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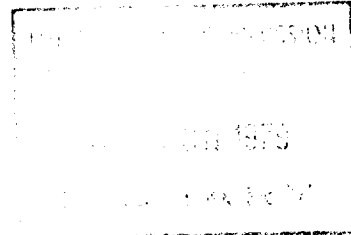
UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Distr.
GENERAL
E/ECMA/76
19 April 1979
Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA

Sixth session
28 April - 5 May 1979
Baghdad, Iraq

Item 6(b) of the Provisional Agenda



FOLLOW-UP ACTION ON THE RESOLUTIONS
ADOPTED BY THE COMMISSION AT ITS
FIFTH SESSION, IN OCTOBER 1978

79-2511

The Commission, at its fifth session, adopted a number of resolutions with provisions calling for action by the secretariat. This document depicts, in brief, the necessary follow-up actions taken, during the period under review, towards the implementation of these provisions.

Resolution 53 (V): Study of the situation of potentials of the Palestinian people

Pursuant to operative paragraphs 2 and 3 of resolution 53 (V), the Executive Secretary has included in the proposed programme budget 1980-1981 a programme element pertaining to the above study. Under the regular budget, an amount of \$77,200 has been requested to reinstate the balance of the United Nations previous allocation under the 1976-1977 budget (\$46,476) adjusted in accordance with revised cost estimates. On the extrabudgetary side, the Executive Secretary estimates that an additional amount of \$74,800 over and above the balance of the contribution of the Government of Qatar (\$124,700) will be needed to carry out the study called for in ECWA resolution 27 (III).

Within the framework of this study the following activities have been undertaken:

(a) The Director of the study has been appointed effective 15 March 1979. The search for other professional staff is continuing, now more actively than heretofore;

(b) The preparation of a working bibliography of relevant material, primarily in Arabic and English, has been completed;

(c) A demographic study of the Palestinian people has been completed in French; translation into English and Arabic is in progress;

(d) Surveys of (i) the legal and administrative status of the Palestinians; and (ii) the several institutions of the PLO have also been completed.

In addition, a base field study of the inhabitants of Burj al-Shimali Camp has been completed, and a similar, though more extensive, field study of Burj al-Barajnah Camp is being planned. The latter study will not only provide relevant information not now available, but will also serve to establish a baseline for comparison with other camps and non-camp Palestinians as well.

A study of a carefully selected sample of non-camp Palestinians is being planned. The study will be based on in-depth personal interviews with Palestinians selected from among those resident in the Arab host countries and elsewhere.

Finally, extensive consultations are in progress with the objective of focussing the ECWA study of the Palestinian people and clarifying in specific terms operational procedures and objectives in the light of limitations, such as time, costs, and availability and/or accessibility of information requisite for the implementation of ECWA resolution 27 (III).

Resolution 54 (V): Regional co-operation and co-ordination

The Commission, since its establishment, has been preoccupied with co-operation and co-ordination which was reflected, inter alia, in the various resolutions adopted on this matter as well as the secretariat's actions pursuant to these resolutions. Thus, in follow-up to subsequent resolutions 9 (II) and 31 (III) on "co-operation with regional institutions", the secretariat continued its efforts to expand its relationships with Arab and regional organizations, bodies and funds, and to report to the Commission on progress made in this regard (E/ECWA/32 and E/ECWA/53).

In follow-up to the above resolutions, the Commission adopted, at its fourth session, resolution 47 (IV) which requested the Executive Secretary "to study the regulation of the Commission's relations with Arab and regional organizations, bodies and funds, including the identification of common objectives; the establishment of a strategy and plan of action; the proposal of practical formulae for effective co-operation and co-ordination between the Commission and Arab and regional organizations, bodies and funds within their common sphere of activity", and further "to study co-ordination and co-operation between the Commission and the organs and specialized agencies of the United Nations, especially with regard to their intersectoral, regional and subregional activities and the role of the Commission in this respect."

Pursuant to resolution 47 (IV), the secretariat presented to the Commission a report containing (i) a preliminary assessment of the status of the Commission's relations with Arab and regional organizations, bodies and funds, as well as with other United Nations organizations; (ii) proposals for possible new formulae for effective co-operation with regional institutions; (iii) proposals for strengthening co-operation with United Nations organizations; and (iv) recommendations for pursuing the implementation of resolution 47 (IV) in consultation with organizations concerned (E/ECWA/59/Add.1).

Again at its fifth session, the Commission adopted resolution 54 (V) in which it reaffirmed the importance of co-operation and co-ordination in development activities carried out by the organs of the United Nations and Arab regional organizations. By this resolution, the Commission requested the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Governments of the region, to work out concrete arrangements for co-operation and co-ordination.

Within the framework of these resolutions, ECWA continued to intensify its co-operation and co-ordination activities with Arab and regional organizations and bodies. Thus, further to already established links and agreements with several regional bodies, the secretariat developed formal relations with additional regional organizations. Memoranda of understanding were signed with the Arab Federation for Iron and Steel, the Arab Tourism Union, the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Land and Dry Areas, and the Arab Organization for Standardization and Metrology.

In order to develop concrete measures of co-operation and co-ordination, consultations with ECA were made in order to gain insight into existing patterns of co-operation and co-ordination between ECA and its regional organizations and intergovernmental bodies. Furthermore, ECWA has collected background information on some Arab and regional organizations, particularly regarding their terms of reference, objectives, scope of activities, and methods of co-operation and co-ordination. As a result, a framework for a study dealing with this issue has been developed and work on carrying it out has been initiated.

Resolution 55 (V): Co-ordination of the regional strategy and programme of action on labour migration in the ECWA Region

Pursuant to operative paragraphs 1 and 2 of this resolution, the Executive Secretary established contacts with some regional and international organizations for the co-ordination of activities related to the optimum utilization of available manpower at all levels. The issue has also been subject of consultations with ECA as part of over-all consultations on co-operation and co-ordination between the two Commissions.

Future follow-up on this subject has been ensured by the secretariat through incorporating it as a programme element in the 1980-1981 programme budget under the Labour, Management and Employment Programme of the Commission.

Resolution 56 (V): Definition of long-term objectives
and regional development strategy

A comprehensive review and appraisal of progress, at the country and regional levels, in the implementation of the International Development Strategy for the Second United Nations Development Decade was undertaken during the year. The report contains assessment of the major economic trends in the region between 1970 and 1980, evaluation of performance of the member countries and the region as a whole in achieving various targets embodied in the Strategy, and pointers for possible elements for a new IDS in the light of existing problems and constraints.

As a follow-up to this effort and based on the very limited resources available to ECWA, the secretariat is making a modest headway in the area of long-term projections and perspective studies. Attempts will be made to explore policy implications of alternative targets set against some of the key development objectives and delineate policy options available to policy-makers through modelling exercises at the country and regional levels. Three prototype models for the oil economy, non-oil economy and least-developed economy of the region are currently being developed for this purpose. In developing these models, contacts have already been established with the Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU) and the relevant Arab League Organizations to co-ordinate studies on long-term development objectives.

In addition, attempts are underway to embark on an in-depth study on plan harmonization and the formulation of a common regional development strategy for the ECWA region within the context of a new International Development Strategy. The regional implications of the new IDS will be assessed in the study. The results of the modelling exercises will also be used as part of the inputs to the study. The completed study will be submitted for discussion and endorsement to a high-level government expert group meeting which will be convened by the ECWA secretariat some time in 1980/1981. It is hoped that, based on the findings of the study, a guideline for the implementation of plan harmonization and a regional development strategy in line with the new IDS will be laid down at the meeting.

Resolution 57 (V): Assistance to member countries in the field of external trade policies and planning

Pursuant to the provisions of the resolution on the establishment of a regional project to assist member countries of the region in increasing their capabilities in the field of external trade policy and planning, immediate negotiations were initiated with the secretariats of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the International Trade Centre, on 16 October 1978, seeking their views and co-operation to initiate such a project. In response to this initiative, ECWA received an encouraging reaction from the Secretary-General of UNCTAD who, in consultation with the International Trade Centre expressed the readiness of both organizations to develop their co-operative arrangements with ECWA in matters dealing with international trade and development. More specifically, and because of the convergence of the thoughts of ECWA, UNCTAD and ITC on the subject, he expressed the readiness of their two organizations to participate with ECWA in formulating a joint project tailored to the specific needs of the Arab region for submission to UNDP.

Accordingly, an ECWA delegation, in conjunction with another mission, visited Geneva late March/early April 1979 and met with concerned officials and advisers in UNCTAD, ITC and the UNDP/UNCTAD interregional project on Multilateral Trade Negotiations. As a result of deliberations, agreement was reached with UNCTAD and ITC on a joint proposal for a regional project aimed at providing direct support to the governments of the region to strengthen the policy-making and planning capabilities in their external sector and to develop the institutional and administrative machinery involved in the implementation of trade policies and plans. The general development objective of this project is to increase the effectiveness of the contribution of the external sector towards achieving the aims of economic and social development in ECWA member countries. This will include ways and means of expanding and diversifying their trade, particularly intraregional trade, insuring optimal utilization of resources, to make the structure of imports consistent with economic and social development priorities,

minimizing the procurement costs of imports while maximizing the returns from exports, and taking the optimum advantage of international trade agreements. Justification for these services are found in the background and justification of the resolution No. 57 and the experience which ECWA, UNCTAD and ITC have gained by their studies and missions to the region.

The main outputs of this project - which shall be responding to the requests of the Governments of member countries - will consist of direct advice to officials concerned with measures aimed at strengthening the external sector, including the formulation of trade policies, plans, programmes, laws and regulations, improving the skills and increasing the number of trained personnel in this sector.

Governments inputs are not of a financial nature. However, Governments receiving assistance under this project are expected to make available appropriate counterparts, information, office accommodation and necessary administrative services for the project experts when they visit the country concerned.

The proposed UNDP inputs include three senior advisers and 44 work/months of consultancy covering the major aspects of the external economic sector, in addition to support personnel of research assistance and typists, and funds to cover training and official travel expenses including study orientation tours by government officials to Geneva and ECWA headquarters. The total amount allotted to finance these inputs is expected to amount to \$US 1.5 million over a period of four years.

The details of the project will soon be communicated through appropriate channels to member countries for their information and support.

Resolution 58 (V): Census of the Palestine Arab People

Since the last session of ECWA, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) agreed to finance the recruitment of a census expert in order to initiate work on this subject and implement the preparatory steps envisaged in it. The total amount approved was \$50,000 a year for 1979 and 1980. At the request of ECWA, UNFPA later expanded its financial commitment to include the formation of the Advisory Committee for the project as well as provision for consultants, administrative support and non-expendable equipment. The totals approved at present are \$92,000 for 1979, \$96,000 for 1980 and \$17,000 for 1981. It is understood that, as the preparatory work is implemented and new requirements for the implementation of the later phases of the project are clearly identified, financial request to UNFPA will be made.

In consultation with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), ECWA has been able to locate a highly qualified census expert from the region who is expected to join in June or July of this year. The census expert will act as secretary to the Advisory Committee and will be charged with taking direct responsibility for articulating in a final form the forthcoming phases of the census identified in the project.

Resolution 59 (V): The brain drain from the ECWA region

Following an assessment of the scope and nature of work involved in preparing the required study, steps were taken to include a programme element in the 1980-1981 programme budget of the Labour, Management and Employment programme of the Commission. Efforts are already underway to locate suitable expertise for the purpose.

In this connexion, it may be noted that the study prepared by ECWA secretariat, in conjunction with the first ECWA study on the subject, was received. The content of the report will be taken into account in the preparation of the study called for by Commission resolution 59 (V).

Resolution 61 (V): The Arab Regional Centre for the Transfer and Development of Technology

The fifth session of the Economic Commission for Western Asia adopted resolution 61 (V) in which it decided in principle to establish the Arab Regional Centre for the Transfer and Development of Technology. In the resolution's operative paragraphs, the Executive Secretary was requested:

(a) To prepare a second revised version of the feasibility study taking into consideration the comments on it made by the fifth session;

(b) To contact the Secretary General of the League of Arab States in order to submit the second revised version of the feasibility study to the Economic and Social Council of the League of Arab States for discussion and adoption;

(c) Following the approval of the feasibility study by the Economic and Social Council of the League of Arab States, and in co-operation with the Secretariat of the League of Arab States, to invite the Arab Governments, regional Arab organizations and the Economic Commission for Western Asia to a meeting in order to take the necessary measures to set up the Arab Regional Centre for the Transfer and Development of Technology.

Taking into consideration these operative paragraphs, resolution 61 (V) has been implemented as follows:

The "Second Revised Feasibility Study on the Arab Regional Centre for the Transfer and Development of Technology" (E/ECWA/NR/CTT.2/Rev.3) was prepared incorporating the comments and suggestions of the Joint Meeting of Representatives of Arab Governments and Arab Regional Organizations (Amman, 16-18 September 1978) and of the fifth session of ECWA. Use was also made during the preparation of this study of the efforts made in this area by the Arab side of the Euro-Arab Dialogue Committee on Technology Transfer Issues.

The Second Revised Feasibility Study was submitted to the Secretary General of the League of Arab States at a meeting held between the Secretary General and a representative of the ECWA secretariat. At this meeting it was agreed that the Feasibility Study would be presented to the Economic and Social Council of the League of Arab States for discussion at its meeting in February 1979.

The Feasibility Study was discussed at the last meeting of the Economic and Social Council of the Arab League, held on 28 February 1979 in Riyadh. In this regard, the Council adopted decision No. 777 which reads as follows:

"The Council, having taken note of the secretariat's memorandum concerning the establishment of an Arab centre for the transfer of technology, and of the two projects submitted by ECWA and the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils as well as developments related to the establishment of an Arab centre for the transfer of technology in the context of the Euro-Arab dialogue; and having examined the Commission's interim report in this regard, the Council decided that the project adopted at the Meeting of the General Committee of the Euro-Arab Dialogue in Damascus between 6-11 December 1978 should be continued.

The Council also decides to call upon experts from the Economic Commission for Western Asia, the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils and member States to study the two projects submitted by ECWA and FASRC, to work out an Arab position regarding these projects and to refer the matter to the Council at a forthcoming meeting".

As a follow-up, the Secretariat of the Arab League proposed that the Expert Meeting indicated in the decision above be held on 4 June 1979 and invited ECWA to participate therein.

The implementation of the last operative paragraph of resolution 61 (V) is pending the outcome of the deliberations of the League of Arab States. ECWA will exhaust all possible ways and means to carry out this exercise in co-operation with the Arab League.

Resolution 62 (V): Cartographic development and co-operation in the ECWA region

Pursuant to resolution 62 (V), the Executive Secretary made an assessment of the need for establishing a Cartographic Unit within ECWA with a view to assisting member countries in establishing and/or strengthening their national surveying and mapping programmes, and to promoting co-operation in this field at regional and subregional levels and to provide linkage with international programmes in this area.

While unprecedented economic and social development is taking place in the member countries of the ECWA region, particularly the oil-producing countries, inadequacy of thematic maps and other necessary charts are hampering efficient planning of development projects. In some countries the required maps and charts are virtually non-existent, while in others the available maps no longer meet the current planning requirements. Some maps prepared long ago need updating and reproduction on suitable scales for planning transportation networks, exploration and exploitation of mineral resources, urban and rural development, hydrography etc.

The prerequisite for establishing and strengthening the cartographic capabilities of countries of the region is the development of necessary skills for new techniques of geodesy, photo interpretation, remote sensing from satellite and aerial surveys and modern mapping production techniques. Furthermore, surveying and mapping facilities should be available on a continuing basis for development programmes. The lack of cartographic centres and qualified technical personnel have led to heavy dependence on costly ad hoc cartographic services provided on piece-meal foreign basis.

The Executive Secretary already established contacts with the Netherlands Government to help the secretariat of ECWA establish a Mapping and Cartographic Unit under their technical assistance programme. However, these contacts have not been fruitful in view of the inconclusive deliberations at the fifth session.

In light of the above, the establishment of a Cartographic Unit within the framework of ECWA's secretariat is not only necessary but urgently called for.

Resolution 63 (V): Establishment of Subsidiary Bodies

By this resolution, the Commission recognized the importance of subsidiary bodies both for the work of the secretariat and the Commission's role in global policy-making and requested the Executive Secretary to prepare a detailed study on the modalities and possibilities for establishing subsidiary bodies of the Commission in consultation with Arab and international organizations and member States.

In preparation for this study, the advice of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs was sought. The office supplied the secretariat with a paper on "Legal Aspects of the Establishment of Subsidiary Bodies by Regional Commissions". This paper provides important and needed information regarding the authority of the regional commissions to establish subsidiary bodies and the characteristics of subsidiary bodies established by ECE, ESCAP, ECLA, and ECA. Furthermore, ECWA had direct consultations with ECA regarding the mode of establishment, structure and functioning of its subsidiary bodies.

On the basis of the information acquired regarding subsidiary bodies elsewhere, the secretariat sent member States and Arab organizations a note verbale along with a note of the Executive Secretary which raised a number of questions on the matter. In this note, the secretariat sought the views and proposals of governments regarding the establishment of subsidiary bodies of the Commission, their role, and the priority areas for such bodies and their functioning.

Most governments of the ECWA region have not yet responded to the secretariat's note. However, replies received were positive and offered very useful proposals and suggestions. The study could not, therefore, be prepared without the support and co-operation of member governments and regional bodies concerned.

Resolution 64 (V): A programme of action in favour
of the least-developed countries

Pursuant to the provisions of the resolution, the United Nations Department for Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCO) was approached at various levels in order to secure the necessary funds for the continuation of the activities of the subregional training Programme in Public Finance and Administration (PROPFAD) during 1979. The response of DTCO was that it was not possible to finance the Programme beyond 1978. However, in order to enable ECWA to explore other sources of finance, DTCO was willing to finance the activities of the Programme for another three months, covering the period January - March 1979. This, it was indicated, should enable ECWA to contact other possible sources of funds.

At the same time, the Iraqi Fund for External Development, which was contacted among other organizations to participate in the financing of the Programme, informed ECWA secretariat of its decision to contribute a total of \$US 30,000 towards the budget of the Programme to be spent at the rate of \$US 10,000 per year. Acceptance of the sum or part of it is conditional upon the receipt of contributions from other sources.

In the meantime, in order to meet the outstanding requests of the three beneficiary countries for advisory and training services in various aspects of development finance, measures are taken by the secretariat to retain certain relevant activities of PROPFAD under a modified scheme for the remaining part of 1979. Contacts are underway with the Government of the Yemen Arab Republic and the Netherlands with a view to securing additional resources to supplement the Iraqi Fund's contribution and thus ensure the provision of the limited essential services to the recipient countries until the end of 1979.

Pursuant to the wishes of a number of delegations to the fifth session of the Commission to ensure the continuity of PROPFAD services and to extend its geographical coverage to include other countries of the region, ECWA secretariat is in the process of assessing and evaluating the state of development finance and administration in all member countries of the Commission in order to ascertain

their capabilities and future needs in this field and the extent to which assistance can appropriately be provided at the regional level. Arrangements are underway to carry out this exercise in co-operation with the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCD) at United Nations Headquarters. The findings and proposals for future action will be presented to member countries for their views. Subsequently, the secretariat will submit a detailed report on the subject to the next session of the Commission.

Resolution 65 (V): Establishment of an agency for the Reconstruction of Lebanon

As a follow-up to this resolution, the Executive Secretary recommended that the Secretary-General of the United Nations submit to the General Assembly a draft resolution for the establishment of an agency designated as "The United Nations Agency for the Reconstruction of Lebanon".

The General Assembly, in its resolution 33/146, took note of ECWA's resolution 65(V) and requested the Secretary-General to establish at Beirut a joint co-ordinating committee of the specialized agencies and other organizations within the United Nations system to co-ordinate their assistance and advice to the Government of Lebanon in all matters relating to reconstruction and development. It also decided that the Committee on Assistance for the Reconstruction and Development of Lebanon should also assist the Government of Lebanon in the assessment, formulation and phasing of aid and ensure its implementation within the framework of the needs of Lebanon.

The General Assembly, further requested, by this resolution, the Secretary-General to provide all possible assistance to the Committee in discharging its duties and to establish, in the manner he deems appropriate, a mode of consultation with representatives of the countries providing assistance.

Resolution 66 (V): Strengthening the ECWA programme in the area of increasing the participation of women in development

For the implementation of this resolution ECWA secretariat has:

(a) Initiated the process of appointing an officer for women's programmes, as well as to supporting staff, financed from the Voluntary Fund for the Decade of Women and who are expected to assume their responsibilities beginning May 1979. In the forthcoming submission of proposals for Voluntary Fund allocations to ECWA, a senior regional adviser for women's programmes will be requested to strengthen further the capabilities of ECWA in planning and implementing the various programmes related to the integration of women in development in the Region. The additional personnel will provide the nucleus of a unit for women's programmes within ECWA's structure;

(b) Started implementing two of the approved Voluntary Fund projects, namely, the Regional Workshop for Women Workers in Rural Extension Services, held in co-operation with the Government of Iraq in Baghdad 30 March-21 April 1979, and the training of childcare, housemothers/teachers/administrators of Beit As-Smoud, to be organized in co-operation with PLO, 1-30 May 1979. Training Institutions (Arab Institute for Planning, Kuwait; Damascus Institute for Planning; and Arab States Centre for Functional Literacy) are being contacted for co-operation in implementing the other approved projects;

(c) Contacted governments for formulating additional projects proposals for Voluntary Fund financing;

(d) Established closer co-operation with United Nations bodies and agencies particularly the United Nations Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, UNICEF, ILO, FAO and ECA in activities related to the integration of women in development. Efforts were also made in the same direction with the Secretariat of the League of Arab States;

(e) Continued its activities and studies with respect to monitoring progress and obstacles towards the steady integration of women in development efforts in the ECWA region. Three papers were prepared:

- (i) A paper on technical co-operation among developing countries and women was prepared for a meeting on TCDC and Women held in Teheran in 1978 and sponsored by the Asian and Pacific Centre for Women and Development;
- (ii) A paper on the Implications of Development on the Arab Women, especially in relation to ECWA's Regional Plan of Action;
- (iii) A paper on the Impact of National Development Plans on the Child in the Gulf Countries was prepared for a Conference sponsored by the Federation of Iraqi Women and the University of Basra, and held in Basra, 13-15 January 1979;

(f) Taken the necessary steps for printing (in Arabic and English) the Regional Plan of Action for the Integration of Women in Development in the ECWA Region, for general distribution to governments; non-governmental organizations; United Nations specialized agencies and bodies, and national, regional and international institutions concerned with the development of human resources in the region.

(g) In co-operation with the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, the Division is in the process of preparing for the Regional Meeting on Women and Development, to be held in October/November 1979 in Damascus. The recommendations of the Preparatory Regional Meeting will be presented to the Mid-Decade World Conference, to be held in 1980. A Consultant has been recruited to analyze the data that was requested from ECWA's member States.