

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION
FOR WESTERN ASIA**

REPORT ON THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION
8-11 May 2006

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Summary

The twenty-fourth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) was held in Beirut from 8 to 11 May 2006, pursuant to its resolutions 158 (XIV) of 5 April 1987 on holding the sessions of the Commission on a biennial basis, and 196 (XVII) of 31 May 1994 on the frequency of ministerial sessions of the Commission.

Session meetings were held in two segments, one for senior officials and the other for ministers. At the former, consideration was given to the report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission, management issues, and the progress made by Yemen in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2001-2010. The meetings of the ministerial segment took the form of a round table on general policy issues in the ESCWA region, at which the following issues were addressed: new challenges in the region and their impact on the work of ESCWA, facing youth unemployment problems in the ESCWA region, and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in the ESCWA region.

The session concluded with the adoption of a number of recommendations made by the senior officials' segment and a set of resolutions to be brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council. This report includes those recommendations and resolutions and a summary of the most important points that were raised in the course of the discussions.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The twenty-fourth session of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia was held pursuant to resolution 196 (XVII) of 31 May 1994 on the frequency of Commission sessions.
2. This report covers the work of the Commission at its twenty-fourth session, which was held in Beirut from 8 to 11 May 2006. Seven session meetings were convened in two segments, one of which was for senior officials, who held five meetings, while the other was for ministers, who held two.

I. ISSUES TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

3. At its seventh plenary meeting, held on 11 May 2006, the Commission adopted a number of resolutions to be brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council, the texts of which are set forth below:

269 (XXIV). The role of ESCWA in the light of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document and the subsequent change process

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/50 on the Damascus Declaration and the role of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in achieving the internationally-agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration,

Guided by General Assembly resolution 60/1 of 16 September 2005 on the 2005 World Summit Outcome,

Reaffirming that ESCWA can provide valuable contributions in pursuit of the global priority issues identified in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, including the eradication of poverty and the promotion of sustained economic growth, employment, achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), migration and development, good governance and the rule of law, gender equality, the provision of public goods, rural development, and science and technology for development,

Taking note of the debate and recommendations of the high-level expert group meeting on the role of ESCWA in serving the countries of the region to 2010,¹

Noting with concern that critical unemployment rates, especially among youth, warrant that urgent attention should be given to the creation of an environment that is conducive to the provision of productive and decent work for all and, in particular, youth,

Having reviewed the ESCWA draft strategic framework for the biennium 2008-2009² and the proposed changes to the programme of work for the biennium 2006-2007,³

Taking note of the mandate review requested by the States Members of the United Nations and its possible implications on the future work of the different United Nations entities,

Acknowledging the efforts of the secretariat to support member countries in their economic and social development endeavours,

1. *Reaffirms* the importance of the role ESCWA plays as the regional arm of the United Nations in Western Asia, in supporting social and economic cooperation between the countries of the region, and its efforts in promoting the development process in those countries and achieving regional integration;

¹ E/ESCWA/24/4(Part I).

² E/ESCWA/24/6(Part III).

³ E/ESCWA/24/6(Part II).

2. *Affirms* that regional integration, particularly economic and social integration, is the overriding objective of the Commission;
3. *Also affirms* that through regional cooperation and integration member countries will be able to confront the challenges of globalization and avoid marginalization;
4. *Notes with satisfaction* that the draft strategic framework for 2008-2009⁴ addresses the main critical areas of importance to the region of Western Asia, and the priorities identified in the 2005 World Summit Outcome and in the report of the high-level expert group meeting on the role of ESCWA in serving the countries of the region to 2010;⁵
5. *Adopts* the draft strategic framework for 2008-2009, with the understanding that further adjustments may be required in line with decisions arising from the ongoing United Nations reform process;
6. *Approves* the changes proposed to the programme of work of the Commission for the biennium 2006-2007⁶ emanating from the 2005 World Summit Outcome, the documents issued by the second phase of the World Summit on Information Society, which was held in Tunis in November 2005,⁷ and the relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly at its sixtieth session;
7. *Calls upon* member countries to work towards the achievement of the goals and objectives endorsed in the 2005 World Summit Outcome as an integral part of their national plans and strategies;
8. *Urges* all United Nations entities working in the region of Western Asia to provide coordinated support for regional needs and focus on making progress in the realization of those goals;
9. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to do the following:
 - (a) Increase coherence and synergy with other regional United Nations organizations, and foster partnerships and cooperation with those organizations through ESCWA's leading role in the Regional Coordination Group;
 - (b) Continue to play a catalytic role in enhancing cooperation with regional organizations and, in particular, with the League of Arab States and its subsidiary bodies and the Gulf Cooperation Council;
 - (c) Increase cooperation with the other regional commissions, particularly with regard to sharing experiences and replicating best practices;
 - (d) Keep member Governments informed of outcomes of the United Nations reform process that have programmatic implications;
10. *Also requests* the Executive Secretary to report on the progress made in the implementation of this resolution to the twenty-fifth session of the Commission.

7th plenary meeting
11 May 2006

⁴ E/ESCWA/24/6(Part III).

⁵ E/ESCWA/24/4(Part I).

⁶ E/ESCWA/24/6(Part II).

⁷ WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/6(Rev.1)-A and WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/7-A.

270 (XXIV). Macroeconomic policy for financial stability

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Guided by the Damascus Declaration on the Realization of the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the Commission at its twenty-third session,⁸ which affirms the importance of accelerating economic growth and addressing related linkages when formulating strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

Referring to General Assembly resolution 59/222 of 22 December 2004 on the international financial system and development, which underlines the importance of efforts at the national level to increase resilience to financial risk,

Recognizing the increasing importance of the financial sector in the region, where it has contributed to employment creation by financing investment in economic diversification and growth in non-oil sectors,

Stressing that further development of the financial sector is important for investment finance, the retention of young talent and expanding employment creation within the region,

Noting with concern problems associated with financial sector development in facing recent volatility in market behaviour, which may have more serious repercussions for socio-economic development and the realization of MDGs in the ESCWA region,

Aware that, in the past, severe financial instabilities in other regions caused a sharp increase in unemployment and a substantial decrease in real earnings, and widened income inequality,

Satisfied with the macroeconomic policies undertaken by ESCWA member countries with a view to curbing financial speculation within the prevailing policy environment,

1. *Urges* member countries to take appropriate macroeconomic policy measures and develop regulatory frameworks that will help to stabilize and promote orderly and transparent performance in financial markets;
2. *Requests* the secretariat, in cooperation and coordination with the relevant regional and international institutions, to monitor and analyse possible consequences of financial market instability, with a view to identifying and assessing the impact of such events on economic and social development in the region;
3. *Also requests* the secretariat to undertake regular and timely forecasts and policy analyses of current and emergent macroeconomic trends;
4. *Further requests* the secretariat to disseminate its forecasts, analyses and macroeconomic policy recommendations to the widest possible audience;
5. *Requests* the Governments of member countries which have investment funding deficits to improve and streamline their legal and regulatory frameworks with a view to encouraging greater intraregional investment and capital flows;

⁸ E/2005/41 - E/ESCWA/23/10.

6. *Requests* the Governments and private sectors of member countries with surplus capital to raise the level and intensity of investment and capital flows within the region by reducing investment controls and increasing intraregional diversification.

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271 (XXIV). Strengthening the role of ESCWA in addressing the impact of conflict and instability within the context of social and economic development

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Noting General Assembly resolution 60/1 of 16 September 2005 on the 2005 World Summit Outcome and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005) of 20 December 2005 on the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission,

Noting also that the 2005 World Summit Outcome emphasizes the interlinkages between development, peace and security and human rights and that they are mutually reinforcing,

Recalling its resolutions 260 (XXIII) of 12 May 2005 on development and regional cooperation under unstable conditions, 241 (XXII) of 17 April 2003 on the impact of the lack of stability in the Arab region on economic and social development and 252 (XXII) of 17 April 2003 on rehabilitation and economic and social reconstruction in Palestine,

Noting with concern the repercussions of continued conflict and instability on the social and economic development of ESCWA member countries, especially in the occupied Palestinian territory and Iraq,

Appreciating the economic and social development initiatives of the ESCWA secretariat and its capacity-building activities in the occupied Palestinian territory and Iraq,

1. *Requests* member countries to intensify their efforts to attain peace, security and stability at the regional and international levels;
2. *Requests* the ESCWA secretariat to intensify its endeavours to enhance the capacity of member countries to assess, predict and respond to socio-economic and political challenges posed by conflict and instability through the following:
 - (a) Monitoring, analysing and reporting on the repercussions of conflict and instability on socio-economic development in Western Asia;
 - (b) Identifying and reporting on potential sources of conflict, tension and instability in Western Asia;
 - (c) Formulating and implementing operational activities for the rehabilitation and development of conflict-stricken areas, including capacity-building projects for the public sector and civil society;

(d) Forging partnerships between stakeholders in conflict-stricken areas and their regional/international counterparts within the framework of a wide public participatory and consultative approach;

(e) Identifying the socio-economic development needs of member countries which are suffering from conflict, sanctions and instability, and incorporating them into the technical cooperation and work programmes of the Commission;

(f) Assisting conflict-stricken countries and regions in the improvement of good governance practices, including improving the quality and effectiveness of public administration, rule of law and socio-economic decision-making;

(g) Supporting the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission in the ESCWA region;

3. *Calls* on the Executive Secretary to affirm the independence of approaches to issues related to conflict and lack of stability and mobilize additional human and financial resources to support the aforementioned activities;

4. *Requests* the international community to lift the economic, political and financial embargo imposed on the Palestinian people and provide the necessary assistance to liberate it from the Israeli occupation, meet its basic humanitarian needs, and rehabilitate its economic and social sectors;

5. *Appeals* to member countries and donors, including Governments, institutions and civil society, to contribute to ESCWA to enable it to carry out the requisite activities in that regard;

6. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report to the twenty-fifth session of the Commission on the progress achieved in this regard.

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11 May 2006

272 (XXIV). Youth employment in ESCWA member countries

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to the Copenhagen Declaration adopted by the 1995 World Summit for Social Development,

Referring also to General Assembly resolution 60/2 dated 6 October 2005 concerning policies and programmes involving youth, which reaffirms the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond⁹ and requests the United Nations Secretariat to establish a broad set of indicators related to youth, which Governments may use to measure progress towards the implementation of the World Programme of Action,

Referring further to General Assembly resolutions 56/117, dated 19 December 2001, concerning policies and programmes involving youth, which welcomed the Secretary-General's initiative to create a

⁹ General Assembly resolution 50/81, annex.

Youth Employment Network, and 57/165, dated 18 December 2002, concerning the promotion of youth employment,

Taking note of the report on Arab youth employment that was submitted to the twenty-fourth ESCWA session,¹⁰ concerning the preparation of policies, programmes and projects to stimulate the labour market,

Acknowledging the seriousness of the problem of increasing youth unemployment in some Arab countries where the percentage of the unemployed youth is one of the highest in the world, which may have serious implications,

Affirming that youth represent the future of the nation and must participate in and be integrated into planning and implementing development operations, be afforded equal opportunities for employment, and be provided with the skills and training that are in line with the needs of the labour market,

1. *Calls upon* member countries to include youth policies in their national development strategies by mainstreaming the youth perspective in all planning processes, preparing national youth policies, and devising national plans of action for youth employment, in order to limit the migration of a skilled and creative workforce;
2. *Also calls upon* member countries to make available up-to-date and accurate national statistics on youth unemployment; collect periodic data on all youth-related issues, including employment, education and health, from such sources as administrative records, population censuses, and household and specialized surveys, with a view to establishing national databases on employment and unemployment issues and their implications for youth, and for monitoring and preparing national reports; and carry out studies on the factors leading to unemployment and their impact, with a view to devising the appropriate policies to resolve the youth unemployment problem;
3. *Requests* the secretariat to make an effective contribution to the process of developing a broad set of statistical indicators on youth employment, by proposing main regional indicators and incorporating them into development indicators, including those in the Millennium Development Goals;
4. *Also requests* the secretariat, in cooperation and coordination with the relevant Arab and international organizations, to devise a mechanism for the establishment of a system to provide information on Arab labour markets, with the aim of balancing supply and demand and facilitating the identification of appropriate employment opportunities for youth;
5. *Urges* member countries to encourage the exchange of labour and, in particular, of well-qualified youth labour between the countries of the region, thereby helping to circulate financial resources within the region contributing to the development of the region as a whole;
6. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the progress made in implementing this resolution to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session.

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¹⁰ E/ESCWA/24/6(Part II).

273 (XXIV). Follow-up to the development of the Information Society in Western Asia

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Cognizant of the commitments made by ESCWA member countries in the Geneva¹¹ and Tunis¹² phases of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to build an inclusive Information Society and put the potential of knowledge and information and communication technologies (ICTs) at the service of development for the achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration,¹³

Affirming the role given to the regional commissions of the United Nations in the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society¹⁴ to follow up on activities in collaboration with regional and subregional organizations, and to assist member countries with technical and relevant information for the development of regional and national strategies and the implementation of the outcomes of regional conferences,

Guided by the declaration of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society on the need to devise appropriate indicators and benchmarks, including community connectivity indicators, to clarify the magnitude of the digital divide in both its domestic and international dimensions, and to assess such a divide regularly and track global progress in the use of ICTs to achieve internationally agreed development goals and objectives, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

Considering the Damascus Call for Partnership¹⁵ and the work carried out by ESCWA in developing the Regional Plan of Action for Building the Information Society (RPoA),¹⁶ which is based on a thorough understanding of the regional and national needs and on continued cooperation among international and regional organizations,

Recognizing the effect of the important role played by ESCWA as a member of the global Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development and in collaboration with member countries, and its efforts aimed at developing a set of core ICT indicators for the ESCWA region in order to measure the digital divide in its many dimensions, harmonize that set of indicators within the Partnership list of core ICT indicators and strengthen the capacities of the national statistical offices to collect and disseminate timely, accurate and comparable Information Society statistics and indicators,

1. *Calls on the secretariat to provide member countries with technical assistance to implement the plans of actions through workshops, advisory services and other means of technical cooperation in areas related to the formulation and implementation of national ICT strategies and plans of actions; formulate and implement capacity-building plans of action aimed at promoting the adoption and collection of core ICT indicators in support of policymaking at both the national and regional levels; devise a mechanism to foster*

¹¹ WSIS-03/GENEVA/DOC/4-A and WSIS-03/GENEVA/DOC/5-A.

¹² WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/6(Rev.1)-A and WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/7-A.

¹³ General Assembly resolution 55/2.

¹⁴ WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/7-A.

¹⁵ Issued by the Second Regional Preparatory Conference for the World Summit on the Information Society – Partnership for building the Arab information society, Damascus, 21-23 November 2004.

¹⁶ E/ESCWA/ICTD/2004/4.

participatory multi-stakeholder partnerships; and facilitate the implementation of ICT applications for socio-economic development;

2. *Also calls* on the secretariat, in coordination with member countries, to participate actively in the implementation of RpoA,¹⁷ and continually update that plan as progress is made in achieving its objectives;

3. *Appeals* to Governments, the private sector and civil society to contribute to the above endeavours with the aim of promoting regional cooperation and creating equal opportunities for the growth of the ICT sector in Western Asia;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session on follow-up to the WSIS Tunis Agenda,¹⁸ implementation of the plans of actions in respect of the progress achieved in member countries, and the efforts exerted by ESCWA in that regard.

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274 (XXIV). The establishment of the ESCWA Technology Centre

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recognizing the role of science and technology in accelerating development and on their status as one of the priorities of the United Nations as indicated in General Assembly resolution 60/1 of 16 September 2005 on the 2005 World Summit Outcome, in the report of the Secretary-General on promoting the application of science and technology to meet the Development Goals contained in the Millennium Declaration¹⁹ and in Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/68 of 5 November 2004 on science and technology for development,

Referring to ESCWA resolution 254 (XXIII) of 12 May 2005 requesting the secretariat to submit a report to the twenty-fourth session on the establishment of a regional technology centre that would undertake activities aimed at building national technological capacities and at harnessing those capacities to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to strengthen economic and social development and regional and international cooperation in technological fields,

Cognizant of the evolution of the global economy towards a knowledge-based economy that is built on science, technology and technological innovation as the foundation for competitiveness and the achievement of sustainable development goals at the national level, particularly with regard to the creation of opportunities for generating employment and the reduction of poverty,

Taking note that some regional commissions of the United Nations have established special centres to assist their member countries in the endeavours to build independent capacities in the fields of science and technology to which they accord priority for achieving sustainable development,

¹⁷ E/ESCWA/ICTD/2004/4.

¹⁸ WSIS-05/TUNIS/DOC/7-A.

¹⁹ E/CN.16/2004/2.

Recognizing the need for such a centre in the ESCWA region to assist national efforts to build capacities in science and technology and to coordinate cooperation at the regional and international levels,

Bearing in mind the pre-feasibility study on the establishment of the ESCWA Technology Centre²⁰ and on the recommendation of the Consultative Committee on Scientific and Technological Development and Technological Innovation at its third meeting, held in Beirut on 6 and 7 March 2006, which supported the establishment of the ESCWA Technology Centre,

1. *Approves*, in principle, the establishment of the ESCWA Technology Centre as defined in the pre-feasibility study;²¹
2. *Requests* the secretariat to follow up with member countries with respect to the hosting of the Centre and securing its sources of finance;
3. *Also requests* the secretariat to take the necessary actions aimed at establishing the Centre and to submit a report to the twenty-fifth session of the Commission in that regard.

7th plenary meeting
11 May 2006

275 (XXIV). Technical cooperation, partnership development and resource mobilization

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Conscious of the responsibility of the secretariat to promote economic and social development and assist its member countries in achieving increased regional cooperation and integration,

Convinced of the role of ESCWA in strengthening the technical capacities of its member countries in support of achieving the Millennium Development Goals and in implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and international agreements since 1992,

Recalling its resolution 258 (XXIII) of 12 May 2005 on strengthening technical cooperation in ESCWA, and the importance of technical cooperation, namely, general policy advice and capacity-building activities, in meeting the economic and social development needs of member countries,

Recalling also its resolution 263 (XXIII) of 12 May 2005 on promoting partnership and resource mobilization in order to achieve sustainable economic and social development in the region and promote regional integration,

Cognizant that the ESCWA regular programme budget is not sufficient to meet the demand for capacity-building activities and is dedicated primarily to analytical and normative work,

Affirming that a reliable inflow of extrabudgetary resources would enable the secretariat to sustain and develop its operational activities,

²⁰ E/ESCWA/ICTD/2006/WP.1.

²¹ Op. cit.

Commending the efforts of the secretariat on the progress achieved in the implementation of the ESCWA Technical Cooperation Strategy and in the preparation of the proposed multi-year funding plan,

1. *Requests* the secretariat to continue implementing the ESCWA Technical Cooperation Strategy and to take appropriate measures to launch the technical cooperation information and knowledge-sharing network;
2. *Invites* member countries and the donor community to take active part in the work of the secretariat to promote further partnerships and resource mobilization, in order to implement the ESCWA Technical Cooperation Strategy and, in particular, to operationalize the findings of the normative and analytical work;
3. *Approves* the multi-year funding plan and requests member countries and donors, within and outside the United Nations system, to contribute through all three modalities, namely, voluntary annual contributions to the ESCWA Trust Fund for Regional Activities; project/activity agreements between ESCWA and donors; or agreements for in-kind cooperation and support;
4. *Requests* the secretariat to prepare a specific plan of action for partnership development and resource mobilization;
5. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the twenty-fifth session of the Commission on the implementation of the present resolution.

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276 (XXIV). Strengthening statistical capacities in the ESCWA region

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Cognizant of the need for continued cooperation between regional and international organizations in strengthening the capacities of national statistical offices to formulate evidence-based policies by producing and disseminating timely, accurate and comparable statistics and indicators,

Pursuant to the recommendations of the ESCWA Statistical Committee at its sixth session²² and the outcome of the thirty-seventh session of the United Nations Statistical Commission in 2006,²³

Referring to its resolution 262 (XXIII) of 12 May 2005 on support for the capacities of member countries in the field of statistics and the International Comparison Programme,

Recognizing the importance of maintaining a sound system of official statistics based on the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, which was adopted by the Statistical Commission at its Special Session of 11-15 April 1994,²⁴

²² E/ESCWA/SCU/2004/IG.1/6.

²³ E/2006/24-E/CN.3/2006/32.

²⁴ E/1994/29-E/CN.3/1994/18.

Noting that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the region is a national responsibility both with respect to identifying national development goals and targets and to adopting the development policies necessary to ensure that those goals and targets are achieved by 2015,

Guided by General Assembly resolution 59/146 of 20 December 2004 on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development, which aims to provide multilateral solutions to development challenges,

Referring to Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/12 of 22 July 2005 on the need to harmonize and improve United Nations informatics systems for optimal utilization and accessibility by all States,

Referring also to Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/50 of 28 July 2005 on the Damascus Declaration and the role of ESCWA in the achievement of the internationally-agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration,

1. *Calls upon* member countries to improve their national institutional statistical frameworks, including national statistical development strategies, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics of the United Nations Statistical Commission;
2. *Urges* member countries to intensify their efforts to strengthen their statistical capacities for producing and disseminating reliable and timely indicators of progress in achieving national and international development goals, including MDGs;
3. *Requests* the secretariat to continue its efforts to support member countries in developing national capacities through expert group meetings, training workshops and advisory services to improve the coverage, quality and comparability of qualitative statistics and data, particularly in such emerging fields as the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses and MDG-related issues;
4. *Calls upon* the secretariat to implement the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2008-2009²⁵ with respect to the statistics subprogramme;
5. *Requests* the secretariat to meet the increasing demand for statistics and statistical indicators at the regional and international levels by mobilizing additional resources to support the efforts of member countries in developing their national capacities through workshops, advocacy campaigns and training;
6. *Also requests* the secretariat, in close collaboration with member countries, to continue developing and maintaining repositories of data and development indicators, including MDGs, and to make them available for public access and evidence-based policymaking;
7. *Urges* donor Governments and agencies, regional and international financial institutions and the private sector to support ESCWA in its efforts to assist member countries in building their national statistical capacities;
8. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the progress made in this regard to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session.

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²⁵ E/ESCWA/24/6(Part III).

277 (XXIV). Social development policies

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to the development-related aspects of the 2005 World Summit Outcome as stated in General Assembly resolution 60/1 dated 16 September 2005, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) set forth in the United Nations Millennium Declaration contained in General Assembly resolution 55/2 dated 13 September 2000,

Acknowledging the urgent need of member countries to strengthen their capacities to achieve comprehensive, equitable and sustainable development within globalization and its repercussions,

Taking into consideration ESCWA resolution 259 (XXIII) dated 12 May 2005 concerning social policies, which calls upon member countries to cooperate with the secretariat in implementing the next stage of the integrated social policies programme, which requires coordination at the national level in order to find the best ways of formulating social policies that are appropriate to each country and its particularities,

Appreciating the progress made by the secretariat in implementing two main stages of the integrated social policies project in the region,

Also appreciating the progress made by ESCWA in concluding a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Social Affairs of Bahrain on this issue, and the successful National Conference for Social Policies that was held in Bahrain in April 2006, which recommended the holding of an Arab forum for social policies in the Arab region,

Noting the interest of other member countries, including Jordan, Oman, occupied Palestinian territory and Saudi Arabia in the integrated social policies project,

1. *Urges* member countries to adopt an integrated social policy approach;
2. *Calls upon* member countries to make use of the analytical activities, technical and advisory services that ESCWA provides in this field;
3. *Requests* the secretariat to follow up implementation of integrated social policies in member countries;
4. *Also requests* the secretariat to organize an Arab forum for social policies, with the aim of increasing interest in integrated and effective social policies, promoting dialogue and the exchange of views, and strengthening coordination mechanisms and supporting social policies in the Arab region;
5. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the progress made in implementing this resolution to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session.

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11 May 2006

278 (XXIV). Increasing the role of women in decision-making with respect to conflict prevention and peace building

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to General Assembly resolution 60/1 dated 16 September 2005, concerning 2005 World Summit Outcome and the statement made in paragraph 116 thereof with respect to the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding,

Referring also to the Beijing Platform for Action,²⁶ which considers the issue of women and armed conflict one of the most critical areas of concern,

Referring further to Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) dated 31 October 2000 concerning women, peace and security, which urges Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict,

Noting Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/43 dated 26 July 2005 concerning the situation of and assistance to Palestinian women,

Noting also the agreed conclusion of the Commission on the Status of Women at its fiftieth session concerning the equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels, and its other conclusions on the status of women in areas of war and conflict, including that concerning the situation of Palestinian women,²⁷

Affirming the Beirut Declaration: Arab Women 10 Years after Beijing: Call for Peace, that was adopted by the ESCWA Committee on Women at its second session in July 2004,²⁸ which stressed the role of women in strengthening the concepts of peace and dialogue, and the need of Arab women for peace, security and stability, given that the major difficulties they face are occupation, colonization and threats,

Referring to ESCWA resolution 260 (XXIII) dated 12 May 2005 concerning development and regional cooperation under unstable conditions, which requests the Executive Secretary to intensify her endeavours to build capacities and provide the requisite support for the countries of the region that have suffered and continue to suffer from lack of stability, including analytical activities in sustainable economic and social development fields,

Considering that several countries in the ESCWA region have suffered and continue to suffer from lack of stability, because of wars and conflicts and their impact on social and economic conditions,

Concerned that women are more susceptible to the negative impact of war and armed conflict,

1. *Affirms* the need for member countries and the secretariat to accord the exceptional needs of women living in unstable conditions the requisite importance in their plans and programmes;
2. *Calls upon* the secretariat to examine the situation of women in the ESCWA member countries that suffer from occupation, war and conflict, and build their capacities in the field of conflict resolution and peacebuilding;
3. *Urges* member countries to increase the representation, participation and empowerment of women at all levels of decision-making and in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes;

²⁶ Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 2005 (United Nations publication, Sales No. 96.IV.13, Chap. I, resolution 1, annex II.

²⁷ United Nations, Commission on the Status of Women, Report on the fiftieth session (22 March 2005, 27 February - 10 March and 16 March 2006), E/CN.6/2006/15, Chap. I.

²⁸ E/ESCWA/WOM/2004/IG.1/6.

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the progress made in implementing this resolution to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session.

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279 (XXIV). Follow-up to implementation of components of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to the adoption by ESCWA at its twentieth session in May 1999 of the Agreement on the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq (ITSAM),

Referring also to the aim of ITSAM, namely, to increase the flow of goods and persons through the borders of the ESCWA region,

Recognizing that the main components for implementation of ITSAM include the improvement of infrastructure, the facilitation of goods and passenger flows through border crossings, the provision of safe transport, the availability of an information system and a methodological framework for the formulation and analysis of policies,

Affirming the importance of activating the national committee on trade and transport facilitation and establishing them in those member countries where they have not yet been set up;

Referring to subsequent resolutions related to the application of certain components of ITSAM and, in particular, resolutions 235 (XXI) of 11 May 2001 concerning adoption of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq; 243 (XXII) of 17 April 2003 concerning adoption of the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq; 256 (XXIII) of 12 May 2005 concerning adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding on Maritime Transport Cooperation in the Arab Mashreq; and 265 (XXIII) of 12 May 2005 concerning regional cooperation in the field of road traffic safety,

Referring also to the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly concerning road safety and, in particular, resolution 60/5 of 26 October 2005 on improving global road safety, which welcomed the organization of the first United Nations Global Road Safety Week, to be held in Geneva in April 2007,

Noting with satisfaction the steps that have been taken by some member countries towards applying the plan of action for implementation of the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq, particularly on routes M40 (Iraq-Jordan-occupied Palestinian territory-Southern Mediterranean Coast) and M45 (Syrian Arab Republic-Jordan-Saudi Arabia-Yemen), and the steps undertaken to facilitate the passage of goods through borders and, in particular, the formation of national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade,

Referring to the plan of action for implementation of the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq²⁹ which was adopted by the seventh session of the Committee on Transport, held in Beirut from 17 to 19 April 2006,

²⁹ E/ESCWA/GRID/2006/IG.1/3(Part I)/Add.2.

Recognizing that proper implementation of the above-mentioned resolutions and integrated ITSAM activities will contribute to regional integration and the economic development of member countries,

Recognizing also the need to provide the human capacities and sufficient resources to ensure follow-up by ESCWA to the implementation of ITSAM components and the effective participation of member countries in the Global Road Safety Week,

1. *Urges* member countries to take practical steps to complete implementation of the plan of action for the Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq³⁰ by the time specified;
2. *Also urges* member countries to initiate the implementation of the plan of action for the Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq;³¹
3. *Further urges* member countries which have not yet appended a final signature to the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Maritime Transport in the Arab Mashreq,³² deposited an instrument of ratification thereto, or approved or acceded thereto, to do so at the earliest possible opportunity, thereby ensuring that the Memorandum enters into force; and implement and apply its articles at the national and regional levels once the Memorandum enters into force;
4. *Requests* the secretariat to play a leading role in advocating the issue of road safety in the region, including capacity-building and awareness dissemination, and by coordinating the activities that ESCWA will undertake during Global Road Safety Week;
5. *Also requests* the secretariat to follow up and submit an annual report to the Committee on Transport on the progress made in the following:
 - (a) The Agreement on International Roads in the Arab Mashreq;³³
 - (b) Priority routes M40 and M45;
 - (c) The Agreement on International Railways in the Arab Mashreq;³⁴
 - (d) The Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of maritime transport in the Arab Mashreq;
 - (e) The national committees for the facilitation of transport and trade;
 - (f) Road safety.

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³⁰ E/ESCWA/GRID/2004/1/Rev.1.

³¹ E/ESCWA/GRID/2006/IG.1/3(Part I)/Add.2.

³² E/ESCWA/GRID/2006/IG.1/3(Part I)/Add.4.

³³ E/ESCWA/TRANS/2001/3.

³⁴ E/ESCWA/TRANS/2002/1.

II. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION AND DISCUSSION

A. REQUESTS BY STATES MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND/OR ITS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES THAT ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA (ESCWA) TO PARTICIPATE AS OBSERVERS IN THE TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION (Agenda item 5)

4. Requests to participate as observers in the work of the twenty-fourth session were received from four States Members of the United Nations that are not members of ESCWA, namely, Japan, Germany, Morocco and South Korea. Morocco asked to attend all meetings of the session. The Commission approved those requests and agreed to grant Morocco permanent observer status at all ESCWA sessions.

B. POLICY ISSUES IN THE ESCWA REGION (Agenda item 6)

5. At a round table, the Commission considered this agenda item on the basis of document E/ESCWA/24/4. Three issues constituted the focus of discussion and suggestions.

1. *New challenges in the region and their impact on the work of ESCWA*

6. A secretariat representative presented this issue on the basis of the report of the High-Level Expert Group Meeting on the Role of ESCWA in Serving its Member Countries to 2010, which appears in document E/ESCWA/24/4(Part I). Mention was made of the most important recommendations made in the report with respect to the economy, social policies, regional integration, the building of State and civil society institutions, and the media.

7. In the course of the discussion, delegates referred to the need to prepare an attractive investment environment for capital, by providing the political and economic stability necessary for monetary transfers and the requisite infrastructure, and by adopting legislation to protect investment. They underlined the need to facilitate the process of cooperation and integration between the countries of the region, by carrying out studies on possible fields for investment in each country and the requirements for improving the investment climate. Similarly, they stressed that investment should not be linked to Governments, the role of which should be to prepare an environment that would prompt businessmen to attract investment. In that regard, delegates called for encouragement to be given to the establishment of international business councils, in order to make it easier to obtain investment.

8. Delegates stressed the importance of political support for and the involvement of the private sector in social strategies and policies. They suggested that a social contract should be concluded between countries and their citizens, along the lines of similar contracts that had already been adopted by certain countries. Reference was made to the need for the Arab labour-exporting countries to invest heavily in training and skills development, in order to create new Arab markets and retain the opportunities available to them.

9. Delegates called upon ESCWA to establish an observatory to measure social and economic indicators; organize an Arab forum for social policies; and avoid generalizations when putting forward outcomes and solutions in reports, because generalizations bear no relation to the reality in Arab countries as a whole, where problems vary in accordance with the social and economic systems. As a result, different approaches are needed to deal with the issues at stake.

10. Delegates also considered it essential that new mechanisms should be found for supporting the Palestinian people, in view of the fact that its situation was deteriorating on all economic and social levels and, in particular, because of the threats to education, health and other basic services. They proposed that a plan for the activation of Arab economic integration should be adopted, and that the working mechanisms necessary for that purpose should be devised.

2. Facing youth unemployment problems in the ESCWA region

11. Mr. Samir Radwan presented the study on Arab youth employment that is contained in document E/ESCWA/24/4(Part II). He described unemployment in Arab countries and ways of dealing with it, focusing on the fact that the problem manifests itself differently in the various Arab economies. In the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States, the problem is not a lack of employment, but the fact that the quality of education and training system graduates does not match the needs of the private or public sectors. In densely-populated countries, the problem is a lack of employment and the inability of the economy to generate sufficient numbers of employment opportunities, while in the least-developed countries, the problem is the lack of an organized labour market and the inappropriate nature of the education and training system, caused by local conditions or war. It was stressed that one of the most significant ways of dealing with this problem is to increase levels of growth, particularly in sectors that generate employment opportunities.

12. In the course of the discussion, delegates noted that the way in which the problem of unemployment and its causes is addressed varies from one Arab country to another. They also noted the importance of political rhetoric keeping abreast of executive programmes for dealing with the problem of unemployment, and of achieving a balance between the needs of the labour market and education output. They underlined the importance of finding a real understanding of private sector involvement and of offering that sector certain financial incentives for taking part in reducing the number of those seeking employment.

13. Delegates called for steps to be taken and policies adopted that would prompt employment institutions to develop technology, given its impact on improving the balance between education output and the needs of the labour market. Similarly, they called for the establishment of institutions responsible for training and orientation, with a view to solving the problem of the lack of congruity between education output and the needs of the labour market; vocational training programmes to produce youth with the skills needed by the labour market; and the establishment of labour-intensive productive industries.

14. Reference was made to the need to employ studies that address the phenomenon of unemployment on the basis of the most recent data and information, given the accelerating pace of change, and to analyse market needs with respect to specializations and capacities, in order to acquire familiarity with the needs of the countries that both export and host labour. Delegates called for the formulation of special programmes for the funding of small and medium-sized projects, which are the source of many employment opportunities in Arab countries.

3. Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in the ESCWA region: the Damascus Declaration

15. A secretariat representative presented this issue on the basis of document E/ESCWA/24/4(Part III), which includes an evaluation of the progress made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the ESCWA region and a comparison between the countries of the Arab region and between the Arab region and other regions.

16. During the discussion, delegates referred to the link between MDGs and poverty, unemployment and youth problems, all of which are the outcome of low levels of development and require an integrated vision of comprehensive development that enjoys the requisite political support. Reference was made to the fact that work to improve MDG indicators in the region and move them forward to the implementation stage would require the putting in place of a detailed framework for execution at the level of the smallest unit of society.

17. Delegates called upon ESCWA, as the regional arm of the United Nations, to provide technical assistance in calculating the cost of achieving MDGs in countries that are unable to realize them. They stressed the importance, in measuring MDGs, of obtaining information from official sources in the countries concerned rather than State sources alone. Similarly, they underlined the importance of studying successful international comprehensive development models and the extent to which they focused on the development of exports and attraction of investment.

18. They were of the view that the empowerment of women, by removing all the obstacles to their progress and providing them with education, was a major factor in achieving MDGs, including the reduction of infant, child and maternal mortality, and improving the status of women and income levels.

19. Responding to the points raised by delegations on the three issues addressed under this item, the Executive Secretary stressed that ESCWA took every care to obtain the data used in its reports and publications from official Government sources. However, the assistance of member countries was necessary in order to obtain the information required.

20. The Executive Secretary noted that, in its studies, ESCWA divides member countries into three groups, in order to avoid generalizations. Those groups are as follow: the GCC States, countries with more diversified economies, and countries with special needs. However, the mandate of the regional commissions included the analysis of the economic and social situations in the region, and it was therefore necessary to give a general picture of those situations, making it inevitable that averages would be affected by the varying levels of the countries concerned. That did not mean that the progress made by some countries was not acknowledged.

21. The Executive Secretary referred to the importance of following a twin track in training and investment between the countries that export labour and those that host it, in order to ensure that both shared the benefits.

C. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION (Agenda item 7)

22. The Commission considered this agenda item as set forth in document E/ESCWA/24/5, which comprises five sub-items.

1. *Programme performance report for the biennium 2004-2005*

23. Under this item, the secretariat gave a PowerPoint presentation of programme performance, based on document E/ESCWA/24/5(Part I), which sets out the results achieved in the seven subprogrammes and the obstacles and challenges to implementation of the programme of work for the biennium 2004-2005.

24. In the course of the discussion, delegates referred to the importance, in forthcoming reports on programme of work performance, of focusing on and evaluating the impact of ESCWA achievements and the obstacles and challenges ESCWA faces in carrying out its mandate, rather than merely presenting the services that have been provided, and of using data supplied by official sources in member countries rather

than by other, secondary sources, in order to avoid discrepancies in figures. They also referred to the need to take into account the change undergone by the concept of development in recent years, incorporate that change into the ESCWA programme of work, and include in future programmes of work training projects or projects relating to countries that participate in ESCWA sessions in the capacity of observer. It was suggested that ESCWA should employ the media in order to publicize its activities in the fields of the eradication of poverty, empowerment of women and employment, as part of a campaign against violence and terrorism. Stress was laid on the need to focus on marketing and promoting the outcomes of vocational and family projects and, in particular, projects that involve rural women. In other words, greater emphasis should be placed on the economic elements of such projects.

25. In replying to the points raised by delegates, the Executive Secretary expressed her satisfaction with their remarks and positive contribution to the discussions, viewing them as an indication of member country interest in ESCWA activities. She referred to the fact that member countries had requested ESCWA to obtain its data from them, and suggested that they should adopt international and institutional methods of collecting statistical data and strengthen their sources of data, in order to ensure that their own data was the principal source of ESCWA data. Otherwise, ESCWA would have to have recourse to other sources, either regional or international, in order to obtain statistical data. The Executive Secretary also suggested that a committee should be set up in order to consider ways of improving statistics in the Arab countries. With respect to training projects, she explained that ESCWA had provided more than four training programmes for women in Iraq, in addition to training programmes for teachers at four universities, who had been invited to ESCWA headquarters because of the difficulty of going to Iraq. She added that ESCWA sends questionnaires to countries at the beginning of each year, with a view to ascertaining their needs in technical fields and providing the necessary regional advisors. She welcomed all the suggestions put forward by member countries and hoped that they would send requests as early as possible, in order to allow ESCWA to send regional advisors to the countries concerned.

26. In the same context, a representative of the secretariat explained that the report before the Commission was a report on programme performance, containing the outcome of Commission work, lessons learned and best practices. Conceding that the report was a summary, he noted that within a few weeks, member countries would be able to obtain further information when the complete report on programme performance was made available on the Internet. With respect to evaluation, he said that every meeting held by the Commission was evaluated as part of outcome management. As for the emphasis placed by delegations on the importance of networking and the exchange of expertise, he said that ESCWA would in future focus on and develop those two fields. He added that ESCWA is working to develop the capacities of national organizations and institutions, at the national level, with a view to achieving their independent sustainability, by organizing workshops and training courses that meet country requirements. Those programmes and courses had been successful at the national, regional and interregional levels.

*2. Follow-up to the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission
at its twenty-third session*

27. Under this item, a secretariat representative presented document E/ESCWA/24/5(Part II) and summarized the activities that have been undertaken by ESCWA pursuant to those resolutions. He gave the representatives of member countries information on the relevant activities that have been completed and those that are still being carried out.

3. The technical cooperation programme and regional advisory services

28. Under this item, the secretariat gave a PowerPoint presentation of the technical cooperation programme and regional advisory services, based on document E/ESCWA/24/5(Part III), which includes an

overview of the technical cooperation activities carried out by ESCWA with regular budget and extrabudgetary funding.

29. During the discussion, the delegates commented on the need to achieve balance in the provision of technical services, in order to ensure that all countries benefit from them equally. They underlined the need to improve the performance of member countries with respect to economic forecasts at the national level. They also stressed that it was important that the activities of the unit established in order to support regions suffering from wars and conflicts should respect the situation obtaining in each of those regions. Delegates stressed the need to make use of the experience of other organizations and countries and of the special position that ESCWA was in to transfer groundbreaking experiments to member countries, and the importance of information technology and the need to expand its use in Arab countries in a number of ways, including by incorporating the subject into education curriculums. With respect to Palestine, it was suggested that ESCWA should use foreign experts who could enter the Palestinian territory easily, in view of the difficulty Arab consultants had in that respect. It was also suggested that the feasibility should be considered of extending the missions of regional advisors to countries beyond the usual two-week period, which was not sufficient to permit them to learn the circumstances and problems of the country concerned. Reference was made to the need for ESCWA to make all sectors aware of its programmes, activities and services, by contacting the relevant parties. The country concerned should therefore identify the parties with which ESCWA should make contact.

30. In response to the interventions of delegates, the Executive Secretary said that, while all countries benefited equally from regular budget technical cooperation activities, access to extrabudgetary activities was at the request of a country for such services. She confirmed that greater use could be made of the services of the regional advisors and more information made available about the duties that they undertake. She referred to the need to identify consultants resident in Palestine who could be commissioned by ESCWA, in order to avoid the difficulty faced by outside consultants in obtaining entry visas. She also referred to the need to establish an experienced team to consider ways of maximizing the benefit of the services provided by consultants. With respect to the issue of missions, the Executive Secretary explained that the two-week period could be extended in accordance with the need for services.

4. Mobilizing financial resources and funding

31. Under this item the secretariat gave a PowerPoint presentation based on document E/ESCWA/23/5(Part IV), which summarizes the funding plan for several years, pursuant to the provisions of resolution 263 (XXIII) dated 12 May 2005 concerning the promotion of partnership and mobilization of resources.

32. In the course of the discussion, delegates put forward several proposals, including consideration by ESCWA of the feasibility of finding private sector partners in member countries rather than relying solely on States for funding. It was also suggested that ESCWA should wait for responses from member countries with respect to their need for services, which should be distributed between them equally. Reference was made to the possibility of ESCWA using the media to publicize its activities, particularly in such fields as the eradication of poverty, the empowerment of women and employment, as part of the fight against violence and terrorism. Further reference was made to the need to focus on ESCWA programmes and activities rather than comparing them with the resources of the other regional commissions. Another proposal was put forward to the effect that ESCWA human resources should be increased in order to alleviate the need for the mobilization of increased financial resources.

33. The Executive Secretary responded to delegate interventions, explaining that ESCWA was the most recently established regional commission, with many fewer member countries than its counterparts. She

said that, while Western countries felt sympathy for and contributed to such other regions as Africa and South Asia, they considered ESCWA an oil-rich region and did not contribute to it. She added that it had been many years since the budget allocated to ESCWA by the United Nations had been increased, and that it had in fact decreased from time to time. That was one of the obstacles that ESCWA had to face.

34. On the same issue, a representative of the secretariat clarified that the regular budget only allowed ESCWA to undertake normative and analytical activities and certain executive field activities. If ESCWA was to be able to undertake practical and executive activities and regional programmes and initiatives that would respond to the demands and needs of member countries, there would have to be regular inflows of financial resources from member countries to ESCWA.

5. Report of the seventh session of the Committee on Transport

35. Under this item, the Commission was presented with document E/ESCWA/GRID/2006/IG.1/4, which comprises the report of the Committee on Transport on its seventh session.

36. During the discussion of the report, and with respect to the workshop on best practices in the field of road safety, it was proposed that the term "best practices" should be replaced by "road safety", and that where the experiences of countries that had set up road safety commissions had been successful, they should be emulated. The importance of the role of national committees on the facilitation of transport and trade was also discussed, and the question raised of the technical party responsible for links between those committees and their subsidiaries.

37. The Executive Secretary expressed her approval for the change in the title of the workshop, given that its concern was road safety. She stressed that the issue of the facilitation of transport and trade was important albeit, technically, it was a trade and globalization, rather than transport issue. She explained that as far as ESCWA was concerned, that matter was not considered by the transport team, but by the international trade team, which would in the near future be working with those responsible for the issue in member countries.

38. The Commission adopted the recommendations made in the report of the Committee on Transport, with the exception of any that conflicted with resolutions and recommendations of the current ESCWA session.

D. MANAGEMENT ISSUES (Agenda item 8)

39. The Commission considered this agenda item on the basis of document E/ESCWA/24/6, which comprises three sub-items.

1. Streamlining the work of the Commission

40. Under this item, the representative of the secretariat presented document E/ESCWA/24/6(Part I) which comprises two sub-items:

(a) Consideration of the Statistics Programme

41. The secretariat representative reviewed the changes that were made to the ESCWA statistics programme as a result of the restructuring of the Commission in 2003, the review that was conducted by the Office of Internal Oversight Services, and the internal evaluation that was carried out by ESCWA. The

secretariat explained that the statistical aspects of its work had been incorporated into the substantive aspects, with a view to developing and coordinating statistics in member countries and avoiding the duplication of statistics and indicators, as member countries had requested.

42. During the discussion, certain delegations expressed the view that the abolition of the Statistics Division had weakened statistical work with respect to the relationship and synergy with member countries. They thought it best that the Division should be re-established and supported with sufficient financial and human resources, given that there had to be a central body that could standardize statistical concepts and classifications and adapt statistical methodologies as appropriate to the particularities of ESCWA member countries.

43. Delegates referred to the need to focus on gender-disaggregated statistics and for a complete separation between the collection and analysis of data. They underlined the importance of precise and standardized statistics in implementing all development programmes and monitoring MDG achievement.

44. Delegates also referred to the need to evaluate the needs of member countries in various fields relating to the collection of data and dissemination thereof by electronic means; national accounts; and the modern methods employed in that context. They stressed the importance for that purpose of coordination between the ESCWA Statistics Division and the central statistics bodies of member countries.

45. In her response, the Executive Secretary said that when the Commission was restructured, member countries had agreed that the Statistics Division should be incorporated into the technical divisions. The fact that Statistics Division staff had been moved to the technical divisions had not been prejudicial to their statistical work but had, on the contrary, helped to standardize and coordinate the data issued by those divisions. She stressed that the statistics-related subprogramme had remained separate from other ESCWA programmes and that its resources had not been redistributed following decentralization. She said that it was the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to determine the administrative and staffing structure of the secretariat, and explained that the re-establishment of the Statistics Division would require an administrative position at a certain level that was not included in the current ESCWA budget, for which provision would have to be made in the forthcoming budget. The Executive Secretary affirmed that the secretariat would take into consideration all the directives of member countries and that the re-establishment of the Statistics Division had in fact been proposed in the budget for the biennium 2008-2009.

(b) *Consideration of ESCWA intergovernmental machinery*

46. A representative of the secretariat gave a PowerPoint presentation that covered the outcome of the comprehensive evaluation of ESCWA intergovernmental machinery that had been carried out in accordance with the recommendation made by the Office of Internal Oversight Services as part of the United Nations reform process, whereby all mandates that have been established for more than five years must be reviewed. He explained that the secretariat would prepare a methodology and plan of action for ESCWA intergovernmental machinery, in consultation with the advisory body, with a view to determining the best structure for strengthening links between the various programmes and activities, and would focus on issues which had priority in the region. It would also determine the ideal frequency with which intergovernmental committees should meet. The plan of action would be submitted to the Commission at its twenty-fifth session.

47. In the course of the discussion, delegates called for the establishment of a technical committee comprising the focal points of member countries, which would meet once every six months in order to follow up implementation of the ESCWA programme of work and assist in requesting funding for proposed

projects. They also called for the activation of the subsidiary institutions, saying that a lengthy interval between their sessions should be avoided. Specialized working groups should be established for specific periods, with responsibility for addressing certain issues. Delegates underlined the need for an interchange between member countries of expertise and best practices in the fields of organization and administrative performance.

48. The secretariat welcomed the suggestion that a technical committee should be established with responsibility for ensuring direct and continual communication between ESCWA and member countries, on condition that member countries should bear the cost of that committee's meetings, which were not provided for in the current budget.

49. Accordingly, the Commission decided to form a technical committee comprising senior officials from member countries, to meet once every six months at ESCWA headquarters in order to follow up implementation of programme activities and support ESCWA in achieving its aims. The committee would have no budget implications. The secretariat would prepare an agenda and issue invitations to the meeting.

2. Proposed programme changes for the biennium 2006-2007

50. Under this item, the representative of the secretariat presented document E/ESCWA/24/6(Part II), which contains the amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2006-2007 that have been proposed in the light of unforeseen issues at the regional and global levels, including the main concerns and priorities of the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

51. The Commission adopted the proposed programme changes for the biennium 2006-2007.

3. Draft strategic framework for the biennium 2008-2009

52. Under this item, the representative of the secretariat presented document E/ESCWA/24/6(Part III), which contains the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2008-2009 and an overview of the goals and expected achievements of each of the seven subprogrammes.

53. In the course of the discussion, delegates referred to the important initiative taken by ESCWA in implementing the programmes and informing member countries of the assistance with which it could provide them. They stressed the importance of establishing an ESCWA technology centre.

54. Delegates also stressed the importance of strengthening and developing interregional trade and of accelerating the establishment of the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA). They requested that a study should be carried out of the obstacles to such trade and that member countries should be assisted in the matter of becoming members of the World Trade Organization (WTO). They further called for a common policy to be formulated by member countries with respect to energy pricing.

55. In her response to the remarks of the delegates, the Executive Secretary stressed that ESCWA would cooperate with the council of Arab economic unity, which had been given responsibility for establishing GAFTA. The secretariat asked GCC States to inform it of all recent and innovative achievements, that could then be publicized in member countries, all of which could benefit therefrom.

56. The Commission adopted the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2008-2009.

**E. REVIEW OF PROGRESS MADE BY YEMEN IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME
OF ACTION FOR THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THE DECADE 2001-2010
(Agenda item 9)**

57. Under this item, a representative of the secretariat gave a PowerPoint presentation based on document E/ESCWA/24/7, focusing on the most prominent economic and social developments that had taken place in Yemen over the past five years and the development policies that had been adopted with a view to carrying out the undertakings made with respect to the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2001-2010.

58. In the course of the discussion, some delegates questioned the reliability of the data in the study, underlining the need to consult the country concerned when reports on it were being prepared. Some delegates pointed out that the study did not show the assistance given to Yemen by the Gulf States, while others suggested that programmes should be adopted that provided alternatives to the cultivation of *qat*.

59. Delegates noted that the development assistance received by Yemen is less than that enjoyed by other least developed countries (LDCs), and that international support was of a political nature and subject to the strategies and visions of the donor country. Clear and workable projects and programmes must be adopted in order to attract assistance from donor countries. Delegates stressed that the international community must honour its commitment to assist LDCs, in accordance with the recommendations made by the relevant international summit conferences.

60. In replying to the delegates' observations, the secretariat representative stressed that the study was not an analytical study, but a report that had been prepared in accordance with an outline that had been determined by the United Nations Secretariat. The data it contained had been provided by official sources in Yemen.

**F. DATE AND VENUE OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION
(Agenda item 12)**

61. It was decided that the twenty-fifth session of the Commission will be held in Beirut in April 2008.

**G. OTHER BUSINESS
(Agenda item 13)**

62. No proposals were received under this agenda item.

**IV. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION
ON ITS TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION**

63. At its plenary closing session, held on 11 May 2006, the Commission adopted the draft report on its twenty-fourth session, on the understanding that the agreed amendments would be incorporated therein.

V. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. DATE AND VENUE

64. The Commission held its twenty-fourth session in Beirut from 8 to 11 May 2006. The Commission convened seven plenary meetings, during which it discussed the items on its agenda.

B. OPENING OF THE SESSION

1. *Senior Officials' segment*

65. The session was opened in two stages. The first opening, for senior officials, took place on the morning of Monday, 8 May 2006, while the ministerial segment was opened on the morning of Wednesday 10 May 2006 at United Nations House in Beirut.

66. At the first opening, Mr. Ahmad Ashqar, Deputy Head of the State Planning Commission for Human Development Affairs of the Syrian Arab Republic, made a statement on behalf of the Chairman of the twenty-third ESCWA session. He noted that the issues on the session agenda represented national and regional priorities which United Nations organizations are working to help achieve. He stressed that the most important requirement for achieving perceptible development progress was effective cooperation between ESCWA member countries and between those and other countries in economic, political and cultural fields, and a general climate of security and peace in the region and the whole world. He stressed the need for the role of the United Nations to be strengthened with respect to its sponsorship of such cooperation and the establishment of security and a just peace in the region and the world, because of the influence it had on the achievement of economic and social development needs.

67. The Executive Secretary of ESCWA then made a statement in which she welcomed delegations and commended their effective participation and tireless endeavours to ensure the success of the session. She reviewed the pressing issues that would be addressed by the Commission at the session, including the United Nations reform process, its impact on the regional commissions and their role therein, the problem of youth unemployment, and the progress made towards achieving MDGs. She referred to the management and organizational issues to be considered, including the proposed changes to the programme of work for the biennium 2006-2007, the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2008-2009, the institutional structure, and the frequency with which ESCWA intergovernmental committees met, in accordance with the outcome of the United Nations reform process and the expected changes in its work priorities. The Executive Secretary referred to the new unit that had been established by ESCWA in order to support countries suffering from war and armed conflict, and expressed the hope that member countries would support the establishment of the two centres for technology and water which ESCWA intended to set up, and would be prepared to host them, in support of regional cooperation and integration.

2. *Ministerial segment*

68. The ministerial segment of the session was opened by Mr. Khaled Al-Qusaibi, Minister of Economy and Planning of Saudi Arabia, and Chairman of the twenty-fourth ESCWA session. He commended the efforts made by ESCWA through its activities to serve the countries of the region and referred to the rapid economic and social changes that were taking place in the region and the world, which included challenges and opportunities that must be dealt with through development and national and Arab advancement. He affirmed the need to intensify the implementation of social policies that recognized the various aspects of national and regional challenges, including illiteracy, poverty, unemployment and MDG-related fields. He enumerated the most urgent economic issues, namely, the generation of employment opportunities, economic diversification, technology adaptation and the improvement of public administration.

69. The Executive Secretary read out a message from the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, to the twenty-fourth session, in which he greeted session participants and noted that ESCWA sessions constituted an important mechanism for consolidating regional cooperation. That cooperation, and economic integration, represented a strategy of the utmost importance in addressing the effects of the political conflicts and turmoil from which the region suffered. He made particular reference to poverty and

unemployment. He expressed his readiness to work with the Commission in meeting the needs of the region and keeping abreast of the changing challenges of the age. The Secretary-General wished participants every success at the meeting.

70. The Executive Secretary made a statement at the opening of the ministerial segment in which she thanked the Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of Lebanon, Mr. Nabih Berri, for sponsoring the session. She referred to the political and security upheavals from which the region is suffering and their impact on development, as well as the changes that are taking place at the economic level. She underlined the need for sources of income to be diversified, for the revenue from the new oil bonanza to be used in productive fields and for emphasis to be placed on the strengthening of the knowledge-based economy. At the social level, she noted that, while the region had made progress in education and health, much remained to be done in order to reduce poverty and unemployment and strengthen the participation of women in economic and political life. The Executive Secretary concluded her statement by renewing ESCWA's commitment to Arab regional issues and to continue its efforts to achieve progress, sustainable development and advancement, whatever the challenges might be.

71. Mr. Abdul Rahman bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, Secretary-General of GCC, made a statement in which he began by thanking the Executive Secretary and her staff for their efforts to serve the region. He discussed the views held by GCC on certain of the issues to be discussed, including the progress made in the region towards achieving MDGs. He noted that the Arab region continues to face major challenges to achieving those Goals, and said that regional integration is one of the most important means of confronting those challenges. In that context, he cited the experience of GCC in uncovering the hidden benefits of cooperation, coordination and integration, and the strengthening of joint working mechanisms in the ESCWA region. He reviewed the stages through which the GCC had passed in the course of its integration experiment, from the establishment of the free trade area in 1983 to the monetary union and the launch of the single currency in 2010, and other integration projects. He said that there could be no democracy without real development in all economic and social fields and that there could be no political freedom unless the most pressing social issues were addressed.

72. Mr. Nabih Berri, sponsor of the session and Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies of Lebanon, made a statement in which he thanked the Executive Secretary for the support for Lebanon and its stability that had been demonstrated by the United Nations continuing its work in the country, its concern for the reconstruction and development of south Lebanon and the award to Lebanon of a Special Citation of the UN-HABITAT Scroll of Honour. He noted the importance of the issues on the agenda, and the need to re-formulate reform programmes to include sustainable development concepts, to evaluate Government policies and their impact on the environment, and to link Government reform measures with MDGs. He mentioned the issue of youth unemployment and the size of that problem in the region, underlining the need for United Nations expertise in generating employment opportunities. He also addressed the oppressive challenges faced by the region, including organized and constantly changing forms of terrorism that affected many parts of the region, which must be dealt with by a united international front and represented one of the challenges to ESCWA. He affirmed that the holding of the session in Beirut was an expression of confidence in the stability of the public system in Lebanon.

C. PARTICIPATION

73. The session was attended by representatives of the 13 ESCWA member countries and, in the capacity of observers, representatives of other States Members of the United Nations non-members of ESCWA. Other observers included representatives of United Nations programmes, bodies and institutions; representatives of international organizations, non-governmental organizations and other organizations; and a number of experts. The list of participants comprises annex I.

D. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. *Senior Officials' segment*

74. Rule 12 of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Commission provides that the Commission shall, at the commencement of each session, elect from among the representatives of its members, a Chairman, two Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur. Accordingly, Mr. Ahmad Ibrahim Hikmi, Deputy Minister of Finance and Planning of Saudi Arabia, was elected as Chairman of the meetings of the Senior Officials' segment, and Messrs. Mr. Wahid Mubarak Sayyar, Ambassador of Bahrain to the Syrian Arab Republic, and Amru Hilmy, Deputy Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs for International Economic Relations of Egypt, were elected as Vice-Chairmen. Mr. Muhammad Mustafa Muhammad Ghadia, General Director of Development of Palestine, was elected as Rapporteur.

2. *Ministerial segment*

75. Mr. Khaled Al-Qusaibi, Minister of Economy and Planning of Saudi Arabia, assumed the Chair of the ministerial segment of the twenty-fourth ESCWA session. Mr. Wahid Mubarak Sayyar, Ambassador of Bahrain to the Syrian Arab Republic and Mr. Aly Musaylahi, Minister of Social Security of Egypt, assumed the positions of Vice-Chairmen, while Mr. Samir Abu Aisha, Minister of Planning of Palestine, assumed the position of Rapporteur.

E. CREDENTIALS

76. In accordance with rule 11 of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Commission, the credentials of the representatives as submitted to the Executive Secretary were examined by the officers and found to be in order.

F. AGENDA

77. At its first meeting, the Commission adopted the agenda in the form in which it is set forth in document E/ESCWA/24/1. The agenda adopted was as follows:

1. Opening of the twenty-fourth session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda.
4. Proposed organization of work.
5. Consideration of requests by States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) to participate as observers in the twenty-fourth session of the Commission.
6. Policy issues in the ESCWA region:
 - (a) New challenges in the region and their impact on the work of ESCWA;
 - (b) Facing youth unemployment problems in the ESCWA region;

(c) Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in the ESCWA region: the Damascus Declaration.

7. Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission:

- (a) Programme performance report for the biennium 2004-2005;
- (b) Follow-up to the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-third session;
- (c) The technical cooperation programme and regional advisory services;
- (d) Mobilizing financial resources and funding;
- (e) Report of the seventh session of the Committee on Transport.

8. Management issues:

- (a) Streamlining the work of the Commission:
 - (i) Consideration of the Statistics Programme;
 - (ii) Consideration of ESCWA intergovernmental machinery;
- (b) Proposed programme changes for the biennium 2006-2007;
- (c) Draft strategic framework for the biennium 2008-2009.

9. Review of progress made by Yemen in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2001-2010.

10. Date and venue of the twenty-fifth session of the Commission.

11. Other business.

12. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its twenty-fourth session.

78. At the same meeting, once some amendments had been made, the Commission adopted the proposed organization of work for its twenty-fourth session that is set forth in document E/ESCWA/24/L.2.

G. DOCUMENTS

79. A list of the documents presented to the Commission during the twenty-fourth session is provided in annex II.

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

A. ESCWA MEMBERS

Bahrain

Mr. Mahmood Hashem Al-Kooheji
Assistant Under-Secretary for Economic Affairs
Ministry of Finance

H.E. Mr. Waheed Mubarak Sayyar
Ambassador of Bahrain to the Syrian Arab
Republic

Mr. Mohammad Ali Taleb
Director of Economic Relations Department
Ministry of Finance

Egypt

H.E. Mr. Ali Al-Msailhi
Minister of Social Solidarity

H.E. Mr. Hussein Darrar
Ambassador of Egypt to Lebanon

H.E. Mr. Amr Moustapha Kamal Hilmy
Deputy Assistant-Minister for Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Bahiyyeddine Abdel-Hamid Mourtaja
Head of Information Technology Sector
Central Agency for Public Mobilization and
Statistics

Ms. Amira Abdel-Raheem
Third Secretary
Embassy of Egypt in Lebanon

Iraq

H.E. Mr. Tahseen Alawan Ayna
Minister Plenipotentiary
Chargé d'affaires of the Embassy of Iraq in
Lebanon

Mr. Al-Manhal Hussein Al-Safi
Advisor
Embassy of Iraq in Lebanon

Mr. Oday As'ad Al-Saudi
Third Secretary
Embassy of Iraq in Lebanon

Mr. Jamal Abdallah Khudair
Third Secretary
Embassy of Iraq in Lebanon

Jordan

Mr. Mohammad Al-Kaid
Chargé d'affaires
Embassy of Jordan in Lebanon

Ms. Raghad Al-Saqqa
Third Secretary
Embassy of Jordan in Lebanon

Kuwait

H.E. Mr. Ali Suleiman Al-Said
Ambassador of Kuwait to Lebanon

Mr. Hamad Munawer Habib Al-Munawer
Assistant Under-Secretary
Ministry of Planning

Ms. Wissal Abdul-Aziz Madwah
Education and Training Supervisor
Planning and Prospects Sector
Ministry of Planning

Mr. Jaber Abbas Qabazard
External Coordination Supervisor
Planning and Prospects Sector
Ministry of Planning

Lebanon

H.E. Mr. Fawzi Sallukh
Minister for Foreign Affairs and Emigrants

H.E. Mr. Antoine Chedid
Director of International Organizations,
Conferences and Cultural Relations
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants

Mr. Hussein Haidar
Head of International Organizations Service
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants

Lebanon (continued)

Mr. Abbas Rida Mtayrek
Head of Treaties Service
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants

Oman

H.E. Mr. Amer Bin Hamad Al-Hujari
Ambassador of Oman to Lebanon

Mr. Ali Bin Mahboub Bin Hassan Al-Rayissi
General Director of Social Statistics
Ministry of National Economy

Mr. Said Bin Harith Al-Barashdi
Chargé d'affaires
Embassy of Oman in Lebanon

Palestine

H.E. Mr. Samir Abu Aisheh
Minister of Planning

Mr. Luay Abdel Hafez Shabaneh
Head of Palestinian Central Statistics Agency

Mr. Mohammad Moustapha Mohammad
Ghadiyeh
General Director of Development Issues
Ministry of Planning

Mr. Ahmad Abdellatif Mohammad Al-Ashkar
Advisor
Ministry of Youth and Sports

Qatar

H.E. Mr. Jaber Bin Abdallah Al-Soueid
Ambassador of Qatar to Lebanon

Mr. Ghanem Bin Jassem Bin Fahd Al Thani
Second Secretary
International Organizations and Conferences
Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Saleh Mohammad Al-Nabit
Director, a.i.
Department of Economic Planning
Planning Council, General Secretariat

Mr. Fahed Bin Jassem Al Thani
Head of Technical Cooperation Unit
Planning Council

Mr. Nasser Ibrahim Alangawi
Researcher in Economic and Trade Relations
Ministry of Economy and Commerce

Mr. Ali Moubarak Al Khalifa
Director of Organization and Post Classification
Department
Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Housing

Saudi Arabia

H.E. Mr. Khaled Bin Mouhammad Al-Kosseiby
Minister of Economy and Planning

H.E. Mr. Abdel-Aziz Muhyeddine Khoja
Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Lebanon

Mr. Ahmad Ibrahim Hakami
Deputy Minister of Economy and Planning

Mr. Awad Baneeh Al-Radadi
Under-Secretary
Ministry of Social Affairs

Mr. Ali Abdullah Al-Nouaim
Deputy Minister for Planning and Follow-up
Ministry of Transport

Mr. Ahmad Bin Habib Salah
Economic Advisor to the Minister
Ministry of Economy and Planning

Mr. Abdul-Aziz Adib Taher
Assistant Under-Secretary for Planning
Ministry of Economy and Planning

Mr. Mohamed Fida-El-Deen Bin Mahmood Al
Idriss
General Director of Social Services
Ministry of Economy and Planning

Mr. Abdullah Mohammad Al-Batil
General Director of Population and Vital
Statistics
Ministry of Economy and Planning

Mr. Mohammad Ibrahim Al-Hayzan
General Director
Department of International Financial
Organizations and Institutions
Ministry of Finance

Saudi Arabia (continued)

Mr. Abdul-Rahman Saleh Al-Dughaither
Director of Arabic Affairs
Ministry of Trade and Industry

Mr. Abdelmalek Ali Al-Yussufi
First Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Abdel Raouf Al-Sadek El-Kaidi
General Director of Recruitment
Ministry of Labour

Mr. Faysal Mohammad Al-Zawawi
First Secretary
Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Lebanon

Mr. Faysal Al-Mandil
First Secretary
Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Lebanon

Mr. Khaled Nasser Al-Oumayr
Commercial Attaché
Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Lebanon

Mr. Fawaz Bin Soubhi Pharaon
Secretary of the Minister of Economy and
Planning

Syrian Arab Republic

Mr. Ahmad Moustapha Al-Ashkar
Deputy Head of State Planning Commission for
Human Development Affairs

Mr. Refaat Hejazi
Director of Human Resources Management
Department
State Planning Commission

Mr. Mohsen Youssef Esmandar
Director, Cooperation with International
Organizations
State Planning Commission

Ms. Maysoun Awayti
Assistant to Director, Cooperation with
International Organizations
State Planning Commission

United Arab Emirates

Mr. Abdellatif Mohammad Bin Hamad
Under-Secretary
Ministry of Economy and Planning
Mr. Haj Abdullah Bintursh Al-Jabiri
Director of International Cooperation Directorate
Ministry of Economy and Planning

Yemen

Mr. Hisham Sharaf Abdallah
Under-Secretary
Ministry of Planning and International
Cooperation

H.E. Mr. Mohamed Abdel-Majeed Qubaty
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Embassy of Yemen in Lebanon and Cyprus

Mr. Mohammed Jalal Mawla
General Director of International and Regional
Organizations
Ministry of Planning and International
Cooperation

Mr. Mohammad Lutf Mohammad Al-Iryani
Advisor
Ministry of Planning and International
Cooperation

Mr. Hussein Al-Iryani
Advisor
Embassy of Yemen in Lebanon

Ms. Houriiya Mashour Ahmad
Vice-President of the National Committee on
Women

Ms. Balkis Mohammad Al-Jarmouzi
General Director of the Women Department
Ministry of Petroleum and Minerals

Ms. Wafaa Abdallah Awad Ahmad
Member of the National Committee on Women
General Director of Women Department
Head of the Professional Federation of Small
Industries
Ministry of Industry and Trade

B. STATES MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS NOT MEMBERS OF ESCWA

China

Mr. Chenfei Yang
Third Secretary
Embassy of China in Lebanon

Colombia

Ms. Aldona José
Embassy of Colombia in Lebanon

Germany

Mr. Fribdrich Malte Luden
Embassy of Germany in Lebanon

Morocco

H.E. Mr. Lahsen Al-Jit
Minister Plenipotentiary
Embassy of Morocco in Lebanon

Poland

Mr. Zygmunt Cebula
Economic Advisor
Embassy of Poland in Lebanon

Sudan

H.E. Mr. Al-Samani Al-Waseela
Minister of State
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Khaled Al-Khodr Al-Tayyib Al-Ameen
Economic inspector
Ministry of Finance and National Economy

Mr. Abdel-Raheem Al-Sadeek Mohammad
Diplomat and Advisor
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Ahmad Abu Zeid Othman
Advisor
Embassy of Sudan in Lebanon

Tunisia

Mr. Salaheddine Bin Obeid
Chargé d'affaires
Embassy of Tunisia in Lebanon

Ukraine

Mr. Vitalii Chepeliuk
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Embassy of Ukraine in Lebanon

C. UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT

United Nations Information Centre (UNIC)

Mr. Maher Ibrahim Nasser
Director
Egypt

United Nations Truce Supervision Organization

Mr. Igor Colga
Vice-President
Lebanon

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Ms. Renée Sabbagh
National Expert
Lebanon

D. UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMMES AND AGENCIES

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Ms. Mona Hamam
Coordinator of United Nations Activities
UNDP Resident Representative in Lebanon
Representative of United Nations Population Fund

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Mr. Habib Nicolas Al-Habr
Director and Regional Representative
Bahrain

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights (UNHCHR)

Mr. Mazen Jamil Shaqoura
Human Rights Officer
Lebanon

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Mr. Thomas McDermott
Regional Director
Jordan

United Nations Relief and Works Agency for
Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)

Mr. Richard James Cook
Director of UNRWA Affairs in Lebanon

Ms. Adona Al-Murr
Youth Programme Officer
Lebanon

United Nations University (UNV)

Dr. Jairam Reddy
Director
International Leadership Institute
Jordan

World Food Programme (WFP)

Ms. Pippa Bradford
Representative and Country Director
Syrian Arab Republic

E. UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

United Nations Food and Agriculture
Organization (FAO)

Mr. Abdessalam Ould Ahmed
Representative
Lebanon

United Nations Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Mr. Sulieman Awwad Sulieman
Programme Specialist in Technical and
Vocational Education and Training
Lebanon

World Bank

Mr. Omar Razzaz
Director
Lebanon

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

Mr. Sami Geadah
Director of the Middle East Regional Technical
Assistance Centre
Lebanon

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

Mr. Ibrahim Butros Barakat-Diab
Head of Meteorological Department for Lebanon
Representative
Lebanon

United Nations Industrial Development
Organization (UNIDO)

Mr. Cheikh Tidiane Sakho
Regional Representative for Iraq, Jordan,
Lebanon and Syrian Arab Republic
Lebanon

F. INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND RELATED BODIES

League of Arab States

H.E. Mr. Muatasem Rashid Suleiman
Minister Plenipotentiary
Director of Economic Studies and Research
Department
Mr. Salah Mohammad Idriss
Head of International Organizations Department
Economic Sector

Arab Labour Organization

Mr. Ibrahim Guider
General Director
Mr. Salim Fouad Abu Harfush
Head of Information Office
Ms. Doua'a Hassan Yussef
Professor of Statistics

Arab Industrial Development and Mining
Organization (AIDMO)

Mr. Talaat Bin Zafer
General Director

Mr. Hamed Al-Maamoun Alameddine
Director of the Centre of Standardization and
Metrology

Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific
Organization (ALESCO)

Mr. Al-Mongi Bousnina
General Director

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

H.E. Mr. Abdel-Rahman Bin Hamad Al-Atiya
Secretary-General

Mr. Abdel-Aziz Al-Hamad Al-Uwaisheg
Minister Plenipotentiary
Director of Economic Integration and Studies
Department

Mr. Said Bin Hamad Al-Marry
Director of Public Relations Department
Office of the Secretary-General

Council of Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs
in GCC States

Mr. Othman Bin Abdullah Al-Tewaijry
General Director

Mr. Mahmoud Ali Hafez
Director
Social Affairs Department

G. GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Islamic Development Bank

Mr. Hassan Abdel-Majed Moussa
Economist/Country Officer
Saudi Arabia

Islamic Corporation for the Development of the
Private Sector

Mr. Ali Abdel-Aziz Sulaiman
CEO and General Manager
Saudi Arabia

General Union of Chambers of Commerce,
Industry and Agriculture for Arab Countries

Mr. Elias Ghantous
Secretary-General
Lebanon

Ms. Nahed Al-Zein Nu'amani
Economic Researcher in charge of External Trade
Affairs

Ms. Hoda Kachtan
Executive Officer

Federation of GCC Chambers

Mr. Mohammad Bin Abdullah Al-Mulla
General Secretary

Nile Water Sector/Ministry of Water Resources
and Irrigation

Mr. Ahmad Mohammad Fahmi Abdallah
Former Head of Nile Water Sector/Advisor of the
Nile Water Authority
Egypt

Arab Lawyers Union

Mr. Omar Mohammed Zein
Assistant Secretary-General
Lebanon

National Council for Scientific Research

Mr. Mouin Hamzi
Secretary-General
Lebanon

Mr. Hassan Ali Al-Sharif
Advisor for New Science and Technology
Policies

The Higher Council for Science and Technology

Mr. Issam Mustapha
Head of Service
Jordan

Egyptian AIDS Society

Ms. Sawsan Hassan El-Sheikh
President
Egypt

United Nations Association in Lebanon

Mr. Samir Michel Al-Daher
Head of the Association
Lebanon

Mr. Raja Sabri Hamadeh
Secretary-General

Ms. Ghouna Sharif
Director of the Office

Middle East Centre for the Transfer of
Appropriate Technology

Mr. Najib Saab
Head of the Centre
Lebanon

Lebanese Business Women Association

Ms. Laila Karame
President of the Association
Lebanon

The Lebanese Council to Resist Violence Against
Women

Ms. Amal Ftouni
Lebanon

National Coalition of Elimination of
Discrimination Against Women

Ms. Azza Al-Hurr Mrouweh
General Coordinator
Lebanon

Lebanese Union for Child Welfare

Ms. Fadia Othman Al-As'ad
President
Lebanon

Ms. Lina Kronfol
External Relations Officer

Ms. Haifa Nouh Hamdan

Arab Women's Organization

Ms. Wadouda Badran
General Director
Egypt

National Rehabilitation and Development Centre

Mr. Hussein Ali Majed
Lebanon

Ms. Amira Hassan Hamada
Information Officer

National Association for the Lebanese Child

Ms. Nour Daoud Salman
Head of the Association
Lebanon

Ms. Khanum Amer Khaddaj
Secretary-General

Imam Al-Sadr Foundation

Mr. Mohammed Bassam
Studies Office
Lebanon

Caritas Liban

Father Louis Samaha
President of Caritas Liban
Lebanon

Ms. May Melhem As'ad
Officer
Economic Development Projects and Rural Banks
Programme

Middle East Council of Churches

Father Gerges Ibrahim Saleh
Secretary-General
Lebanon

Lebanese National Commission for UNESCO

Ms. Salwa Al-Sanioura Ba'siri
Secretary-General
Lebanon

Women's Federation for World Peace

Ms. Miriana Nicolas Abu Rahhal
President of the Federation
Lebanon

Ms. Thérèse Elias Saadé

Christian Youth Students

Ms. Diana Deeb
Lebanon

AMWAJ Environmental Group

Mr. Khalil Dahoui
Head of Radiology Department
Lebanon

Legal Studies on Civil Aviation

Mr. Fawaz Mourtada
Head
Lebanon

H. EXPERTS

Mr. Samir Radwan
Managing Director
Economic Research Forum
Egypt

Annex II

**LIST OF DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED TO THE COMMISSION AT ITS
 TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION**

Symbol	Item	Title
E/ESCWA/24/L.1	3	Provisional agenda
E/ESCWA/24/L.1/Add.1	3	Annotated provisional agenda
E/ESCWA/24/L.2	4	Proposed organization of work
E/ESCWA/24/3	5	Consideration of requests by States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) to participate as observers in the twenty-fourth session of the Commission
E/ESCWA/24/4	6	Policy issues in the ESCWA region
E/ESCWA/24/4(Part I)	6 (a)	New challenges in the region and their impact on the work of ESCWA
E/ESCWA/24/4(Part II)	6 (b)	Facing youth unemployment problems in the ESCWA region
E/ESCWA/24/4(Part III)	6 (c)	Achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in the ESCWA region: the Damascus Declaration
E/ESCWA/24/5	7	Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission
E/ESCWA/24/5(Part I)	7 (a)	Programme performance report for the biennium 2004-2005
E/ESCWA/24/5(Part II)	7 (b)	Follow-up to the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-third session
E/ESCWA/24/5(Part III)	7 (c)	The technical cooperation programme and regional advisory services
E/ESCWA/24/5(Part IV)	7 (d)	Mobilizing financial resources and funding
E/ESCWA/24/5(Part V)	7 (e)	Report of the seventh session of the Committee on Transport
E/ESCWA/24/6	8	Management issues
E/ESCWA/24/6(Part I)	8 (a)	Streamlining the work of the Commission
E/ESCWA/24/6(Part I)/Add.1	8 (a-i)	Consideration of the Statistics Programme
E/ESCWA/24/6(Part I)/Add.2	8 (a-ii)	Consideration of ESCWA intergovernmental machinery

Symbol	Item	Title
E/ESCWA/24/6(Part II)	8 (b)	Proposed programme changes for the biennium 2006-2007
E/ESCWA/24/6(Part III)	8 (c)	Draft strategic framework for the biennium 2008-2009
E/ESCWA/24/7	9	Review of progress made by Yemen in the period 2001-2005 in implementing the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2001-2010
E/ESCWA/24/L.10	12	Draft report of the Commission on its twenty-fourth session
E/ESCWA/24/INF.1		List of twenty-fourth session documents
E/ESCWA/24/INF.2		List of publications and documents issued by the Commission since its twenty-third session
E/ESCWA/24/INF.3		Information for participants

