

**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia**

Committee on Water Resources
Fifth session
Beirut, 30 October – 1 November 2002

INFORMATION NOTE*1. Background to the session*

The Committee on Water Resources was established in order to strengthen regional cooperation by the effective participation of the relevant parties in member countries in planning the programmes of the secretariat in the field of water resources, and pursuant to Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) resolution 205 (XVIII) of 25 May 1995 concerning the establishment of a committee on water resources in the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, which was adopted by the United Nations Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1995/26 of 24 July 1995 entitled "Establishment of a Committee on Water Resources within the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia". The first session of the Committee was held in Amman in 1997, while the second, third and fourth sessions were all held in Beirut, in 1998, 1999 and 2000 respectively. The fifth session of the Committee will be held in Beirut from 30 October to 1 November 2002.

2. Goals

The aim of this session is to reinforce cooperation between, on the one hand, the countries of the ESCWA region and, on the other, between the countries of the region and the ESCWA secretariat; and to provide the official framework for the discussion of the water situation at national and regional level. In the course of the session, statements will be heard from member countries, which will also present reports on action taken and developments in the field of water. The participation of member countries will also be sought in identifying priorities for the activities included in the programme of work of the Energy, Natural Resources and Environment Division in the field of water resource management, with a view to achieving the sustainable development and optimum, effective and integrated management of those resources.

The secretariat hopes that the session will conclude with a recommendation concerning the priorities of the water programme for the biennium 2004-2005, and that it will adopt the report on the optimum use of water resources, in the preparation of which the members of the Committee were involved. The secretariat also hopes that, once it has been discussed, the session will adopt the ESCWA proposal regarding the establishment of new task forces responsible for the priorities in the field of the integrated management of water resources.

During the session, there will be a review of the progress made in the technical cooperation programme undertaken with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and of a number of the project proposals which have been or will be financed by donor parties.

3. Date and venue

The fifth session of the Committee on Water Resources will be held at ESCWA headquarters, namely, United Nations House in Beirut, from 30 October to 1 November 2002.

4. *Participants*

The permanent representatives of member countries will take part in the meetings of this session. Governments have responsibility for the travel and accommodation expenses of their representatives. Relevant international, regional and national organizations will also be invited to participate as observers in the work of this session, on the understanding that they will also bear the travel and accommodation costs of their representatives.

5. *Working language*

The session will use Arabic during its meetings and discussions. If need be, certain papers may be presented in English.