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**REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ON THE  
ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION****DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK AND PRIORITIES\*  
FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999**Executive summary

1. The ESCWA proposed programme of work for the biennium 1998-1999 is derived from programme 18 of the United Nations medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 and comprises five thematic subprogrammes. The programme of work is aimed at enhancing the sustainable development of the ESCWA member States and promoting regional cooperation and policy coordination among them. In pursuing this objective, it highlights the linkages between the economic, social, cultural, technological, and environmental dimensions of development.
2. The specific objectives of the programme of work for the biennium 1998-1999 are: (a) to monitor and survey economic and social development trends in the member States; (b) to enhance economic cooperation among member States through harmonization of the relevant norms, standards and legislative instruments to enable them to deal with the effects of economic reform and liberalization policies on the various development sectors; (c) to enhance the coordination and harmonization of norms, standards and legislative instruments among member States in the area of social development by following up the implementation of the recommendations of global conferences; (d) to enhance cooperation among member States in the management of natural resources and environment through the harmonization of the relevant norms, standards and legislative instruments; and (e) to assist member States in human and institutional capacity-building.

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\* References to the programme budget and the programme of work are used interchangeably.

3. The proposed programme of work for the biennium 1998-1999 focuses on the following:
- (a) Improving the multidisciplinary/inter-divisional approach to programme formulation and implementation which was introduced in the programme of work for the biennium 1994-1995 and further developed in the programme of work for the biennium 1996-1997;
  - (b) Strengthening relations between the ESCWA secretariat and the member States through the activities of the Advisory Committee composed of ambassadors or their representatives, the four subsidiary intergovernmental committees,<sup>1</sup> and the Commission, as well as through bilateral consultations;
  - (c) Improving the documentation and substantive servicing of the biennial Commission sessions and the four subsidiary intergovernmental committees of ESCWA;
  - (d) Improving coordination between ESCWA and other United Nations bodies through the activities of the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Group established during the biennium 1994-1995;
  - (e) Promoting coordination among the member States in following up the implementation of recommendations of global conferences, including those dealing with environment, population, social development, women, human settlements and food;
  - (f) Promoting cooperation among member States in harmonizing norms, standards and legislative instruments as they relate to the various sectors;
  - (g) Continuing the assessment initiated during the biennium 1996-1997 on the impact of the peace process on various sectors, as well as the assessment of the impact of the Middle East/North Africa economic conferences, the European Mediterranean Partnership, and World Trade Organization (WTO) guidelines and regulations;
  - (h) Consolidating regional efforts in the field of socio-economic statistics through the harmonization of terminology and the standardization of data collection methodologies.
4. In sum, during the biennium 1998-1999, the ESCWA programme of work will emphasize the harmonization of norms, standards and legislative instruments as they relate to both economic issues and social development in the member States.

#### Overview

5. The mandate of ESCWA derives from Economic and Social Council resolution 1818 (LV) of 9 August 1973, which established the Economic Commission for Western Asia. The terms of reference of the Commission were amended by Council resolution 1983/69 of 26 July 1985, in which the Commission was redesignated the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

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<sup>1</sup> Including the Committee on Energy, the Committee on Water Resources, the Committee on Social Development, and the Statistical Committee.

6. There is a direct link between the rapidly changing pattern of socio-economic development in the ESCWA region, and the political and geo-economic situation prevailing in the Middle East; this evolution creates continuing and ever-greater challenges for ESCWA in the various economic and social fields. The mandated activities of ESCWA are also being affected by the globalization process, which has had a tremendous impact on regional trends and has introduced new principles and mechanisms governing development at all levels. Within this fluid context, and fully aware of challenges faced by its member countries, ESCWA has taken the emerging trends in a changing Middle East, together with other regional realities, into consideration in the preparation of its medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001.

7. The ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 1998-1999 has been formulated based on the priorities and areas of concentration contained in the ESCWA medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 and focuses on issues reflecting the Commission's response to current changes within the context of newly emerging regional concerns. The work programme focuses on clusters of priority issues, including: the management of natural resources and sustainable development; increased harmonization in sectoral policy formulation; integrated efforts to follow up the recommendations of global conferences; the setting of norms and standards; the facilitation and liberalization of trade; the impact of the peace process on selected sectors; World Trade Organization (WTO) guidelines and regulations; and the European Mediterranean Partnership agreements. Human development strategies, community development, poverty eradication, the extension of sectoral databases, and assistance in the development of national statistical systems are also relevant parts of the work programme; these will be implemented using the enhanced multisectoral/multidisciplinary approach adopted by ESCWA during the previous biennium. Various reform and efficiency measures, some planned and others already being applied, will also contribute to better ESCWA programme performance.

8. The work programme for the biennium 1998-1999 comprises five thematic subprogrammes, each of which corresponds to a substantive division (the organizational unit at ESCWA responsible for programme implementation). The five thematic subprogrammes and the corresponding substantive divisions are: (a) Management of natural resources and environment (Energy, Natural Resources and Environment Division); (b) Improvement of the quality of life (Social Development Issues and Policies Division); (c) Economic development and global changes (Economic Development Issues and Policies Division); (d) Coordination of policies and harmonization of norms and regulations for sectoral development (Sectoral Issues and Policies Division); and (e) Development, coordination and harmonization of statistics and information (Statistics Division).

9. With its introduction of more focused and coordinated programme of work and activities for the biennium 1998-1999, ESCWA will have a greater impact in the region and a comparative advantage, without duplicating the work of any other international institution or organization.

#### Introduction

10. The proposed ESCWA programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1998-1999 addresses the mandates of the various legislative bodies of the United Nations, including ESCWA and its subsidiary committees. The activities proposed deal with emerging issues in the region that require concentrated attention. The proposed work programme will be implemented within the context of severe budgetary constraints limiting the programmes of the United Nations at large and using Official Development Assistance (ODA) as a means of promoting multilateralism.

11. In preparing the proposed programme of work, various proposals from the substantive and administrative divisions of ESCWA were carefully scrutinized. Consultations also took place at different levels. Meetings were held with staff members, section and unit supervisors, each division separately, chiefs of substantive divisions, eminent persons from the region, representatives of member States, and members of some of the subsidiary committees of the Commission; and final consultations involving the member States will be held during the Commission's nineteenth session. The same situation prevailed in the area of administration, where a series of consultations took place to identify the needs of ESCWA at its permanent headquarters, which is expected to be fully operational within a short time.

12. Investment in communication and automation technologies has been a priority during the biennium 1996-1997, partly in preparation for the move to the Commission's permanent headquarters in Beirut, which is equipped with state-of-the-art automation and telecommunications facilities. Particular attention has been given to automation; as an example, a complex relational database was used to facilitate the preparation of this particular programme of work, with the result that many of the bottlenecks experienced in the past were avoided.

13. This proposed programme budget is formulated based on the assumption that ESCWA will be operating at its permanent headquarters in Beirut. However, though the items of expenditure under both staff and non-staff costs are identified in accordance with the needs in Beirut, totals are based on the running costs in Amman; the budget allocation, amounting to US\$ 35.4 million, reflects the actual cost of operations in Amman and does not take into account the higher common staff and operating costs in Beirut or the inflation rate in Lebanon over the next few years. Even these, however, were identified with great concern for their budgetary implications.

14. The proposed programme of work includes most of the efficiency measures that were proposed by the ESCWA efficiency review team for implementation when the Commission moves to Beirut, among them the restructuring of the General Services Section and a reduction both in the number of General Services posts in the administration and in their ratio to Professional posts. It also, by necessity, reduces and redeploys a number of Professional posts by amalgamating and revising some of the functions of these posts. Another efficiency recommendation which will be implemented during the 1998-1999 programme of work is the common services arrangement at ESCWA headquarters in Beirut, under which various other United Nations agencies will share facilities.

15. The present programme of work has been formulated on the basis of modules, whereby the proposed activities can be implemented within the limits of the approved resources, but each can be expanded in scope and coverage should extrabudgetary resources become available from regional and international donor agencies.

#### **PROGRAMMATIC AND OTHER FACTORS UNDERLYING THE PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF WORK**

16. Certain factors and principles determined the content of the proposed programme of work and priorities for the biennium 1998-1999, as well as the distribution of the allocated resources among the various substantive subprogrammes and the other executive management and support services. The factors delineated below are related to four main issues: (a) the role of ESCWA in the region; (b) the development

of the Commission itself; (c) its relationship with its member States; and (d) its relationship with United Nations agencies and other organizations operating in the region.

A. The unique role of ESCWA in the region as a neutral United Nations organization

ESCWA as the primary regional organization concerned with geo-economic issues

17. There are many organizations which operate in the region within cultural, ideological, religious, or political boundaries that they cannot transcend, though they play an important role in forming the identity of the region and its member States. Others that are being proposed or established are restricted by more serious political limitations. ESCWA, however, as a neutral United Nations organization, is able to transcend these boundaries by addressing issues of geo-economic concern and is therefore in a position to play a unique role in the development of its member States within the regional setting.

B. ESCWA reform, capacity-building and programme implementation

18. It is important for ESCWA to develop its own human and institutional capacities through various means, including the proper formulation of its programmes, so that it can perform the unique role envisaged for the Commission in the region.

1. A focused and integrated programme of work

19. To allow ESCWA to carry out its activities within the present budgetary constraints, a programme of work was devised for the biennium 1998-1999 which incorporates a thematic framework relevant to each of its subprogrammes. The pervasive theme focuses on the coordination of policies and the harmonization of standards and legislative instruments. Activities were proposed within this framework to allow for more focus and greater depth in programme implementation; those activities proposed outside this theme were limited in number and were either of a direct sectoral nature or were specifically mandated by legislative bodies. The programme is thus concise and focused, which allows for the most cost-effective and productive use of available resources.

2. Strengthening the multidisciplinary approach in programme planning, implementation and evaluation

20. During the biennium 1994-1995 ESCWA experimented with programme implementation through multidisciplinary task forces composed of staff members from various substantive divisions. This approach was further developed during the biennium 1996-1997; it proved to be cost-effective, and the impact of the final products on the end-users was significantly greater. This approach will continue to be developed and refined during the 1998-1999 programme of work. Measures are to be taken that will strengthen the capacity of ESCWA to implement these activities, with particular attention given to integrated efforts for following up global conferences.

3. The development of selected pivotal activities supporting the implementation of ESCWA mandates

21. The ESCWA programming exercise and the distribution of resources for the biennium 1998-1999 have been based upon the priority areas defined in the ESCWA medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 and further elaborated according to concrete priorities following a more focused and multidisciplinary approach. The distribution of resources for the biennium has also been guided by the need to expand and develop technical cooperation activities through the mobilization of resources from both within and outside the region for programme implementation. In addition, resources have been proposed for the ESCWA Office of Executive Direction and Management to allow for convening meetings of the Advisory Committee, for organizing consultations among eminent persons for reform and programme planning and evaluation purposes, for seeking specialized assistance in issues related to management reform activities, and for convening the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Group. Resources have also been requested for information activities to be implemented by the United Nations Information System (UNIS) which will be directed at different audiences and which will promote the activities of the United Nations at large and those of ESCWA in particular, including the establishment of an ESCWA Web site and connection with the Internet.

4. Promoting a positive management culture, improving performance, and increasing efficiency

22. Since 1994, when a comprehensive restructuring process was initiated, ESCWA management has been convinced that improving performance and increasing efficiency cannot be realized without appropriate measures to promote a healthy and positive management culture that emphasizes human resources development. The initiatives formulated to promote this management culture continue to reflect a people-sensitive approach; every effort will be made to meet the needs of staff, fulfil their aspirations, and raise morale in the workplace. It is important to develop staff capabilities through the various programmes supported by the Office of Human Resources Management at United Nations Headquarters.

23. The work programme for the biennium 1994-1995 was revised in 1994, leading to rationalization of resources and organizational restructuring. Improvements in productivity will become increasingly apparent as the Commission continues to pursue its policy of investing in technology, simplifying work procedures, and reducing operating costs when and where possible. ESCWA still requires some time to achieve full office automation, including the implementation of the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS), which will facilitate all work processes. This is especially significant since ESCWA, using its own staff resources, has embarked on a major project to automate programme planning and monitoring, an endeavour in which ESCWA is considered a pioneer within the United Nations Secretariat. In the area of administration and in accordance with one of the recommendations of the efficiency review team at ESCWA, General Service posts will be reduced to provide a more appropriate level of support to substantive staff. Another proposed efficiency measure which will be implemented during the biennium 1998-1999 is in the area of common premises cost-sharing, as some United Nations agencies have responded positively to the invitation of the Government of Lebanon to occupy space and share facilities and services at ESCWA headquarters; this will naturally lead to greater efficiency in services provision.

C. Strengthening cooperation among member States in areas of common interest

24. Another major aim of the proposed programme of work is to strengthen cooperation among member States in areas of common interest. As indicated earlier, coordinating policies and harmonizing standards, norms and legislative instruments is a central objective of the programme. This approach is being applied in activities related to shared water resources management; inter-country electricity transport; border-crossing facilitation; the harmonization of environmental and other standards in water, energy, transport, industry and agriculture; economic liberalization; accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO); and the implementation of the recommendations of the various global conferences dealing with environment, human rights, population, women, social development, human settlements, and food. The standardization of terminology and methodologies in the area of statistics has been and will continue to be a major concern. Assessments of the impact of the various initiatives for peace and cooperation in the region, including the Middle East/North Africa economic conferences and the European Mediterranean Partnership, are proposed as well; it is envisaged that the responses to these initiatives will be examined closely by ESCWA since they will reflect the ability of ESCWA member States to coordinate their positions and cooperate in developing various negotiation mechanisms. Activities in these areas require regional cooperation among ESCWA member States and a commensurate allocation of resources.

D. Expanding the capacity of ESCWA to deal with issues related to civil society, with special reference to NGOs

25. The United Nations in general, and its regional commissions in particular, are required to promote civil society institutions, especially non-governmental organization (NGOs), by providing the necessary substantive backstopping. Thus, resources are allocated to support activities in this particular area, especially those related to civil society institutions in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This activity will both benefit from and contribute to the skills that will be acquired by a number of ESCWA staff members during 1997 through their participation in a training course on Managing NGOs: Strategies for Change Programme—Workshop on Introduction to NGOs Management, held from 12 to 16 January 1997, administered by Cranfield University and supported by the Office of Human Resources Management.

E. ESCWA external relations and coordination initiatives

1. The role of ESCWA in relation to other regional organizations

26. ESCWA has established good working relations with other regional organizations operating in Western Asia for the benefit of all Arab countries. The League of Arab States and its specialized agencies, the various development funds including the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and the Arab Monetary Fund, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and the Islamic Development Bank have supported and participated in joint activities with ESCWA for some time. Throughout the biennium 1996-1997, emphasis has been placed on strengthening these relations and identifying new areas for cooperation. It is important to recognize the role played by these organizations, since each one has a distinct and indigenous mandate within the region's cultural, religious and geographic context. In dealing with issues of a geo-economic nature, ESCWA has its own distinct identity and mandate which transcends ideological and geographic boundaries. The complementarity between ESCWA and the regional organizations is natural and indicates that ESCWA has a unique role to play in the region.

2. ESCWA as a coordinator of United Nations economic and social development activities at the regional level

27. As a United Nations organization responsible for supporting economic and social development in the region, ESCWA is ideally suited to carry out work and activities in fields not covered by other agencies and to address specific issues which these agencies do not or cannot deal with. Since ESCWA is located in the region and has direct access both to vast amounts of information on the member States and to the member States themselves, it is best placed to deal with issues that are of relevance to more than one country. It also exists as an effective forum for facilitating interaction among its member States on issues of direct interest to them. ESCWA has a comparative advantage in the sense that it can promote cooperation among its member States, develop synergy with the other United Nations programmes and agencies, and work towards the joint planning of selected activities relevant to the region with the agencies concerned.

3. Strengthening the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Group

28. The member States have been requesting, through the General Assembly, increased coordination among United Nations bodies so that duplication and the wasting of resources can be avoided. The Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Group established by ESCWA in 1995 will continue to be strengthened through the implementation of joint activities. In particular, this inter-agency cooperation will concentrate on integrated efforts to follow up the global conferences which have been held on environment, human rights, population, women, social development, human settlements, and food. This collective follow-up effort will be initiated in 1997 as a major joint programme in which various interested agencies will participate. ESCWA coordinates the working group and thus requires sufficient resources to carry out this task properly.

**SUBPROGRAMME 1. MANAGEMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT<sup>2</sup>**

Activities

1. Servicing of intergovernmental and expert bodies

1a Substantive servicing of meetings

- (i) Servicing of the second session of the Committee on Energy (1999);
- (ii) Servicing of the second session of the Committee on Water Resources (1999).

1b Parliamentary documentation

- (i) Report to the Commission on the second session of the Committee on Energy (1999);

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<sup>2</sup> One asterisk (\*) denotes high priority; two asterisks (\*\*) denote low priority for the subprogrammes.



- (ii) Report to the Commission on the second session of the Committee on Water Resources (1999).

1c Other services (ad hoc expert groups)

- (i) Expert group meeting on the privatization of the electric power sector (1999);
- (ii) Expert group meeting on updating the assessment of water resources in ESCWA member countries (1999);
- (iii) Expert group meeting on the adequacy of environmental legislation and the promotion of enforcement mechanisms (1999);
- (iv) Expert group meeting on the harmonization of environmental standards in the energy sectors of ESCWA member States (1999);
- (v) Expert group meeting on the harmonization of environmental standards in the water sectors of ESCWA member States (1999).

2. Other substantive activities

2f Mandated non-recurrent publications

- (i) Updating the assessment of water resources in ESCWA member countries\* (1998);
- (ii) Progress achieved in the implementation of chapter 18 of Agenda 21, with emphasis on water for sustainable agricultural production: case-studies (1998);
- (iii) Harmonization of environmental standards in the water sectors of ESCWA member States (1998);
- (iv) Assessment of the privatization of power generation in selected ESCWA member countries\* (1999);
- (v) Development of freshwater resources in rural areas through the use of non-conventional techniques (1999);
- (vi) Harmonization of environmental standards in the energy sectors of ESCWA member States (1999);
- (vii) Current water policies and practices in selected ESCWA member countries (1999);
- (viii) Proceedings of the expert group meeting on the harmonization of environmental standards in the energy sectors of ESCWA member States\*\* (1999);

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- (ix) Proceedings of the expert group meeting on the privatization of the electric power sector (1999);
- (x) Promotion of new and renewable sources of energy, with particular emphasis on rural and remote areas (1999);
- (xi) Proceedings of the expert group meeting on the harmonization of environmental standards in the water sectors of ESCWA member States\*\* (1999);
- (xii) Assessment of the adequacy of environmental legislation and the promotion of enforcement mechanisms\* (1999);
- (xiii) Proceedings of the expert group meeting on the adequacy of environmental legislation and the promotion of enforcement mechanisms\*\* (1999).

2g Discretionary non-recurrent publications

Modalities of cooperation with respect to the interconnection of electric power grids among ESCWA member countries (1999).

3. International cooperation and inter-agency coordination and liaison

3a Participation in activities of intergovernmental bodies

- (i) Cooperation with the League of Arab States and its related organizations on programmed activities related to: the establishment of a regional electric power grid; the harmonization of standards in the energy sectors of ESCWA member States; updating the assessment of water resources; water use for sustainable agricultural production; the implementation of the regional priorities of Agenda 21; and the outcome of the 1997 special session of the United Nations General Assembly (continuous);
- (ii) Cooperation with the European Union (EU) on programmed activities related to the privatization of the electric power sector and on the establishment of a regional electric power grid (continuous);
- (iii) Cooperation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference, including the Islamic Development Bank, on programmed activities related to, *inter alia*, updating the assessment of water resources; water use for sustainable agricultural production; the implementation of regional priorities of Agenda 21; and the outcome of the 1997 special session of the United Nations General Assembly (continuous);
- (iv) Cooperation with the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for Environment (CAMRE) on the implementation of the regional priorities of Agenda 21 and on the outcome of the 1997 special session of the United Nations General Assembly (continuous);

- (v) Substantive contributions to the annual meetings of the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR) (1998 and 1999).

3c Participation in activities of the United Nations system

- (i) Coordination with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) on the establishment of a regional electric power grid in ESCWA member States (continuous);
- (ii) Coordination with the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) on the establishment of a regional electric power grid (continuous);
- (iii) Cooperation with the World Bank in the area of privatization of the electric power sector and on issues pertaining to the development of water resources in ESCWA member States (continuous);
- (iv) Cooperation with the United Nations Department of Development Support and Management Services (DDSMS) on the establishment of a regional electric power grid (continuous);
- (v) Coordination with the World Health Organization/Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean/Regional Centre for Environmental Health Activities (WHO/EMRO/CEHA), on issues pertaining to the development of water resources in ESCWA member countries (continuous);
- (vi) Coordination with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) on issues pertaining to the development of water resources in ESCWA member countries (continuous);
- (vii) Coordination with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on issues pertaining to the development of water resources in the region (continuous);
- (viii) Coordination with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on issues pertaining to the development of water resources in ESCWA member countries (continuous);
- (ix) Substantive contributions to the annual meetings of the Commission on Sustainable Development (1998 and 1999).

**SUBPROGRAMME 2. IMPROVEMENT OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE**

Activities

1. Servicing of intergovernmental and expert bodies

1a Substantive servicing of meetings

- (i) Substantive servicing of the second session of the ESCWA Committee on Social Development (1999);

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- (ii) Substantive servicing of the Arab conference on integrated follow-up of global conferences (1999).

1b Parliamentary documentation

- (i) Report to the Economic and Social Council on economic and social repercussions of the Israeli settlements on the Palestinian people in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, occupied since 1967, and on the Arab population in the Syrian Golan (1998 and 1999);
- (ii) Report to the Commission on the second session of the ESCWA Committee on Social Development (1999).

1c Other services (ad hoc expert groups)

- (i) Regional preparatory meeting for the Arab conference on integrated follow-up of global conferences: follow-up of the International Conference on population and Development (1998);
- (ii) Regional preparatory meeting for the Arab conference on integrated follow-up of global conferences: follow-up of the World Summit for Social Development (1998);
- (iii) Regional preparatory meeting for the Arab conference on integrated follow-up of global conferences: follow-up of the Fourth World Conference on Women (1998);
- (iv) Regional preparatory meeting for the Arab conference on integrated follow-up of global conferences: follow-up of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (1998);
- (v) Expert group meeting on migration and population policies in ESCWA member countries\*\* (1999);
- (vi) Urban management: follow-up of national strategies in ESCWA member States (1999).

2. Other substantive activities

2d Mandated recurrent publications

- (i) News Bulletin on Human Settlements in the Arab World, Nos. 9, 10, 11 and 12 (biannual) (1998 and 1999);
- (ii) Population Bulletin, Nos. 46 and 47 (1998 and 1999);
- (iii) Demographic and Related Socio-economic Data Sheets (1999);

- (iv) Studies on Arab women and development series: gender and the role of non-governmental organizations; a case-study of the West Bank and Gaza before and after the peace accords (1999);
- (v) Human settlement data sheets\*\* (1999).

2f Mandated non-recurrent publications

- (i) Manifestations of and approaches to alleviating poverty in Western Asia: the role of income-generating activities in eradicating poverty and improving the standard of living in local communities (1998);
- (ii) Developmental role of the informal sector in community development: cases of Egypt and the Republic of Yemen (1998);
- (iii) The role of non-governmental organizations in local community development (1998);
- (iv) Critical assessment of local community development experiences in the Arab world (1998);
- (v) National population policies in ESCWA member countries (1998);
- (vi) Proceedings of the expert group meeting on the eradication of poverty in Western Asia (1998);
- (vii) Urban governance and participation: problems and prospects (1998);
- (viii) Urban environmental changes and sustainable development in ESCWA member countries (1998);
- (ix) Towards a strategy for sustainable human development in the Arab world (1999);
- (x) The social impact of structural adjustment with special emphasis on unemployment (1999);
- (xi) Manifestations of and approaches to alleviating poverty in Western Asia: poverty and youth (1999);
- (xii) Manifestations of and approaches to alleviating poverty in Western Asia: operational microcredit lending facilities for poor women in rural and urban areas (1999);
- (xiii) Manifestations of and approaches to alleviating poverty in Western Asia: urban settlements and poverty (1999);
- (xiv) Report on the role of non-governmental organizations in the integrated follow-up of global conferences (1999);
- (xv) Housing policy issues in ESCWA member States (1999).

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2g Discretionary non-recurrent publications

Manual on community development services (1998).

2n Technical material (including databases and software)

- (i) Integrated information system for population policies in ESCWA member countries (continuous);
- (ii) Population estimates and projections database (continuous);
- (iii) Database on social policies and measures in the area of human development in selected ESCWA member countries (continuous);
- (iv) Database on social policies and measures in the area of gender and the family (continuous);
- (v) Database on social policies and measures in the area of human settlements (continuous);

3. International cooperation and inter-agency coordination and liaison

3a Participation in activities of intergovernmental bodies

- (i) Cooperation with the League of Arab States (LAS) and its related agencies in following up activities related to the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women, and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), as well as on other social issues (continuous);
- (ii) Cooperation with the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND) on follow-up activities related to the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, as well as on other social and family issues (continuous);
- (iii) Cooperation with the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) on follow-up activities related to the Fourth World Conference on Women and other family issues (continuous);
- (iv) Cooperation with the Centre for Environment and Development in the Arab Region and Europe (CEDARE) on follow-up activities related to Habitat II (continuous);
- (v) Cooperation with the Regional Bureau of the Urban Management Programme on follow-up activities related to Habitat II (continuous).

3b Participation in activities of non-governmental organizations

Cooperation with non-governmental organizations in ESCWA member countries on follow-up activities related to the Fourth World Conference on Women and on gender issues (continuous).

3c Participation in activities of the United Nations system

- (i) Coordination with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on follow-up activities related to the International Conference on Population and Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, as well as on population and gender issues (continuous);
- (ii) Coordination with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on follow-up activities related to the International Conference on Population and Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, as well as on population and gender issues (continuous);
- (iii) Coordination with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) on follow-up activities related to the International Conference on Population and Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, as well as on population and gender issues (continuous);
- (iv) Coordination with the World Health Organization (WHO) on follow-up activities related to the International Conference on Population and Development and on population issues (continuous);
- (v) Coordination with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on follow-up activities related to the World Summit for Social Development and on human development issues (continuous);
- (vi) Coordination with the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) on follow-up activities related to the World Summit for Social Development and on human development issues (continuous);
- (vii) Coordination with the International Labour Organization (ILO) on follow-up activities related to the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women, as well as on human development and gender issues (continuous);
- (viii) Coordination with United Nations Headquarters on follow-up activities related to the World Summit for Social Development and on human development issues (continuous);
- (ix) Coordination with the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) on follow-up activities related to the Fourth World Conference on Women and on gender issues (continuous);
- (x) Coordination with the United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV) on follow-up activities related to the Fourth World Conference on Women and on gender issues (continuous);

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- (xi) Coordination with the United Nations University/World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU/WIDER) on follow-up activities related to the Fourth World Conference on Women and on gender issues (continuous);
- (xii) Coordination with the World Bank on follow-up activities related to the Fourth World Conference on Women and on gender issues (continuous);
- (xiii) Coordination with the Division for the Advancement of Women at United Nations Headquarters on follow-up activities related to the Fourth World Conference on Women and on gender issues (continuous);
- (xiv) Participation in the annual meetings of the Commission on the Status of Women (1998 and 1999);
- (xv) Coordination with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) on follow-up activities related to Habitat II (continuous);
- (xvi) Participation in the annual meetings of the Commission on Human Settlements (1998 and 1999);
- (xvii) Coordination with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on follow-up activities related to Habitat II and on the implementation of joint programmes (continuous).

#### 5. Technical cooperation

##### 5b Group training

Training workshop on population policies and sustainable development in ESCWA member countries: the ESCWA population policies information system (PPIS) in the Arab world (XB) (1999).

##### 5d Field projects

Community development services (continuous).

### **SUBPROGRAMME 3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND GLOBAL CHANGES**

#### Activities

##### 1. Servicing of intergovernmental and expert bodies

##### 1b Parliamentary documentation

Report to the Commission on the Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region: summary (1998 and 1999).



1c Other services (ad hoc expert groups)

- (i) Expert group meeting on prospects for the development of trading companies in the ESCWA region (1998);
- (ii) Expert group meeting on environment and trade-related issues: The decisions of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Committee on Trade and Environment and their impact on ESCWA member States (1999);
- (iii) Expert group meeting on the assessment of economic development in the ESCWA region during the 1990s and the region's priorities for the next decade (2000-2009) (1999).

2. Other substantive activities

2d Mandated recurrent publications

- (i) Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region\* (1998 and 1999);
- (ii) Part two of the Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region: special issue (1998 and 1999);
- (iii) Preliminary overview of economic development in ESCWA member States in 1998 (1998);
- (iv) Preliminary overview of economic development in ESCWA member States in 1999 (1999);
- (v) Review of progress made in the implementation of the New Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s (1999).

2f Mandated non-recurrent publications

- (i) Assessment of the privatization programmes in ESCWA member countries (1998);
- (ii) The role of foreign direct investment in economic development in ESCWA member States (1998);
- (iii) Trade efficiency in selected ESCWA member countries: a comprehensive study (1998);
- (iv) European Mediterranean Partnership agreements: critical assessment\* (1998);
- (v) The decisions of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Committee on Trade and Environment and their impact on trade in ESCWA member States (1998);
- (vi) Proceedings of the expert group meeting on environment and trade-related issues (1999);

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- (vii) The impact of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on intellectual property rights in selected ESCWA member States or the impact of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on services in selected ESCWA member countries (1999);
- (viii) Comparative study on corporate tax in selected ESCWA member countries: prospects for harmonization\*\* (1999);
- (ix) Development of capital markets in ESCWA member countries in the light of the peace process (1999).

2g Discretionary non-recurrent publications

- (i) Inflation in ESCWA member States: causes and effects\*\* (1998);
- (ii) Proceedings of the expert group meeting on prospects for the development of trading companies in the ESCWA region (1999);
- (iii) Appraisal of the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) economic conferences (1999);
- (iv) Proceedings of the expert group meeting on the assessment of economic developments in ESCWA member States during the 1990s and the region's priorities for the next decade (2000-2009) (1999).

3. International cooperation and inter-agency coordination and liaison

3a Participation in activities of intergovernmental bodies

Cooperation with the League of Arab States (LAS) and its related organizations on economic, trade and finance issues (1998).

3c Participation in activities of the United Nations system

Strengthening cooperation, coordination and liaison with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis (DESIPA) at United Nations Headquarters (1998).

#### **SUBPROGRAMME 4. COORDINATION OF POLICIES AND HARMONIZATION OF NORMS AND REGULATIONS FOR SECTORAL DEVELOPMENT**

##### Activities

##### 1. Servicing of intergovernmental and expert bodies

###### 1a Substantive servicing of meetings

Servicing the intergovernmental meeting on transport facilitation across borders through the harmonization of norms, standards and related conventions (1998).

###### 1b Parliamentary documentation

Report to the Commission on the intergovernmental meeting on transport facilitation across borders through the harmonization of norms, standards and related conventions\* (1999).

###### 1c Other services (ad hoc expert groups)

- (i) Expert group meeting on science and technology policies for the twenty-first century in ESCWA member countries (1998);
- (ii) Expert group meeting on policies for increasing the share of Arab fleets in the seaborne trade of ESCWA member States (1998);
- (iii) Regional expert group meeting on the WTO agreements and international trade in textiles and clothing (1999);
- (iv) Expert group meeting on national standardization bodies\* (1999);
- (v) Expert group meeting on project planning and management in research and development and quality control (RD/QC) institutions (1999);
- (vi) Expert group meeting on the application of the United Nations Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport (UNEDIFACT) in ESCWA member States (1999);
- (vii) Expert group meeting on the harmonization of norms and standards for selected agricultural commodities\* (1999).

##### 2. Other substantive activities

###### 2d Mandated recurrent publications

Review of Science and Technology in ESCWA Member Countries, Nos. 1 and 2\*\* (1998 and 1999).

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2e Discretionary recurrent publications

- (i) Review of Transport in ESCWA Member Countries (previously the Transport Bulletin), Nos. 9 and 10 (1998 and 1999);
- (ii) Review of Agriculture in ESCWA Member Countries (previously Agriculture and Development in Western Asia Bulletin), Nos. 20 and 21 (1998 and 1999);
- (iii) Review of Industry in ESCWA Member Countries, Nos. 1 and 2 (1998 and 1999).

2f Mandated non-recurrent publications

- (i) Science and technology policies for the twenty-first century in ESCWA member countries\* (1998);
- (ii) Report on the early implementation of the ISO 14001 Environmental Management System in selected industries in the developed world (1998);
- (iii) Capacity-building in national standardization institutions in view of the technical barriers to trade listed in the WTO Agreement (1999);
- (iv) Production and quality assurance technologies in the agro-food industries in ESCWA member countries (1999);
- (v) Environmentally sound technologies in selected sectors (1999);
- (vi) The harmonization of norms and standards for selected agricultural commodities, with special emphasis on sorting, grading, packaging and labelling for export to the European market (1999);
- (vii) The Harmonization of environmental standards in the transport sector in ESCWA member countries (1999);
- (viii) Small- and medium-sized industrial enterprises in selected ESCWA member States: strategies, policies and support institutions (1999);
- (ix) Rural community development through the strengthening of institution-building: two case-studies (1999);
- (x) Economic assessment of water use in agriculture for a selected ESCWA member country (1999).

2g Discretionary non-recurrent publications

- (i) Assessment of the impact of the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) economic conferences on transport in ESCWA member countries (1998);

- (ii) The development of merchant fleets: policies for increasing the share of Arab fleets in the seaborne trade of ESCWA member States (1998);
- (iii) National Farm Data Handbook for Lebanon (1998);
- (iv) The formulation of export-oriented and marketing policies for selected agricultural products in the context of recent national, regional and global developments (1999);
- (v) The status, productivity and competitiveness of selected branches of agro-food industries in ESCWA member States (1999);
- (vi) Monitoring and assessment of the impact of the Middle East/North Africa (MENA) economic conferences and the peace process on the industrial sector\*\* (1999);
- (vii) The application of electronic data interchange (EDI) and the United Nations Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport (UNEDIFACT) in ESCWA member States (1999);
- (viii) Peace and regional economic cooperation in the agricultural sectors of ESCWA member countries (1999);
- (ix) Evaluation of Agricultural Policies In Lebanon (Policy Analysis Matrix approach) (1999).

2k Booklets, pamphlets and fact sheets

Pamphlet: review of port legislation in ESCWA member countries\*\* (1999).

2n Technical material (including databases and software)

Development of a spatial information system for selected sectors in ESCWA member countries (continuous).

3. International cooperation and inter-agency coordination and liaison

3a Participation in activities of intergovernmental bodies

- (i) Cooperation and coordination with the League of Arab States (LAS) and its affiliated bodies on industrial, transport and agricultural development issues (continuous);
- (ii) Cooperation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Islamic Development Bank on industrial and science and technology issues (continuous);
- (iii) Cooperation with the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO) on industrial issues (continuous);

- (iv) Cooperation with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) on industrial standardization issues (continuous);
- (v) Cooperation with the Federation of Arab Scientific Research Councils (FASRC) on capacity-building in the field of science and technology (continuous);
- (vi) Cooperation with the World Customs Organization (WCO) on transport development issues (continuous);
- (vii) Cooperation with the International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA) on agricultural issues (continuous);
- (viii) Cooperation with the International Service for National Agricultural Research (ISNAR) on agricultural issues (continuous).

3c Participation in activities of the United Nations system

- (i) Coordination with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) on industrial issues and on the development of science and technology capabilities in ESCWA member countries (continuous);
- (ii) Coordination with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on industrial and agricultural development issues in ESCWA member countries (continuous);
- (iii) Coordination with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) on industrial development issues (continuous);
- (iv) Coordination with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization/Regional Office for Science and Technology for the Arab States (UNESCO/ROSTAS) on the development of science and technology capabilities in ESCWA member countries (continuous);
- (v) Coordination with the United Nations Environment Programme/Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP/ROWA) on industrial issues, on the development of science and technology capabilities, and on agricultural issues in ESCWA member countries (continuous);
- (vi) Coordination with the International Labour Organization (ILO) on sectoral issues (continuous);
- (vii) Coordination with the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD) at United Nations Headquarters on science and technology issues (continuous);
- (viii) Participation in the annual meetings of the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development (1998 and 1999);

- (ix) Coordination with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) on the development of science and technology capabilities and on transport development in ESCWA member countries (continuous);
- (x) Coordination with the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) on transport development issues (continuous);
- (xi) Coordination with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on agricultural development issues (continuous).

#### 5. Technical cooperation

##### 5a Advisory services

- (i) Advisory services to member States on transport planning and management (continuous);
- (ii) Technical assistance to ESCWA member States in the follow-up of relevant recommendations of the World Food Summit (continuous);
- (iii) Technical assistance to ESCWA member States in agricultural policy analysis, mainly in service training\* (continuous).

##### 5d Field projects

- (i) Project document on the development and capacity-building of small- and medium-sized industrial enterprises (1998);
- (ii) Preparation of project documents on the rehabilitation of the agricultural sector in the occupied territories (1998 and 1999);
- (iii) Project document on guidelines for integrating the gender dimension in industrial projects (1999).

### **SUBPROGRAMME 5. DEVELOPMENT, COORDINATION AND HARMONIZATION OF STATISTICS AND INFORMATION**

#### Activities

##### 1. Servicing of intergovernmental and expert bodies

##### 1a Substantive servicing of meetings

Servicing of the third session of the ESCWA Statistical Committee (1999).

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1b Parliamentary documentation

- (i) Six reports to the ESCWA Statistical Committee (1999);
- (ii) Report to the Commission on the third session of the ESCWA Statistical Committee (1999).

1c Other services (ad hoc expert groups)

- (i) Expert group meeting on the implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts (1999);
- (ii) Expert group meeting on the implications of the United Nations global conferences for social statistics (1999);
- (iii) Expert group meeting on vital statistics and civil registration systems in ESCWA member States (1999);
- (iv) Expert group meeting on industrial surveys and censuses (1999).

2. Other substantive activities

2d Mandated recurrent publications

- (i) Statistical Newsletter, Nos. 5, 6, 7 and 8 (biannual) (1998 and 1999);
- (ii) Bulletin of Vital Statistics in ESCWA Member States, Nos. 1 and 2\*\* (1998 and 1999);
- (iii) National Accounts Studies of the ESCWA Region, Nos. 18 and 19 (1998 and 1999);
- (iv) Bulletin of Industrial Statistics for the Arab Countries, No. 4 (1999).

2e Discretionary recurrent publications

- (i) Statistical Abstract of the Region of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Nos. 18 and 19 (1998 and 1999);
- (ii) External Trade Bulletin of the ESCWA Region, No. 9 (1998).

2f Mandated non-recurrent publications

Study on women and men: statistical portrait of the Arab countries (1999).

2n Technical material (including databases and software)

- (i) Development and maintenance of the database on industrial statistics (continuous);



- (ii) Development and maintenance of the database on national accounts (continuous);
- (iii) Development and maintenance of the database on social statistics (continuous);
- (iv) Development and maintenance of the database on labour force statistics (continuous);
- (v) Development and maintenance of the database on gender statistics and indicators (continuous);
- (vi) Development of an ESCWA statistical information system\* (continuous);
- (vii) Development and maintenance of the database on energy statistics (continuous);
- (viii) Development and maintenance of the database on price statistics (continuous);
- (ix) Development and maintenance of the database on financial statistics (continuous).

3. International cooperation and inter-agency coordination and liaison

3a Participation in activities of intergovernmental bodies

- (i) Cooperation with the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO) on industrial statistics (continuous);
- (ii) Coordination with the League of Arab States (LAS) and its related organizations on the implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts (continuous);
- (iii) Cooperation with the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS) on training in statistics (continuous);
- (iv) Cooperation with the Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU) on economic statistics (continuous);
- (v) Cooperation with the Center of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR) on gender statistics (continuous);
- (vi) Cooperation with the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND) on household survey projects (continuous);
- (vii) Cooperation with the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) on financial statistics (continuous);
- (viii) Cooperation with the Arab Planning Institute on statistics issues (continuous).

3c Participation in activities of the United Nations system

- (i) Coordination with the Statistics Division of the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis (DESIPA/STAT) at United Nations Headquarters in the areas of national accounts and the United Nations Economic and Social Information System (UNESIS) (continuous);
- (ii) Participation in the annual meetings of the Statistical Commission (1998 and 1999);
- (iii) Coordination with the World Bank on the implementation of the International Comparison Programme (ICP) in the ESCWA member States (continuous);
- (iv) Coordination with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on statistical issues (continuous);
- (v) Coordination with the International Statistical Institute on statistical issues (continuous).

3d Participation in the activities of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and its subsidiary machinery

Participation in the annual sessions of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) Subcommittee on Statistical Activities (1998 and 1999).

5. Technical cooperation

5a Advisory services

- (i) Advisory services relating to gender statistics (continuous);
- (ii) Backstopping of advisory services on national accounts and economic statistics, data processing and household surveys (continuous).

5b Group training

Workshop on gender statistics (1998).

5d Field projects

Implementation of the International Comparison Programme (ICP) in ESCWA member States (continuous).

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