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**THE PROPOSED STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE ESCWA PROGRAMME OF
WORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2006-2007 IN THE FIELD OF WATER RESOURCES**

**SUBPROGRAMME I. INTEGRATED POLICIES FOR THE MANAGEMENT
OF REGIONAL RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Under this agenda item, the Committee on Water Resources has before it for its consideration the subprogramme that includes, inter alia, water-related issues, contained in A/59/6 (Prog.18), Proposed strategic framework for the period 2006-2007. That document comprises two parts, namely, a plan outline and a biennial programme plan that will replace the current four-year medium-term plan.

The proposed strategic framework was submitted to the Committee for Programme and Coordination at its forty-fourth session, which was held in New York from 7 June to 2 July 2004. After the amendments to the framework agreed upon by the Member States present at that session had been inserted, it was presented to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 58/269 of 23 December 2003 entitled Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change, which requests the Secretary-General to prepare a strategic framework, on a trial basis, for submission to the General Assembly at its fifty-ninth session. The document submitted to the Committee on Water Resources is taken from A/59/6 (Prog.18), which includes the overall orientation of Programme 18, concerning economic and social development in Western Asia, and subprogramme 1, concerning integrated policies for the management of regional resources for sustainable development.

Programme 18 contains seven subprogrammes, six of which were adopted by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) at its fourth special session, held on 11 March 2002, and a new subprogramme. The seven subprogrammes are set forth below:

- Subprogramme 1. Integrated policies for the management of regional resources for sustainable development.
- Subprogramme 2. Integrated social policies.
- Subprogramme 3. Economic analysis and forecasting for regional development.
- Subprogramme 4. Regional integration and responding to globalization.
- Subprogramme 5. Information and communication technology for regional integration.
- Subprogramme 6. Comparable statistics for improved planning and decision-making.
- Subprogramme 7. Advancement and empowerment of women.

It should be noted that the proposed strategic framework for the ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2006-2007 was submitted to focal points in member countries and to the consultative committee meeting that was held on 2 June 2004. The framework sets out the general orientation of ESCWA work, without going into the activities that will be carried out. It should therefore be given due consideration, the priorities set out in subprogramme 1 endorsed, and any appropriate activities that have been agreed upon by member countries should be proposed.

Subprogramme 1. Integrated policies for the management of regional resources for sustainable development

Objective of the Organization: To improve the sustainable management and use of natural resources in the region, with particular emphasis on water, energy, environmental protection and the production sectors.

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat

- (a) Enhanced capacity of member countries to formulate and adopt integrated environmentally sound policies and measures and introduce mechanisms to improve the sustainable management of natural resources, with particular emphasis on the water, energy and production sectors.
- (b) Improved performance and competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises by networking and clustering and harnessing technology and innovation.
- (c) Increased application of measures and approaches for integrated water resource management in the region for the prevention of water and environment-related disputes.

Indicators of achievement

- (a) (i) An increase in the number of countries formulating and adopting policies and measures and introducing mechanisms to improve sustainable resource use and management;
- (ii) An increase in the number of policies adopted and implemented by countries in the region to protect the environment and decrease pollution.
- (b) (i) An increase in the number of business associations that facilitate the development of clusters and networks of small and medium-sized enterprises;
- (ii) An increase in the number of measures adopted to improve the use of technology and innovation.
- (c) An increase in the number of measures applied by member States relating to integrated water resources management, shared water resources and environmental impacts.

Strategy

18.7 The ESCWA region is suffering from a scarcity of water resources, which is aggravated by their inefficient use. This is manifested in wasteful consumption patterns, particularly in the agricultural sector. The region also suffers from disputes over rights to shared water resources. On the other hand, the abundance of fossil-fuel energy has encouraged unsustainable production and consumption patterns that have adverse impacts on the environment. Despite the abundance of conventional and renewable energy resources, rural areas have limited access to energy services. The production sectors suffer from low productivity and weak competitiveness, due mainly to the inefficient use of resources, insufficient networking and clustering and poor use of technology. Costs of environmental protection have not yet been fully taken into consideration in the production process.

18.8 This subprogramme, which is under the responsibility of the Sustainable Development and Productivity Division, will concentrate on facilitating the formulation and implementation of sustainable development strategies, policies and programmes and on assisting member countries in their follow-up to the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and in achieving its targets, as well as the Millennium Development Goals and targets, especially target 9, on integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reversing the loss of environmental resources, and target 10, on sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation, of goal 7, on ensuring environmental sustainability. The subprogramme will continue to serve as a forum for promoting policy dialogue as a means to reach common positions and enhance synergies among the countries of the region; facilitate regional cooperation, particularly in the management of shared water resources, and enhance negotiation skills to prevent disputes; support national and regional capacity-building in priority areas of sustainable development, especially in the fields of integrated management of water resources and energy efficiency; facilitate the establishment and