic analysis and forecasting for regional development
- Subprogramme 4. Regional integration and responding to globalization



Subprogramme 7 Advancement and empowerment of women

Objective of the Organization: To increase the focus on women and gender issues with a view to reducing gender imbalances and empowering women.

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Strengthened capacity of national mechanisms for the empowerment and advancement of women to address gender imbalances and mainstream a gender perspective	(a) (i) An increase in the number of gender units or autonomous or permanent national mechanisms for women established by member countries (ii) An increase in the number of countries adopting a gender-mainstreaming approach in national policies
(b) Increased civil society institution involvement in and contribution to policy dialogue with governments on gender issues and monitoring the implementation of the recommendations of global conferences	(b) An increase in the number of non-governmental organizations involved in policy dialogue on gender issues and in monitoring the implementation of global conferences

Strategy

18.20 The region is characterized by low rates of women's participation in the economic, social and political domains, despite their increased educational levels. Although the constitutions of most ESCWA countries recognize women's equal civil and political rights, this has not been translated in practice into women's full realization of their civic, legal and political rights. The political participation rate of women is one of the lowest in the world. The patriarchal structure and cultural norms of the region have acted as a barrier impeding the advancement of women. The participation of civil society institutions in policy dialogue at the regional level, as well as their contribution to the implementation of recommendations of global conferences, and the monitoring thereof, is rather modest.

18.21 This subprogramme reflects the determination of ESCWA to increase its focus on women's issues and ameliorate the status and participation of women in the region, pursuant to ESCWA resolution 240 (XXII) of April 2003. The ESCWA Centre for Women, which serves as the secretariat of the Committee on Women, will assume a major role in the region in assisting in gender mainstreaming, empowering women and promoting gender equality. It will also strive to promote partnerships between governments and civil society institutions.

18.22 To achieve its objective, the subprogramme will pursue the strategy of raising awareness and understanding of women's issues and of the vital role of non-governmental organizations in this respect; promoting dialogue on critical areas of concern for the advancement of women and for fostering partnerships between civil

Overall orientation

18.1 The overall orientation of programme 18 is to foster comprehensive, integrated and sustainable development and economic and social cooperation in the region and to maintain and strengthen economic relations between the member countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and other countries of the world. ESCWA is responsible for the implementation of the programme.

18.2 Policy direction for the programme is provided in Economic and Social Council resolutions 1818 (LV) of 9 August 1973 and 1985/69 of 26 July 1985, establishing ESCWA and amending the terms of reference to underscore the social functions of the Commission. Further direction is provided in ESCWA resolution 220 (XX) of 27 May 1999, on the adoption, by ESCWA member countries, of the Beirut Declaration, which envisioned an enhanced role for the Commission at the regional level; and, by the recommendation of the Commission at its twenty-first session (May 2001) that activities focus on a limited number of priorities, on Arab regional integration and on the study of mechanisms that would activate such integration. The internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration and in the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and international agreements since 1992, dealing with such matters as trade, sustainable development, social development, finance, and information and communication technologies, provide further policy direction to the programme.

18.3 In the biennium 2006-2007, ESCWA will reinforce the orientation set out in the reform and restructuring effort undertaken in 2002-2003 to achieve its full potential and reap the benefits in terms of improved programme outcomes. The key priority areas identified at that time — globalization and regional integration, social policies, water and energy, and information and communication technologies — remain valid and are reflected in the strategic framework. These priorities both are an integral part of the global agendas and are region-specific.

18.4 Overall, the programme seeks to promote successful outcomes in the countries of Western Asia in key areas of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals. The programme is structured around seven interdependent and complementary subprogrammes, which, on the basis of core analytical and normative work and through regional coordination and cooperation, aim in particular to enhance capacity development, upon request of member countries, to build consensus and negotiate agreements in global and regional forums, to formulate, implement and monitor policies, strategies, programmes and measures and to establish and manage related mechanisms. A salient feature of the strategy is to strengthen the capacity of member countries to prepare for, monitor and follow up progress towards internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration and in the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and international agreements since 1992 with a view to achieving agreed goals and targets. Other important elements are awareness-raising, policy dialogue, advocacy and advice, knowledge-sharing and networking, training and technical support and, importantly, partnership development.

18.5 As the Western Asia region continues to be beset by instability and wanting for peace, ESCWA will continue to give special emphasis to countries emerging from conflict and the governance of recovery, pursuant to ESCWA resolution 241 (XXII).

Subprogramme 7
Advancement and empowerment of women

General Assembly resolutions

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| 58/142 | Women and political participation |
| 58/148 | Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly |
| 58/206 | Women in development |

Economic and Social Council resolutions

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| 2003/9 | The establishment within the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia of a committee on women |
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