



**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL  
COUNCIL**

Distr.  
LIMITED  
E/ESCWA/TRANS/2001/IG.1/6  
9 January 2001  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

---

**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia**

Committee on Transport  
Second session  
Beirut, 6-7 February 2001

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

UN DOCUMENT  
E/ESCWA/TRANS/2001/IG.1/6

9 JAN 2001

LIBRARY & DOCUMENT SECTION

**PROPOSED MEDIUM-TERM PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 2002-2005**

## Introduction

The General Assembly adopted the medium term plan for the period 2002-2005, whose programme 18 on economic and social development in Western Asia applies to the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) (see document A/55/6(Prog.18) of 4 April 2000).<sup>1</sup> The following are portions of the adopted text of the plan, with emphasis on Subprogramme 4 on coordination of sectoral policies and harmonization of norms and standards for sustainable development within global changes, which cover the activities of the Transport Section and are submitted to the Committee on Transport at its second session for information and follow-up:

### “Overall orientation

“18.1 The overall orientation of the programme is to further equitable economic and social development, to promote regional cooperation and to strengthen the ability of the region to cope with the implications of globalization. The direction of the programme is provided in resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council, which in its resolution 1818 (LV) of 9 August 1973 established the terms of reference of the Economic Commission for Western Asia, and in its resolution 1985/69 of 26 July 1985, amended those terms in order to underscore the social dimension of the functions of the Commission, at which time the name was altered to the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) to reflect that change. Further direction to the programme is provided in ESCWA resolutions, in particular, ESCWA resolution 220 (XX) on the adoption, by ESCWA member States, of the Beirut Declaration, dated 27 May 1999, on the occasion of the celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Commission. The Beirut Declaration presented a vision of the role and tasks of ESCWA for the twenty-first century and aimed at enhancing the role of the Commission at the regional level, in line with the Secretary-General's efforts to revitalize the performance of the United Nations at the dawn of the third millennium. Substantive responsibility for the programme is vested in the Commission.

“18.2 The overall strategy of ESCWA is designed around five interdependent and complementary subprogrammes. The strategy is based on the formulation of regional programmes, mechanisms and solutions to interface with global issues and problems, in both the economic and social fields, to help ESCWA members to achieve a balanced integration in the world economy. One aim of the programme is to foster the adoption and adaptation of global principles, standards and trends, without detriment to the interests and specificities of the region. Another aim is to advocate the creation of an enabling environment that would stimulate the achievement of sustainable development with its three interdependent and mutually reinforcing components: economic development, social development and protection of the environment. Within this framework, the issue of gender commands special attention. Structurally, a gender perspective is articulated in each of the five ESCWA subprogrammes as a principal multidisciplinary component thereof. Likewise, it is an integral substantive component of the right to development which permeates the work of ESCWA and is one of the cornerstones of its mandate: the promotion of integrated economic and social development.

“18.3 The implementation of the overall strategy would involve the following:

“(a) Facilitating the formulation of new region-specific strategies for development based on reducing the heavy reliance on oil revenues through the diversification of output, mobilization of regional savings and attraction of suitable foreign direct investment, by continuing its work as a regional catalyst and an effective forum for dialogue, for the exchange of experiences and for building consensus and common positions;

---

<sup>1</sup> United Nations General Assembly, fifty-fifth session, item 120 of the primary list, programme planning, proposed medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005, programme 18: economic and social development in Western Asia, A/55/6(Prog.18) of 4 April 2000.

“(b) Cultivating the interest of member States in the advantages of regional cooperation and coordination in developing concerted policies, norms, regulations and legislation on regional issues, such as water scarcity, renewable energy resources, environment protection, intraregional trade, future negotiations under the auspices of the World Trade Organization (WTO), technology transfer and information networks;

“(c) Raising the awareness of ESCWA members of their rights and obligations under multilateral trade liberalization in goods and services and partnership agreements as well as of the vital importance of regional and subregional integration to the future of the region;

“(d) Assisting member States in determining regional priorities, developing effective regional coordination mechanisms and strengthening existing ones, and streamlining activities of common interest, while strengthening cooperation with other regional and subregional organizations, by serving as a platform, focal point and coordinator for United Nations organizations with a regional mandate;

“(e) Incorporating, into the substantive areas of the programme, multidisciplinary issues, especially gender, human and institutional capacity-building, the right to development, poverty eradication, the environment, technology transfer and the development and dissemination of data and information;

“(f) Enhancing the role of ESCWA as a major source for up-to-date reliable statistical data, information systems and networks in the economic and social fields of the region, while working to enhance demand, especially by the business sector, by raising awareness of the increasing importance of information as the most powerful tool of analysis for promoting business;

“(g) Providing continued support to the least developed member country (Yemen) and other countries with special needs.

“18.4 In fulfilling its mandates, ESCWA has maintained, and shall continue maintaining, cooperative arrangements with member States and with a host of United Nations and non-United Nations regional organizations, notably the League of Arab States (LAS), the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND), the other regional commissions, the United Nations Development Group, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the Bretton Woods institutions.”

#### **“Subprogramme 4**

#### **Coordination of sectoral policies and harmonization of norms and standards for sustainable development within global changes**

##### **“Objective**

“18.20 The objective is to positively impact sustainable development through the coordination of sectoral policies and the harmonization of sectoral norms and standards within the region to achieve compatibility with international requirements, thus enhancing competitiveness of goods and services.

##### **“Strategy**

“18.21 In the ESCWA region, the persistence of fluctuations in the oil market makes the development of the non-oil sectors the only way of achieving diversification in output and of creating new sources of income. In addition, accession to WTO, as well as integration into regional and subregional blocs and participation in partnership agreements, require that competitiveness in output be achieved through the implementation of advanced technology, the modernization of production support services, especially in the transport and telecommunication sectors, and adherence to internationally recognized standards and regulations. These are prerequisites to benefiting from the opportunities of a free-trading system. The obligation to comply with international mandates on some emerging issues requires further commitment to incorporating the right to

development, poverty eradication, gender mainstreaming and protection of the environment into the planning and implementation of sectoral policies.

“18.22 Support will be provided to member States in the formulation of coordinated sectoral policies and harmonization of norms, standards and regulations to create agricultural and manufacturing industries that are export-oriented and are compatible with the requirements of a free-trading system. Measures will be identified, including technological innovations, to facilitate capacity development in order to enhance productivity, competitiveness and environmental compatibility of output. Member States will be advised on the facilitation of national, intraregional and interregional transport and telecommunications operations to support the physical flow of goods and movement of people as well as on the integration of markets at the national and regional levels. The awareness of both the governments and the private sector would be increased with regard to the need for rational utilization of scarce resources, especially land and water in sectoral production and investment activities. Additionally, awareness among ESCWA member States would be increased with regard to the importance of addressing the social aspect of sectoral development. This would be achieved by identifying production, transport and telecommunication activities that benefit the least advantaged groups of society, especially women, and helping to bridge the gap between rural and urban areas.

#### **“Expected accomplishments**

“18.23 Expected accomplishments would include: (a) increased facilitation of physical and information transboundary flows among member States; (b) enhanced competitiveness through increased capacity-building in relevant productive sectors; (c) enhanced sectoral productivity through increased usage by member States of environment-friendly measures, and improved linkages between technology and sectoral development; and (d) integration between rural and urban areas taking into consideration necessary interaction between the agricultural sector and other sectors.

#### **“Indicators of achievement**

“18.24 Indicators of achievement would include: (a) the number of member States adopting improved quality regimes and building networks and infrastructure; (b) fewer technical barriers across borders; (c) an increased number of member States adopting appropriate legal instruments to ensure competitiveness; (d) the number of institutions achieving ISO 9000 and 14000 standards and other international standards and the extent of assistance provided in building the requisite technological skills; (e) the extent of identification and usage, by member States, of environment-friendly options in sectoral development and increased usage of technology to promote sectoral development; and (f) the number of countries adopting policies for ensuring sustainable livelihoods in rural areas.”

