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**FOLLOW-UP ACTION ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE STATISTICAL
COMMITTEE AT ITS THIRD SESSION**

1. The third session of the Statistical Committee of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) was held in Beirut from 16 to 18 March 1999. The final report on that session contained a number of recommendations adopted by the Committee. The following is a review of those recommendations on which ESCWA was requested to follow up and of the efforts made in that regard:

A. TEXT OF THE RECOMMENDATION CONTAINED IN PARAGRAPH 9 (a), (b) AND (c)

2. The recommendation contained in paragraph 9 (a), (b) and (c), on follow-up action on the recommendations made by the Statistical Committee at its third session, reads as follows:

(a) Subparagraph (a): [The Committee] "emphasized the importance of providing advisory services in the field of sampling to the countries of the region and requested ESCWA to make available an expert on sampling, if only from time to time, in accordance with countries' requests";

(b) Subparagraph (b): "It requested members to provide ESCWA with the names and curricula vitae of experts in their respective territories in the field of statistical sampling, to be included in an ESCWA reference list of experts";

(c) Subparagraph (c): "It requested ESCWA to send a questionnaire to the central statistical organizations to enable them to furnish an inventory of the experience available in them in the various specialized statistical fields".

Follow-up action

3. Concerning subparagraph (a): ESCWA made available to Yemen, at its request, an expert on sampling who provided advisory services for a short period. ESCWA also furnished a list of names of experts on surveys and sampling to the office of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Baghdad. In addition, it provided Oman, at its request, with names of statistical and economic experts. Regarding subparagraphs (b) and (c), ESCWA sent a questionnaire to the central statistical organizations of the ESCWA member countries. Replies were received from only seven, three of which asked to be excused, while four completed 26 copies of the said questionnaire, thus providing the curricula vitae of 26 experts from those countries.

B. TEXT OF THE RECOMMENDATION CONTAINED IN PARAGRAPH 15 (b)

4. The recommendation contained in paragraph 15 (b), on guiding principles for good practices in technical cooperation for statistics, reads as follows:

[The Committee] “agreed to the study of the document ‘Some guiding principles for good practices in technical cooperation for statistics’ by the central statistical organizations of the countries of the region and their sending their comments to ESCWA within three months from the date of the current session of the Statistical Committee in order to enable ESCWA to forward them to the United Nations Statistical Commission,* to be taken into account by the Commission* when reviewing the guiding principles.”

Follow-up action

5. No comments were returned to ESCWA in this regard.

C. TEXT OF THE RECOMMENDATION CONTAINED IN PARAGRAPH 17 (a), (b), (c) AND (e)

6. The recommendation contained in paragraph 17 (a), (b), (c) and (e), on the work programme of the ESCWA statistics division for the biennium 2000-2001, reads as follows:

(a) Subparagraph (a): [The Committee] “approved the proposed programme and called for an examination of the possibility of advancing the date of the expert group meeting on the links between the balance of payments and the 1993 System of National Accounts to 2000 rather than 2001”;

(b) Subparagraph (b): “It called upon ESCWA to devote greater attention to the problems facing statistical work as a whole in the region”;

(c) Subparagraph (c): “It requested that ESCWA should increase its role in coordination and the exchange of experience and information among the statistical organizations in the region”;

(d) Subparagraph (e): “It emphasized the importance of continued training in the field of statistics and of furthering that training through cooperation between ESCWA and the Arab, regional and international organizations and institutions concerned”.

Follow-up action

7. Concerning subparagraph (a): ESCWA advanced the date of the workshop on the links between the balance of payments and the 1993 System of National Accounts, which was in fact held from 27 to 29 June 2000.

8. Concerning subparagraphs (b), (c) and (e): the Division, in coordination with the United Nations Statistics Division, developed a project to provide support for statistical capacities and coordination among the ESCWA members and to deal with the other fundamental problems that thwart statistical work. ESCWA also took part in the meetings of the statistical committees of the League of Arab States, the Council of Arab Economic Unity, the Board of Directors of the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics and other subsidiary committees, in order to gain first-hand knowledge of their statistical programmes and the difficulties that stand in their way and take them into account when preparing the work programmes of the ESCWA Statistics Division. In addition, ESCWA experts made visits to a number of statistical organizations in the region, during which exchanges of information and consultations took place on a number of issues related to statistical data, workshops and expert group meetings.

D. TEXT OF THE RECOMMENDATION CONTAINED IN PARAGRAPH 19 (b)

9. The recommendation contained in paragraph 19 (b), on technical cooperation in statistics, reads as follows:

Subparagraph (b): [The Committee] “called for the continuation and further development of that cooperation”.

Follow-up action

10. ESCWA took that request into account, as is clear from the report on technical cooperation submitted to this meeting.

E. TEXT OF THE RECOMMENDATION CONTAINED IN PARAGRAPH 25

11. The recommendation contained in paragraph 25, on the implementation of the International Comparison Programme (ICP) in the ESCWA region, reads as follows:

[The Committee] “requested ESCWA to continue work on the International Comparison Programme in cooperation with the World Bank”.

Follow-up action

12. The World Bank blocked the activity of that programme and discontinued the related financing, all of which adversely affected the activity of ESCWA in that area.

F. TEXT OF THE RECOMMENDATION CONTAINED IN PARAGRAPH 27 (b)

13. The recommendation contained in paragraph 27 (b), on purchasing power parities and a comparison of price and volume levels of economic aggregates for the ESCWA region in 1995, reads as follows:

Subparagraph (b): [The Committee] “requested ESCWA to send the document to the statistical organizations for study and for their comments, to be taken into consideration when the document is issued in its final form”.

Follow-up action

14. ESCWA sent the document to the statistical organizations in the countries of the region.

G. TEXT OF THE RECOMMENDATION CONTAINED IN PARAGRAPH 29 (b)

15. The recommendation contained in paragraph 29 (b), concerning the report of the Expert group meeting on the implications of the United Nations global conferences for social statistics, reads as follows:

Subparagraph (b): [The Committee] “requested ESCWA to keep the statistical organizations abreast of all new developments, particularly as regards manuals, definitions and measuring methods.”

Follow-up action

16. In this connection, the ESCWA Statistics Division, in cooperation with the Multidisciplinary Social Issues Unit of the Social Development Issues and Policies Division of ESCWA and the United Nations Statistics Division, held a “Regional Meeting on Social Indicators within the Framework of the Implementation and Follow-up of Major United Nations Conferences and Summits in the Arab Countries” in Muscat, Oman, from 29 October to 1 November 2000. It submitted a paper on the Common Country Assessment Framework that included the definitions, goals and expected results of the Framework and a presentation of the content of a general data base containing data relating to the indicators proposed for following up on the recommendations of the United Nations conferences. It also presented the orientations of the United Nations and the report of the Secretary-General on that subject.

H. TEXT OF THE RECOMMENDATION CONTAINED IN PARAGRAPH 31 (b)

17. The recommendation contained in paragraph 31 (b), concerning the report of the Workshop on Strategies for the 2000 Round of Population and Housing Censuses in the ESCWA Member States, reads as follows:

Subparagraph (b): [The Committee] “requested ESCWA to provide the statistical organizations with any new manuals and software and keep them informed of any new recommendations and principles in this area”.

Follow-up action

18. ESCWA, in cooperation with the United Nations Statistics Division, provided the member States with a manual entitled “Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 1”, prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division in 1998 (ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/67/Rev.1). ESCWA reviewed the Arabic version.

I. TEXT OF THE RECOMMENDATION CONTAINED IN PARAGRAPH 35 (B) AND (C)

19. The recommendation contained in paragraph 35 (b) and (c), concerning the report on the project on the development of national gender statistics programmes in the Arab countries (RAB/96/007), reads as follows:

- (a) Subparagraph (b): [The Committee] “requested ESCWA to continue work on the project”;
- (b) Subparagraph (c): “It invited those countries which had not yet joined the project to do so”.

Follow-up action

20. ESCWA continued its work on this project with the participation of nine Arab countries. In addition, the necessary steps for starting project activity in Morocco and Qatar are currently being taken.

21. ESCWA is currently making efforts to provide financial resources to enable other countries to take advantage of the services of this project.

J. TEXT OF THE RECOMMENDATION CONTAINED IN PARAGRAPH 37 (C)

22. The recommendation contained in paragraph 37 (c), concerning the report on the Workshop on Environmental Statistics, Indicators and Accounting, reads as follows:

Subparagraph (c): [The Committee] “requested ESCWA to take steps to hold workshops, symposia and expert group meetings on environmental statistics, owing to their extreme importance”.

Follow-up action

23. The work programme of the statistics division of ESCWA for the biennium 2002-2003 (E/ESCWA/STAT/2001/IG.1/6) includes an expert group meeting on environmental statistics.