



Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
Technical Committee
Eleventh session
Beirut, 25-26 May 1999

Item 6 (d) of the provisional agenda

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

**SUMMARIES OF REPORTS OF SESSIONS
OF THE COMMISSION'S SUBSIDIARY BODIES**

Report on
the second session of the Committee on Water Resources

1. The second session of the Committee on Water Resources of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) was held at the permanent headquarters of the Commission in Beirut on 14 and 15 December 1998. The principal objectives of the session were as follows:
 - (a) To review and discuss the progress made during 1996 and 1997 in the implementation of the programme of work and priorities;
 - (b) To present information regarding the water programme as reflected in the revised ESCWA medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001;
 - (c) To review and discuss the proposed programme of work of the Natural Resources Section for the biennium 2000-2001 as it relates to water;
 - (d) To present proposals concerning the preliminary preparations for the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of ESCWA and World Water Day during the third session of the Committee on Water Resources, to be held in April 1999;
 - (e) To present and discuss the study prepared on groundwater conditions in Palaeogene calcareous aquifers in the ESCWA region;
 - (f) To formulate recommendations regarding the various topics mentioned above, to be presented to the Commission.
2. Representatives of the following ESCWA member States participated in the second session of the Committee on Water Resources: Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar and the Syrian Arab Republic. In addition, the session was attended by experts in the field of hydrology from Bahrain, Jordan and Yemen.

3. The debates of the Committee led to a number of recommendations aimed at strengthening the Commission's water-related activities among its members, including the following:

(a) ESCWA should continue to develop regional cooperation among its members through the Committee on Water Resources;

(b) ESCWA should undertake, as soon as possible, to prepare an appropriate training programme for technical staff in the member countries in water-resource-related fields, particularly with regard to rendering national water legislation in those countries more effective;

(c) With regard to studies relating to the management of non-conventional water resources and the use of appropriate technology for groundwater management in the ESCWA member countries, the ESCWA secretariat should monitor the studies required by member States and formulate them clearly in future ESCWA programmes;

(d) The Committee on Water Resources approved the general frameworks for activities relating to the proposals formulated for the programme of work for the biennium 2000-2001, on the understanding that the member States would provide ESCWA, as early as possible, with any proposals they felt should be included within those frameworks;

(e) ESCWA should prepare a paper on its vision of the challenges that will be posed by water issues in the twenty-first century, including water resource management integrated in respect of maintenance of both quality and quantity, as well as on water policy, legislation and institutions;

(f) The member States should prepare working papers on related topics. In this connection, it was agreed that the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic would prepare a working paper on shared surface water resources and the representative of Lebanon would prepare a working paper on water basins in Lebanon, it being understood that the two papers should be submitted within two months in order to be finalized and presented at the next session of the Committee on Water Resources;

(g) The third session of the Committee should be held at ESCWA headquarters in Beirut, from 20 to 23 April 1999;

(h) The representatives of the member countries should provide ESCWA with publications, studies and other research on water resources in those countries;

(i) ESCWA should continually provide the member States, on request, with the advisory services available at ESCWA;

(j) ESCWA should make use of the technical expertise available in the member States in areas related to water resources, provided that the representatives of those States furnish to ESCWA the names of such experts and their specialized fields, so as to enable the Commission to call upon their expertise for various studies.
