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**DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK AND PRIORITIES  
FOR THE BIENNIUM 2004-2005**

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## Overview

1. The programme of work under this section has been formulated within the framework of programme 18 of the revised medium-term plan and will be implemented by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). The programme of work consists of six interlinked subprogrammes.

2. The objective of this programme is to accelerate the pace of economic, social and technological development in the ESCWA region and halt the unsustainable exploitation of its natural resources. This objective can be served through the facilitation of Arab regional integration, mandated by the twenty-first Ministerial Session of the Commission as the principal concern of ESCWA secretariat.

3. The region is confronted by four principal challenges, namely:

(a) The absence of comprehensive, integrated and sustainable social policies that take into consideration the economic, social and environmental aspects of development;

(b) The need to consider the impact of economic variables on the social dimension of development in addressing the unsustainable economic situation with regard to sustained population growth;

(c) The need to respond to the challenges of globalization and trade liberalization under the World Trade Organization (WTO) regime;

(d) The need to keep abreast with the requirements of the rapid pace of the technology revolution and bridge the digital divide.

These considerations are of particular importance in the region, which is characterized by rapid population growth, scarce water resources and conflict.

4. The programme, which observes the requirements for reform as expressed in the *Report of the Secretary-General (A/57/387)*, is predicated on the strategic approach of the reform exercise carried out by ESCWA in 2002-2003 and further developed for the biennium 2004-2005. This approach aims to emphasize and strengthen existent elements or add new ones to the revised programme structure, based on rational criteria. The Commission will continue to rationalize its work by focusing on the four pivotal region-specific priority areas, also central to the Millennium Declaration Goals and the Monterrey and Johannesburg priorities (A/CONF.198/11 and A/CONF.199/20), at programme and output levels, namely:

(a) Managing social policies, given that existing social policies in the ESCWA region are often fragmented;

(b) Managing water and energy, given the importance of water in a region characterized by scarce water resources, most of which are shared, and abundant energy resources;

(c) Managing globalization, the driving force in world economic developments;

(d) Managing technology, an issue of special importance owing to the considerable digital divide that prevails in the region.

Task-oriented intra-divisional and inter-divisional work teams will follow a holistic, multidisciplinary approach to the implementation of the programme of work that underlines the strong linkages among the four priorities identified. Corresponding changes have been introduced to the organizational structure in order to accommodate these priorities.

5. The programme will continue to pursue its objectives by reorienting its work in the area of social development through focusing on raising the awareness of member countries of the need to widen the scope

of the social aspects of development in order to cover pressing issues and formulate integrated and sustainable social policies. The industrial and agricultural sectors have been integrated with energy, environment and water disciplines at ESCWA in order to consolidate the programme of work and improve multidisciplinary synergies, eliminate redundancies and increase focus as the agricultural and industrial sectors are the primary consumers of water and energy, respectively. Combining issues that deal with globalization and regional integration under one subprogramme is also emblematic of attempts being made by ESCWA to draw on synergies in its work, as economic integration at the regional level could act as a catalyst for the integration of the region into the world economy. Transport issues have been placed under the subprogramme that deals with globalization in order to enhance programmatic synergies, as transport facilitation is closely related to trade facilitation, which is a key issue under the WTO regime.

6. The Commission will also assist member countries with accession to WTO and the implementation of WTO agreements, as well as position them for competition in regional and international markets. It will place emphasis on the relative importance of knowledge-based industries as a leading sector of the global economy that could drive regional development and introduce information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool for poverty reduction and job creation that could lead to improved quality of life with moderate investment and impact on the environment. An entire new subprogramme has been dedicated to this purpose. Furthermore, ESCWA will assist member countries in increasing their capacity for the quantitative assessment of economic and financial data and trends and coordination of economic policies in order to achieve economic development in the region through a new subprogramme dedicated to that specific purpose.

7. The programme will continue to serve as a forum for articulating the concerns of member countries, facilitating dialogue and exchanging best practices. It will further continue to assist ESCWA member countries in their preparations for United Nations global conferences by raising awareness of principal issues of concern and providing advocacy in the facilitation of consensus and adoption of regional positions with regard to issues discussed at global forums.

8. The work of ESCWA is mainly geared towards analytical and normative activities. However, there is an increase in the number of capacity-building activities that would lead to more tangible benefits and, also, an increase in technical material due to the need to keep abreast with advances in technology.

9. The Commission will carry out its activities with various United Nations, regional and international entities. These include other United Nations regional commissions as well as the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Bretton Woods Institutions and WTO. Partners at the regional level include the League of Arab States as well as the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD) and its subsidiary bodies. Collaboration and cooperation will include the organization of joint meetings, preparation of joint studies and sharing information and experience. Efforts to enhance cooperation among regional United Nations entities through the United Nations Regional Coordination Group will continue. The secretariat of ESCWA will increase its efforts to involve civil society institutions in its work.

10. Rationalization of the number of outputs, initiated in the previous biennium within the framework of the restructuring of ESCWA programmes, resulted in a reduction of 26.8 per cent in the 2002-2003 programme and a further reduction of 15.5 per cent in 2004-2005. This reduction, which conforms to the policy of the Secretary-General and exhibits significant multidisciplinary synergies, has served to shift emphasis from a quantitative to a qualitative approach in the formulation of outputs.

11. The restructuring of ESCWA has resulted in the establishment of a Centre for Arab Women. The Chief of this Centre will assume a leading role in the region for gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women and serve as principal adviser to the Executive Secretary on women and gender equality.

12. The restructuring of ESCWA has also resulted in the redeployment of nine posts from support to substantive subprogrammes in 2002-2003. This has brought the ratio close to the average of that in other regional commissions. This exercise will continue in 2004-2005.

### **SUBPROGRAMME 1**

#### **INTEGRATED POLICIES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF REGIONAL RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

##### **A. ORIENTATION OF THE SUBPROGRAMME FOR THE BIENNIUM**

13. This subprogramme is the responsibility of the Sustainable Development and Productivity Division (SDPD). The programme of work has been formulated with reference to programme 18, subprogramme 1 of the revised medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005.

14. The objective of this subprogramme is to have a positive impact on regional integration and cooperation among ESCWA member countries, based on a concrete approach to the integrated and sustainable management of water, energy and the production sectors.

15. Water resources are scant in the ESCWA region and its limited fertile land is subject to degradation. The scarcity of water is aggravated by inefficient use and large-scale consumption of water by the agricultural sector. The production sectors also suffer from low productivity and weak competitiveness, due to inefficient and unsustainable use of resources and technology encouraged by the abundance of depletable fossil energy reserves. The combination of these factors has dire consequences for the environment.

16. The course of action involves the provision of assistance to the countries of the region in implementing the relevant recommendations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) held in Copenhagen in 1995 with regard to water, energy, renewable energy and the environment, with emphasis on the integrated management of water resources. It also requires the enhancement of the competitiveness and productivity of the agricultural and production sectors through increasing on-farm water use efficiency and halting land degradation, conducting operational programmes on renewable energy promotion and its use in poverty alleviation and, in particular, for women, in addition to improving the performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through technology innovation, clustering and networking of institutions.

17. This subprogramme will continue to serve as a forum for the countries of the region for dialogue and discussion, as a means by which to reach common positions, promote policies and measures for sustainable development on water and energy issues, facilitate regional cooperation with particular regard to the management of shared resources and promote knowledge-based, sustainable development as a means by which to enhance regional synergy and, thus, improve productivity, competitiveness and networking. To this end, efforts will be expended in order to raise awareness on these issues through undertaking research and analytical studies, convening meetings, disseminating best practices and building capacities through the organization of workshops and provision of advisory services on integrated sustainable development with regard to energy, water, environment, agriculture, industry and technology.

18. In order to achieve these objectives, partnerships will be forged with United Nations agencies, programmes and organizations such as DESA, UNDP, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNCTAD, UNEP, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), FAO and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development in New York, as well as other regional commissions. Partnerships will also be forged with concerned international organizations such as the World Bank as well as with regional and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO), the World Water Council (WWC), the International Solar Energy Society (ISES), the International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA), the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment (CAMRE) and the League of Arab States.

19. The end-users of the subprogramme outputs will include policy and decision makers in government agencies, civil society institutions, NGOs and the business community.

20. Expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement are listed below.

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
(a) Increased capacity of member countries to apply sustainable development measures and policies	✓ Increase in the number of countries that adopt or implement sustainable development measures as evidenced by the number of environment monitoring tools applied by member countries;  Increase in the number of member countries that adopt or implement sustainable development measures as evidenced by the number of measures and/or tools adopted or applied in order to improve water use efficiency and/or reverse land degradation in agriculture
(b) Facilitation of regional cooperation in the management of water and energy resources, in particular shared surface and groundwater resources	✓ Number of memorandums of understanding (MOUs) signed by member countries in order to jointly plan and manage shared water resources;  Number of countries agreeing to cooperate in energy and renewable energy issues;  Increase in the activities of the Regional Promotional Mechanism for Sustainable Energy Systems (RPMSES) and partnership initiatives in member countries
(c) Increased capacity of member countries to achieve sustainable integrated management of water and energy sectors, with due consideration to the needs and role of women	✓ Measures undertaken by member countries to increase the number of institutions adopting policies and measures for improving the sustainability of the water and energy sectors
(d) Enhanced national capacities for improving productivity and competitiveness as well as the performance of SMEs with a view to poverty reduction	✓ Increase in the number of countries and/or initiatives targeting innovative technology and management techniques to enhance productivity and competitiveness, as evidenced by feedback from SMEs regarding benefits derived from information disseminated by ESCWA;  ✓ Increase in the number of countries and/or initiatives targeting innovative technology and management techniques to enhance productivity and competitiveness as evidenced by new institution building, such as technology parks and incubators and networking/clustering arrangements

21. It is anticipated that the objectives and expected accomplishments of the subprogramme will be achieved based on the assumption that there is:

- (a) Willingness on the part of ESCWA member countries for partnership and cooperation in the planning and management of shared natural resources;
- (b) Continued availability of extrabudgetary resources;
- (c) Willingness on the part of ESCWA member countries to adopt technology development policies and institutions;
- (d) Active participation by SMEs in related ESCWA activities;
- (e) Willingness on the part of ESCWA member countries to provide data and information for the construction of databases and environmental monitoring;
- (f) Availability of sufficient resources for Governments to undertake the necessary related development measures.

## B. ACTIVITIES

### 1. *Servicing of intergovernmental and expert bodies*

- (a) *Substantive servicing of meetings*
  - (i) Substantive servicing of the sixth session of the Committee on Water Resources (2004) (six meetings);
  - (ii) Substantive servicing of the fifth session of the Committee on Energy (2004) (four meetings).
- (b) *Other services provided (ad hoc expert group meetings)*
  - (i) Expert group meeting on the status and prospects of achieving sustainability in the energy sector in the ESCWA region (2004);
  - (ii) Expert group meeting on reversing land degradation: issues and options (2004);
  - (iii) Second meeting of the ESCWA Consultative Committee on Scientific and Technological Development and Technological Innovation (2004) (conducted jointly with ESCWA Information and Communication Technology Division (ICTD));
  - (iv) Expert group meeting on national and sectoral policies for knowledge societies in the Arab countries (2004);
  - (v) Expert group meeting on access to environmental information for public participation in the ESCWA region (2005);
  - (vi) Expert group meeting on upgrading environmental monitoring systems in the ESCWA region (2005).

### 2. *Other substantive activities*

- (a) *Recurrent publications*
  - (i) ESCWA Water Development Report, No. 1 (2005);
  - (ii) Review of Productivity and Sustainable Development Activities, Nos. 3 and 4 (2004 and 2005).

(b) *Non-recurrent publications*

- (i) Role of women in rural areas in managing water, conserving energy and safeguarding the environment (2004) (conducted jointly with ESCWA Social Development Division (SDD));
- (ii) Report on follow-up to RPMSES activities (2005);
- (iii) Report on knowledge mapping and needs assessment in integrated water resources management (IWRM) in the ESCWA region (2004);
- (iv) Energy efficiency and cleaner fossil fuels in selected sectors in selected ESCWA countries (2004);
- (v) Interstate/interregional cooperation on shared water resources management: selected case studies (2004 and 2005);
- (vi) Environmental standards and competitiveness of key economic sectors (2005);
- (vii) Technology transfer to SMEs and identification of opportunities for domestic and foreign direct investment in selected sectors (2005);
- (viii) Networking research, development and innovation in the Arab countries (2005).

(c) *Seminars for outside users*

- (i) Seminar on the development of sustainable development indicators and country profiles in selected sectors (agriculture, energy, environment, industry, technology and water) (2005);
- (ii) Seminar on RPMSES (2005);
- (iii) Seminar on the application of IWRM guidelines (2004);
- (iv) Seminar on water governance: the role of stakeholders and civil society institutions in water management (2005);
- (v) Seminar on enhancing agricultural productivity through on-farm water use efficiency (2005);
- (vi) Seminar on rural development: policies, strategies and institutions (2004);
- (vii) Regional seminar on sustainable development and competitiveness of the agro-food sector (SMEs) (2004).

(d) *Technical material for outside users (including databases and software)*

Development and maintenance of ESCWA home page on productivity and sustainable development, including a web site on the development of the Arab Water Resources Management Network (AWARENET) (continuous).

(e) *Organization of United Nations System of Chief Executives Board (CEB) for coordination and/or inter-agency meetings and activities*

Substantive servicing of intergovernmental meetings of the executive bureau of CAMRE, the Joint Committee on Environment and Development in the Arab Region (JCEDAR), joint technical secretariat of ESCWA, CAMRE and the UNEP Regional Office for West Asia (UNEP/ROWA) to follow up on the Arab initiative for the implementation of WSSD (continuous).

### 3. *Technical cooperation*

#### *Field projects*

Endogenous capacity-building through new institutional forms in selected priority areas (continuous).

#### **SUBPROGRAMME 2**

#### **INTEGRATED SOCIAL POLICIES**

##### A. ORIENTATION OF THE SUBPROGRAMME FOR THE BIENNIUM

22. This subprogramme is the responsibility of the Social Development Division (SDD). The programme of work has been formulated with reference to programme 18, subprogramme 2 of the revised medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005.

23. The objective of this subprogramme is to achieve regional cooperation in the advocacy and promotion of comprehensive and integrated social policies that are region-specific, culturally sensitive and have a practical orientation.

24. In the ESCWA region, which suffers from political instability, member countries grapple with various social problems including the unbalanced provision of basic social services and uneven distribution of income associated with deepening poverty and unemployment, as well as threats to family cohesion and community development. National social policies are often conflicting. They are seldom integrated or harmonized and frequently formulated and implemented with little input from civil society institutions. As such, they tend not to foster a rights-based approach to development. The development process is further impeded by failure to build the capacities of human capital, including women.

25. The orientation of the subprogramme during the biennium 2004-2005 will emphasize the importance of integrated social policies for social development and advocate good governance through more open dialogue and strengthened partnership between Governments and civil society institutions. Concerted efforts will be made to lend further impetus to gender mainstreaming, gender equality and the empowerment of women while also taking into account social policies for poverty alleviation and unemployment reduction. The issues of family cohesion, youth, the ageing and the disabled will be addressed within this perspective.

26. The course of action will be multidimensional, as manifested in the forthcoming comprehensive flagship report on social policies in the ESCWA region. The report will serve as an umbrella for a cluster of closely linked intermediate inputs on population, gender equality, housing and urban management policies as well as other, related socio-economic policies such as poverty alleviation and unemployment reduction.

27. During the biennium 2004-2005, the subprogramme will seek to move from mapping, defining and conceptualizing social policies to proposing socio-economic frameworks in which integrated social policies can be formulated and made operational in order to achieve sustainable development. The new Centre for Arab Women will play a major role in improving the status of women in the ESCWA region and will serve as the secretariat of the Committee on the Status of Arab Women approved by the Committee on Social Development in July 2002. The Centre will undertake expanded functions with regard to building the capacity of national machineries for gender mainstreaming in the region and will span normative and operational activities by advocating the application of pro-poor technologies for the alleviation of poverty among women and emphasizing the role of women in water and environmental management, as well as the utilization of ICTs as a means for job creation and unemployment reduction among women.

28. The subprogramme will continue to serve as a forum for dialogue and contribute to reaching and/or facilitating common regional positions with regard to global social issues. Research and analytical studies will be conducted under the subprogramme, which will also hold meetings, monitor social developments, implementation and follow-up to global conferences and observances and disseminate information on social issues, lessons learned and best practices, implement a number of field projects for capacity-building and, in addition, produce and disseminate social statistics and indicators including gender-disaggregated statistics



and migration statistics. The subprogramme will also provide advisory services on social development issues.

29. Main partners in the subprogramme will include DESA, counterparts in regional commissions, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), UNDP, ILO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UNESCO, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT), the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), the League Arab States and its specialized agencies, the Centre of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR), the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND), the Arab Planning Institute (API), international research institutes and NGOs.

30. Expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement are listed below.

Expected accomplishment	Indicators of achievement
(a) Enhanced capacity of Governments and NGOs to forge partnerships and open policy dialogue on social issues at regional, national and local levels	✓ Increase in the number of joint committees between Governments and civil society institutions, facilitated by ESCWA, at regional, national and local levels;  Increase in the number of NGOs at regional, national and local levels participating in ESCWA meetings
(b) Enhanced awareness and ability of policy makers to formulate integrated social policies and programmes	✓ Increase in the number of officials and other end-users recognizing the importance of formulating integrated social policies for social development;  Increase in the number of member countries formulating and implementing suitable social policies
(c) Increased capacity of policy makers for mainstreaming gender and reducing gender imbalances	✓ Increase in the number of Governments and institutions pursuing gender mainstreaming for gender equality
(d) Increased awareness of policy makers of the need to adopt measures, mechanisms and projects for productive employment and poverty reduction	✓ Number of measures adopted at the Committee on Social Development or expert group meetings that deal with poverty and unemployment;  Number of beneficiaries of training activities in projects;  Number of electronic documentation centres for the blind
(e) Strengthened national capacities in formulating integrated population policies and adopting urban planning and development policies	✓ Increase in the number of member countries formulating integrated population policies;  Increase in the number of urban development initiatives in member countries developed with the assistance of ESCWA

31. It is anticipated that the objectives and expected accomplishments of the subprogramme will be achieved based on the assumption that:

- (a) The Governments of ESCWA member countries are prepared to accept the increased role of NGOs and forge effective partnerships with them;
- (b) Good coordination mechanisms are established in order to facilitate dialogue on integrated social policies between the various parties involved;
- (c) Member countries are supportive of gender mainstreaming;
- (d) Extrabudgetary resources are available for the purpose of financing technical assistance projects and activities;
- (e) Data needed for databases and social indicators are available and valid.

## B. ACTIVITIES

### 1. *Servicing of intergovernmental and expert bodies*

#### (a) *Substantive servicing of meetings*

Substantive servicing of the fifth session of the Committee on Social Development and report to the Commission thereof (2004) (six meetings).

#### (b) *Parliamentary documentation*

Two reports to the Economic and Social Council on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (2004 and 2005).

#### (c) *Other services provided (ad hoc expert group meetings)*

- (i) Second meeting of ESCWA Consultative Committee on NGOs (2004);
- (ii) Expert group meeting on globalization and employment (2004);
- (iii) Expert group meeting on formulation of integrated population policies (2005);
- (iv) Expert group meeting on sustainable Arab cities, security of tenure and good urban governance (2005);
- (v) Substantive servicing of intergovernmental/expert group meeting on social policies (regional follow-up to WSSD, Copenhagen +10) (2005);
- (vi) Substantive servicing of intergovernmental/expert group meeting on regional follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW) (Beijing +10) (2004);
- (vii) Expert group meeting on intraregional migration statistics (2004).

### 2. *Other substantive activities*

#### (a) *Recurrent publications*

- (i) ESCWA Social Policies Series (2005);
- (ii) ESCWA Population and Development Report, No. 2 (2004);
- (iii) Status of Arab Women Report 2005, No. 2 (2005);
- (iv) Studies on Arab Women and Development Series, No. 34: Gender, Citizenship and Non-Governmental Organizations in Egypt (2004);

- (b) *Non-recurrent publications*
  - (i) Women and the information society: use of ICTs to empower women (2004) (conducted jointly with ICTD);
  - (ii) Urbanization and the changing character of the Arab city (2004).
- (c) *Booklets, pamphlets, fact sheets, wall charts, information kits*
  - (i) Wall chart on population and millennium development goals (2004);
  - (ii) Information kit on Population Policies and Information System (PPIS), No. 2 (2004);
  - (iii) Information kits and indicators on Arab women (2004);
  - (iv) Wall chart on key indicators of the labour market (2004);
  - (v) Pamphlet on women and men in public life and leadership in Arab countries (2005).
- (d) *Technical material for outside users (including databases and software)*
  - (i) Maintenance of PPIS database (continuous);
  - (ii) Maintenance of PPIS home page (continuous);
  - (iii) Maintenance of the United Nations Population Information Network (POPIN) Western Asia home page (continuous).

### 3. *Technical cooperation*

#### *Field projects*

- (i) Local community development in rural areas (continuous);
- (ii) Regional capacity-building and networking in the ESCWA region, including networking between Arab youth NGOs, capacity-building of NGOs in Lebanon and Saudi Arabia, vocational training for men and women in Yemen and training of local community development workers (continuous);
- (iii) Social policies, including application of integrated social policies framework, three subregional seminars on the social policies report, information kit and brochures on the social policies report (continuous);
- (iv) Promotion of electronic Braille and information technology for disabled persons (continuous);
- (v) Regional campaign on security of tenure and urban governance (continuous);
- (vi) Post-conflict reconstruction in south Lebanon and Palestine (continuous);
- (vii) Regional centre for gender mainstreaming in ESCWA countries (continuous);
- (viii) Development of national gender statistics programmes in the Arab countries (continuous).

### **SUBPROGRAMME 3**

#### **ECONOMIC ANALYSIS AND FORECASTING FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

##### A. ORIENTATION OF THE SUBPROGRAMME FOR THE BIENNIUM

32. This subprogramme is implemented by the Economic Analysis Division (EAD). The programme of work has been formulated with reference to programme 18, subprogramme 3 of the revised medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005.

33. The objective of this subprogramme is to increase the capacity of ESCWA member countries to coordinate their economic policies and achieve economic development by providing a quantitative assessment of economic and financial data and trends.

34. The economic performance of the ESCWA region has been lagging for the past decade. There is a need to achieve sustainable growth and development, in view of the increasing openness of the region in a globalized world economic environment that is, increasingly, characterized by regional groupings.

35. The subprogramme will aim to improve economic management through improving the availability of indicators, statistics and economic analysis in order to facilitate decision-making and enable ESCWA member countries to cope with impending economic challenges.

36. Moreover, the subprogramme will continue to review and assess economic performance, formulate development indicators, provide periodic and timely statistical publications with comparative analysis of time series and, also, produce forecasts and projections for future developments. In addition, it will cover, for the first time, satellite accounts including environmental, social and gender aspects of national accounts.

37. Furthermore, the subprogramme will conduct studies, hold expert group meetings and provide training and technical assistance to ESCWA member countries, with particular emphasis on the progress of the International Comparison Programme (ICP), purchasing power parity (PPP) and the comparability of statistics and national accounts.

38. The activities of the subprogramme will be conducted in close partnership with its stakeholders and users as well as regional and international partners such as the League of Arab States, DESA, UNCTAD, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC), ILO and the Bretton Woods institutions.

39. Expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement are listed below.

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
(a) Improved availability and analysis of macroeconomic performance and trends to contribute to a better understanding of economic development issues and problems in the region	✓ Feedback from end-users on the benefits derived from ESCWA activities in this regard
(b) Improved availability, accessibility and analysis of economic and financial data and indicators including those on regional integration	✓ Increase in the coverage and analysis of national and regional economic data and indicators
(c) Improved availability to member countries and business associations of relevant data and analysis of productivity and productivity trends	✓ Increase in the availability and coverage of production statistics
(d) Improved capacity of member countries to assess their comparative economic situation with a view to timely intervention	✓ Improved availability of models and/or scenarios and projections disseminated by ESCWA

40. It is anticipated that the objectives and expected accomplishments of the subprogramme will be achieved based on the assumption that:

(a) No negative development occurs that might affect the economic growth prospects of ESCWA member countries;

- (b) The capacity of member countries for the utilization of economic models and projections is adequate;
- (c) Member countries are willing to implement the 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA) and PPP conversions;
- (d) The data needed for databases, economic statistics and indicators are available and valid.

## B. ACTIVITIES

### 1. *Substantive activities*

#### (a) *Recurrent publications*

- (i) Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region, 2003-2004 (2004);
- (ii) Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the ESCWA Region, 2004-2005 (2005);
- (iii) Analysis of Performance and Assessment of Growth and Productivity, Nos. 3 and 4 (2004 and 2005);
- (iv) Annual Production Indices, Nos. 3 and 4 (2004 and 2005);
- (v) Global Forecasts and Predictions for the ESCWA Region, Nos. 2 and 3 (2004 and 2005);
- (vi) Economic Trends and Impacts, Nos. 2 and 3 (2004 and 2005).

#### (b) *Non-recurrent publications*

- (i) Impact of economic variables on the social dimension of development (2005) (conducted jointly with SDD);
- (ii) Macroeconomic policy analysis for regional coordination in ESCWA member countries (2004) (conducted jointly with ESCWA Globalization and Regional Integration Division (GRID)).

### 2. *Technical cooperation*

#### *Group training*

Workshop on debt analysis and management in ESCWA member countries (2005) (conducted jointly with GRID).

## **SUBPROGRAMME 4**

### **REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND RESPONDING TO GLOBALIZATION**

#### A. ORIENTATION OF THE SUBPROGRAMME FOR THE BIENNIUM

41. This subprogramme is the responsibility of the Globalization and Regional Integration Division (GRID). The programme of work has been formulated with reference to programme 18, subprogramme 4 of the revised medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005.

42. The objective of this subprogramme is to facilitate transboundary flows of goods, information, services, persons and capital in order to meet the challenges posed and opportunities offered by the trend towards globalization.

43. The process of globalization represents a considerable challenge for the ESCWA region, in particular with regard to goods, services and capital. That challenge is precipitated by the absence of the prerequisites for trade liberalization and manifest in the low level of non-oil exports, which is the result of the low competitiveness of goods and services, low inflow of foreign direct investment (FDI) due to the unsuitability

of physical, legal and institutional investment infrastructures and, in addition, low levels of regional integration.

44. The subprogramme will aim to provide a basis for the facilitation of regional integration and prepare ESCWA member countries to optimize their use of opportunities provided by WTO agreements and minimize adverse impacts.

45. In pursuit of its objective, the subprogramme will provide substantive support to member countries in the formulation of policies and strategies for economic integration and monitor and assess their progress in this regard. This support will include mechanisms for developing regional road, rail and maritime transport infrastructures. The subprogramme will also raise the awareness of member countries with regard to selected issues relevant to multilateral trade negotiations, such as trade facilitation competition laws, intellectual property rights and electronic business (e-business). Furthermore, it will assist in raising the awareness of decision makers with regard to ways and means of improving the investment climate in the region and enhancing policies that aim to attract a higher level of FDI inflows as well as intraregional investment. In addition, it will disseminate data and statistics on FDI flows and the activities of transnational corporations (TNCs) in the region. Special emphasis will be placed on the provision of advice to Yemen, which is the least developed country in the ESCWA region, on issues related to the mobilization and allocation of domestic financial resources for development. The subprogramme will also establish web-based regional databases for the purpose of maintaining and disseminating data and information on regional trade and transport issues, FDI inflows and regional investment.

46. The subprogramme will coordinate its activities with other United Nations agencies and, in particular, regional commissions and UNCTAD. It will also cooperate with regional and international organizations, in particular the League of Arab States, its subsidiary bodies and WTO.

47. The intended end-users and beneficiaries of the subprogramme are decision makers in the Governments of member countries, the private sector and civil society.

48. Expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement are listed below.

<b>Expected accomplishments</b>	<b>Indicators of achievement</b>
(a) Sustained follow-up on the implementation of the relevant terms of the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development, including efforts to encourage FDI	✓ Policies and measures adopted by member countries that contribute to the implementation of the Monterrey Consensus and FDI inflows
(b) Increased awareness of member countries, including the private sector and women business communities, of the implications of the emerging international trading system	✓ Number of rules and regulations adjusted in compliance with the requirements of the WTO Agreement;  Increase in the number of female officials and other end-users participating in ESCWA meetings and seminars on regional and global integration
(c) Increased awareness of member countries of the requirements and benefits of the role of regional integration in increasing export capacity	✓ Increase in the number of procedures, policies and measures implemented by member countries in compliance with the scheduled implementation steps of the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA)

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
(d) Increased adoption by ESCWA member countries of trade and transport facilitation measures	✓ Increase in the number of member countries initiating steps to establish national trade and transport facilitation committees; Increase in the number of countries formulating interregional transport linkages; Increase in the number of countries adopting or ratifying transport facilitation schemes

49. It is anticipated that the objectives and expected accomplishments of the subprogramme will be achieved based on the assumption that:

(a) Commitment is shown by ESCWA member countries with regard to the recommendations of the International Conference on Financing for Development;

(b) Member countries increasingly recognize the importance of regional economic integration in the context of globalization;

(c) The political will exists for the ratification/adoption of transport agreements and transport facilitation measures;

(d) Data needed for databases and statistics on trade, finance and transport are available and valid.

## B. ACTIVITIES

### 1. *Servicing of intergovernmental and expert bodies*

#### (a) *Substantive servicing of meetings*

- (i) Substantive servicing of the fifth session of the Committee on Transport (2004) (six meetings);
- (ii) Substantive servicing of the sixth session of the Committee on Transport (2005) (six meetings);
- (iii) Substantive servicing of the regional ministerial meeting in preparation for the sixth WTO Ministerial Conference (2005) (six meetings);
- (iv) Substantive servicing of the fourth session of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region (2005) (six meetings).

#### (b) *Other services provided (ad hoc expert group meetings)*

- (i) Expert group meeting on follow-up to the results of the fifth WTO Ministerial Conference (2004);
- (ii) Expert group meeting on assessment of progress made in regional integration (GAFTA and GCC) and interregional cooperation (Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Agreements) (2005);
- (iii) Expert group meeting on transport facilitation for regional integration (2004).

### 2. *Other substantive activities*

#### (a) *Recurrent publications*

- (i) Review of Progress Made by the Republic of Yemen in the Implementation of the National Programme of Action for the Least-Developed Countries for the 1990s (2005);

- (ii) Annual Review of Developments in Globalization and Regional Integration in the Countries of the ESCWA Region, Nos. 3 and 4 (2004 and 2005);
  - (iii) Methodological Framework for the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq (ITSAM-FRAMEWORK), vol. 4 (2005).
- (b) *Non-recurrent publications*
- (i) Follow-up action on implementation of the Monterrey Consensus: progress made by ESCWA member countries (2004);
  - (ii) The role of transnational corporations (TNCs) from developed and developing countries in the ESCWA region (2005);
  - (iii) Trade and investment in the Arab countries (2005);
  - (iv) Developments in intellectual property rights regulation in Arab countries, including transport, trade in services and trade liberalization (2004);
  - (v) Trade facilitation in the Arab countries, including transport, trade in services, competitiveness and trade liberalization (2004);
  - (vi) The implications of the commitments of ESCWA member countries to WTO agreements, European partnership agreements and GAFTA (2005);
  - (vii) Impact of regional integration on certain sectors in selected ESCWA member countries (2005);
  - (viii) Action plan for the implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq (2005);
  - (ix) Report on follow-up action on the adoption/implementation of the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq (2005);
  - (x) Follow-up action on cooperation in maritime transport in the Arab Mashreq (2005).
- (c) *Technical material for outside users (including databases and software)*
- (i) Maintenance of ESCWA web page on globalization and regional integration (continuous);
  - (ii) Development of a database for ITSAM (continuous);
  - (iii) Development and maintenance of a database on FDI flows, foreign assistance and stock markets (continuous).

### 3. *Technical cooperation*

#### *Field projects*

Capacity-building through cooperation in developing interregional land and land-cum sea transport linkages, including an expert group meeting on the formulation of interregional transport linkages, two workshops on capacity-building and appraisal of interregional transport links, workshop on border-crossing formalities and related conventions and workshop on developing interregional land and land-cum sea transport linkages (continuous).



**SUBPROGRAMME 5**  
**INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY  
FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION**

A. ORIENTATION OF THE SUBPROGRAMME FOR THE BIENNIUM

50. This subprogramme is the responsibility of the Information and Communication Technology Division (ICTD). The programme of work has been formulated with reference to programme 18, subprogramme 5 of the revised medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005.

51. The objective of this subprogramme is to increase the capabilities of ESCWA member countries to harness ICTs for their development.

52. The ESCWA region suffers from costly and uncompetitive information and communication infrastructures and services, insufficient research and development in ICTs, limited development of ICT applications and shortage of services, knowledge and awareness, as well as slow development of Arabic digital content. Addressing these issues will narrow the digital gap between the Arab region and other regions and countries and, in addition, will improve the competitiveness of firms and contribute to poverty reduction.

53. The subprogramme will be oriented towards increasing the capacity of ESCWA member countries to disseminate ICTs for their development. It will also aim to forge and coordinate the integrated efforts of multilateral stakeholders and streamline these efforts in order to serve the needs and requirements of key private, public and civil society actors.

54. The subprogramme will build on previous efforts to enhance operational knowledge and expand the ICT research base by disseminating knowledge, drawing action plans, providing qualified technical assistance and implementing pilot projects that address poverty and the digital divide through an integrated approach that emphasizes the employment of women and youth in ICT-related jobs.

55. The subprogramme will provide assistance to countries of the region in their preparations for the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS-2, Tunis, 2005) and implementation of the recommendations of the first phase (WSIS-1). It will also facilitate the connectivity and interoperability of telecommunication infrastructures and services in the region by proposing new regulatory policies and structures. Moreover, it will address technical standards related to promotion of the use of Arabic in ICT applications and on the Internet in order to improve regional communication, knowledge and competencies. Furthermore, it will promote the development of e-services, e-business and e-government applications adapted to regional needs.

56. The end-users are public authorities and decision makers, business communities and NGOs, including professional associations concerned with ICT.

57. Expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement are listed below.

<b>Expected accomplishments</b>	<b>Indicators of achievement</b>
(a) Improved promotion of the role of ICT in increasing the competitiveness of enterprises and contributing to gender-balanced job creation and poverty alleviation ✓	Number of ICT-based initiatives involving ESCWA targeting enhanced enterprise competitiveness, employment opportunities and poverty reduction, in particular for youth and women
(b) Improved connectivity of ESCWA member countries ✓	Number of initiatives targeting ICT standards related to regional specificities and involving ESCWA;

Expected accomplishments	Indicators of achievement
(c) Enhanced preparedness of ESCWA member countries to adopt ICT policies including implementation of the relevant WSIS-1 recommendations and their effective participation in the second phase	Number of member countries formulating ICT policies to improve telecommunication infrastructures, networks and services Number of member countries adopting recommendations of WSIS-1 that relate to regional priorities
(d) Increased awareness of ESCWA member countries of the role of ICT applications in priority areas	Number of initiatives involving ESCWA for the promotion of ICT applications in member countries; Number of countries implementing ICT applications
(e) Improved availability, accessibility and utilization of national and regional data and information in socio-economic fields	Increase in contributions to and utilization of ESCWA databases by member countries

58. It is anticipated that the objectives and expected accomplishments of the subprogramme will be achieved based on the assumption that:

- (a) Member countries are supportive of efforts to utilize ICT for the purpose of increasing competitiveness and productivity;
- (b) The ICT infrastructure and applications that support networking and connectivity are sufficient;
- (c) Member countries give due attention to implementation of the relevant WSIS recommendations;
- (d) No negative developments occur that could affect the capacity of countries to undertake recommended actions.

## B. ACTIVITIES

### 1. *Servicing of intergovernmental and expert bodies*

#### *Ad hoc expert group meetings*

- (a) Expert group meeting on enterprise incubation schemes in ICTs (2005) (conducted jointly with SDPD);
- (b) Regional preparatory conference for WSIS-2 (2004) (conducted with SDPD, GRID and SDD);
- (c) Expert group meeting on legal and regulatory frameworks for e-business in ESCWA member countries (2005).

### 2. *Other substantive activities*

- (a) *Recurrent publications*

Review of ICT and Development, Nos. 3 and 4 (2004 and 2005).

(b) *Non-recurrent publications*

- (i) Information and communication technologies for poverty reduction in selected ESCWA member countries (2005);
- (ii) Arabic content on the Internet: issues, policies and standards (2004);
- (iii) Enhancing telecommunication infrastructures, services, and policies in ESCWA member countries (2004);
- (iv) Towards an integrated knowledge society in the Arab countries: strategies and implementation modalities (2005) (conducted jointly with SDPD);
- (v) Information and knowledge management in the public sector (2005);
- (vi) Needs and requirements for disseminating system and process integration technologies in the ESCWA region (2004);
- (vii) Data centres and Internet hosts: opportunities for regional integration (2004).

(c) *Technical material for outside users (including databases and software)*

Development of ESCWA Statistical Information System (ESIS) web-based database, comprising the following eleven modules (continuous):

- (i) National and regional energy sources and utilization;
- (ii) National and regional water resources and utilization;
- (iii) Social indicators;
- (iv) Gender;
- (v) Health and vital statistics;
- (vi) Population;
- (vii) Labour;
- (viii) Trade;
- (ix) Transport;
- (x) National accounts;
- (xi) Finance.

3. *Technical cooperation*

*Field projects*

Pilot projects on new technologies for poverty reduction in selected ESCWA member countries (continuous).

**SUBPROGRAMME 6**

**COMPARABLE STATISTICS FOR IMPROVED PLANNING  
AND DECISION-MAKING**

**A. ORIENTATION OF THE SUBPROGRAMME FOR THE BIENNIUM**

59. Coordination of the activities of this subprogramme is the responsibility of the Statistics Coordination Unit (SCU), headed by the Deputy Executive Secretary. The Unit heads the secretariat of the Interdivisional Statistics Steering Committee (ISSC), also headed by the Deputy Executive Secretary. The Steering Committee will play the important role of coordinating and ensuring the integration and harmonization of statistical functions carried out by all subprogrammes at ESCWA.

60. The objective of this subprogramme is to enhance the statistical capabilities of ESCWA member countries for informed decision-making and improve the availability and timeliness of comparable statistical data.

61. Serious new challenges have emerged since the turn of this century that make having efficient, modern and technologically advanced statistical apparatus within ESCWA an overriding imperative. Equally challenging is the need for the secretariat to produce uniform, harmonized data and statistics in order to support its analytical functions and eliminate duplication.

62. The subprogramme will be oriented towards enhancing the quality of data and statistics and contributing to the development of the reliable, timely, standardized, customized, comparable national and regional statistics needed by analysts and policy makers in ESCWA member countries. It will also facilitate the establishment of synergies between statisticians, professional researchers and analysts in substantive divisions. It will produce specialized statistics on social issues, including gender-disaggregated data, economic statistics, national accounts and trade statistics. Moreover, the subprogramme will assist member countries in building their capacities for the purpose of implementing international statistical programmes at the national level.

63. Uniformity of statistics within ESCWA can be achieved through the decentralization of statistical teams to divisions and the establishment of interactive, web-based databases in order to allow free access and exchange of data indicators and information. Strategies for statistical activities will be developed and enriched by ISSC, which will also ensure good governance, comparability principles and efficient implementation and lay down the entire subprogramme of statistics, including seminars, training workshops and other capacity-building activities for ESCWA member countries. Furthermore, ISSC will monitor and coordinate with all ESCWA divisions and other United Nations and international organizations with regard to principles and procedures in order to maintain international standards and share databases.

64. Expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement are listed below.

<b>Expected accomplishments</b>	<b>Indicators of achievement</b>
(a) Increased harmonization and improved quality of statistics of member countries ✓	Number of measures agreed upon by member countries in order to harmonize statistics and improve their quality
(b) Enhanced capacity for implementation of the 1993 SNA in the construction of integrated economic accounts and PPP conversions in member countries ✓	Number of countries adopting PPP conversions;  Number of countries implementing the 1993 SNA
(c) Improved quality, accessibility and usage of statistical data and information on trade, transport, natural resources, energy and the environment ✓	Increase in coverage and/or dissemination of statistics on trade, transport, natural resources, energy and the environment
(d) Enhanced national capacities for improving the production, dissemination and utilization of social indicators and gender disaggregated data for monitoring and analysis ✓	Number of indicators developed and adopted by member countries in order to monitor various aspects of social development

65. It is anticipated that the objectives and expected accomplishments of the subprogramme will be achieved based on the assumption that:

(a) Member countries are willing to provide data and information for the construction of databases and environmental monitoring;

(b) Data needed for databases and social indicators are available and valid.

## B. ACTIVITIES

### 1. *Servicing of intergovernmental and expert bodies*

#### (a) *Substantive servicing of meetings*

Substantive servicing of the sixth session of the Statistical Committee (2004) (six meetings).

#### (b) *Other services provided (ad hoc expert group meetings)*

- (i) Expert group meeting on satellite accounts in the ESCWA region (2004) (implemented jointly with EAD and GRID);
- (ii) Expert group meeting on the compilation of trade in services statistics (2005) (implemented by GRID);
- (iii) Expert group meeting on sectoral-based statistics on energy and water (2005) (implemented by SDPD).

### 2. *Other substantive activities*

#### (a) *Recurrent publications*

- (i) National Accounts Studies of the ESCWA Region, Bulletin Nos. 24 and 25 (2004 and 2005) (implemented by EAD);
- (ii) External Trade Bulletin of the ESCWA Region, Nos. 13 and 14 (2004 and 2005) (implemented by GRID);
- (iii) Compendium of Social Statistics and Indicators, No. 2 (2005) (implemented by SDD);
- (iv) Statistical Abstract of the ESCWA Region (2005).

#### (b) *Technical material for outside users (including databases and software)*

- (i) Bulletin on vital statistics in ESCWA member countries (2004) (implemented by SDD);
- (ii) Maintenance of two ESIS web-based database modules on financial and national accounts (continuous) (implemented by EAD);
- (iii) Maintenance of two ESIS web-based database modules on national energy resources and utilization and regional water resources and utilization (continuous) (implemented by SDPD);
- (iv) Maintenance of five ESIS web-based database modules on gender, health and vital statistics, labour, population and social indicators (continuous) (implemented by SDD);
- (v) Maintenance of two ESIS database modules on transport and trade (continuous) (implemented by GRID).

### 3. *Technical cooperation*

#### *Field projects*

The International Comparison Programme (continuous) (implemented by EAD).

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