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**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION**

**FOLLOW-UP ACTION ON THE RESOLUTIONS
OF THE COMMISSION ADOPTED AT ITS SIXTEENTH SESSION**

**Resolution 184 (XVI) on the economic and social conditions
of the Palestinian Arab people
in the occupied Palestinian territories**

1. Pursuant to its resolution 172 (XV) of 18 May 1989, reiterated in resolution 184 (XVI) of 2 September 1992 on the economic and social conditions of the Palestinian Arab people, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) continued to monitor the implementation of all the resolutions adopted at its previous sessions and to pursue the studies and contacts that it had initiated, taking into consideration the development requirements of the Palestinian Arab people. ESCWA also invited the Arab funds as well as those Governments in a position to do so to support the endeavours of its Executive Secretary to secure extrabudgetary financial resources to enable the Commission to provide the assistance needed by the Palestinian people.

2. Under the terms of the above-mentioned resolution, and within the framework of the ongoing implementation of the provisions of the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its previous sessions, particularly resolution 184 (XVI) of 2 September 1992, the secretariat undertook the activities listed below during the period under review (1992-1993).

3. The secretariat was careful to gather and publish statistical data on the social and economic conditions of the Palestinian Arab people for the statistical abstracts and surveys issued by it, such as the annual Statistical Abstract, the Compendium of Social Statistics and Indicators, the Bulletin on National Accounts Studies of the ESCWA Region, the publication entitled Agriculture and Development in Western Asia and the Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region.

4. The Commission continued to provide technical advisory services to assist the staff of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in the following fields:

(a) National accounts;

(b) Data processing and household surveys;

(c) Programme planning through the provision of assistance in the formulation of a plan for the gathering of statistical data on the living and health conditions of the Palestinians living in the Syrian Arab Republic and Lebanon in 1994.

5. The secretariat prepared estimates and projections of the population of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, including projections of demographic variables through the year 2025.

6. With regard to the preparation of studies on the occupied Palestinian territories and the Palestinian people, the secretariat undertook the following studies of the social and economic conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories:

(a) "Economic and social consequences of Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and Golan Heights" (E/ESCWA/1993/PTF/1). The study was presented in the form of a report submitted by the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council (E/1993/78 dated 8 July 1993) and subsequently to the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session (A/48/188);

(b) "The impact of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights". This study, which was prepared in 1993 but has not yet been published, deals with the question of Israeli settlement under the following headings:

- (i) The Israeli policy regarding settlements;
- (ii) The funding of settlements;
- (iii) Settlement in occupied Jerusalem;
- (iv) Settlement in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights;
- (v) The socio-economic effects of settlement on the land, water and economy of the Palestinians;
- (vi) The evolution of the number of settlements and settlers in the occupied Arab territories;
- (vii) Settlements from the standpoint of international law.

The study was prepared in accordance with the mandate of ESCWA to monitor developments on this sensitive issue, to transmit the results of such studies to all the international and regional institutions and States concerned in the region, and to draw attention to the sufferings of the Palestinian Arab people due to the pressures exerted by the Israeli authorities and the ongoing construction of settlements, which have direct and indirect effects on the Palestinian national economy and on the peace process as a whole;

(c) "A preliminary feasibility study for the establishment of a dairy production training centre in the West Bank" (E/ESCWA/AGR/1992/6 [in Arabic]).^{1/} The aim of this study was to assess the feasibility of establishing a dairy production centre in the West Bank, as well as the possibility of using that centre for training in the dairy industry. The cost of this project was estimated at US\$ 7.3 million;

(d) "Rehabilitation of the agricultural sector in the occupied Palestinian territories" (E/ESCWA/AGR/1993/9 [in English]).^{1/} This study assessed the current status of the agricultural sector and specified the obstacles impeding its development. The study focused on the identification of urgent priority agricultural projects whose implementation would promote the development and modernization of the agricultural sector. Within this framework two documents were prepared on the following agricultural projects:

- (i) A project proposal on the rehabilitation of deep wells in the occupied Palestinian territories (E/ESCWA/AGR/1993/9/Add.1 [in English]) with a view to supplying the largest possible amount of irrigation water for the agricultural sector through rehabilitation and improvement of the operational efficiency of existing wells by carrying out the requisite deepening, maintenance and renovation operations in accordance with modern technical methods. The project

^{1/} Undertaken in collaboration and coordination with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

document also proposed the formation of a private Palestinian drilling company comprising a maintenance workshop capable of undertaking the rehabilitation and maintenance of those wells. The cost of the project during the first five years amounts to approximately US\$ 6.5 million, most of which would hopefully be provided in the form of aid, both in cash and in kind;

- (ii) A project proposal on the rehabilitation of springs and related irrigation canals in the occupied Palestinian territories (E/ESCWA/AGR/1993/9/Add.2 [in English]). This project attempts to make maximum use of the water from the many sources in the West Bank by maintaining them, constructing suitable water basins and exploiting them by proper technical methods. The project also covers irrigation canals and ways to reduce wastage of water. The cost of the project during the first five years of its implementation amounts to approximately US\$ 4.5 million, which would probably be provided in the form of aid in cash and in kind.

(e) In addition to the above, the following project documents are under preparation:

- (i) A project document (in English) on the establishment of a central veterinary laboratory in the West Bank in view of the non-existence of any central veterinary laboratory in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip and the importance of establishing such a laboratory to promote the development of livestock resources, which ranks high among the priorities for the development of the agricultural sector. This document will be presented to donors with a view to obtaining aid for the establishment of the laboratory;
- (ii) A project document (in English) on the reclamation and development of land in the occupied Palestinian territories. The land reclamation process is one of the agricultural development priorities in the occupied Palestinian territories for ending the confiscation of uncultivated land by the Israeli military authorities and also for halting further soil erosion and ensuring greater medium- and long-term food security.

(f) "The role of ESCWA in supporting development activities related to Palestine" (E/ESCWA/PPTCO/1992/WG.2/INF.1). This report was prepared on the basis of a decision taken by the Executive Secretary of ESCWA at the end of September 1992 to form a working group on the technical assistance and advisory services that ESCWA could provide in order to promote Palestinian national development in coordination with United Nations agencies and donor States and institutions with a view to meeting the development needs of the Palestinian territories and, in particular, providing assistance to the Palestinian self-governing area. The decision by the Executive Secretary of ESCWA was taken in the light of the tasks and obligations assigned to ESCWA as the regional commission directly concerned with developments in Western Asia.

7. The secretariat has begun a survey of the situation and needs of Palestinian women in the occupied territories, which will also comprise the formulation of a plan of action to improve their situation. That survey is

being conducted in collaboration with the General Federation of Palestinian Women and the Central Bureau of Statistics as part of the preparations for the Fourth World Conference on Women, which is due to be held at Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995. It is hoped that this survey will be completed in the very near future so that it can be discussed and adopted as a national paper for subsequent presentation at the Regional Expert Group Meeting on Women and Development, which is due to be held from 4 to 8 September 1994.

8. The secretariat has also held symposia and meetings and has participated in courses and meetings in collaboration and coordination with regional and international institutions and bodies, which included the following:

(a) A training course on planning and evaluation of agricultural and rural development projects,^{1/} held at Jerusalem from 27 July to 12 August 1992 in collaboration with the Jerusalem office of the United Nations Development Programme and Jerusalem Open University, was attended by 32 trainees from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip;

(b) An expert group meeting on the assessment of policies and programmes of rural development in the ESCWA countries^{1/} held at Amman from 10 to 14 October 1993, was attended by experts from the ESCWA member countries and the occupied Palestinian territories. A paper was presented on "Palestinian rural rehabilitation and development";

(c) An expert group meeting on creation of indigenous entrepreneurship and opportunities for small- and medium-scale industrial investment was held in Damascus from 11-14 April 1993. Participants included experts from ESCWA member countries, including the occupied Palestinian territories;

(d) A seminar on "Entrepreneurial motivation and training concepts", in which experts from the occupied Palestinian territories participated, was held at Amman from 20-25 April 1992;

(e) The Second Arab Conference on Prospects of Modern Biotechnology was held at Amman from 24-28 April 1993, with the participation of representatives from the occupied Palestinian territories;

(f) An expert group meeting on industrial automation and microprocessor controls was held at Amman from 15-17 November 1993, with the participation of experts from the occupied Palestinian territories;

(g) A "Start your own business" training workshop was held at Cairo from 23 October to 11 November 1993, with the participation of trainees from the occupied Palestinian territories.

9. In order to ensure the implementation of resolutions aimed at supporting the Palestinian Arab people under occupation through the call for studies, symposia, and projects on the social and economic conditions of the occupied Palestinian territories, ESCWA will carry out during the biennium 1994-1995 the following activities related to the occupied Palestinian territories.

(a) Reexamination of the project proposal on the rehabilitation of the fishery sector in the Gaza Strip (1994, fourth quarter);^{2/}

(b) A study on the Assessment of the Cropping Pattern and Development in the Gaza Strip, in the light of new conditions (1994, fourth quarter);^{2/}

(c) Assessment and development of institutional structure for the planning and implementation of rural development policies and programmes in the occupied Palestinian territories (1994, fourth quarter);^{2/}

(d) A study on the current situation of agricultural credit in the occupied Palestinian territories and future agricultural credit demand for the purpose of promoting development and creating a suitable institutional structure;^{2/}

(e) A training course on the means of implementing and evaluating rural development projects (Jordan and Palestine, in cooperation with the Centre for Agriculture and Rural Development in the Near East and FAO, [1994, third quarter]);^{2/}

(f) The secretariat, in cooperation with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and the competent Palestinian authorities, will continue to gather relevant statistical data on the social and economic conditions of the Palestinian people and incorporate them in the statistical compendiums issued by ESCWA;

(g) The secretariat will strengthen its cooperation with the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics in providing technical advisory services, especially in the establishment and development of adequate statistical structures and systems for meeting the statistical data requirements of the current stage, particularly in the wake of signing the Agreement on Principles by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel. In this context, ESCWA participated in a technical meeting related to Palestinian statistical structures and systems, held in New York on 25 and 26 January 1994. The meeting produced an outline to establish a statistical system in the occupied Palestinian territories;

(h) After ensuring the requisite financial resources, the secretariat will undertake a survey of available data on the social and economic conditions in the occupied Palestinian territories and will present them in the form of a statistical database;

(i) ESCWA will organize three training workshops on "Start your own business" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip;

(j) ESCWA will prepare a project document on the establishment of a "Project Incubator" in the Gaza Strip.

^{2/} Undertaken in collaboration and coordination with FAO and the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development.

10. ESCWA has taken part with other bodies, organizations and specialized agencies of the United Nations system in observing the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, which was established by the United Nations Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People to support the Palestinian people in their efforts aimed at achieving liberation and the attainment of their legitimate rights. In this connection, it should be pointed out that ESCWA established in 1987 an ad hoc working group on the Palestinian people and issues to follow socio-economic developments in the occupied territories, prepare studies, hold training courses and provide technical assistance to some Palestinian institutions, in cooperation with United Nations specialized agencies and relevant Arab organizations.

11. Furthermore, ESCWA has devoted its attention to the occupied territories and has provided them with the requisite advisory services and expertise for promoting and developing regional cooperation to achieve development in the region. At the ministerial sessions of ESCWA, member States have adopted many resolutions aimed at improving the living conditions of the Palestinian people under occupation.

12. ESCWA has regularly expressed its willingness to extend, within its available resources, all possible services to the Palestinian people and its popular and official institutions in accordance with political developments in the Palestinian question and the exigencies of Palestinian self-rule, based on its mandate as determined by the Economic and Social Council for developing cooperative relations among the countries of the region and supporting socio-economic regional development. ESCWA will continue its efforts to provide direct technical aid to the process of social and economic development for the Palestinians in Palestine.

13. Within the revised medium-term plan (1992-1997), the 1994-1995 programme of work and the outline of the 1996-1997 programme of work, a subprogramme entitled "Special Issues" was included specifically to deal with special circumstances facing individual ESCWA members, such as Palestine.