



UN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION
FOR WESTERN ASIA

1006 2 7 1992



UNITED NATIONS
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

LIBRARY & DOCUMENT SECTION

Distr.
GENERAL
E/ESCWA/16/3(Part I)/Add.5
5 July 1992
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION
FOR WESTERN ASIA

Sixteenth session
30 August - 3 September 1992
Amman

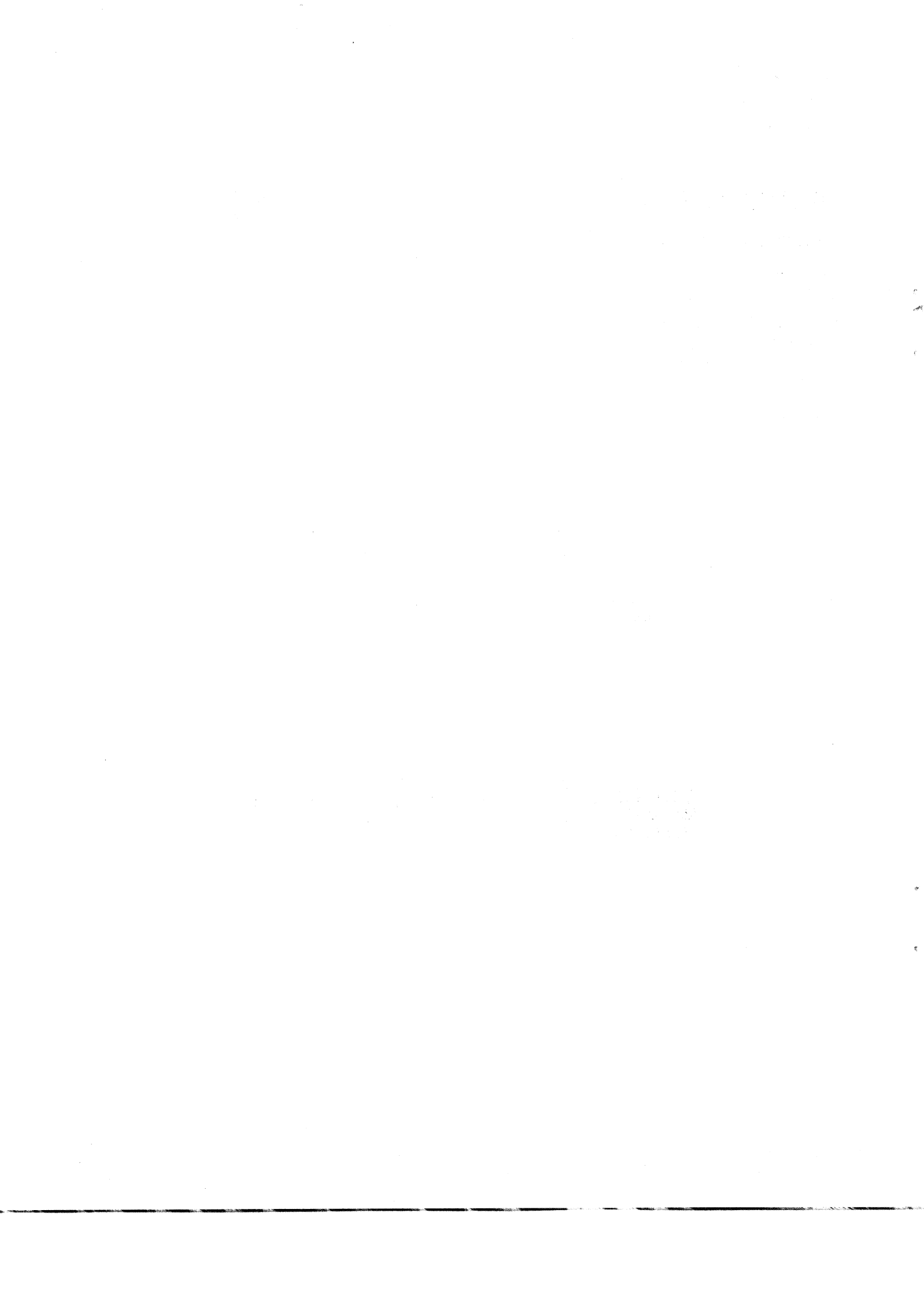
Item 5(a) of the provisional agenda

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION

PROGRESS MADE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 1990-1991

Report on

Promotion of cooperation among ESCWA countries for
the setting up of a centre for space science and
technology education



1. The project proposes to set up a centre for space science and technology for the benefit of member States of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). The project will be implemented in cooperation with the United Nations Outer Space Affairs Division and with the participation of universities and scientific institutions concerned with outer space research in ESCWA countries.

2. The idea to establish this centre emerged in the recommendation which the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), at its thirty-third session, in June 1990, submitted to the General Assembly for endorsement at its forty-fifth session in the autumn of the same year. The recommendation called upon the United Nations to lead, with the active support of its specialized agencies and other international organizations, an international effort to establish regional centres for space science and technology education in existing national/regional educational institutions in the developing countries.

The Commission therefore decided to incorporate the preparations for this centre into its activities, within the framework of consolidating cooperation in the field of science and technology among member countries.

3. The proposed centre will enable ESCWA member States to benefit from the technical assistance it provides and to keep pace with the tremendous progress taking place in the field of applied space science and space-science technology. It will also provide facilities to enable institutes, educational institutions and supervisors of academic curricula in the region to formulate and continuously update educational curricula and training programmes. In view of the importance of this, the Commission has -- besides including this project within its additional activities -- undertaken to implement the project in cooperation and coordination with the United Nations Outer Space Affairs Division.

4. Preparations for the implementation of the project comprise the following four major activities:

(a) Participating in formulating the project relating to the centre;

(b) Distributing the project document, information materials and questionnaires relating to the project to member States and communicating with them with regard to its implementation;

(c) Making preparations for the visit of the Technical Committee to the countries interested in being host to the centre, in order to evaluate the facilities which these countries could provide for this purpose. Preparations will also include participation in formulating the questionnaires that the Technical Committee will rely on in selecting a suitable location for the centre;

(d) Making preparations for a meeting of experts and government officials who are concerned with space sciences and research and scientific programmes in the countries concerned. The meeting would be devoted to studying and debating the project.

5. The project document is divided into four parts. Part I contains a brief account of the centre and highlights its importance. Part II sets out the development objectives and the immediate objectives of the centre and describes the steps and measures to be taken to set up and operate the centre. It gives an account of the scientific research and training activities of the centre, methods of designing research programmes and projects, the number of training programmes, the methods by which they are conducted, their duration and beneficiaries. There is also a detailed description of the outputs expected from the centre. Part II also lists the centre's requirements for scientific and administrative personnel, experts and employees, as well as facilities and equipment. Responsibilities of the centre's host Government/institution and those of the States that will participate in its activities are mentioned in this part, which also deals with organizational and administrative structures, operation of this centre and the responsibilities of the governing and advisory boards. Part III sets out the work plan of the centre. The plan comprises four phases, to be implemented partly concurrently and partly consecutively. The phases will be referred to later in this paper. This part also mentions the institutional framework of the centre, the quarters which will participate in the centre's activities and the methods of evaluating and monitoring its work. Part IV deals with organizational matters related to the legal framework and ways and means of financing the centre and its activities.

6. It may be relevant to give a brief account of the objectives of the centre and the stages of execution of its activities. The chief objective of the centre is to develop local scientific and technological capabilities of member States in the field of outer space science and technology, with special emphasis on remote sensing and its applications in the protection of environment and other developmental issues. The centre will utilize existing professional staff and physical infrastructure in universities and space research institutes in the region. A significant portion of the centre's work programme will be devoted to creating suitable opportunities to make maximum use of the capabilities and facilities existing in the region.

The development objectives of the centre provide for designing and implementing education and training programmes in space science and technology for educators in universities and institutions of higher learning, and also for developing educators' skills in designing remote-sensing research projects that address Western Asian problems. The objectives also include assisting educators in designing and developing educational modules in outer space sciences. The centre will particularly focus on developing the capabilities of educators and teachers to keep abreast of ongoing developments in applied space science and space-science technology and their uses in addressing environmental problems and making use of resources in the region.

The immediate objectives of the project provide for the creation of a regional centre for space science and technology education in collaboration with an institution of higher learning or a university in the region. The centre will organize intensive education programmes for educators at various levels to enable them to keep pace with and continuously evaluate developments in outer space science and technology. There will also be education, research and applications opportunities in the principles of remote sensing, the

principles of satellite data acquisition, the integration of data into geographic information systems (GIS) and the use of GIS to monitor the environment. The objectives also envisage providing assistance to appropriate institutions in the region to allow them to benefit from modern educational methods and applications. The immediate objectives are listed and described in detail in the project document in Part II.

7. For the implementation of the objectives described above, the project document proposes four phases. Phase 1 involves selecting a location, negotiating with the host Government or institution, and selecting personnel and consultants for the project. Phase 2 concerns the acquisition of equipment and materials and the establishment of maintenance and user procedures. Phase 3 is concerned with organizing training programmes and workshops. Phase 4 involves implementing pilot projects; the centre will assist educators at educational institutes to apply the information they have acquired through the training programmes in the education and training programmes in their own institutions.

8. Contacts are in progress with ESCWA member countries regarding the location of the project. So far, five States have officially applied to the United Nations offering to host the centre. These States (in the order in which they submitted their applications) are: Oman, United Arab Emirates, Syrian Arab Republic, Jordan and Iraq. Contacts are also being made with the States concerned, to complete the questionnaires to be used by the Technical Committee that will visit these States, to select an appropriate institution to host the centre.

9. The questionnaire prepared for the Technical Committee comprises four groups of questions relating to personnel, physical infrastructures, instruments and equipment and the required financial support. Outer space affairs departments in the States in question pointed out that the Technical Committee cannot make this field visit until these States have officially confirmed their commitments in these four areas.

10. Eager to expedite implementation of the project and to give the States concerned an opportunity to deliberate and agree on the methods of operating and supporting the centre, the secretariat invited experts and high-ranking officials from the concerned States to a government meeting in December 1991. However, some members could not attend because of short notice, and the meeting was consequently cancelled, despite the fact that all the preparations for it had been made. The secretariat and the Outer Space Affairs Division are in continuous contact with the concerned States for the purpose of making the field visit to select an appropriate location and obtain the official commitments as a first step in implementing the project.

1945
1946
1947
1948
1949

1950
1951
1952
1953
1954
1955
1956
1957
1958
1959
1960

1961
1962
1963
1964
1965
1966
1967
1968
1969
1970
1971

1972
1973
1974
1975
1976
1977
1978
1979
1980
1981
1982

1983
1984
1985
1986
1987
1988
1989
1990
1991
1992
1993
1994
1995
1996
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024
2025