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**SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP AND MEETING REPORTS**

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## I. ECONOMIC FIELDS

### A. WORKSHOP ON THE COMPILATION OF INTEGRATED ECONOMIC ACCOUNTS OF THE 1993 SNA BEIRUT, 26 TO 28 OCTOBER 1999

#### Introduction

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), in cooperation with United Nations Statistics Division, organized a Workshop on the Compilation of Integrated Economic Accounts of the 1993 SNA, which was held in Beirut from 26 to 28 October 1999. The participants included representatives from 11 ESCWA members, namely: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. A representative of the Gulf Cooperation Council also participated.

#### 1. Objectives

The main objectives of the Workshop were as follows: to engage in an exchange of experience among experts in the field of national accounts in the ESCWA member States; to obtain greater knowledge within that field, especially with regard to the concepts, definitions and classifications of the 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA); and to gain familiarity with valuation issues and methods of estimation.

#### 2. Recommendations

The participants in the Workshop made the following suggestions and recommendations:

(a) ESCWA should be requested, in so far as possible, to hold more regional seminars, workshops and expert group meetings on national accounts, and appeals should be addressed to international, regional and Arab funds to finance them;

(b) ESCWA should be requested to provide technical support, through the holding of local workshops, for enhancing the capabilities of persons employed in the field of national accounts in the countries of the region;

(c) ESCWA should be requested to have international statistical standards and manuals relating to national accounts translated into Arabic in cooperation with the relevant international organizations;

(d) The ESCWA member countries must make it a point to conduct surveys that serve national accounts purposes, ranking such surveys among their priorities;

(e) ESCWA member countries in which the surveys needed for the System of National Accounts are not available should prepare an annual questionnaire for corporations and establishments, especially large ones, with a view to obtaining data that will serve the purposes of the 1993 System of National Accounts, and ESCWA should provide them with technical assistance if so requested;

(f) ESCWA should be requested to hold a workshop on informal private enterprises in the member countries, making use, in so far as possible, of any documents or manuals issued on that subject by the United Nations;

(g) Efforts should be made to procure financial resources for the holding of a seminar on agriculture and national accounts and to coordinate with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and other relevant organizations;

(h) The Central statistical organizations and the agencies responsible for preparing national accounts in the ESCWA member countries should be invited to exchange expertise and questionnaires with a view to benefiting from each other's experience;

(i) Coordination should be established between the agencies responsible for foreign trade statistics and central banks with a view to achieving the highest possible degree of data homogeneity;

(j) Thanks should be extended to the Statistics Division of ESCWA for its excellent technical preparation and organization of the Workshop and to the United Nations Statistics Division for material and technical support, and they should both be requested to continue that cooperation for follow-up during the stages of implementation of the system in the ESCWA member countries.

B. WORKSHOP ON INDUSTRIAL AND CONSTRUCTION STATISTICS  
BEIRUT, 29 NOVEMBER TO 4 DECEMBER 1999

**Introduction**

Within the framework of the programme of work of the Statistics Division for the biennium 1998-1999, a Workshop on Industrial and Construction Statistics was organized in cooperation with the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO) and the Islamic Development Bank. The Workshop was held at ESCWA headquarters in Beirut from 29 November to 4 December 1999.

Thirty-three trainees with experience in the field of industrial statistics and construction statistics from 17 Arab countries took part in the Workshop.

The Workshop included 12 lectures delivered by United Nations and non-United Nations experts and 8 country papers presented by participants.

1. *Objectives*

The chief aim of the Workshop was to standardize the system followed in all Arab countries through the adoption of the concepts, definitions and classifications used by the United Nations and other international organizations.

2. *Recommendations*

The Workshop made numerous recommendations, the most important of which are as follows:

(a) Surveys of industry and construction should be carried out at frequent intervals and in accordance with international standards;

(b) Statistical data on industry and construction should be compiled and updated continually;

(c) Coordination and links should exist between producers and users of statistics on industry and construction;

(d) Managerial staff employed in the fields of industrial statistics and construction statistics should be developed through continual training;

(e) The concepts, definitions, classifications and units of measurement used in industrial and construction statistics should be standardized;

(f) ESCWA and AIDMO, in order to add to and further develop their databases, should design and prepare a questionnaire specifically for industrial and construction establishments with a view to the periodic acquisition of the required data;

(g) Links should be established between industrial and construction activities and their impact on the environment should be measured;

(h) AIDMO should be given support for creating sectoral statistical databases and connecting its information network to Arab statistical organizations;

(i) A first Arab conference on industrial statistics should be held with a view to developing industrial statistical work in the Arab world;

(j) Specialized workshops in the fields of industrial and construction statistics should continue to be held.

C. WORKSHOP ON THE LINKS BETWEEN THE BALANCE OF PAYMENTS  
AND THE 1993 SYSTEM OF NATIONAL ACCOUNTS  
BEIRUT, 27 TO 29 JUNE 2000

**Introduction**

ESCWA, in coordination with United Nations Statistics Division and the International Monetary Fund, organized a Workshop on the Links between the Balance of Payments and the 1993 System of National Accounts, which has held in Beirut from 27 to 29 June 2000. Participating in the Workshop were experts from national statistical organizations, central banks and concerned ministries representing the 13 ESCWA member States. Also attending were representatives of the Arab Monetary Fund, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations Statistics Division, as well as a number of experts.

*1. Objectives*

The aim of the Workshop was to enhance the capabilities of persons employed in the field of national accounts and balance of payments statistics and increase their capacities in the area of statistics with a view to satisfying the constant need for statistical cadres specializing in those fields. Further aims of the Workshop were: developing know-how; acquainting the participants with new systems and manuals; standardizing statistical concepts and methods; providing an insight into the experience gained in various quarters and studying and taking advantage of that experience; exchanging expertise in that field among the Arab countries; and learning about the theoretical and practical difficulties encountered in implementation as well as appropriate solutions for them.

*2. Recommendations*

At a round table including all the participants that was held on the final day of the Workshop, the most important issues that had emerged during the Workshop were discussed. The participants made the following recommendations:

(a) It is important to carry out sample surveys at border points in countries on whose borders there is no provision for customs declarations so as to make it possible to complete the estimation of the related foreign trade statistics. In the case of smuggled goods, studies to estimate their percentages can be carried out in cooperation with the competent authorities;

(b) Care should be taken to design forms that show the nature and purposes of financial flows in relation to transactions that take place via the banking system. Information pertaining to transactions that take place outside that system, on the other hand, can be obtained through surveys within a framework of cooperation and coordination between the preparers of balance of payments and national accounts with a view to arriving at uniform figures;

(c) ESCWA should be requested to hold, whenever possible, additional specialized seminars, workshops and expert group meetings at the regional level in the fields of national accounts and balance of payments and international, regional and Arab funds should be urged to finance such meetings;

(d) Arab and international funds and organizations should be urged to offer material and technical support for regional and national workshops, to be held in coordination and cooperation with ESCWA, for the purpose of enhancing the qualifications of persons working in the fields of national accounts and balance of payments statistics in the countries of the region;

(e) The International Monetary Fund and the United Nations Statistics Division should be requested to endeavour to have any new international statistical standards and manuals relating to national accounts and balance of payments translated into Arabic and made available to the countries of the region;

(f) It is imperative that the ESCWA member countries have surveys carried out that serve the purposes of national accounts and the requirements of the Balance of Payments Manual (fifth edition), considering such surveys as being among their priorities in the area of statistics;

(g) Central banks, monetary agencies, central statistical organizations and the agencies responsible for preparing national accounts in the ESCWA member States should be invited to engage in an exchange of visits, expertise and questionnaires so as to benefit from each other's experience;

(h) Coordination among the agencies responsible for foreign trade statistics, central banks and central statistical organizations in the countries of the region is essential for ensuring the highest possible degree of data homogeneity;

(i) The region's central banks should be encouraged to make every effort to apply the fifth edition of the Balance of Payments Manual promptly and with the highest degree of detail possible for the purposes of the rest of the world account in the 1993 System of National Accounts;

(j) It is important to provide detailed data and make them available via the various means of dissemination, both written and electronic, reducing the level of secrecy so as better to serve national accounts and balance of payments purposes;

(k) Solutions and methods must be found for estimating remittances that accompany travellers and their personal effects, primarily in order to improve balance of payments statements in a way that will reflect positively on the national accounts.

## **II. SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC FIELDS**

### **A. REPORT OF THE REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON VITAL STATISTICS AND CIVIL REGISTRATION SYSTEMS IN THE ESCWA MEMBER STATES CAIRO, 16 TO 21 OCTOBER 1999**

#### **Introduction**

Within the framework of the efforts being made by ESCWA in the area of acceleration of the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems, the Statistics Division of ESCWA, in cooperation with the United Nations Statistics Division and the Cairo Demographic Centre, held a Regional Workshop on Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems in the ESCWA Member States, which took place in Cairo from 16 to 21 October 1999.

The participants in the Workshop included 24 trainees from eleven ESCWA member countries, 5 experts from the United Nations Statistics Division and the UNFPA Country Support Team for the Arab States and Europe and experts from the Cairo Demographic Centre. Workshop activities included the presentation of 24 training modules, for which use was made of the *Handbook on Training in Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems* prepared especially for that purpose, and 11 documents, in addition to country papers. The Workshop, which met daily for six days, from 9.30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m., also included a field trip to the Civil Status Organization of Cairo.

## 1. Objectives

The purpose of the Workshop was to train a group of national trainers in the field of vital statistics and civil registration in the ESCWA countries. The training programme focussed on issues related to the establishment, management, operation and maintenance of reliable civil registration and vital statistics systems and was also intended to inform the participants of the latest international recommendations and standards in that field. The long-range objective of the Workshop was to strengthen the capacities of the countries of the region for the effective operation and maintenance of civil registration and vital statistics systems so as to enhance system reliability and increase the national, regional and international comparability of vital statistics.

Further purposes of the Workshop were to ascertain the progress made in the ESCWA region in the field of civil registration and vital statistics over the six years since the Western Asia Workshop on Strategies for Accelerating the Improvement of Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems, held in Damascus from 20 to 24 June 1993, and to provide an opportunity for the exchange of experience among the ESCWA member countries and the discussion of means of regional cooperation with a view to a more rational utilization of the resources available in the two fields in question.

## 2. Recommendations

The participants recommended the following:

(a) Permanent national committees should be set up within the national organizations in the ESCWA member States to take up the task of improving civil registration and vital statistics methods through efforts of coordination and cooperation among the various governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations concerned;

(b) Emphasis should be placed on the third recommendation of the Western Asia Workshop, which called for the formation of a regional committee on civil registration and vital statistics, charged with facilitating the exchange of experience and information in those fields, and for efforts to establish a regional network of information and experience. ESCWA should act as secretary of that committee, call for the holding of its first meeting and propose the related agenda;

(c) Attention should be devoted to the adaptation of the laws and regulations on civil registration and vital statistics systems to technological developments, inasmuch as they constitute the cornerstones of proper work in the area of civil registration and vital statistics systems in the ESCWA member countries;

(d) Encouragement should be given to the publication of national reports, news bulletins, wall charts and other printed materials on vital statistics, as permitted by the systems in the different participating countries, it being deemed advisable for such reports, bulletins and materials to mention the level of data completeness, coverage and accuracy;

(e) In connection with the appreciable progress made in the area of civil registration and vital statistics systems in the region since the time of the Western Asia Workshop, which the participants noted with satisfaction:

- (i) The agencies concerned in the member countries should be encouraged to continue their efforts in this field;
- (ii) The agencies concerned in the member countries should be urged to use the latest information technology in the field of civil registration and vital statistics systems;
- (iii) Attention should be paid to according absolute priority, in civil registration and vital statistics systems, to coverage, accuracy and up-to-dateness;

(f) The agencies concerned in the ESCWA member States should be requested to hold similar workshops at the national and local levels;

(g) The agencies concerned in the ESCWA member States should be urged to undertake periodic consciousness-raising programmes aimed at the general public, making use of the *Handbook on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems: Developing Information, Education and Communication* (ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/69) and other literature on the subject;

(h) ESCWA and the United Nations Secretariat should be encouraged to expedite the translation into Arabic of the *Handbook on Training* used in the Workshop and the five booklets on civil registration and vital statistics;

(i) Emphasis should be placed on the importance of a prominent role of ESCWA in providing the member States with information and technical advice in fields connected with civil registration and vital statistics systems;

(j) Regional training sessions on civil registration and vital statistics should be held yearly, resources permitting, and should be hosted in turn by the different ESCWA member States;

(k) There should be added to the *Handbook on Training* prepared by the United Nations Statistics Division a further training module devoted to explaining the various ways of using vital statistics for planning, for the assessment of health conditions, for purposes related to population and development, etc.;

(l) The Statistics Division of ESCWA should be requested to publish the proceedings of the Workshop, as was done in the case of that held in 1993;

(m) The member States should be urged to strive to implement the contents of the Cairo Declaration on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics, adopted by the Workshop. The text of the Declaration follows:

#### **CAIRO DECLARATION ON CIVIL REGISTRATION AND VITAL STATISTICS**

*We the participants in the Regional Workshop on Vital Statistics and Civil Registration Systems in the ESCWA Member States,*

*Meeting at the Civil Status Organization of Cairo,*

*Having deliberated for six days, from 16 to 21 October 1999,*

*Believing in the inalienable right of every child to have a name and nationality,*

*Recognizing that the registration of births is a fundamental right of the child, as provided in article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly on 20 November 1989,*

*Realizing that the registration of births constitutes official recognition of the child by the Government and of the rights and privileges inherent in such recognition,*

1. *Accord the highest priority to the objective of complete registration of all children under 18 years of age by 31 December 2002.*

2. *Agree to intensify our efforts in all fields so as to facilitate the completion of civil registration in our countries, use being made of the media, education and communication at every level, national capacity-building, the holding of symposia, the establishment of committees and other means that will contribute to the achievement of the objective.*

3. *Recommend* the establishment and development of permanent and ongoing relations between central civil registration and vital statistics administrations so as to ensure that the various types of vital statistics are supplied and developed and made available to users.

4. *Value* the great efforts made by the Statistics Division of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in that important field; thank the Division for organizing this Regional Workshop; and request it to continue its assistance in the organization of all regional efforts towards the acceleration of the improvement of civil registration and vital statistics systems in cooperation with United Nations organizations, other regional and international organizations and non-governmental organizations concerned with this field.

This declaration was signed and distributed in Cairo on 21 October 1999 and adopted as a document issued by the Workshop.

B. SECOND REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON GENDER STATISTICS IN THE ARAB COUNTRIES,  
AMMAN, 8 TO 11 NOVEMBER 1999

**Introduction**

Within the framework of the efforts being made by ESCWA in the area of development of gender statistics, the Statistics Division, in cooperation with the Department of Statistics of Jordan, organized the Second Regional Workshop on Gender Statistics in the Arab Countries, which was held in Amman from 8 to 11 November 1999. The Workshop was held under the umbrella of the regional project entitled "Development of National Gender Statistics Programmes in the Arab Countries", which is being funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the International Development Research Centre (Canada).

Participating in the Workshop were 21 national experts drawn from among producers and users of gender statistics in governmental bodies and organizations of civil society and representing the nine countries and areas covered by the project, namely: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia and Yemen.

1. *Objectives*

The Workshop was aimed primarily at familiarizing statisticians and users of gender statistics with the steps and requirements for developing gender statistics programmes; providing guidance on the assessment of data availability and quality; reviewing methods of compiling, analysing and presenting gender statistics for a wide audience; and preparing national work plans for the development of a gender statistics programme. The main objectives of the Workshop were as follows:

(a) To facilitate the exchange of national expertise in the field of data compilation from available national sources and the identification of problems encountered in the preparation of national databases on women and men;

(b) To facilitate, among the countries participating in the project, an exchange of experience gained in the preparation of the national publications (Women and Men: a Statistical Portrait) and related outputs such as booklets, flyers, brochures and wall charts;

(c) To encourage discussion on methods of developing national gender statistics systems in order to create, in cooperation with users, national mechanisms for the production of reliable statistics that highlight priority gender issues at the national and regional levels;

(d) To provide a forum for proposing strategies aimed at improving national gender statistics in the respective countries and developed to address the deficiencies and gaps identified during the data compilation stage;



(e) To agree on a regional programme of action aimed at strengthening regional cooperation in this area in order to improve gender statistics as an important tool for promoting change and ensuring equality between women and men.

## 2. Recommendations

On the basis of the experience acquired over a span of three years by the countries participating in the project entitled "Development of National Gender Statistics Programmes in the Arab Countries", the participants agreed on the need to continue that development, taking into account the following:

(a) The importance of publicizing and raising international and regional support for gender statistics programmes through the following:

- (i) Finalizing and issuing the national publication (Women and Men: a Statistical Portrait);
- (ii) Preparing supporting materials (such as brochures, pamphlets, fact sheets and wall charts);
- (iii) Producing additional publications that address specific topics related to gender statistics;
- (iv) Organizing media briefings and information seminars to present the main findings contained in the national reports;
- (v) Developing project proposals for fund-raising, based on the national plan of action for the development of gender statistics;
- (vi) Establishing an Internet Web site on gender statistics;

(b) Improving the use of currently available statistics in the following areas:

- (i) Training and sensitization;
- (ii) User-producer cooperation;
- (iii) Tabulation and analysis;
- (iv) Presentation;
- (v) Dissemination;

(c) Standardizing and improving concepts and definitions:

- (i) Reviewing existing concepts and definitions (of economic activity and the informal sector, for example) to identify conceptual problems related to gender issues;
- (ii) Updating definitions in the light of revised international standards and national requirements;
- (iii) Modifying definitions in consultation with users and experts in specific statistical fields;
- (iv) Updating manuals to reflect modifications;
- (v) Promoting the use of standardized definitions in the collection of national data;
- (vi) Training producers and users to apply the various concepts and definitions;

(d) Improving measurements:

- (i) Improving the content and design of data collection tools;
- (ii) Training staff in data collection and processing;
- (iii) Conducting a publicity campaign on data collection activities;
- (iv) Collecting new data;

(e) Making institutional arrangements:

- (i) Establishing a gender statistics unit with full-time staff within the national statistical office;
- (ii) Establishing statistical units or improving existing statistical units to enable them to play a more effective role;
- (iii) Designating specific focal points for gender statistics in all statistical units inside and outside the national statistical office and in the various sectors, to ensure coordination of the production of gender statistics;
- (iv) Forming an advisory committee on gender at the national level, comprising producers and users of statistics at relatively high decision-making levels;
- (v) Establishing close cooperation between producers and users of statistics through ad hoc meetings, seminars and training workshops on gender statistics;
- (vi) Improving national statistical systems to enhance the collection of gender statistics;

(f) Following regional cooperation strategies, which includes:

- (i) Maintaining the coordinating role played by ESCWA, in cooperation with various regional and international agencies, in the development of gender statistics in the Arab region, particular attention being accorded to the following:
  - a. Facilitating networking and the exchange of information and experience among participating countries;
  - b. Providing technical advisory services for the implementation of national strategies;
  - c. Disseminating regional comparative statistics on gender;
- (ii) Organizing regional and subregional training workshops for producers and users of statistics to review progress made and study best practices in national gender statistics programmes;
- (iii) Developing and implementing a curriculum for training trainers in gender statistics;
- (iv) Distributing training materials and other publications on gender statistics;
- (v) Arranging study or training tours or exchange programmes to enable national staff to learn from their counterparts in the region;
- (vi) Undertaking a comprehensive review of the concepts, definitions and methods used in the collection of data on areas such as economic activity, unpaid work and the informal sector;
- (vii) Designing standardized data-collection questionnaires to be adopted as models for national use;
- (viii) Holding expert group meetings to develop methods of measuring time use, poverty, violence and other variables having a gender component;
- (ix) Reviewing and updating the regional database on gender statistics in line with users' needs and the prioritization of gender issues in the region;
- (x) Issuing a regular (triennial to quinquennial) regional publication on gender statistics, dealing with specific development themes;
- (xi) Establishing an Internet Web site on gender statistics.

C. WORKSHOP ON ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE POPULATION: EMPLOYMENT,  
UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT  
CAIRO, 17 TO 21 SEPTEMBER 2000

**Introduction**

Within the framework of the efforts being made by ESCWA in the area of capacity-building for the collection of statistics on the labour market, the Statistics Division of ESCWA, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Cairo Demographic Centre, held a regional Workshop on Economically Active Population: Employment, Unemployment and Underemployment. The Workshop was held in Cairo from 17 to 21 September, 2000.

The ILO manual entitled "Surveys of economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment", published in 1990, was adopted as a training tool. The manual includes explanations of international definitions and concepts relating to economically active population and technical guidelines for the application of international standards in the collection of data on that subject by means of household and other surveys.

The participants in the Workshop included 24 trainees representing eleven ESCWA member States and 3 experts from ILO, as well as participants from the Cairo Demographic Centre and Arab and international organizations and institutes.

*1. Objectives*

The principal objective of the Workshop was to train specialists and analysts in the field of labour statistics in the ESCWA member countries. The training programme focussed on issues related to economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment and was intended to familiarize the participants with the most recent international recommendations and standards in that area.

Another aim of the Workshop was to organize a regional forum at which member countries could voice their opinions on international guidelines relating to economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment, based on their own national conditions, and to exchange relevant experience. A further aim was to present the Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM) developed by the International Labour Office.

The long-term objective was essentially to enhance specialists' and analysts' knowledge of international guidelines on the measurement of the various aspects of economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment.

*2. Recommendations*

At the end of the Workshop, the participants made the following recommendations:

(a) The member States should be invited to draft, in cooperation with ESCWA and ILO, a proposal for a regional interpretation of the existing international recommendations relating to statistics on economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment, and a model form should be designed on the basis of that recommendation;

(b) The member States should be requested to carry out regular labour force surveys at sufficiently close intervals, in which it should be possible to use the sample rotation method. One of the basic stages of the survey should include an evaluation of the survey data;

(c) ESCWA and ILO should be requested to offer technical assistance and training at the national level with a view to the designing and carrying out of labour force surveys and to translate the necessary materials into Arabic;

(d) The member States should be requested to publish labour force survey results in a manner in keeping with the official statistical principles issued by the United Nations Statistical Commission, which have been adopted by the ESCWA Statistical Committee;

(e) The member States should be requested to provide ESCWA and ILO with any requested data in their possession on the labour force and the related methodologies, in accordance with national laws on statistics;

(f) The member States should be encouraged to exchange national experience in the field of labour market statistics;

(g) ESCWA and ILO should be requested to hold regional workshops for follow-up of the exchange of information and experience among member States, provided that the requisite financial resources are available;

(h) The member States should be requested to play a more positive role in the drafting of international recommendations through participation in international conferences of labour statisticians;

(i) The member States should be encouraged, in addition to obtaining data on time-related underemployment, to devise and test ways of measuring the most important types of inadequate employment and keep ILO and ESCWA informed of the results in order to build up a body of international experience in that field;

(j) National statistics compiled on employment characteristics in accordance with the major international statistical classifications, such as the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88) and the International Classification of Status in Employment (ISCE), should reflect national realities and be flexible enough to adapt to changes in those classifications. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the process of compiling, maintaining and updating information on employment characteristics requires a well-trained staff;

(k) Inasmuch as men's and women's roles differ from country to country due to the influence of social and cultural factors, labour statistics should reflect the differing situations of women and men in the country in respect of work and living conditions, such differences being taken into account in the establishment of definitions and methods of measurement, classification and tabulation. In addition, member States should be urged to perform gender analysis with a view to evaluating the quality and validity of their statistics;

(l) ILO should be requested to distribute literature on the Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM), including definitions and computation methods, in the region in Arabic;

(m) ESCWA and ILO should be requested to organize workshops on the analysis of labour force survey data, and especially the use of labour market indicators in national reports submitted to policy-makers.

**D. 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  
MUSCAT, 29 OCTOBER TO 1 NOVEMBER 2000**

**Introduction**

The Statistics Division and the Social Development Issues and Policies Division of ESCWA, in cooperation with the United Nations Statistics Division and the Ministry of National Economy of Oman, 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. The Meeting took place in Muscat, Oman, from 29 October to 1 November 2000.

The participants in the Meeting included national data-producing experts representing central statistical organizations in the Arab States. They also included experts from ministries of planning and ministries of labour and social affairs, inasmuch as such experts are users of social indicators in the Arab countries. In addition, a number of experts participated in their personal capacity, presenting working papers which they had been charged with preparing.

Also participating were representatives of the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

### 1. Objectives

The general purpose of the Meeting was to learn about social indicators relating to the summit conferences held by the United Nations and about national and regional efforts towards building national statistical capacities in the field of data collection, analysis, dissemination and utilization in development planning and in the implementation and follow-up of United Nations global conferences. More specifically, the Meeting had the following objectives:

(a) To present the orientations of the Economic and Social Council on statistics and indicators relating to follow-up to United Nations global conferences;

(b) To learn of national efforts made in the area of coordination and rationalization of the basic indicators on the implementation and follow-up of the recommendations of the United Nations global conferences;

(c) To ascertain to what extent central statistical organizations have adopted the Common Country Assessment (CCA) Indicator Framework and to become familiar with the indicators used in that area; to identify gaps in data; and to agree on a mechanism for publishing the indicators, updating them annually and incorporating them into a national statistics system with a view to achieving sustainability;

(d) To learn about the national mechanism for linking the Common Country Assessment Indicator Framework to various policies, such as those relating to the alleviation of poverty, strategies for reducing unemployment, the advancement of women, population issues, human development and others;

(e) To become familiar with national programmes prepared with a view to filling gaps in data and improving timing and to learn of national efforts made in the area of national statistical capacity-building in the field of data collection, analysis and publication within the framework of the implementation and follow-up of the recommendations of the United Nations global conferences.

### 2. Recommendations

The participants made the following recommendations:

(a) The participants welcomed the adoption of the Common Country Assessment Indicator Framework for monitoring national development trends in the Arab countries and measuring the progress made in implementing the resolutions and recommendations of the global conferences, which was presented by ESCWA, and expressed satisfaction at its being considered part of the integrated statistical system at the national level;

(b) ESCWA should be requested to take the initiative in the effort to develop and update a national "statistical system" aimed at raising the level of data, statistics and indicators, standardizing statistical classifications and developing special coding manuals in Arabic that match the coding manuals issued by the United Nations;

(c) ESCWA should be requested to establish an information network on social indicators on the Internet and train producers and users of such indicators in preparing them and identifying the policies connected with them;

(d) The United Nations organizations should be requested to promote capacity-building and provide support to statistical organizations in the following areas:

- (i) Data analysis and improvement of data quality;
- (ii) Electronic data dissemination;

(e) Existing gaps in data collection, analysis and distribution should be ascertained and efforts should be made to build institutional capacities in that area;

(f) Efforts should be made to establish new indicators in fields not hitherto dealt with: human rights, democracy, partnership, governance, children's issues, etc.;

(g) National statistical organizations should be supported, their performance of their duties should be strengthened on all levels and national sources should be taken as a basis for producing indicators, in cooperation with data users and the institutions of civil society in that area;

(h) Efforts should be made to create familiarity with the necessary indicators for monitoring progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the global conferences and ways of taking them into account;

(i) The need for data, statistics and indicators to reflect the social and cultural issues of the different societies should be emphasized;

(j) It is essential to highlight the importance of regional and international coordination in the field of data collection and analysis and the establishment of indicators, including composite indicators to measure development, and follow-up of the recommendations of the United Nations global conferences;

(k) Efforts should be made to hold training workshops for producers and users of social indicators and to create the necessary mechanisms for the exchange of expertise relating to the establishment of the national indicators of the Common Country Assessment with a view to the follow-up of the recommendations of the United Nations conferences;

(l) With a view to the measurement and monitoring of the national development process, the indicators listed below might be added to the Common Country Assessment Indicator Framework in the following areas:

(i) Gender equality:

- a. Literacy rates;
- b. Enrolment rates in technical and vocational institutes;
- c. Female unemployment rates as compared with overall rates of unemployment;
- d. The representation of women in government at the national and regional levels in all administrative, diplomatic and political fields;
- e. Rates of women's access to resources;

(ii) Education:

- a. Indicators of level of education;
- b. Teacher-student ratio and educational expenditure as a percentage of national income;

(iii) Employment:

- a. Types of unemployment;
- b. Employment rate distribution according to employment sector and economic activity;

(iv) Housing:

Identification of services available in housing agglomerations (water, sanitation, transportation);

(v) Health:

- a. Rates of child immunization against the principal diseases;
- b. Rates of disability at birth;

(vi) Poverty/income indicators;

- a. Reduction of the poverty rate (percentage);
- b. Improvement in child nutrition (percentage);
- c. Percentage of the population having an adequate caloric intake;
- d. Food expenditure rates among the poorest segment;
- e. Expenditure on food as a percentage of household income;

(m) A coordinating committee should be created, including the rapporteurs of the national committees on housing, social development, women, etc., for follow-up of the recommendations of the recent international conferences and summits held by the United Nations, to participate in the preparation of national reports on progress made;

(n) In the collection of data and the development of indicators, priority should be accorded to local levels in all rural and urban areas;

(o) Housing indicators should be reformulated to include guarantees of occupancy of housing, access to and availability of drinking water, and electricity;

(p) Legislation on statistics should be revised to keep up with scientific advances in data collection, analysis and dissemination, and efforts should be made to prepare and publish social indicators periodically;

(q) The importance of publishing a yearly national report, along the lines of the *Human Development Report*, for follow-up of the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations global conferences, should be emphasized. The report should include the Common Country Assessment indicators and the necessary contextual indicators;

(r) The role of organizations of civil society as users rather than producers of social indicators and data (except to the extent that data are produced through their internal records on the activities undertaken by them) should be emphasized;

(s) The importance of the method presented by ESCWA on the calculation of indicators for follow-up to the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) should be emphasized, as should the importance of training at the national level;

(t) The necessary steps should be taken to pool the efforts of producers and users of social indicators and data at the national level, owing to the advantages and importance of such pooling for standardization of statistical concepts, classifications and definitions.

