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Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda

**REVIEW OF STATISTICAL WORK CARRIED OUT SINCE THE SIXTH SESSION  
OF THE STATISTICAL COMMITTEE**

*Progress made in implementing statistics-related activities in the period between  
the sixth and seventh sessions of the Statistical Committee*

**Summary**

The statistics-related activities that were carried out by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in the period between the sixth and seventh sessions of the Statistical Committee were aimed at providing comparative statistics to assist in the formulation of evidence-based policies. During that period, statistical work focused on the following main themes:

- (a) Supporting the capacities of member countries to produce, disseminate and use precise and timely statistics in the social, economic and sectoral fields, based on international standards, with a view to publicizing the concept of evidence-based policies and meeting the needs of local and international development programmes and regional integration goals;
- (b) Strengthening of the linkages and coordination with the United Nations Statistics Division, the regional commissions and the specialized United Nations organizations, with a view to harmonizing and directing efforts relating to the development of statistics-related work in the region;
- (c) Upgrading the capacities of officials in national statistics offices to produce statistical data and indicators to measure the progress made towards achieving national and international development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals;
- (d) Consolidating the role of ESCWA as the leading source in the region of high-quality statistical services, with a view to harmonizing and monitoring the quality of statistics and improving their integration between member countries, and making ESCWA the central repository of precise and transparent data that reflect the main development issues in the region;
- (e) Supporting member country capacities to implement the International Comparison Programme and calculate purchasing power parities and use them in preparing economic indicators as part of the System of National Accounts 1993.

**I. SUPPORTING THE CAPACITIES OF MEMBER COUNTRIES TO PRODUCE,  
DISSEMINATE AND USE PRECISE AND TIMELY STATISTICS IN THE  
SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND SECTORAL FIELDS, BASED  
ON INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS, WITH A VIEW  
TO PUBLICIZING THE CONCEPT OF EVIDENCE-BASED  
POLICIES AND MEETING THE NEEDS OF LOCAL  
AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAMMES AND REGIONAL  
INTEGRATION GOALS**

**A. EXPERT GROUP MEETINGS AND TRAINING WORKSHOPS**

1. As part of ESCWA ongoing endeavours to support the capacities of member countries to produce, disseminate and use precise and timely statistics in the social, economic and sectoral fields, based on international standards, a number of expert group meetings and training workshops were held in various statistics-related fields, including the following:

(a) Ad Hoc Expert Group Meeting on New Techniques in Conduction Population and Housing Censuses, held in Abu Dhabi on 22 and 23 May 2006;

(b) Expert Group Meeting on International Migration Statistics, held in Cairo from 14 to 16 November 2005;

(c) Workshop on Disability Statistics in the ESCWA Region, held in Beirut from 21 to 23 March 2005;

(d) Seminar on Statistics of International Trade in Services, held in Beirut from 14 to 17 December 2004;

(e) Workshop on Land Transport Statistics, held in Beirut from 12 to 14 July 2005.

**B. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CONSULTANCY SERVICES**

2. As part of its provision of technical assistance and consultancy services, ESCWA carried out the following activities:

(a) The National Workshop on 2006 Population and Housing Censuses, which was held in Cairo from 18 to 21 April 2005 at the request of the Egyptian Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics;

(b) Seminar on general population and housing censuses and opportunities for comprehensive development, which was held in Cairo on 30 and 31 July 2006 at the request of the Egyptian Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics;

(c) Provision, as requested by the Planning Council of Qatar, of the necessary technical support and participation in the Second and Third Symposiums on Statistics for Development: A Dialogue Between Users and Producers, which were held in Doha from 16 to 19 May 2005 and from 5 to 7 June 2006 respectively;

(d) National workshop on the use of DevInfo 4.0 software, at the request of the Supreme Council for the Environment and Nature Reserves, Qatar, which was held in Doha from 1 to 5 July 2006;

(e) Advisory services to the Ministry of National Economy, Oman, in order to review the questionnaire for the workforce survey and enable it to be used when that survey is carried out, held in Muscat from 11 to 17 February 2006;

- (f) Advisory services to the Planning Council of Qatar from 23 to 27 April 2006 on sustainable development statistics;
- (g) Provision of technical support to the Arab Women Organization on building a statistical database on Arab women, Cairo, 27 and 28 December 2005;
- (h) Advisory services to the Central Bureau of Statistics of the Syrian Arab Republic on labour statistics, Damascus, from 2 to 4 August 2005;
- (i) Advisory services to the Ministry of National Economy, Oman, on building depositories of statistical data, from 30 June to 4 July 2006;
- (j) Advisory services to the Gulf Organization for Industrial Consulting in Qatar on the ESCWA Statistical Information System, from 2 to 6 April 2006;
- (k) Advisory services to the United Arab Emirates on revising and evaluating project documents relating to the establishment of a statistics and information centre in Ras al Khaimah, January 2005;
- (l) Advisory services to the Central Bureau of Statistics of the Syrian Arab Republic on national accounts, from 31 January to 14 February 2005;
- (m) Advisory services to the Central Statistical Organization in Yemen on national accounts, from 5 to 19 April 2005;
- (n) Advisory services to the city of Dubai, United Arab Emirates, to review and evaluate the outcome of the 2004 insurance survey, and on the methodologies of preparing comparable consumer figures, from 20 to 27 May 2005;
- (o) Advisory services to the Ministry of Planning of Kuwait on the review and evaluation of statistical survey methodologies and review of the categories relating to national accounts, 18 July to 1 August 2005;
- (p) Advisory services to the city of Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on the preparation of comparable consumer figures, 26 November to 3 December 2004;
- (q) Advisory services to the Ministry of Planning of the United Arab Emirates in order to provide assistance with respect to statistical samples, from 7 to 16 July 2006;
- (r) Advisory services to the Ministry of Planning of the United Arab Emirates in order to provide assistance in preparing to carry out the industrial survey 2006, from 15 to 26 July 2006;
- (s) Advisory services to the Department of Statistics of Jordan in preparation for the carrying out of agricultural census that is planned for 2007, from 11 to 18 August 2006.

**II. STRENGTHENING OF THE LINKAGES AND COORDINATION WITH  
THE UNITED NATIONS STATISTICS DIVISION, THE REGIONAL  
COMMISSIONS AND THE SPECIALIZED UNITED NATIONS  
ORGANIZATIONS, WITH A VIEW TO HARMONIZING AND  
DIRECTING EFFORTS RELATING TO THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF STATISTICS-RELATED WORK IN THE REGION**

**A. COORDINATION WITH UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEES  
AND REGIONAL COMMISSIONS**

3. ESCWA acts as coordinator with the other United Nations commissions and their regional organizations, as well as the League of Arab States, with a view to achieving integration, strengthening

cooperation and reducing duplication with respect to statistical work. Accordingly, ESCWA took part in the following meetings and seminars:

- (a) The thirty-sixth and thirty-seventh sessions of the Statistical Commission, held in New York;
- (b) Expert group meetings on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
- (c) Technical meetings of the statistical activities coordination group;
- (d) Expert group meetings on the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses;
- (e) A training course on labour statistics in the Arab countries which was organized by the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ILO), Turin, Italy and held from 28 November to 2 December 2005;
- (f) Meetings held by the League of Arab States on MDGs and a meeting of the League's statistical technical committee;
- (g) The first meeting of the Regional Task Force on the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses, which was held in Cairo on 12 and 13 November 2005;
- (h) The second meeting of the Regional Task Force on the 2010 World Programme on Population and Housing Censuses, which was held in Abu Dhabi on 20 and 21 May 2006;
- (i) Regular meetings of the task force for international merchandise trade statistics, which was held at the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) from 15 to 17 March 2005 and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) from 3 to 5 April 2006;
- (j) A workshop on the collection of statistics on international trade in agricultural commodities which was organized by the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development in cooperation with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and held in the Libyan Arab Republic from 19 to 21 July 2005;
- (k) A meeting organized for the countries of the Middle East and North Africa by the World Bank as part of a project for building national capacities with respect to statistics of international trade in services, which was held in Beirut in November 2005;
- (l) The Workshop on Energy and Environment Statistics which was organized by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD) in cooperation with the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Planning Council of Qatar, which was held in Doha from 1 to 3 May 2006;
- (m) An expert group meeting on power supplies, which was organized by the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and held in Geneva on 10 and 11 November 2004;
- (n) An expert group meeting on water statistics which was organized by UNSD, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and FAO and held in Vienna from 20 to 22 June 2005;
- (o) Regional coordinators meetings on the International Comparison Programme (ICP) held in Washington;
- (p) A meeting of the Ring Countries, namely, those that determine both global and regional price lists with a view to linking regions to each other through what is known as ring comparisons, as part of ICP, which was held in Washington in September 2005.

## B. MDG FOLLOW UP AND MONITORING

4. In order to monitor the progress made towards achieving MDGs, ESCWA, in cooperation with the United Nations organizations operating in the region, issued a report on MDGs in the Arab region 2005. The report was prepared with a view to reviewing the progress made towards achieving MDGs in the five years that have passed since the Millennium Summit of the United Nations and complements the MDG publicity campaign at the national and regional levels and other regional reports prepared by United Nations specialized agencies. It was also intended to raise awareness of the Goals and support opportunities for monitoring and information in the Arab region.
5. That report marks an important turning point in the MDG monitoring and publicity process that is being undertaken by ESCWA, in that it is the first report of its kind, in the preparation and funding of which a number of United Nations organizations and agencies in the region have been involved. Those organizations and agencies include FAO; ILO Regional Office for Arab States; the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa; the Western Asia Regional Office of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM); the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Programme of Information and Communication Technology for Development in the Arab Region; ESCWA; the Regional Office for Science and Technology for the Arab States of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); the UNESCO Institute for Statistics; the Regional Office for Western Asia of UNEP; the United Nations Population Fund; the United Nations Programme on Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV/AIDS); the Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa of the United Nations World Food Programme; and the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean of the World Health Organization.
6. Preparation of the report was part of the best practice for cooperation between United Nations agencies that is taking place within the regional coordination group. That work could be adopted as a model for any future cooperation or coordination in the region. The report would not have been so successful had it not been for the significant and generous technical and financial contributions made by United Nations agencies involved.

## C. FIELD PROJECTS

7. With a view to harmonizing and directing efforts related to the development of statistical work in the region, ESCWA, in cooperation with several United Nations organizations, is implementing a number of field projects that aim to improve national statistical capacities to produce and issue timely and precise statistics that will form the nucleus of evidence-based development policies. Such policies include the following:
  - (a) The development of gender statistics in Iraq: in 2006-2007, ESCWA is undertaking a project to develop gender statistics in Iraq in partnership with the Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation of Iraq, through the Central Organization for Statistics and Information Technology, UNDP and UNIFEM. The project brings together the endeavours of national and international development partners to assist in the development of gender-disaggregated statistics and indicators for the purposes of evidence-based policies, with special focus being placed on the mainstreaming of the gender perspective and empowerment of women in development plans and monitoring and publicity mechanisms at the national level. The aim is to raise awareness of the importance of gender statistics to policy formulation, monitoring mechanisms and the mainstreaming of the gender perspective in statistical work. A further aim is to improve national capacities to produce, analyse and disseminate gender-disaggregated statistics and indicators;
  - (b) A project to support the development of international merchandise trade statistics and collect statistics on electronic trade in the ESCWA region, which is being carried out in 2006-2008 in cooperation with UNSD, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), FAO and OECD. The primary aim of the project is to improve and develop member country capacities to collect, classify, analyse and disseminate international merchandise trade statistics, with a view to formulating, monitoring and evaluating national policies and plans, including those that form part of World Trade Organization (WTO)

negotiations. Work on project activities began in September 2006, when ESCWA and UNSD visited Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Reports were prepared on the status of international merchandise trade statistics and collection of electronic trade statistics. ESCWA and UNSD will visit all member countries by the end of 2006, in accordance with the project plan;

(c) A project to measure the informal sector and levels of informal employment. In 2006-2008, ESCWA is undertaking a project on those issues with a view to improving statistical data in that field and enabling evidence-based policies to be formulated, and improving gender equality, eliminating child labour, creating employment opportunities and eliminating poverty at the national and international levels. Further aims of the project are to raise awareness in national statistics offices and Government organizations of the importance of collecting and disseminating data on the black economy and to strengthen technical capacities in those offices to collect, classify, analyse and disseminate data on that sector that is consistent with international methodologies and classifications. The project is being carried out in cooperation with the other United Nations regional commissions, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, ILO, the Delhi Group on Informal Sector Statistics and UNIFEM.

### **III. UPGRADING THE CAPACITIES OF OFFICIALS IN NATIONAL STATISTICS OFFICES TO PRODUCE STATISTICAL DATA AND INDICATORS TO MEASURE THE PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS ACHIEVING NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS, INCLUDING THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

#### **A. EXPERT GROUP MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS**

8. With a view to upgrading member country capacities with respect to monitoring MDG implementation, ESCWA held the following workshops:

(a) DevInfo 4.0 Regional Training of Trainers Workshop, held in Cairo from 4 to 8 December 2005 in cooperation with UNICEF and the United Nations Development Group Office;

(b) Regional DevInfo 5.0 Workshop, held in Cairo from 18 to 22 September 2006 in cooperation with UNICEF and the United Nations Development Group Office.

#### **B. FIELD PROJECTS**

9. In partnership with a number of United Nations organizations, ESCWA is implementing several field projects that aim to raise statistical capacities, thereby contributing to the monitoring and achievement of MDGs and formulation of evidence-based development policies in the ESCWA region. Those projects include the following:

(a) Building capacity and statistical literacy for MDG monitoring at the country level: the aim of the project, which is being carried out in partnership with UNDP and the countries of the region, is to facilitate data production through improving the capacities of national statistics offices to build databases for information purposes in respect of MDGs and to improve statistical capacities and knowledge through training in best use of MDG-related data and indicators, in order to improve proof-based management and support evidence-based awareness-raising by strengthening statistical analysis skills. As part of the project, which will be carried out in 2006-2007, all the necessary training materials will be prepared and translated into Arabic, together with a schedule of proposed activities;

(b) A project to strengthen development policies for social integration, gender equality and improved health. In coordination with United Nations organizations, ESCWA is carrying out such a project, which aims to promote MDGs by providing additional targets and indicators and improving regional progress towards achievement of the Goals, raising policy-makers' awareness and knowledge of social integration, gender equality and the activation of health systems, as well as expanding development policies and programmes to include the main issues related to those fields. The main outcomes expected from the project include the development of regionally-specific additional targets and indicators, and knowledge management

through the design and opening of electronic sites to disseminate those additional targets and indicators; documentation of research and literature on the relationship between MDGs and the main issues, to be made available on the Internet; the transformation of the relevant groups into groups that have the knowledge to sustain their contribution to programmes; and the annual review of progress made towards the additional targets and indicators.

**IV. CONSOLIDATING THE ROLE OF ESCWA AS THE LEADING SOURCE IN THE  
REGION OF HIGH-QUALITY STATISTICAL SERVICES, WITH A VIEW TO  
HARMONIZING AND MONITORING THE QUALITY OF STATISTICS  
AND IMPROVING THEIR INTEGRATION BETWEEN MEMBER  
COUNTRIES, AND MAKING ESCWA THE CENTRAL  
REPOSITORY OF PRECISE AND TRANSPARENT  
DATA THAT REFLECT THE MAIN DEVELOPMENT  
ISSUES IN THE REGION**

**A. PUBLICATIONS AND STUDIES**

10. In the period between the sixth and seventh sessions of the Statistical Committee, ESCWA has issued many publications and studies, of which some of the most important are the following:

(a) *Statistical abstract of the ESCWA region*, twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth issues. Each issue comprises 11 chapters dealing with issues relating to population, education, health, national accounts, agriculture, hunting and fish, energy, transport, foreign trade, economic statistics and prices, and information and communication technologies. In addition to the traditional publication, ESCWA has made those two issues available on its Internet site: <http://css.escwa.org.lb/Abstract/index.asp>;

(b) *MDGs in the ESCWA region: progress made in 2004*. The report comprises eight chapters, each of which deals with one of the eight MDGs. After reviewing the development achievements realized by the countries of the region in the 1990s, the challenges faced by those countries in their endeavours to achieve MDGs are set forth, together with the positive factors that are conducive to achievement of the Goals and the priorities that must be respected when local and foreign resources are allocated. The report also throws light on the different levels of development in the countries of the region;

(c) *Bulletin on vital statistics in the ESCWA region*, seventh and eighth issues. Those include birth and death and marriage and divorce statistics;

(d) *The Millennium Development Goals in the Arab Region 2005*, which was prepared in cooperation with United Nations agencies in the region and coordinated by ESCWA for the World Summit that was held in New York on 16 September 2005 and the High-Level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, which was held from 14 to 16 September 2005. The aim of the report was to complement the MDG publicity process at the country and international levels. The report consists of three main parts, the first of which monitors progress made in the Arab region towards the target of achieving MDGs by 2015. The second throws light on the challenges and main issues, while the third refers to ways of making progress. The report is designed for a wide audience that includes policy makers, development experts, academics, researchers, the media and the general public;

(e) *Compendium of social statistics and indicators*, seventh issue, a special issue on youth;

(f) *Arab women in public life and decision-making*;

(g) Arabic translation of the *ILO International Training Compendium on Labour Statistics, module I: statistics of employment, unemployment, underemployment: economically active population*;

(h) *External Trade Bulletin of the ESCWA Region*, thirteenth and fourteenth issues. The publication comprises three parts that cover a set of indicators, statistics and figures that reflect the situation of foreign trade of the countries of the ESCWA region, including intraregional trade and trade with partners outside the region;

(i) *National Accounts Studies of the ESCWA Region*, bulletins Nos. 24 and 25. The publication comprises three parts that cover selected indicators that give total figures for the national accounts of the region and the most important components of those accounts for each member country in current and fixed prices and in national currencies and United States dollars. Both publications were prepared on the basis of member country responses to a national accounts questionnaire, supported by estimates from ESCWA and other sources, including the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, that were used to fill in missing data;

(j) A set of brochures entitled *Country and regional profiles for sustainable development indicators with selected sectors in the ESCWA region*, which covered energy, water resources, the environment, agriculture and rural development, small and medium-sized enterprises, and science and technology. Each brochure contains sustainable development indicators for the ESCWA region in general and each of the 13 ESCWA member countries in particular, in addition to a review of the country and regional characteristics of those indicators for each sector involved. The indicators were presented in the form of tables and figures as available for consecutive years. Those characteristics are not restricted to figures: light is also thrown on the most important issues and priority policies related to particular indicators in the country concerned. The brochures were included in the Arabic language publications available on the ESCWA Internet site.

#### B. INFORMATION SYSTEMS, DATABASES AND THE INTERNET SITE

11. ESCWA has developed its own statistics information system, which concentrates on geographical, temporal and selected indicators, with the aim of finding a central, standardized tool for the storage of information by the relevant departments, and for the derivation and monitoring of more precise and applicable indicators. ESCWA has stored data and calculated indicators for sectors including, inter alia, economic development, energy, water resources, the environment, agriculture, ICT, national accounts and gender. The data have been published on the main page of the ESCWA Internet site in order to make them available to users free of charge. Furthermore, ESCWA has provided consultancy services on application of the System of National Accounts to certain member countries and regional organizations.

12. Additionally, ESCWA has developed and improved a database on international merchandise trade statistics, which has been updated using MS SQL software and made available on the Statistics Coordination Unit page of the ESCWA Internet site. ESCWA will continue to update that database in order to meet the needs of users of such statistics within and beyond the ESCWA region.

13. The Statistics Coordination Unit page of the ESCWA Internet site is available at <http://www.escwa.org.lb/divisions/scu/main.asp> where all the information necessary on statistical work in the ESCWA region is available, together with ESCWA activities in the field and, in particular, those related to expert group meetings and training workshops. Meeting documents are also published in advance in order to allow participants to come fully prepared for effective participation. ESCWA has published a significant number of manuals, particularly with respect to statistical methodologies and international classifications, and the majority of statistical studies and publications, as well as providing links to databases. With a view to strengthening linkages between national statistics offices, ESCWA has decided to provide links through the Statistics Coordination Unit page of the ESCWA Internet site to all the Internet sites of such offices.

### V. SUPPORTING MEMBER COUNTRY CAPACITIES TO IMPLEMENT THE INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON PROGRAMME AND CALCULATE PURCHASING POWER PARITIES AND USE THEM IN PREPARING ECONOMIC INDICATORS AS PART OF THE SYSTEM OF NATIONAL ACCOUNTS 1993

#### A. MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

14. Work is continuing on second phase of the International Comparison Programme (ICP), which has been extended to 2007, in partnership with the World Bank, the ICP Global Office, the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and national statistics offices in ESCWA member countries. Against that



background, and with the aim of ensuring the full participation of those countries and the highest possible level of data precision, ESCWA held a number of meetings and workshops, including the following:

(a) The Third Regional Workshop on ICP for Western Asia, which was held in Beirut in October 2004. The theme was field surveys of prices and included in-depth training for participants on how to use the electronic programme that must be applied at each stage, beginning with the process of determining commodity classifications, to the transfer of prices to the Global Office;

(b) A workshop for the ring countries in the Western Asia region, namely, those that determine both global and regional price lists with a view to linking regions to each other through what is known as ring comparisons, which was held in Amman in February 2005. At the workshop, agreement was reached on the consumer goods available in the region that should be used in the ring comparison surveys. Some technical problems to the programme were discussed and solutions found thereto;

(c) The Fourth Regional Workshop on ICP for Western Asia, which was held in Beirut in May 2005. At the Workshop, a preliminary review was conducted of prices for the first quarter of 2005 and participants were trained in the use of the new version of the electronic programme, which enables them to review and correct their national data before they are transmitted. An in-depth review of commodities was also carried out and the necessary deletions were made. Agreement was reached on a work plan and dates agreed in order to meet the requirements of the Global Office;

(d) The Fifth Regional Workshop on ICP for Western Asia, which was held in Beirut in December 2005. The aim was to discuss and revise prices for the second quarter of 2005 and the steps that should be taken to ensure precision in collecting prices for the remaining two quarters. Agreement was reached on a work plan and dates agreed in order to meet the requirements of the Global Office;

(e) The Sixth Regional Workshop on ICP for Western Asia, which was held in Beirut in April 2006. In the course of the Workshop, data on consumer goods for the third and fourth quarters of 2005 were revised and corrected and their collection was completed. Participants were advised on ways of calculating estimates of the weighting of the main components of GDP. During the Workshop, a meeting was held for participants specialized in construction commodity and equipment price surveys, and they were given guidance on how to price such materials in accordance with given specifications, using the correct terminology, in order to ensure that data were consistent and in preparation for the process of collecting non-consumer good prices that will be used to calculate GDP on the basis of purchasing power parity by the end of 2007;

(f) Meetings of the ICP executive board in the Western Asia region, in order to discuss progress and development of programme work at the regional and global levels in respect of administration, techniques and finance and to evaluate the regional workshop.

## B. FIELD VISITS

15. ESCWA provided, as requested, technical support to countries participating in ICP with a view to assisting in implementation of the Programme, through field visits that included the following:

(a) Visits to Egypt and Yemen in the first quarter of 2006 to assist in preparations for carrying out a better survey and ensure the similarity of country data;

(b) Visits to Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar in March 2006 to assist ICP task forces in using the electronic system for the Programme and provide the necessary technical consultancy;

(c) A visit to the ICP office in Jordan in August 2006 to follow up work and urge that the data required for ring comparisons and other data should be transmitted. Discussions were also held on the current process of collecting non-consumer commodity prices and on preparations for the seventh ICP workshop.

