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**THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL MECHANISM OF ESCWA
AND ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES**

**EVALUATION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL MECHANISM
OF ESCWA AND ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES**

Note: This document was prepared by Salih Osman and Roger Pipe. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of ESCWA.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an evaluation of the intergovernmental mechanism (IGM) of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). The evaluation was carried out pursuant to ESCWA resolution 291 (XXV) on the Frequency of the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, which requested the secretariat of ESCWA to “carry out an in-depth evaluation of the intergovernmental structure of ESCWA in the light of both programme priority, as identified by member countries, and ongoing United Nations reforms”; and decided “to review the outcome of the in-depth evaluation at the twenty-sixth session” of the Commission.

B. KEY FINDINGS OF THE EVALUATION

1. *Further strengthening of the current intergovernmental mechanism structure*

A strong, positive aspect of the current ESCWA IGM structure is that a structure is in place and mechanisms exist to review plans, monitor and assess implementation and impacts. For this structure to work and for ESCWA to achieve its mandate, however, member countries must be committed to its achievement and proactively and collectively work towards that end. Interaction and knowledge sharing between the secretariat and member countries *need to be strengthened and done in an effective manner*.

2. *Lack of political and security stability in the ESCWA region*

The economic and social impact of decades of instability in the Arab region as a result of successive wars, in particular wars that are the outcome of Israeli occupation of Arab territories, has significantly impaired the ability of ESCWA IGM and secretariat to effectively address the needs of the region. It is recommended that ESCWA consider establishing programme activity centres in different member countries to mitigate the negative impacts of instability.

3. *Cooperation between ESCWA and other United Nations entities*

The presence of several major United Nations operational programmes, funds and other entities, in addition to the United Nations specialized agencies in the region, together with the nature of ESCWA's relatively small membership create a competitive and crowded institutional framework. This makes it exceedingly difficult for ESCWA to exercise a leadership role at the regional level despite repeated calls for ESCWA to play such a role in many United Nations General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions and despite the high profile of the Executive Secretary at the rank of Under-Secretary-General. RCM is not reporting to a governing body and it is operating outside the political process. It is recommended that ESCWA establish special bilateral and multilateral relationships with selected major United Nations entities notably the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

4. *Cooperation between ESCWA and the League of Arab States*

ESCWA is not a regional entity. It is a regional presence and an arm of an international organization, the United Nations. The bulletin ST/SGB/2002/16 defines in detail its secretariat functions and organization. The convening power of ESCWA is derived from that of the Economic and Social Council as a Charter organ. The League of Arab States is a regional organization of the first order, having a system of subsidiaries in certain ways similar to that of the United Nations system of agencies. The coverage that ESCWA extends over the Arab region is partial, whereas that of the League of Arab States is full. The League of Arab States had a relationship with the United Nations long before ESCWA was established. The programme of work initiated by ESCWA covers a wide range of economic and social development issues, involving several government ministries, departments and offices. The well-noted finding that ESCWA has

no national constituency is attributed to the fact that there are several stakeholders at the national level which are ESCWA clients. ESCWA membership is too small to be divided like the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) into subregional offices. *As such, the situation of ESCWA is unique and an innovative approach is needed in relating to member countries.* ESCWA's best entry point to the political level of engagement is through a close, structured and sustained relationship with the League of Arab States and its system of organization. ESCWA can play a catalytic role in enhancing the technical expertise of the League of Arab States and its organizations in shared areas of interest. The experience of ECA previously with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and currently with the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Development Bank (AfDB) can be useful as a model for ESCWA to emulate. This is an area in which the IGM structure of ESCWA should show sustained interest, initiating and guiding ESCWA in repositioning itself to relate in an effective way to the institutional landscape in West Asia and North Africa.

5. Cooperation between ESCWA and the Gulf Cooperation Council

It is also recommended that ESCWA relate in a structured and sustained manner with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Arab financial institutions. A well-thought-out strategy is needed to enable ESCWA to be recognized by the financial institutions as a technically competent body for performing pre-investment feasibility studies and project preparation for regional and/or national projects to be funded by these institutions in eligible ESCWA countries.

6. Monitoring and evaluation of programme of work performance

Resolutions of the Commission sessions tend to have long preambles, and in some instances are self-praising and repetitive. Programme-related resolutions should emphasize monitoring and evaluation of performance at all IGM levels.

The quality of interventions by some delegates and some representatives of the secretariat, as reflected in the reports of meetings, were not clear or added little value to the debate. Effective management of meetings by presiding officers must address such shortcomings and enhance the quality and focus of deliberation with a view toward reaching actionable decisions.

7. Cooperation and coordination of ESCWA and other regional commissions

Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions periodically meet to coordinate at the secretariat level. Elevating such coordination to the intergovernmental level (for example, at meetings of bureaus) will provide a political dimension, adding authority to such coordination and notably enhancing the political nature of all regional commissions.

Regional commissions try to show that they have many things in common while the High Level Panel on United Nations Reform noted that some regional commissions need to be more focused in their activities and have a clear division of responsibilities between themselves and UNDP. This observation is particularly relevant to ESCWA. The ESCWA IGM, especially the Commission, must guide and monitor ESCWA/UNDP relations and consider engagement at the intergovernmental level as appropriate.

8. ESCWA intergovernmental mechanism ownership of decision-making process

The Commission is seen by some respondents to be midway between the "ceremonial governing body" where the Executive Secretary controls the process and the IGM passes all proposals presented by the secretariat and the "liberated governing body" where members can raise questions generating group-dynamics. The ESCWA IGM needs to be more proactive and own the process of decision-making at all levels.

Some work programme activities tend to be based on expertise residing in ESCWA rather than on what member countries need from ESCWA; the ESCWA IGM needs to monitor work programmes at early stages in the process and set regional priorities clearly for the secretariat.

9. *Small size of ESCWA membership*

ESCWA has 14 members with participation primarily at the ministerial level. Participation of other United Nations Member States from the Arab region and other regions is extremely modest and in some instances, non-existent. The Commission invited Arab countries which are not members of ESCWA to join as members while maintaining their membership in ECA. Only the Sudan has so far heeded this invitation and became a member in 2008. It is recommended that the Executive Secretary and the Bureau of the Commission follow up on this matter with Arab States at a high political level. The Commission may also wish to consider inviting Turkey which is a member of both the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Islamic Republic of Iran which is a member of ESCAP. This matter should be active on the Commission agenda.

Participation by non-member countries in ESCWA Ministerial sessions is extremely modest compared to other regional commissions. This observation was explained by several respondents, relating it to the previous colonial presence including territorial possession in other regions. It is recommended that the ESCWA IGM, particularly the Commission, solicit interest of United Nation Member States which are not members of ESCWA in its work, emphasizing its international character.

10. *Fund-raising*

The ESCWA IGM, primarily the Commission, has not been successful in its efforts to raise financial resources for ESCWA programme activities other than those funded from the United Nations regular budget. Traditional donors, according to a former Executive Secretary, were not contributing to ESCWA financing due to their perception that ESCWA is in an oil rich region with a strong regional financial structure (comprising pan Arab multilateral and bilateral financial institutions such as the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, and the Saudi Fund for Development), making it possible for funds to be raised regionally. The extremely modest response of the GCC countries and institutions to repeated fund-raising initiatives, including the call of the United Nations Secretary-General to use the convening of ESCWA "Ministerial" sessions as pledging conferences, needs to be revisited by the Commission and strong political sponsorship for a fund-raising campaign needs serious consideration. It should be noted here that the Commission has no real say in how the budget of ESCWA is allocated from the United Nations regular budget. Funds contributed from voluntary sources to the Commission shall be used according to its own priorities. Another reason why ESCWA is not successful in raising voluntary funds for its programme activities is that the role of ESCWA and its mandate are not well understood. The effectiveness and efficiency of the organization is in question. Ability to raise extrabudgetary contributions for ESCWA programme activities over and above its regular programme remains a challenge for the ESCWA IGM and secretariat.

11. *The Commission bureau*

The Commission bureau is by rotation according to the Arabic alphabet. Such an arrangement might not, in some instances, be conducive to the effective discharge of functions of the Commission, thereby compromising "group dynamics", a key determinant of Commission effectiveness.

Several observations were made about the need to have an effective bureau for intergovernmental sessions at all levels. Coordination with other regional commissions has always been at the Executive Secretaries level, in other words, at the secretariat level to the exclusion of intergovernmental levels. It is recommended that, without necessarily replacing meetings of the Executive Secretaries, periodic meetings of the bureaus of the regional commissions must be held on important agenda items of interest to the regions in

the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. This can be done on an ad-hoc basis initially, but to be institutionalized with experience. Some of the issues currently addressed at the meetings of the Executive Secretaries could benefit from joint bureau meetings, particularly if political insight and endorsement is needed. Each bureau would report to its commission. Such a proactive role for the Chairperson of the commission would require amendment of rule 12 of the Rules of Procedure of ESCWA.

12. *Policy manual*

The Commission needs to periodically evaluate its effectiveness as a policymaking body and ensure consistency and comprehensiveness in exercising its policymaking function. Establishing a Policy Manual will help the secretariat in preparing substantive documentation with regard to policy implications. Furthermore, the Commission needs to reformulate its mandate in an operational form thereby making it more easily understood by representatives of all stakeholders and, foremost, member countries and the secretariat staff.

13. *Functions of the secretariat*

While the terms of reference/mandate of the Commission need to be sharpened, the functions of the ESCWA secretariat as stipulated in ST/SGB/2002/16 are very clear. It is recommended that this bulletin be handed out at all intergovernmental meetings to assist stakeholders in understanding the respective roles of the IGM and the secretariat. It is also recommended that training representatives of governments in conference diplomacy and proper induction of newly recruited staff of ESCWA should be given high priority.

14. *The international character of ESCWA secretariat*

The level of effectiveness of the ESCWA IGM depends both on the level of engagement of member countries and the quality and commitment of the secretariat staff. The policy of the current Executive Secretary regarding international recruitment for professional and higher category staff to fill vacancies with highly-qualified candidates from within and outside the United Nations system should enhance overall staff quality at ESCWA. In a setting like ESCWA, senior management staff members are called upon, and should be able, to assist the Executive Secretary in positioning ESCWA as a partner with whom other regional players seek to engage. Key attributes in this regard, in addition to vision and other leadership qualities are modesty and even humility. What matters is for the job to be well done without claiming credit for it. It is recommended that the Executive Secretary engage her/his cabinet in a process of “rethinking ESCWA” and “repositioning” it as a relevant, useful, and effective United Nations presence in the region. A leadership role needs to be assumed not only by the Executive Secretary but also by cabinet members. An agenda for such an exercise would include:

- A strategy to engage Arab States that are not members of ESCWA to be involved in ESCWA activities and join as members or regular participants in ESCWA intergovernmental meetings;
- Establishment of an enduring and programmatic relationship with the League of Arab States and its system of relevant organizations;
- Cooperation between ECA-North Africa Sub Regional Office (NASRO) and ESCWA.

The three items above are closely interrelated.

15. *The intergovernmental mechanism structure*

The online survey response shows that the present IGM structure is more than satisfactory and does not need any major change.

This satisfactory level is a direct result, as shown by interviews and document review, of a rather narrow perception of several member countries' representatives and some secretariat staff of the mandate and role of ESCWA.

What is needed to enhance the effectiveness of the present structure is more engagement of member countries in "owning" the ESCWA work programme and monitoring and evaluating programme delivery of the secretariat.

A major recommendation of the study is the establishment of an Intergovernmental Task Force (ITF) to consider the findings and recommendations in this report and review ESCWA positioning in the region with a view to relating it, in a positive and productive way, with principal actors at the regional level, in particular the League of Arab States, GCC, Arab Financial institutions and UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Trade Organization (WTO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

I. INTRODUCTION

1. This report presents the results of an evaluation of the ESCWA IGM carried out pursuant to resolution 291 (XXV) on the Frequency of the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies, which requested the secretariat of ESCWA to “carry out an in-depth evaluation of the intergovernmental structure of ESCWA in the light of both programme priority, as identified by member countries, and ongoing United Nations reforms”; and decided “to review the outcome of the in-depth evaluation at the twenty-sixth session” of the Commission.

A. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

2. The objective of the evaluation is to assess the effectiveness of ESCWA IGM in terms of:
- Achieving its set purpose/expected outcomes;
 - Facilitating interaction and coordination between the ESCWA secretariat and its member countries and between member countries themselves on regional priorities and emerging issues in the economic and social domain;
 - Facilitating monitoring and follow-up on resolutions, recommendations and decisions taken.
3. This present evaluation considers the effectiveness of ESCWA’s:
- Commission Sessions;
 - Technical Committee;
 - Specialized Technical Committees (7).
4. The period for review is from January 2004 to June 2009. Following the identification of areas for improvement, the evaluation presents recommendations for enhancing ESCWA’s existing IGM for consideration in the next Commission session.

B. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

5. The evaluation methodology comprised three elements: (a) review of documents; (b) interviews with key stakeholders; and (c) Internet-based questionnaire.

1. *Review of documents*

6. An extensive desk review of relevant documents was undertaken to gain an understanding of the issues, decisions, and concerns related to the mandate, work programme and effectiveness of ESCWA and its intergovernmental mechanism. All existing material on streamlining the work of the organization, the evaluation reports of ESCWA Commission Sessions and all other committees from 2004 to 2009 were scrutinized, including: (i) Commission reports on its twenty-second, twenty-third, twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth sessions and documents related to the task of evaluation; (ii) relevant Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), and United Nations Reform reports; (iii) other Regional Commission Conference Structure documentation; (iv) regional coordination mechanism (RCM) reports; (v) documents dealing with relations with the League of Arab States and GCC.

2. *Interviews with key stakeholders*

7. The following interviews were conducted for this evaluation:
- Interviews in person with Directors and Chiefs of Substantive Divisions as a focus-group and selected professional staff of ESCWA;
 - Telephone interviews with ESCWA Directors and Chiefs of Substantive Divisions, current and two former Secretaries of the Commission;

- Telephone interviews with staff of regional commissions and Coordinator of Regional Commissions in New York;
- Focus group interviews with delegates from some member countries attending the twenty-sixth session.

3. *Internet-based questionnaire*

8. A questionnaire on the effectiveness of ESCWA was developed and sent to 152 stakeholders, including: focal points from the ESCWA Intergovernmental Subsidiary Bodies; Chiefs of Substantive Divisions; Secretary of the Commission (past and current); ESCWA staff assigned to the specialized technical committees; the Office of the Executive Secretary/Programme Planning and Technical Cooperation Division (OES/PPTCD) staff; and observers. The complete results of the survey are presented in annex II.

II. KEY FINDINGS

A. KEY FINDINGS FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW

9. This section presents the major findings and conclusions stemming from the literature review:
- (a) The relatively small number of ESCWA members is more of a weakness than a strength;
 - (b) The characterization of ESCWA as Commission of Arab countries is more of a weakness than a strength;
 - (c) The economic and social impact of decades of instability in the Arab region as a result of successive wars, in particular wars that are the outcome of Israeli occupation of Arab territories, has significantly impaired the ability of ESCWA IGM and secretariat to effectively address the needs of the region;
 - (d) The fact that the League of Arab States' system of economic and social organizations has been in existence long before the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut (UNESOB) or its successor, ESCWA, makes it difficult for ESCWA to define a domain where it is recognized as a lead agency. There is a great opportunity, however, for ESCWA to help the League of Arab States by elevating their economic and social concerns to the international level in a regionally-focused way. ESCWA's substantive expertise can be useful to the League of Arab States by enhancing their technical capacity; it can be the think tank for the region. In this sense, ESCWA can learn a lot from the ECA/OAU-African Union (AU)/AfDB relationship;
 - (e) The unresponsiveness of GCC countries to repeated fund-raising initiatives, including the call of the United Nations Secretary-General to use the convening of ESCWA "Ministerial" sessions as pledging conferences, is due to the perception on the part of conventional donors that ESCWA is in an oil rich region with a strong regional financial structure (comprising pan Arab multilateral and bilateral financial institutions such as the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development; Kuwait Fund for Arab Development, Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, and the Saudi Fund for Development), making it possible for funds to be raised regionally. Moreover, some GCC countries provide bilateral assistance to other Arab countries. Another reason why ESCWA is not successful in raising voluntary funds for its programme activities is that the role of ESCWA and its mandate are not well understood. The effectiveness and efficiency of the organization is in question;
 - (f) The presence of several major United Nations operational programmes, funds and other entities, in addition to the United Nations specialized agencies in the region, together with the nature of ESCWA's relatively small membership create a competitive and crowded institutional framework. This makes it exceedingly difficult for ESCWA to exercise a leadership role at the regional level despite repeated calls for ESCWA to play such a role in many United Nations General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions and despite the high profile of the Executive Secretary at the rank of Under-Secretary-General. RCM is not reporting to a governing body and is operating outside the political process;

(g) Even allowing for the possibility that reports of the IGM meetings, including the Ministerial sessions (particularly the parts of the reports corresponding to the consideration of agenda items), might not fully reflect the scope and quality of interventions by participants and the representative of the secretariat, there are occasions where interventions are not clear or do not add value to the debate;

(h) Resolutions of the sessions tend to have long preambles, and in some instances are self-praising and repetitive;

(i) Participation by non-member States in ESCWA Ministerial sessions is extremely modest compared to other regional commissions. This observation was explained by several respondents by relating it to a previous colonial presence including territorial possession in other regions; ESCWA may follow the example of ESCAP and review its IGM periodically, every five or six years;

(j) Member countries do not see ESCWA as a source of support. Regional commissions have not evolved their mandate-drawing authority from the Economic and Social Council or the United Nations Secretary-General;

(k) Regional commissions coordinate at the secretariat level (periodic meetings of Executive Secretaries of the Regional Commissions) and not at the intergovernmental level (for example, meetings of bureaus);

(l) Regional commissions try to show that they have many things in common while the High Level Panel on United Nations Reform noted that some regional commissions need to be more focused in their activities and have a clear division of responsibilities between themselves and UNDP;

(m) A strong, positive aspect of the current ESCWA IGM structure is that a structure is in place and mechanisms exist to review plans and to monitor and assess implementation and impacts. For this structure to work and for ESCWA to achieve its mandate, however, member countries must be committed to achieving these mandates and proactively work collectively towards that end. Interaction and knowledge-sharing between the secretariat and member countries is not sufficient and it is not done in an effective manner;

(n) Work programmes tend to be based on the expertise residing in ESCWA rather than what member countries need from ESCWA;

(o) The type of governing board of the Commission is seen to be mid-way between the "ceremonial governing body" where the Executive Secretary controls the process and passes all proposals made by the secretariat and the "liberated governing body" where members raise questions generating group-dynamics.

B. KEY FINDINGS FROM STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

10. This section presents the salient findings and conclusions resulting from the interview process, grouped under the Commission, the Technical Committee and the Specialized Technical Committees. Transcripts of the interviews are presented in annex II.

1. *The Commission*

11. Based on views expressed during interviews concerning the Commission, the following observations and conclusions were made:

(a) Ministerial sessions were managed by the secretariat by necessity and not by design or desire (issue of effective bureau and level of experience in conference diplomacy);

(b) The lack of technical knowledge on the part of delegates to the session accounts for limited discussion of the technical agenda; since the technical agendas have already been deliberated upon at the

Specialized Technical Committees (STCs), the views of member countries are already taken into account. Indeed, some interviewees went so far as to state that STCs *are* the Commission;

(c) The Commission bureau is by rotation, according to the Arabic alphabet. Such an arrangement might not, in some instances, be conducive to the effective discharge of functions of the Commission, thereby compromising “group dynamics” a key determinant of Commission effectiveness;

(d) The secretariat does not send pre-session documents in time (six-week rule) to enable consideration of the agenda by the different government departments concerned;

(e) A recurrent issue expressed by many stakeholders is the need for governments to designate a focal point that will ensure coordination at the national level. This is a major finding which will be addressed later in connection with the question of what ESCWA’s constituency is at the national level;

(f) The Commission adequately considers the issue of collaboration and coordination with regional entities, notably the League of Arab States, and has been adopting resolutions on a regular basis on the subject. The Commission, however, does not adequately follow-up on implementation of actions that are geared towards fostering and strengthening collaboration and coordination nor does it adequately monitor achieved results. *Cooperation between ESCWA and the League of Arab States is considered a central issue for ESCWA relevance and effectiveness;*

(g) There is no branding for ESCWA;

(h) It is not possible for the Commission Session and the Technical Committee to effectively discuss technical issues as specialized people do not attend the meetings;

(i) Technical services rendered to member countries are based on specialized areas of work and should not be seen as separate to, or above and beyond, ESCWA mandated specialized areas.

2. *The Technical Committee*

12. In adopting the report of the twenty-fourth session, 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”.

13. According to the terms of reference of the Technical Committee that were finalized and adopted by the Committee itself, it will provide assistance to the secretariat in: (a) drawing up proposals for the strategic framework, the programme of work and priorities, consistent with guidance provided by the Commission; (b) following up on the implementation of Commission resolutions and any other outstanding matters that require action; (c) following up on the implementation of the programme of work and activities of the Commission, including mobilization of extrabudgetary resources to support their implementation; (d) identifying emerging economic and social issues and other relevant priority issues for incorporation into the provisional agenda of the Commission sessions and the subsidiary intergovernmental committees. The Technical Committee is also required to carry out any other tasks entrusted to it by the Commission.

14. The membership of the Committee is comprised of high-level senior officials designated by member countries of the Commission. The sessions were held every six months from January 2008, but at the last meeting the Committee decided to meet three times every two years with a fourth meeting if needed. The fourth meeting of the Technical Committee was held in January 2010. Though the Technical Committee is relatively new and its terms of reference were agreed upon by the Committee itself with assistance from the secretariat, some findings from the review of literature and interviews are listed below:

(a) At the fourth session of the Committee, opinions were divided as to the effectiveness of the role of the Technical Committee in facilitating consultations, cooperation and coordination between ESCWA and member countries. Those who found the Technical Committee ineffective attributed that to several reasons including a lack of dedicated resources and inadequate understanding of its terms of reference. One member country stated that the Commission itself might be better placed to assume this role. Another was not clear on what was required from the Committee in the area of addressing regional and global priorities. A third member country mentioned that the issues of climate change and food security are being addressed in-depth through action plans and strategies of organizations affiliated to the League of Arab States. A fourth suggested the omission of the empowerment of women as a priority area “as governments in the region do not require directives on how to address this issue”;

(b) Reviewing the reports of the first three sessions of the Technical Committee show that more effort needs to be made by participants to better understand conference diplomacy and engagement in a decision-making process. The Executive Secretary had addressed the need to train participants of willing member countries in this arena;

(c) It was suggested to have an Executive Committee like ECE rather than a Technical Committee;

(d) Development is not about one ministry or one sector. It is difficult for the Technical Committee to provide an overview of ESCWA unless one imagines a national committee within each country focused on reviewing and reporting to the Technical Committee;

(e) To improve effectiveness of the Technical Committee several suggestions were made including: (a) sending session documents to member countries in a timely manner; (b) sharing knowledge and best practice through session presentations of the experiences of member countries; for example, how countries are addressing the issue of empowerment of women; (c) participation of all member countries at the technical level and not just diplomatic representation.

3. *Specialized Technical Committees*

15. The review of the literature and separate interviews in focus-group settings of government representatives and ESCWA division Directors and Chiefs as well as ESCWA professional staff interviewed have shown that the STCs are an effective link between member countries and the secretariat. Indeed, in the view of a division director, supported by others, the STCs are ESCWA. Major findings are listed below:

(a) It is important for member countries to understand the mandate and functions of ESCWA in order to know what to expect from it, and the secretariat has to better communicate the broader ESCWA mandate to better serve the member countries;

(b) It is not possible for the Commission session and the Technical Committees to effectively discuss technical issues as it is not specialized people who attend the meetings;

(c) Representatives from member countries attending various intergovernmental meetings should have the authority to make decisions at the event. This is key to interactive negotiations and decision making at the intergovernmental level;

(d) There is a need to clearly define ESCWA’s comparative advantage. Discrepancy among perspectives is due to an internal lack of clarity in the organization;

(e) It is not to the benefit of ESCWA to be seen as a provider of technical assistance;

(f) ESCWA’s real clients are members of the STCs;

(g) It is important for ESCWA to clearly state to member countries that the emphasis in its mandate is on regional activities rather than in-country services which will help to clarify and communicate ESCWA's comparative advantage. Lack of clarity in this respect is partly from the message given by the Regional Advisors' programme. Differences between operational United Nations agencies and ESCWA, which focus on policymaking, strategies and concepts at the regional level, should be clarified to the point of inculcation in the minds of representatives of member countries and the secretarial professional staff, particularly the regional advisors;

(h) Focal points of ESCWA in member countries are communication lines only; they are not the client. There are many other clients within each government; hence the perception from these representatives at ESCWA meetings is not always as effective as that of the clients themselves.

C. RESULTS OF THE INTERNET SURVEY

16. This section presents the results of the Internet survey of stakeholders regarding the effectiveness of ESCWA IGM in providing strategic leadership and at setting the direction with regard to the following:

- Reducing poverty and addressing development disparities among countries/subregions within the region;
- Fostering economic integration at the subregional/regional level;
- Promoting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally-agreed development goals in the region;
- Supporting South-South cooperation, both intraregional and interregional;
- Promoting the economic, social and environmental aspects of security and peacebuilding at the subregional/regional levels.

17. Figure 1 presents a summary of results of the survey of stakeholders regarding the effectiveness of ESCWA IGM at providing strategic leadership and direction setting. In the survey, stakeholders were asked to indicate their perception of the degree of effectiveness of ESCWA IGM for each of the above topics. Possible responses were: "very effective"; "effective"; "neither effective nor ineffective"; "ineffective"; "very ineffective"; and "don't know". To help interpret the results, the two categories "effective" and "very effective" are combined in figure 1. Similarly, the two categories "ineffective" and "very ineffective" are also combined. The rationale for combining the categories in this fashion is that it simplifies the interpretation of the results while maintaining the essential information insofar as both "effective" and "very effective" indicate a satisfactory performance, while both "ineffective and very ineffective" indicate a deficient performance and an opportunity for improvement. The response "neither effective nor ineffective" is a neutral response and is indicated as such in figure 1. For the purpose of the current evaluation, a neutral ranking of efficiency is considered to indicate a deficient performance, because it is less than effective and therefore represents an opportunity for improvement. This is an important point in the interpretation of the results of the stakeholder survey, for it implies that the measure of unsatisfactory performance is obtained by adding the inefficient responses together with the neutral responses.

18. For the purpose of this evaluation the following statements are taken to be axiomatic:

Axiom 1: The scores of the evaluation provide a baseline measurement of the effectiveness of ESCWA IGM, against which future evaluations may measure incremental increases;

Axiom 2: An effectiveness score below 100 per cent indicates an opportunity for improvement; however there will always be a certain percentage of stakeholders that considers specific aspects of ESCWA IGM to be less than effective so a perfect score of 100 per cent is not a realistic institutional goal. A score of 90 per cent is an ambitious yet achievable goal.

19. Taking into account Axiom 2, the following scoring system will be applied for the purpose of this evaluation:

TABLE 1. INTERPRETATION OF SURVEY SCORES

Effectiveness score	Interpretation
Effectiveness score is 85 per cent or higher (Excellent effectiveness)	Excellent institutional performance. No institutional strengthening required.
Effectiveness score is equal to or greater than 75 per cent and below 85 per cent (Good effectiveness)	Good institutional performance with a minor institutional deficiency reflecting institutional issues that are of tertiary importance.
Effectiveness score is equal to or greater than 65 per cent and less than 75 per cent (Moderate effectiveness)	Fair institutional performance and moderate institutional deficiency reflecting institutional issues that are of secondary importance.
An effectiveness score below 65 per cent (Weak effectiveness)	Weak institutional performance with a significant institutional deficiency that constitutes a primary priority area for attention.

20. Figure 1 shows the aggregated stakeholder responses concerning the effectiveness of ESCWA IGM at providing strategic leadership and direction setting. The percentages shown in figure 1 are calculated based on the total number of responses excluding those who answered "Don't know".

21. According to stakeholders, ESCWA IGM displays *good effectiveness* with regard to:

- Promoting the achievement of the MDGs and other internationally-agreed development goals in the region;
- Supporting South-South cooperation, both intraregional and interregional.

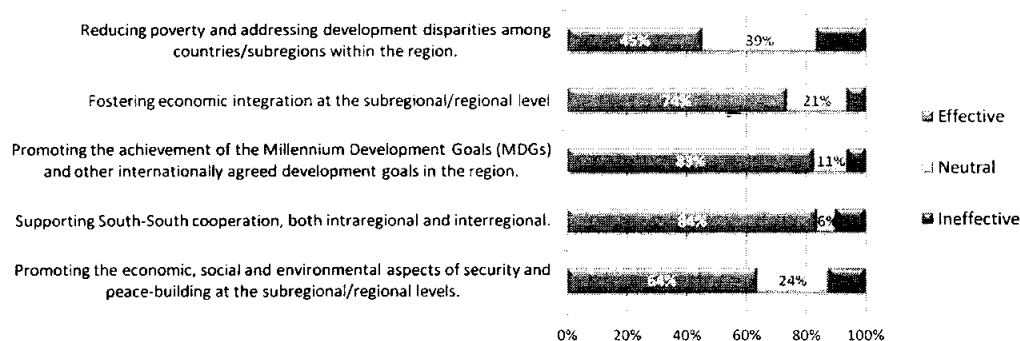
22. Stakeholders consider that ESCWA IGM displays *moderate effectiveness* with regard to:

- Fostering economic integration at the subregional/regional level;
- Supporting South-South cooperation, both intraregional and interregional.

23. ESCWA IGM is *weakly effective* with regard to:

- Promoting the economic, social and environmental aspects of security and peacebuilding at the subregional/regional levels;
- Reducing poverty and addressing development disparities among countries/subregions within the region.

Figure 1. Effectiveness of ESCWA IGM at providing strategic leadership and direction setting



Poverty Reduction and Development Disparities

24. Table 2 and figures 2 and 3 present detailed results regarding the effectiveness of ESCWA IGM at providing strategic leadership and direction setting for reducing poverty and addressing development disparities among countries/subregions within the region. Only 35.9 per cent of respondents consider the IGM to be effective or very effective, 12.9 per cent considered the IGM to be ineffective or very ineffective, 31 per cent consider that it is neither effective nor ineffective and 20.5 per cent of respondents indicated that they did not know*.

25. The above results were used to calculate the aggregate totals shown in figure 1 corresponding to poverty reduction and addressing development disparities, thus:

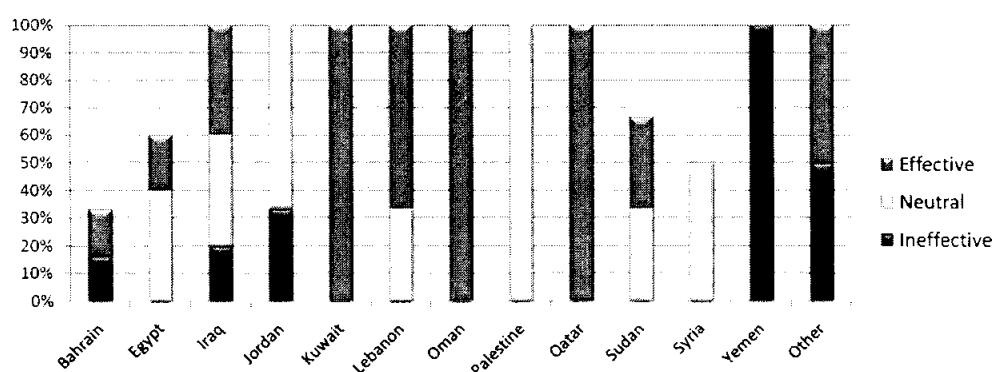
- Aggregate Effective Responses = (Very Effective + Effective) ÷ (Total – Don't Know);
- Aggregate Ineffective Responses = (Very Ineffective + Ineffective) ÷ (Total – Don't Know);
- Aggregate Neutral Responses = (Neither Effective nor Ineffective) ÷ (Total – Don't Know).

TABLE 2. EFFECTIVENESS OF ESCWA IGM AT PROVIDING STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND DIRECTION SETTING FOR REDUCING POVERTY AND ADDRESSING DEVELOPMENT DISPARITIES

Effectiveness	Percentage
Very ineffective	2.6
Ineffective	10.3
Neither effective nor ineffective (neutral)	30.8
Effective	33.3
Very effective	2.6
Don't know	20.5

26. Looking at the results by nationality, the leadership and direction setting of ESCWA IGM was considered to be effective by all respondents from Kuwait, Oman and Qatar and most of Lebanon's respondents (figure 2). In contrast, all of Yemen's respondents consider the IGM to be ineffective. Some respondents from Bahrain, Iraq and Jordan also find the IGM to be ineffective. Respondents from seven out of twelve countries (Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, the Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic) consider that in this aspect the IGM is neither effective nor ineffective (neutral).

Figure 2. Opinion by country on the effectiveness of ESCWA IGM at providing strategic leadership and direction setting for reducing poverty and addressing development disparities among countries/subregions within the region

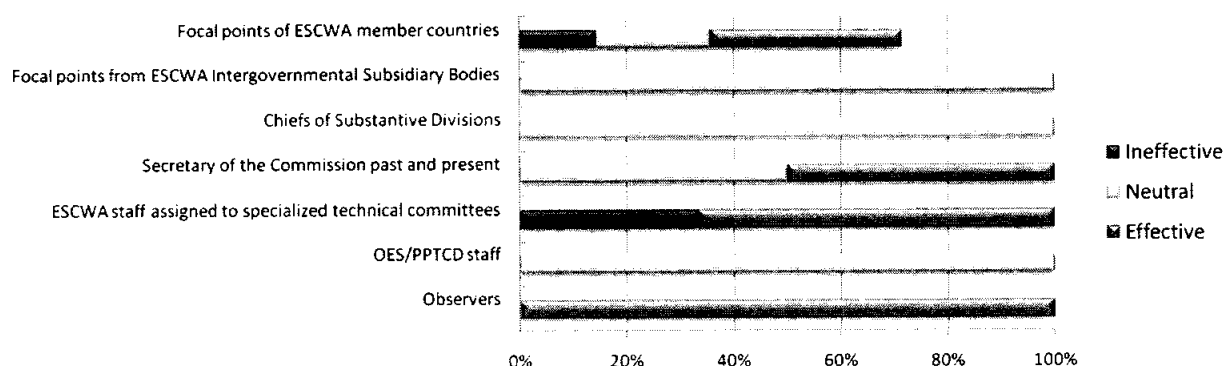


* With the exception of table 2, the survey results presented in this report have been rounded to the nearest percentage point for ease of interpretation. Totals may not add to 100 per cent as a result of this rounding.

27. Figure 3 shows the opinion of respondents disaggregated by stakeholder group. Salient aspects include:

- Observers consider ESCWA IGM to be effective at providing strategic leadership and direction setting for poverty reduction and addressing development disparities;
- Fifty per cent of respondents from the Secretary of the Commission past and current consider the IGM to be very effective while 50 per cent consider it to be neither effective nor ineffective;
- Two-thirds of ESCWA staff assigned to specialized technical committees consider the IGM to be effective while one-third consider it ineffective;
- Thirty-six per cent of focal points of ESCWA member countries consider the IGM to be effective; Twenty-one per cent believe it to be neither effective nor ineffective and 14 per cent consider it to be ineffective (29 per cent indicated that they do not know);
- Respondents from the following stakeholder groups hold a neutral view of the effectiveness of IGMs: focal points from ESCWA intergovernmental subsidiary bodies; chiefs of substantive divisions; OES/PPTCD staff.

Figure 3. Opinion by country on the effectiveness of ESCWA IGM at providing strategic leadership and direction setting for reducing poverty and addressing development disparities among countries/subregions within the region



Fostering Economic Integration

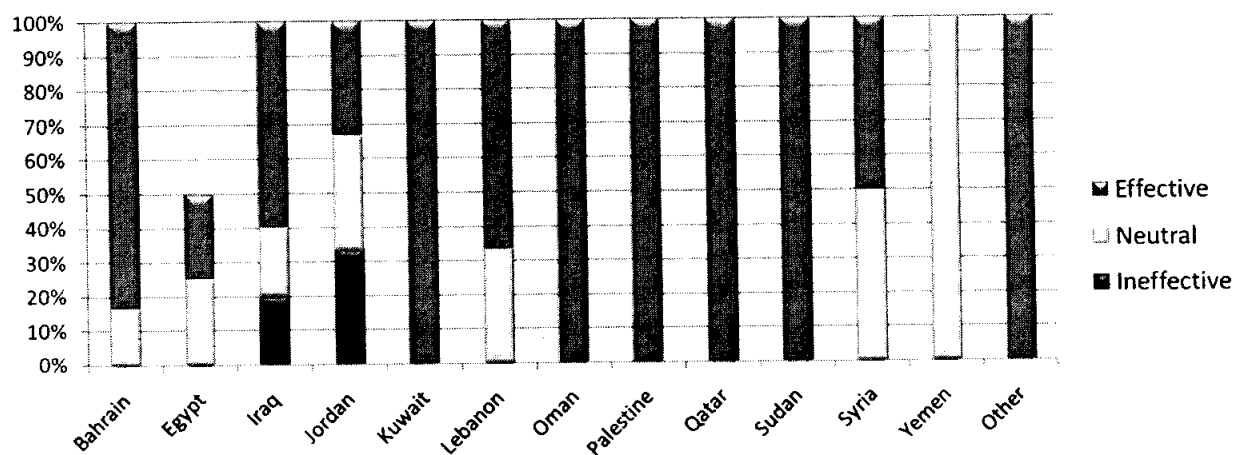
28. With regard to fostering economic integration at the regional and subregion level, 70 per cent of respondents consider the leadership and direction setting of ESCWA IGM to be either effective or very effective; 19 per cent believe it is neither effective nor ineffective and 6 per cent consider it to be ineffective or very ineffective (table 3).

TABLE 3. EFFECTIVENESS OF ESCWA IGM AT FOSTERING ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AT THE SUBREGIONAL/REGIONAL LEVEL

Effectiveness	Percentage
Very ineffective	3
Ineffective	3
Neither effective nor ineffective (neutral)	19
Effective	56
Very effective	14
Don't know	6

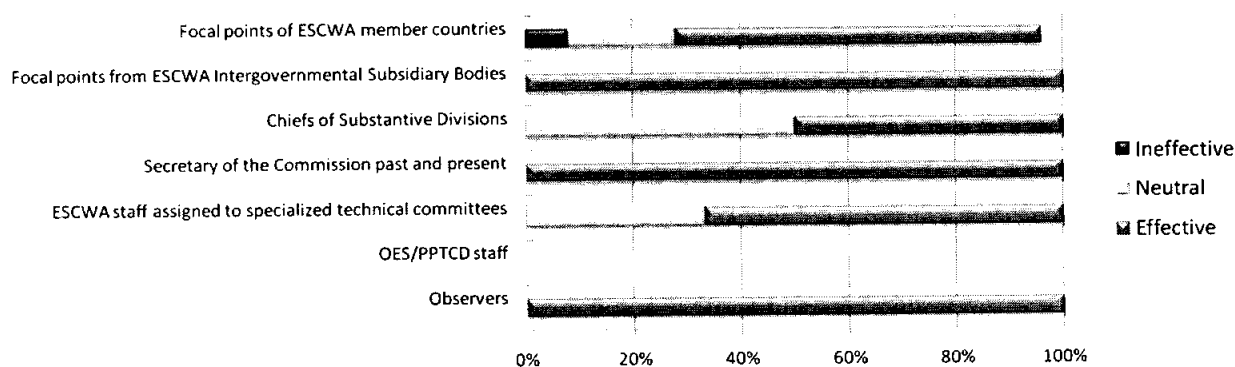
29. All respondents from Oman, Palestine, Qatar, and the Sudan consider the IGM to be effective (figure 4), as do the majority of respondents from Bahrain, Iraq, and Lebanon (83 per cent, 60 per cent and 67 per cent, respectively). Stakeholders from Yemen believe the IGM to be neither effective nor ineffective, as do a third of the respondents from Lebanon and Jordan. Only in the case of Iraq and Jordan do respondents deem the IGM to be ineffective (20 per cent and 33 per cent, respectively).

Figure 4. Opinion by country on leadership and direction setting of ESCWA IGM at fostering economic integration at the subregional/regional level



30. Focal points from ESCWA intergovernmental subsidiary bodies, Secretaries of the Commission and Observers all consider the IGM to be effective (figure 5), as do half of Chiefs of substantive divisions and one third of ESCWA staff assigned to specialized technical committees. With regard to the focal points of ESCWA member countries, 68 per cent consider the IGM to be effective, 20 per cent hold a neutral view and 8 per cent consider it to be ineffective.

Figure 5. Opinion by stakeholder group on leadership and direction setting of ESCWA IGM in fostering economic integration at the subregional/regional level



Promoting the Achievement of Internationally-agreed Development Goals

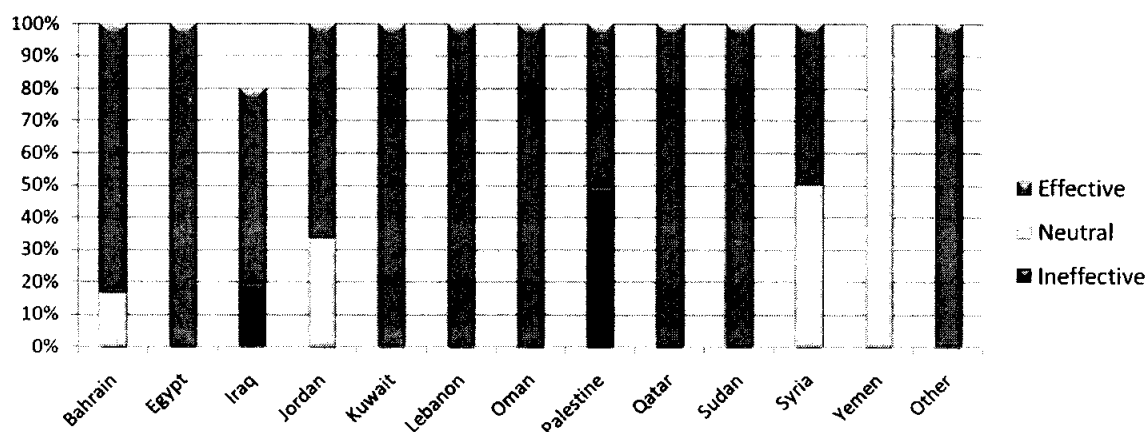
31. With regard to promoting the achievement of the MDGs and other internationally-agreed development goals in the region, 80 per cent of respondents consider the leadership and direction setting of ESCWA IGM to be either effective or very effective; 11 per cent believe it is neither effective nor ineffective and 6 per cent consider it to be ineffective or very ineffective (table 4).

TABLE 4. EFFECTIVENESS OF ESCWA IGM AT PROMOTING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND OTHER INTERNATIONALLY-AGREED DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN THE REGION

Effectiveness	Percentage
Very ineffective	3
Ineffective	3
Neither effective nor Ineffective (neutral)	11
Effective	69
Very effective	11
Don't know	3

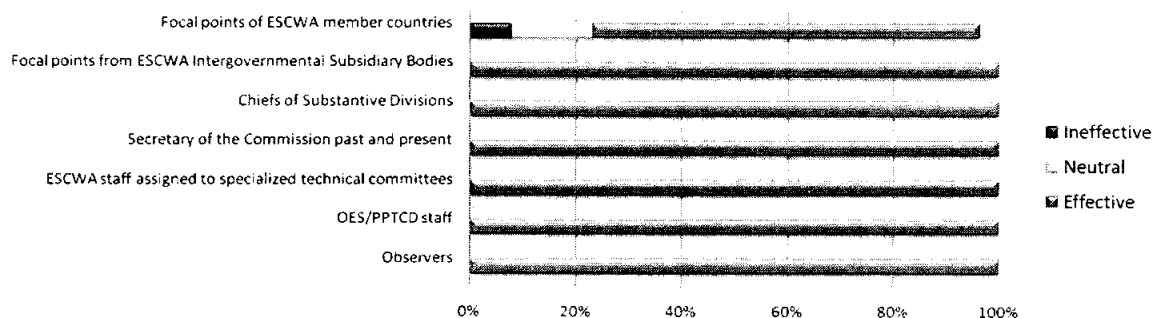
32. Respondents from Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar and the Sudan consider the IGM to be effective (figure 6), as do the majority of respondents from Bahrain, Iraq, and Jordan (83 per cent, 60 per cent and 67 per cent, respectively). Stakeholders from Yemen hold a neutral view of the effectiveness of IGM, as do half of respondents from the Syrian Arab Republic, a third of the respondents from Jordan and 17 per cent of the respondents from Bahrain. Only in the case of Iraq and Palestine do respondents deem the IGM to be ineffective (20 per cent and 50 per cent, respectively).

Figure 6. Opinion by country on the effectiveness of ESCWA IGM at promoting the achievement of the millennium development goals and other internationally-agreed development goals in the region



33. Seventy-three percent of focal points of ESCWA member countries consider the IGM to be effective; 15 per cent have a neutral opinion and 8 per cent consider it to be ineffective. Respondents from all other stakeholder groups consider the IGM to be effective (figure 7).

Figure 7. Opinion by stakeholder group on the effectiveness of ESCWA IGM at promoting the achievement of the millennium development goals and other internationally-agreed development goals in the region



Supporting South-South Cooperation

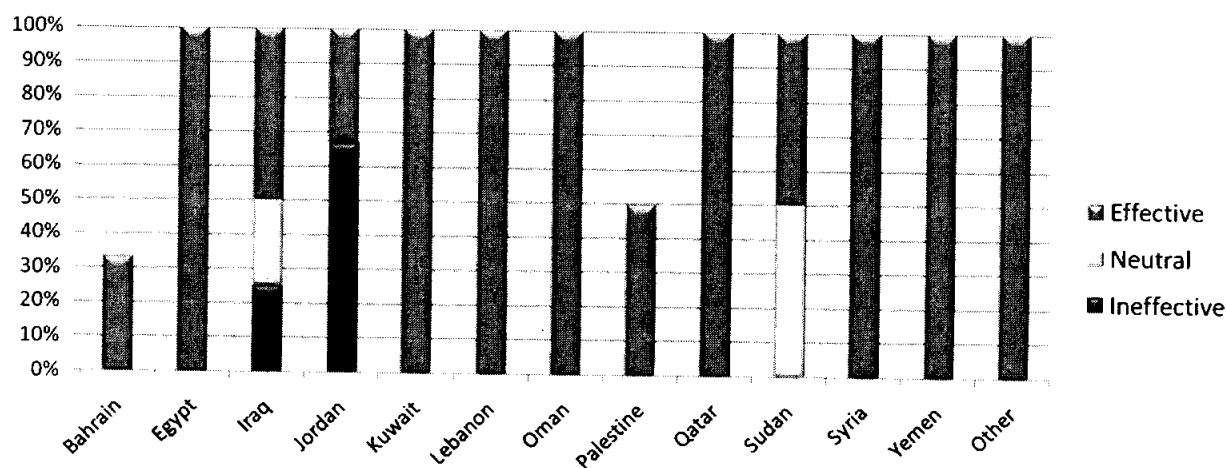
34. With regard to Supporting South-South cooperation, both intraregional and interregional, 75 per cent of respondents consider the leadership and direction setting of ESCWA IGM to be either effective or very effective; 6 per cent believe it is neither effective nor ineffective and 9 per cent consider it to be ineffective or very ineffective (table 5).

TABLE 5. EFFECTIVENESS OF ESCWA IGM AT SUPPORTING SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION, BOTH INTRAREGIONAL AND INTERREGIONAL

Effectiveness	Percentage
Very ineffective	3
Ineffective	6
Neither effective nor ineffective (neutral)	6
Effective	61
Very effective	11
Don't know	14

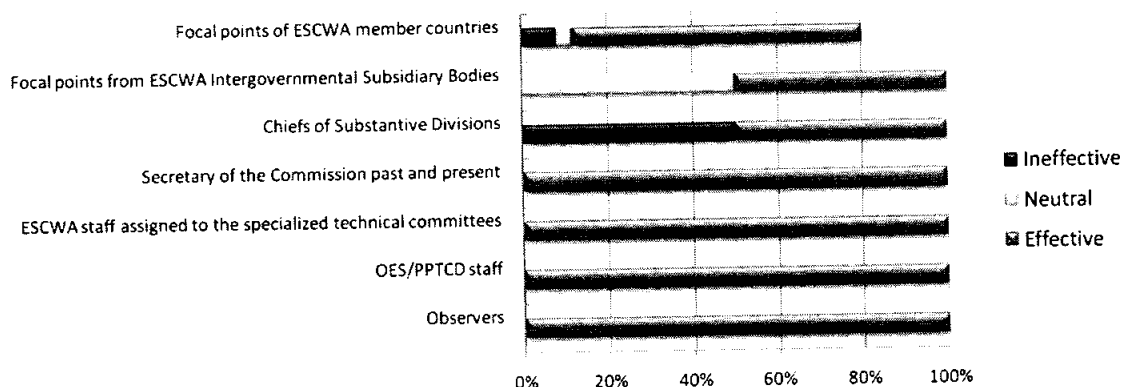
35. Respondents from Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen consider the IGM to be effective (figure 8), as do half the respondents from Iraq, Palestine, and the Sudan. Half of the respondents from the Sudan consider the IGM to be neither effective nor ineffective, as do 25 per cent of respondents from Iraq. Two-thirds of respondents from Jordan feel that the IGM is ineffective, as do one quarter of respondents from Iraq.

Figure 8. Opinion by country on the effectiveness of ESCWA IGM at supporting South-South cooperation, both intraregional and interregional



36. All respondents from the following stakeholder groups consider the IGM to be effective: Secretary of the Commission past and present, ESCWA staff assigned to the specialized technical committees, and OES/PPTCD staff and observers (figure 9). One half of respondents from the Chiefs of substantive divisions group said the IGM is effective while the other half indicated it is ineffective. Similarly, 50 per cent of focal points from ESCWA intergovernmental subsidiary bodies are of the opinion that the IGM is effective while half deem it to be neither effective nor ineffective. Sixty-eight per cent of focal points of ESCWA member countries consider the IGM to be effective, while 8 per cent think that it is ineffective and 4 per cent hold a neutral view.

Figure 9. Opinion by stakeholder group on the effectiveness of ESCWA IGM at supporting South-South cooperation, both intraregional and interregional



Promoting the Economic, Social and Environmental Aspects of Security and Peacebuilding

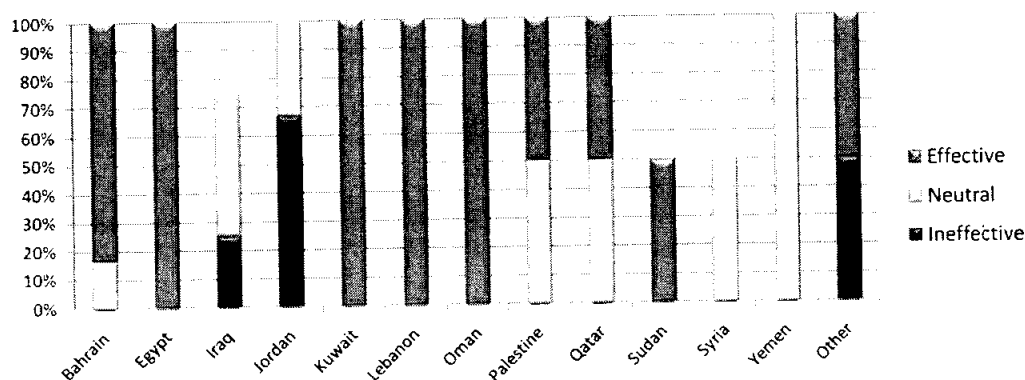
37. With regard to promoting the economic, social and environmental aspects of security and peacebuilding at the subregional/regional levels, 59 per cent of respondents consider the leadership and direction setting of ESCWA IGM to be either effective or very effective; 22 per cent believe it is neither effective nor ineffective and 12 per cent consider it to be ineffective or very ineffective (table 6).

TABLE 6. EFFECTIVENESS OF ESCWA IGM AT PROMOTING THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS OF SECURITY AND PEACEBUILDING AT THE SUBREGIONAL/REGIONAL LEVELS

Effectiveness	Percentage
Very ineffective	6
Ineffective	6
Neither effective nor ineffective (neutral)	22
Effective	56
Very effective	3
Don't know	8

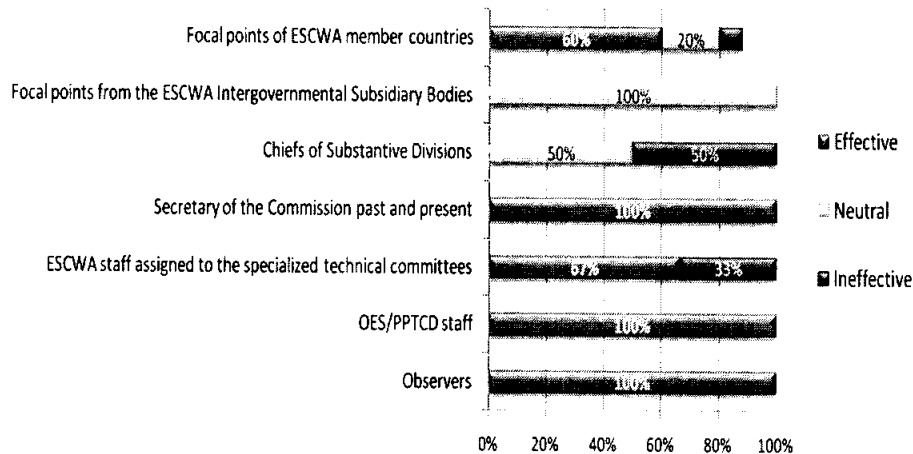
38. All respondents from Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, and Oman consider the IGM to be effective (figure 10), as do 83 per cent of respondents from Bahrain and half the respondents from Palestine, and Qatar. Respondents from Yemen consider the IGM to be neither effective nor ineffective, as do 50 per cent of respondents from Iraq, Palestine, Qatar and the Syrian Arab Republic as well as one-third of respondents from Jordan and 17 per cent from Bahrain. Two-thirds of respondents from Jordan feel that the IGM is ineffective, as do one quarter of respondents from Iraq.

Figure 10. Opinion by country on the effectiveness of ESCWA IGM at promoting the economic, social and environmental aspects of security and peacebuilding at the subregional/regional levels



39. All respondents from the following stakeholder groups consider the IGM to be effective: Secretary of the Commission past and present, OES/PPTCD staff and observers (figure 11). With regard to ESCWA staff assigned to the specialized technical committees, 67 per cent believe the IGM is effective while one third consider it to be ineffective. Half of the Chiefs of substantive divisions hold a neutral opinion of the effectiveness of IGMs while the other half consider it to be ineffective. All of the focal points from the ESCWA intergovernmental subsidiary bodies indicated that the IGM is neither effective nor ineffective. Sixty per cent of focal points of ESCWA member countries consider the IGM to be effective, while 20 per cent hold a neutral view and 8 per cent consider it ineffective.

Figure 11. Opinion by stakeholder group on the effectiveness of ESCWA IGM at promoting the economic, social and environmental aspects of security and peacebuilding at the subregional/regional levels



Prime Functions

40. This section presents the results of the evaluation on the perception of stakeholders regarding the effectiveness of ESCWA IGM at providing strategic leadership and setting direction with regard to its prime functions:

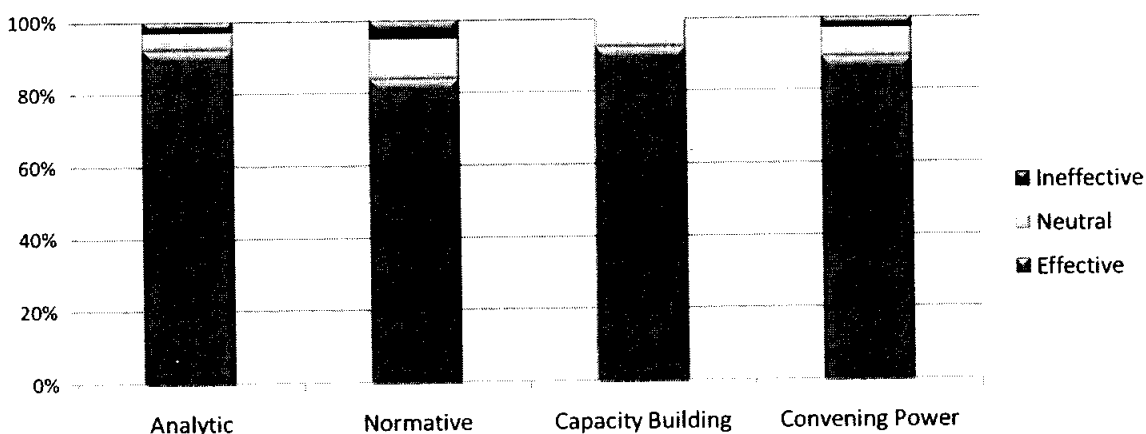
- Analytical function:* Producing regional economic and social studies on trends, situations and policies in various areas of work.
- Normative function:* Preparing policy recommendations/guidelines/norms and standards for policy debate or adoption/implementation.
- Capacity-building function:* Providing technical assistance.
- Convening power function:* Organizing multilateral dialogue, knowledge sharing and networking at the regional level.

41. Based on the ranking scheme of table 1, stakeholders consider that ESCWA IGM has a good level of effectiveness with regard to its normative function (84 per cent of respondents consider the IGM to be effective or very effective). With a combined effectiveness score of over 85 per cent, the IGM is deemed by stakeholders to have an excellent level of effectiveness with regard to its other three prime functions. The IGM is most effective in terms of its capacity-building function (no stakeholders think that the IGM is ineffective in this regard) and its analytic function. There is an opportunity to improve the effectiveness of the IGM with regard to ESCWA's normative function.

TABLE 7. EFFECTIVENESS OF ESCWA IGM WITH REGARD TO ITS PRIME FUNCTIONS

Effectiveness	Analytic function (percentage)	Normative Function (percentage)	Capacity-building (percentage)	Convening power (percentage)
Very effective	24	22	27	16
Effective	68	62	65	73
Neither effective nor ineffective	5	11	8	8
Ineffective	3	5	0	3
Very ineffective	0	0	0	0

Figure 12. Effectiveness of ESCWA IGM at strategic planning and direction setting with regard to its prime functions



Optimum Frequency of Meetings of ESCWA IGM

42. Stakeholders were asked their opinion regarding the ideal frequency of IGM meetings in order to achieve maximize effectiveness. The results are reported in table 8. The majority of stakeholders consider that the following committees should meet on an annual basis:

- Ministerial Session;
- Committee on Energy;
- Committee on Transport;
- Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization;
- Statistical Committee.

43. The majority of stakeholders consider that the Technical Committee and the Committee on Water Resources should convene every six months.

44. Opinion regarding the frequency of meetings for the Committee on Social Development was split, between every six months and once a year. Female respondents favoured meetings every six months while male respondents favoured annual meetings (table 9).

45. Opinion was similarly split regarding the optimum frequency of the Committee on Women, with female respondents favouring meetings every 2 years and male respondents favouring annual meetings (table 10).

TABLE 8. OPINIONS REGARDING OPTIMUM FREQUENCY OF IGM MEETINGS

Frequency of meeting	Ministerial Session	Technical Committee	Committee on Energy	Committee on Water Resources	Committee on Social Development	Committee on Transport	Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development in the Countries of the ESCWA Region	Statistical Committee	Committee on Women
Every 3 months	15%	23%	9%	8%	17%	12%	5%	13%	9%
Every 4 months	0%	4%	0%	4%	0%	4%	5%	0%	5%
Every 6 months	8%	42%	27%	33%	30%	24%	27%	29%	0%
Once a year	46%	31%	45%	29%	30%	44%	45%	38%	36%
Once every 2 years	31%	0%	18%	25%	22%	16%	18%	21%	36%

TABLE 9. OPTIMUM FREQUENCY OF COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, BY GENDER

	Female	Male
Every 3 months	25%	8%
Every 4 months	0%	0%
Every 6 months	33%	25%
Once a year	17%	42%
Once every 2 years	25%	25%
Once every 3 years	0%	0%

TABLE 10. OPTIMUM FREQUENCY OF COMMITTEE ON WOMEN, BY GENDER

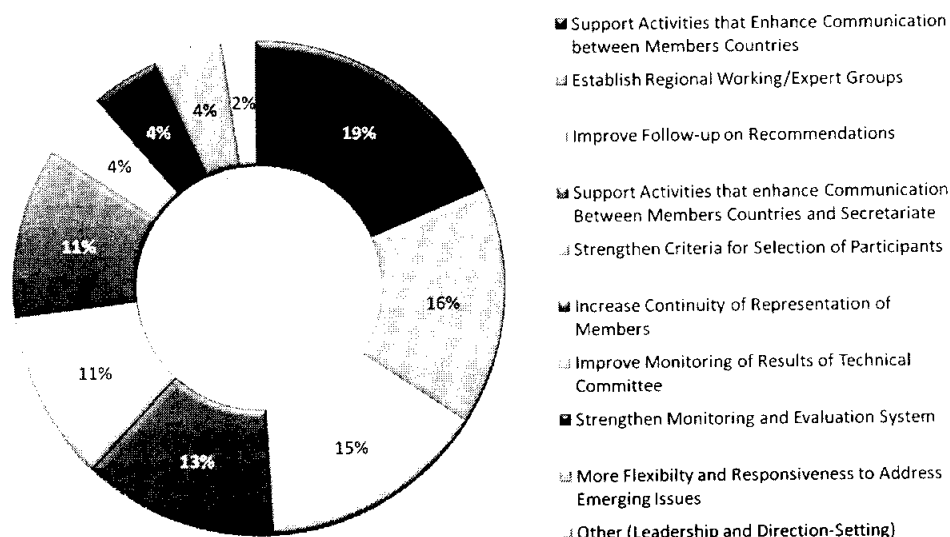
	Female	Male
Every 3 months	17%	0%
Every 4 months	8%	0%
Every 6 months	0%	0%
Once a year	25%	45%
Once every 2 years	42%	36%
Once every 3 years	8%	18%

Recommendations to Improve the Effectiveness of ESCWA Strategic Leadership and Direction Setting

46. Respondents were asked for their recommendations of actions that ESCWA should implement in order to improve the effectiveness of the IGM's strategic leadership and direction setting. The responses, presented in figure 13, have been arranged according to frequency of response. In order of priority, the recommended actions corresponding to 86 per cent of the responses are:

- Action 1:* Support activities outside IGM sessions that enhance communication between member countries;
- Action 2:* Establish regional working/expert groups (one for each specialized technical committee);
- Action 3:* Improve follow-up on recommendations made during IGM sessions;
- Action 4:* Support activities outside IGM sessions that enhance communication between member countries and the ESCWA secretariat;
- Action 5:* Strengthen the technical/professional criteria for the selection of participants in IGM sessions;
- Action 6:* Ensure the continuity of representation of member countries of the ministerial sessions, the technical committee and the specialized committees.

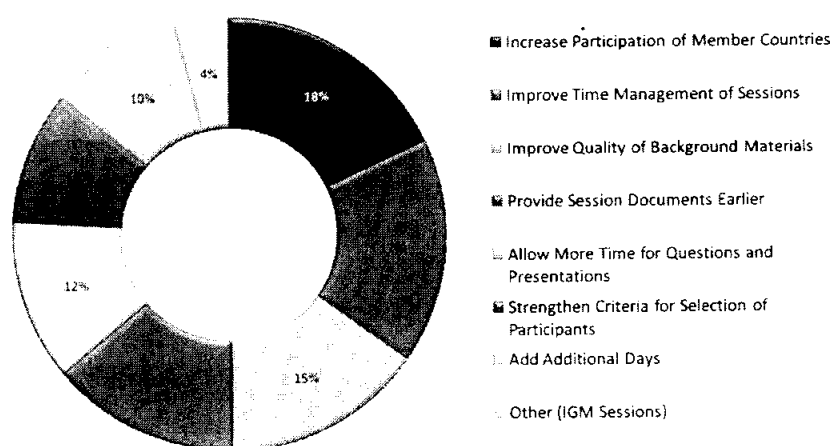
Figure 13. Recommended ways to improve the effectiveness of ESCWA’s strategic leadership and direction setting



47. Respondents were asked their recommendation for actions that ESCWA should implement in order to improve the effectiveness of the IGM sessions. The responses, presented in figure 14, have been arranged according to frequency of response. In order of priority, the recommended actions corresponding to 86 per cent of the responses are:

- Action 1:* Increase the participation of member countries in agenda development for IGM sessions;
- Action 2:* Improve time management of IGM sessions;
- Action 3:* Improve the quality of background material for IGM sessions, in particular regarding input on substantive issues and agenda items;
- Action 4:* Provide session documents in a more timely fashion (adhering to the six week rule);
- Action 5:* Allow more time for questions following presentations made at IGM sessions;
- Action 6:* Strengthen the technical/professional criteria for the selection of participants in IGM sessions;
- Action 7:* Add additional days to IGM sessions to allow for more detailed discussion of issues.

Figure 14. Recommended ways to improve the effectiveness of IGM sessions



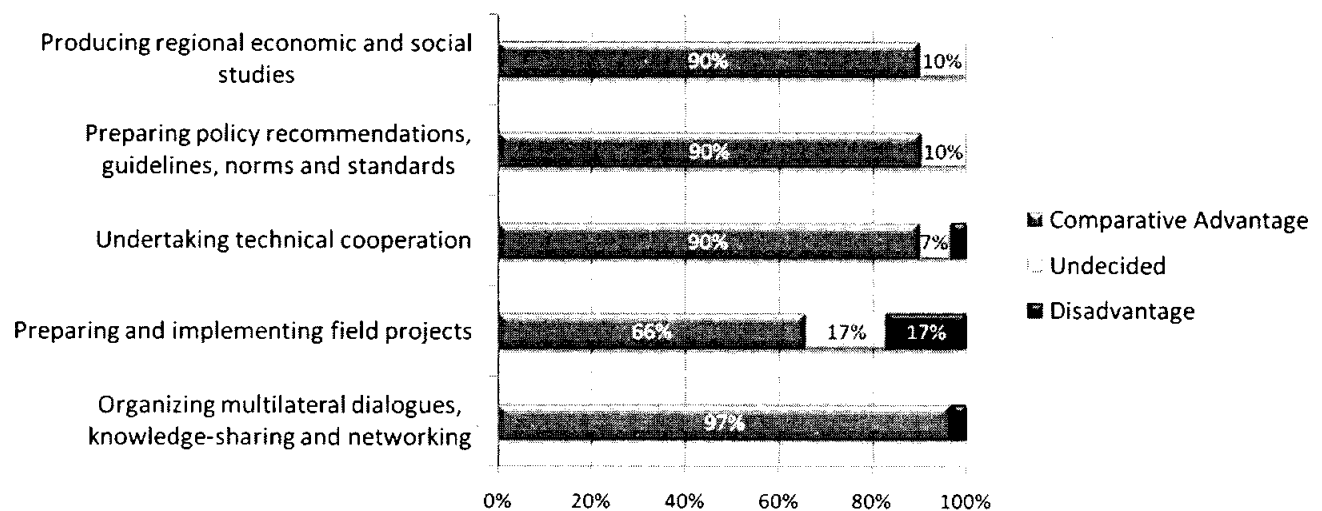
The Comparative Advantages of ESCWA

48. The evaluation explored the perception of stakeholders regarding ESCWA's comparative advantage compared with other entities in the region in terms of the following activities:

- Producing regional economic and social studies on trends, situations and policies in the various areas of work;
- Preparing policy recommendations, guidelines, norms and standards for policy debate or for adoption and implementation;
- Undertaking technical cooperation for capacity-building within the region;
- Preparing and implementing field projects;
- Organizing multilateral dialogues, knowledge sharing and networking at the regional level.

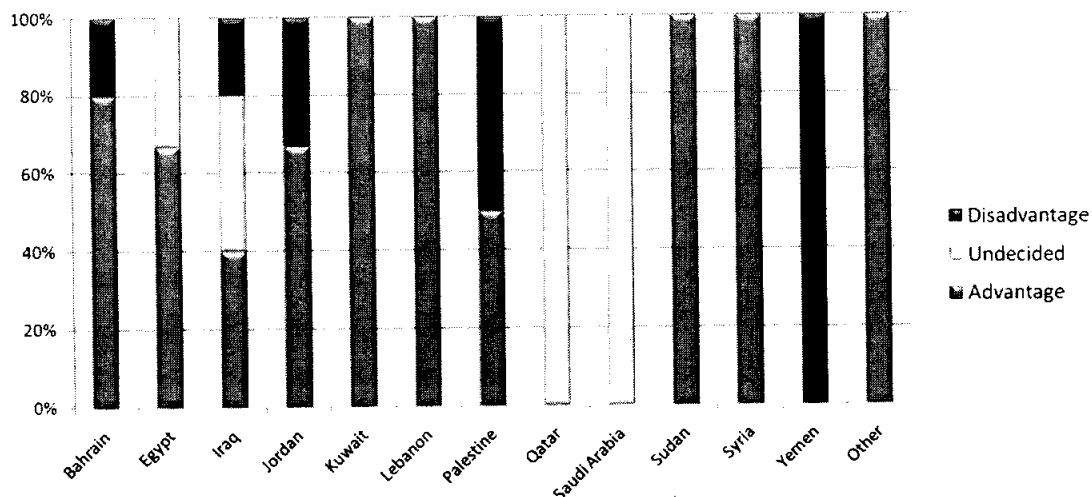
49. According to stakeholders, ESCWA has a comparative advantage in all areas with the exception of preparing and implementing field projects (figure 15): 17 per cent of respondents consider that ESCWA has a comparative disadvantage in this area while 17 per cent were undecided.

Figure 15. ESCWA's areas of comparative advantage



50. With regard to the preparation and implementation of field projects, all of the respondents from Kuwait, Lebanon, the Sudan and the Syrian Arab republic consider that ESCWA has a comparative advantage. In contrast, all respondents from Yemen believe that ESCWA has a comparative disadvantage, as do half of the respondents from Palestine, a third of the respondents from Jordan, and 20 per cent of respondents from Bahrain and Iraq. Respondents from Qatar and Saudi Arabia were undecided, as were 40 per cent of respondents from Iraq and a third of the respondents from Egypt (figure 16).

Figure 16. Opinion by country of ESCWA’s areas of comparative advantage in preparing and implementing field projects



The Effectiveness of ESCWA Activities

51. Stakeholders were asked their opinion regarding the effectiveness of:

- The activities of ESCWA in linking national, regional and international goals;
- The support of ESCWA to member countries in ensuring that their common position and interests are adequately reflected in the outcome of high-level international development-related conferences;
- The role of ESCWA IGM in adjusting the work programme to address emerging issues.

52. The survey results are presented in figure 17. According to respondents, ESCWA IGM has a good level of effectiveness with regard to adjusting the work programme to address emerging issues, but 29 per cent of respondents believe that it is either ineffective or hold a neutral view (consider that it is neither effective nor ineffective).

53. With regard to support to member countries and adjusting the work programme, stakeholders believe that ESCWA has a good level of effectiveness (with an effectiveness score of over 80 per cent in both cases).

Figure 17. Perception of the effectiveness of ESCWA (all respondents)

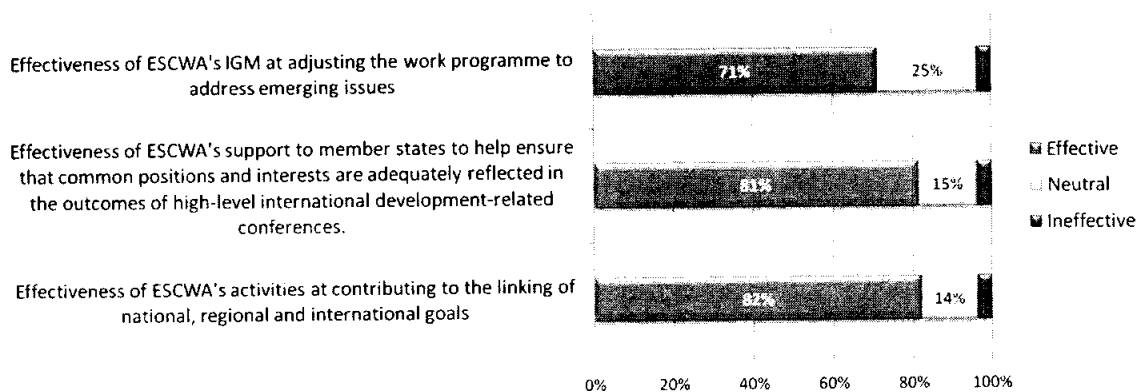
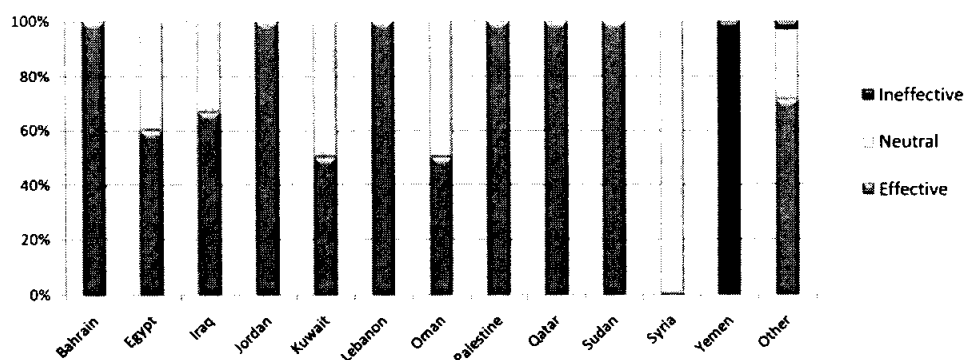


Figure 18. Perception of the effectiveness of ESCWA by country



Effectiveness of the Commission

54. Stakeholders were asked their opinion regarding the effectiveness of the Commission as the regional arm of the United Nations in West Asia in ensuring that ESCWA:

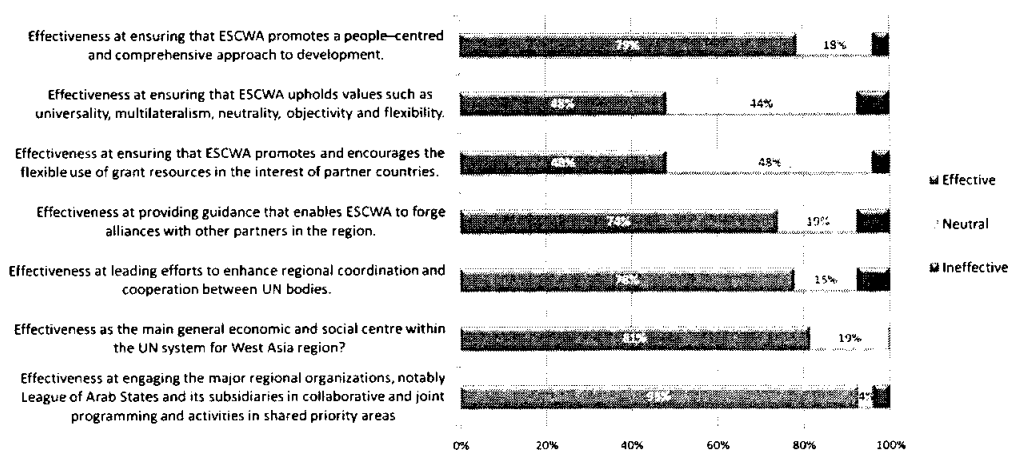
- Promotes a people-centred and comprehensive approach to development;
- Upholds values such as universality, multilateralism, neutrality, objectivity and flexibility;
- Promotes and encourages the flexible use of grant resources in the interest of partner countries.

55. Stakeholders were also asked their opinion regarding the effectiveness of the Commission:

- At providing guidance that enables ESCWA to forge alliances with other partners in the region;
- At leading efforts to enhance regional coordination and cooperation between United Nations bodies in order to achieve better synergy, coherence, consistency and effectiveness in the regional activities of those bodies;
- At establishing ESCWA as the main general economic and social centre within the United Nations system for the West Asia region;
- At engaging the major regional organizations, notably League of Arab States and its subsidiaries in collaborative and joint programming and activities in shared priority areas.

56. The results of the survey are presented in figure 19.

Figure 19. Perception of the effectiveness of the Commission



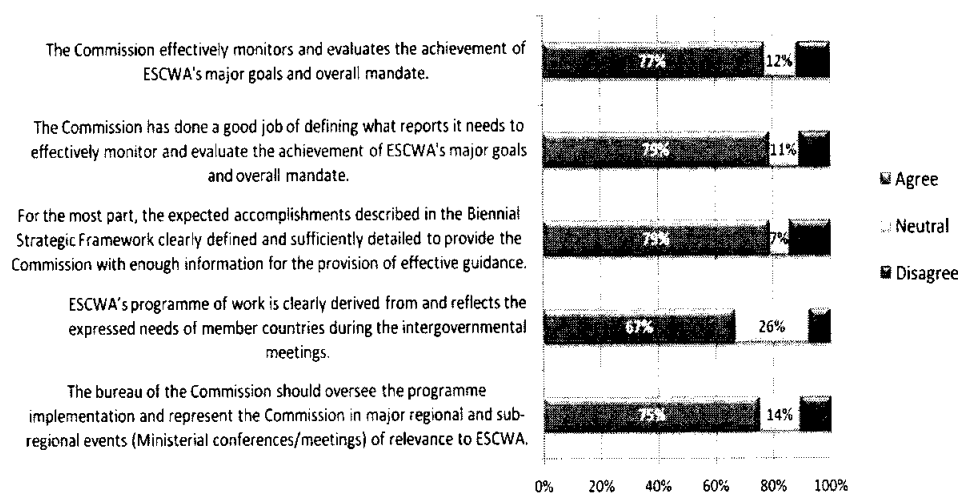
Effectiveness of ESCWA Programme of Work

57. Stakeholders were asked their opinion regarding various aspects relating to the effectiveness of the ESCWA programme of work:

- Whether the secretariat and the sessions of the Commission effectively monitor and evaluate the achievement of ESCWA major goals and overall mandate;
- Whether the secretariat and the sessions of the Commission have done a good job of defining what reports they need in order to effectively monitor and evaluate the achievement of ESCWA major goals and overall mandate;
- Whether, for the most part, the expected accomplishments described in the strategic framework are clearly defined and sufficiently detailed to provide enough information for the provision of effective guidance and monitoring;
- Whether ESCWA programme of work is clearly derived from and reflects the expressed needs of member countries during intergovernmental meetings;
- Whether the bureau of the sessions should oversee the programme implementation and represent the Commission in major regional and subregional events (ministerial conferences/meetings) of relevance to ESCWA.

58. Figure 20 presents the survey results.

Figure 20. Stakeholder perception of the effectiveness of ESCWA programme of work (all respondents)



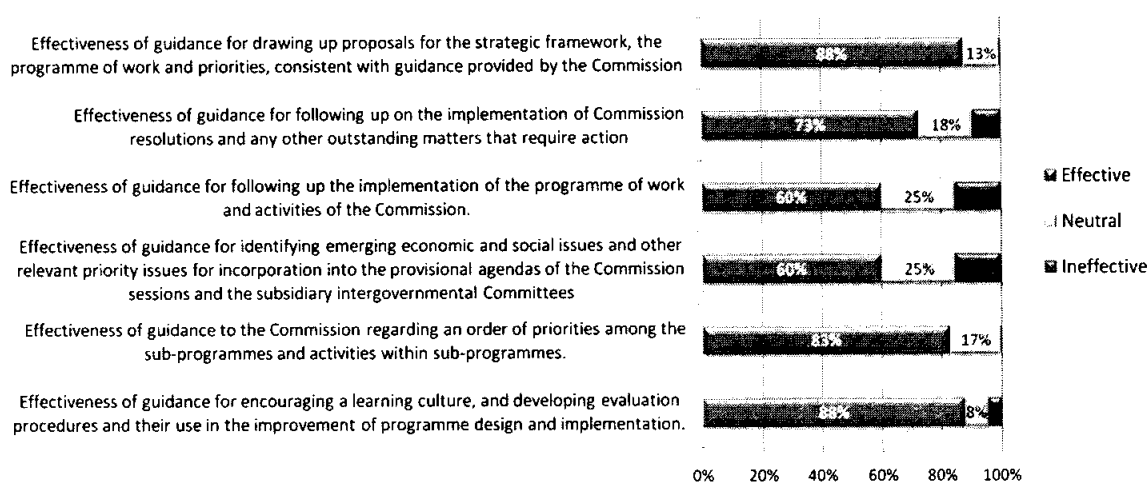
Effectiveness of the Technical Committee

59. Stakeholders were asked their opinion of the effectiveness of the guidance that the Technical Committee provides to the secretariat with regard to the following:

- Drawing up proposals for the strategic framework, the programme of work and priorities, consistent with guidance provided by the Commission;
- Following up on the implementation of Commission resolutions and any other outstanding matters that require action;

- Following up on the implementation of the programme of work and activities of the Commission, including the mobilization of extrabudgetary resources to support their implementation;
- Identifying emerging economic and social issues and other relevant priority issues for incorporation into the provisional agendas of the Commission sessions and the subsidiary intergovernmental committees;
- Recommending an order of priorities among the subprogrammes and activities to the Commission;
- Encouraging a culture of learning and developing evaluation procedures and their use in the improvement of programme design and implementation.

Figure 21. Effectiveness of the guidance the Technical Committee provides to the secretariat



Recommendations for Strengthening Effectiveness of Technical Committees

60. Recommendations by stakeholders for strengthening the effectiveness of the Technical Committees:

- Increase participation of member countries and engagement of technical experts;
- Exploit regular technical meetings, progress reports, workshops, seminars and exhibitions as major tools in this strengthening approach;
- Standardize the level of representation from member countries at the level of technical experts rather than diplomats;
- Have countries submit comments and observations on documents prior to meetings to ensure a richer discussion on proposed topics;
- Take advantage of the Technical Committee meetings to share experiences and lessons learned from member countries;
- Link the work of the Technical Committee to that of other committees;
- Increase preparedness of participants for discussion and remove time constraints and interventions by the secretariat which discourage real and effective dialogue between participants;
- Strengthen the working force in terms of education and experience;
- Prepare manuals in different languages;
- Develop the capacity of technical experts in economic, social and environmental fields;

- Identify problems and analyse them;
- Create profiles on background of participants;
- Prepare proposals and recommendations on important issues such as poverty;
- Develop comprehensive strategies and policies based on the vision of member countries in order to overcome obstacles they are facing;
- Provide adequate opportunity to discuss and debate the main issues on the agenda and follow up on recommendations.

Statistical Committee

61. Recommendations made by stakeholders for strengthening the effectiveness of the Statistical Committee:

- Build capacity in member countries for producing harmonized, reliable statistics following international statistical standards and introducing statistics in previously untapped areas;
- Create open channels between the Statistics Division and statistics offices of member countries and training programmes on updating data and census conduction;
- Nominate a coordinator within statistics offices in member countries and create a well-formed technical assistance programme to support them in conducting their work within a specified period of time through well-planned coordination between the two parties, submitting technical reports and progress reports to ESCWA for revision and records;
- Obtain a more realistic idea of conditions in each country and take that into account when developing indicators, and definitions;
- Ensure that data is accurate and up to date;
- Standardize methodology and statistical methods used;
- Improve methodology and develop integrated plans that would result in a comprehensive strategy.

Committee on Social Development

62. Recommendations made by stakeholders for strengthening the effectiveness of the Committee on Social Development:

- Concentrate on social issues of particular relevance to the ESCWA region;
- Increase participation of member countries in policy formulation and planning of long-term socio-economic projects;
- Effectively contribute to solving complex social problems that stem from known country circumstances;
- Promoting a culture of learning;
- Develop an appropriate framework for participation in social development;
- Take into consideration different views during the various stages of planning and policy development and promote participation on a large scale during implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- Develop specific and realistic proposals and plans that would contribute to achieving MDGs and the establishment of a global partnership for development.

Committee on Energy

63. Recommendations made by stakeholders for strengthening the effectiveness of the Committee on Energy:

- Foster the implementation of regional cooperation projects, such as gas and electricity grids and renewable energy projects;
- Increase involvement of international, regional, and national experts in meetings and discussions;
- Partner with the European Union and donors to support member countries' projects in energy at the rural levels;
- Follow up on global events relating to oil and energy and inform member countries of any major developments;
- Coordinate with member countries regarding solutions to problems facing sustainable development;
- Participate in coordination meetings and conferences in the field of fossil or renewable energy and climate change;
- Assign a specialized coordinator and Technical Committee member of each sector from member countries and coordinate a well-formed technical assistance programme between the two parties with identified activities to be realized under the supervision of technical officer (ESCWA staff) in a reasonable period of time, submitting both technical reports and progress reports to ESCWA for revision and records;
- Coordinate with the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, the Organization of Arab Petroleum Countries and relevant authorities on the issue of alternative energy, especially solar energy;
- Increase capacity-building in ESCWA member countries and continuously hold meetings to demonstrate progress achieved;
- Invite participants with appropriate technical skills and disseminate experiences of other countries by holding meetings in the various participating countries.

Committee on Water Resources

64. Recommendations made by stakeholders for strengthening the effectiveness of the Committee on Water Resources:

- Concentrate on the progress made in implementing ongoing water-related projects that foster regional cooperation on water-related issues;
- Extend the participation of the private sector and reform legislation on water;
- Help resolve the water problem between Iraq and relevant countries and benefit from the experience of European countries and countries with similar issues in solving such problems;
- Increase capacity-building through supporting projects with multiple phases in the area of environmental-economic accounting;
- Intervene aggressively to find realistic solutions to problems;
- Strengthen the work of member countries in order to cope with the acute shortage in water resources in the region and put an end to the water crisis for the betterment of human health.

Committee on Transport

65. Recommendations made by stakeholders for strengthening the effectiveness of the Committee on Transport:

- Follow up closely with member countries on the implementation of the Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq (ITSAM) and move from land transport to railroad and maritime transport;
- Establish strong links between transport and trade, as transport is of prime importance as a vehicle for facilitating trade;
- Implement the existing transport agreements between member countries;
- Take into account the methodology used and the experience gained in formulating bilateral agreements between ESCWA member countries when formulating such agreements;
- Encourage countries that did not sign agreements to sign them and pass them;
- Evaluate national plans according to international standards;
- Allow for the participation of technically and scientifically qualified individuals in the meetings of the Committee;
- Provide adequate opportunity for each country to express their ideas clearly and explicitly;
- Follow up directly with focal points that are designated by each country regarding implementation of recommendations of the meetings of the Committee.

Committee on Women

66. Recommendations made by stakeholders for strengthening the effectiveness of the Committee on Women:

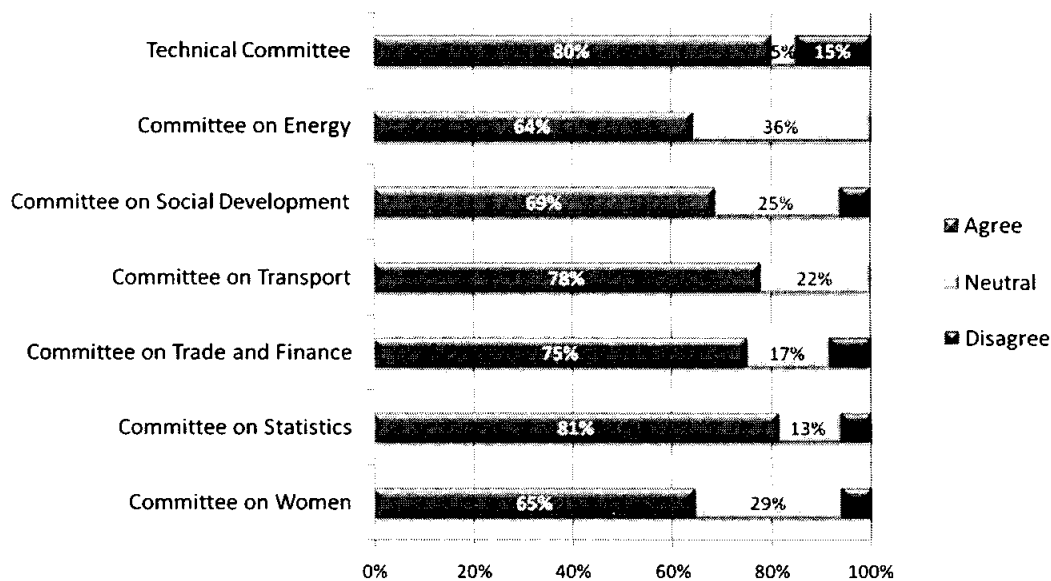
- Assist member countries in establishing and strengthening a national mechanism on women's issues; assist those bodies in reporting on women's issues and focus their interest on selected issues related to the 12 subjects enshrined in the Beijing Platform for Action;
- Make use of the new United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and seek more participation of women;
- Perform in-depth analysis of the status of women, especially in employment; promote legislation and cooperate with the media in order to reclaim the high status that Iraqi women enjoyed more than twenty years ago;
- Emphasize the role of customs and social values;
- As poverty is a major obstacle in attaining sustainable development and economic growth and represents a threat to security and social stability, particularly of poor women, maintain certain standards through which progress on poverty reduction can be tracked and compared between different countries through the convening of annual workshops, seminars and campaigns that promote public awareness;
- Support the participation of women in water conservation issues which, due to their significant role in the domestic use of water, has a substantial impact on water conservation.

Academic and Professional Qualifications of Committee Members

67. The evaluation asked stakeholders opinion of whether the members of the following committees have the necessary academic and professional qualifications, skill set and knowledge base to effectively contribute

to the ability of the committee on which they serve to fulfil its responsibilities. The responses are presented in figure 22.

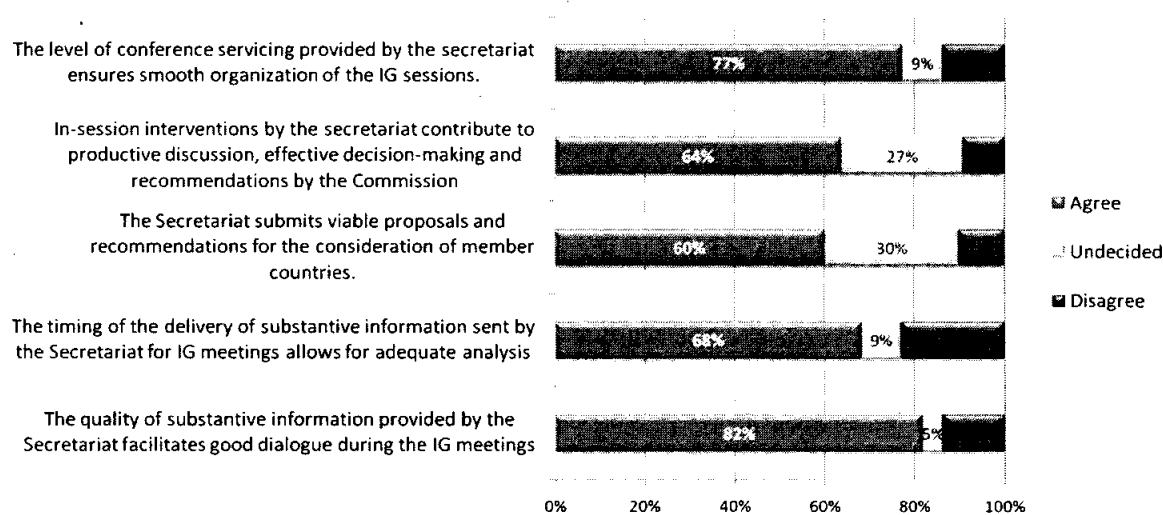
Figure 22. Stakeholder opinions regarding the qualifications of committee members



Secretariat Management of Intergovernmental Meetings

68. Stakeholder opinions regarding the secretariat management of intergovernmental meetings are presented in figure 23.

Figure 23. Stakeholder opinions regarding secretariat management of intergovernmental meetings



Stakeholder Recommendations for Improvement of Management of Intergovernmental Meetings

69. Recommendations made by stakeholders for improving the management of intergovernmental meetings:

- Better manage time by ensuring time measurement and reducing the number of days;
- Ensure good coordination in selecting country representatives and experts for meetings in consultation with country focal points, as emerging experts contribute more effectively to discussion than traditional experts;
- Provide participants with reports listed on the agenda in adequate time for review;
- Develop mechanisms for monitoring the implementation of recommendations emanating from these meetings;
- Improve management of meetings by training ESCWA staff on the requirements of this task; give appropriate guidance to participating countries when administrating a meeting.

70. Stakeholder recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of the intergovernmental sessions:

- Involve member countries in setting the agendas and soliciting early feedback on documents to facilitate meaningful discussion during the session which may require establishing a focal point for this purpose in each member country;
- Increase frequency of meetings to ensure coordination and effective follow up (the more meetings, the better the outcome);
- Improve the level and quality of representation by member countries;
- Consult with member countries about agendas prior to meetings;
- Send out meeting documents in adequate time before meetings;
- Develop a mechanism for follow-up on the implementation of session recommendations;
- Propose practical applications that enhance expertise instead of theoretical proposals;
- Reduce the number of subjects for deliberation to allow for more discussion and exchange of views;
- Improve the management of meetings;
- Increase the importance and role of ESCWA in dealing with regional problems particularly outside the realm of politics, as its region of operation experiences a high level of political and military tension and economic inequality;
- Increase the number of specialized participants and organize field courses in different member countries;
- Make available a coherent framework specifying priorities, providing clear guidelines and integrating planning at the national level with mechanisms for implementation;
- Follow up on all issues related to the region and replicate good practices during ESCWA sessions, stressing issues of importance to the Arab region and keep member country representatives up-to-date on emerging global issues;
- Strengthen capacity of member countries in realizing their desired goals by focusing on points of weakness.

Annex I¹**BACKGROUND TO THE REFORM INITIATIVE OF ESCWA****A. THE ORIGIN OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR WESTERN ASIA**

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is one of five regional commissions created by the United Nations to promote cooperation and integration between the countries in each region of the world. ESCWA was established in 1973 as the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ECWA) by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations as one of its regional Commissions (ECOSOC resolution 1818 (LV) of 9 August 1973). In effect it was elevation of the United Nations office in Beirut following the admission, as members of the United Nations, of Bahrain (21 September 1971), Qatar (21 September 1971), United Arab Emirates (9 December 1971), and Oman (7 October 1971). Beirut (Lebanon) which was the seat for the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut (UNESOB) remained as headquarters for ECWA. In 1985 the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1985/69 of 26 July 1985 acknowledging fully the social aspect of the work of the Commission and renamed the Commission as United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia was established, like the other United Nations regional Commissions (Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) 1947, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) 1947, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) 1948, Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) 1958) as a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council. As of 2008, ESCWA has 14 member countries and is serviced by a unit of the United Nations secretariat under the leadership of the Executive Secretary at the rank of Under-Secretary-General. The Executive Secretary is accountable to the Secretary-General (see ST/SGB/2002/16). The core budget of ESCWA is covered by the United Nations regular budget.

Previous reports including A/44/206, E/1989/69 of 26 April 1989 of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and A/61/61 of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) 17 February 2006 and others have shown that the ESCWA region has suffered from a protracted absence of peace and stability since the early years of its establishment. The location had, likewise, laid an additional burden on its shoulders, forcing it to operate in an environment fraught with uncertainties. ESCWA had to relocate its staff or part thereof from one country to another eight times, the last of which was in the aftermath of the war in Lebanon in July 2006. The security imperative exacerbated managerial responsibilities and cast its shadow on working conditions. ESCWA strove to surmount this security imperative through a series of measures to mitigate its effects on the smooth conduct of its work.

It is generally recognized and acknowledged that the challenges of the twenty-first century at the regional level of Western Asia and in the Arab region as a whole have been posed by a legacy of conflict, unrest, wars and civil strife, that has driven away valuable material and human resources, and when combined with the demand posed on the ESCWA region by globalization and peace, have placed formidable obstacles in the way of development. The social, political, economic and environmental ramifications of the absence of stability exacerbated existing problems such as high population growth, rapid urbanization, poverty, unemployment, unsustainable utilization of natural resources and a widening digital divide.

It is in this context and that of ongoing United Nations reforms as well as in the light of programme priority as identified by member countries, that the Commission adopted its resolution 291(XXV) calling on the ESCWA secretariat to carry out an in-depth evaluation of the intergovernmental structure of ESCWA.

¹ Large portions of this annex have been extracted from United Nations Documents.

B. THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE OF ESCWA

ESCWA and its subsidiary bodies are intended to play a vital role in strengthening coordination at the subregional and regional levels by encouraging and facilitating multilateral dialogue, knowledge sharing and networking among member countries, and between member countries and the secretariat. Intergovernmental bodies determine mandates which provide the foundation for programmes of work for the Commission, and guide and oversee their implementation. The intergovernmental structure is comprised of the following components:

Commission Session: the Commission Session reports to the Economic and Social Council and provides overall direction to the work of the secretariat. It meets once biennially (every 2 years) for five working days, normally at its headquarters. As mandated by resolution 223 (XX) which was adopted on 27 May 1999, the Preparatory Committee meets prior to the plenary of the Commission to consider programmatic agenda items.

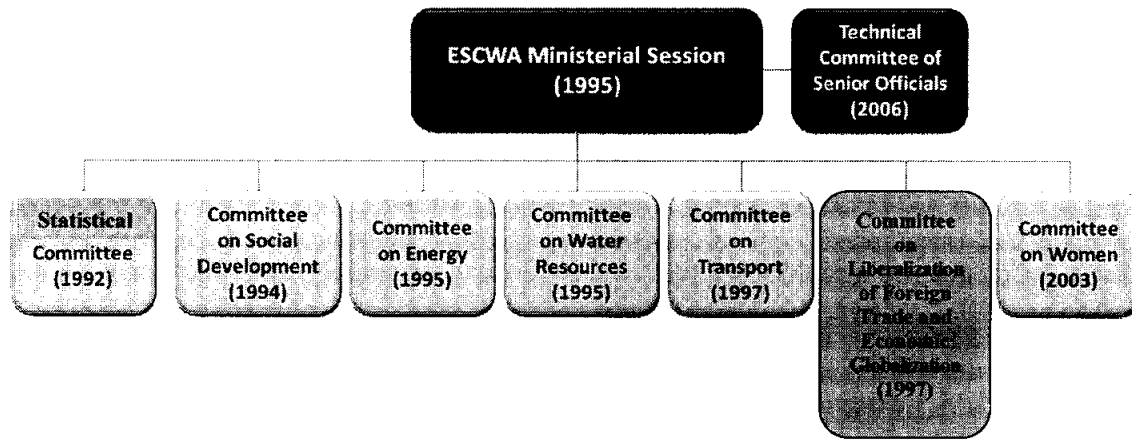
Technical Committee: The Technical Committee is composed of representatives of all ESCWA member countries. The Technical Committee meets biannually (twice a year) to guide the ESCWA secretariat on programmatic issues, including the draft strategic framework, the proposed programme of work; follow-up on the implementation of the programme of work; mobilization of extrabudgetary resources; follow-up resolutions made at the sessions of the Commission, and identifies emerging regional economic and social issues for consideration at the next Commission session.

Specialized Technical Committees: The Commission has seven subsidiary Specialized Technical Committees. The frequency of these meetings has changed throughout the years, and some specialized subsidiary committees have called for annual sessions to increase the effectiveness of these committees and make more progress on issues.

- (a) Committee on Energy;
- (b) Committee on Water Resources;
- (c) Committee on Social Development;
- (d) Committee on Transport;
- (e) Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization;
- (f) Statistical Committee;
- (g) Committee on Women.

Advisory Committee of Ambassadors: In addition to the formal machinery outlined above, the Advisory Committee of Ambassadors of member countries is an informal entity which plays a consultative role and provides an informal means of communication between ESCWA member countries and the secretariat on important matters requiring attention in the period between the biennial sessions of the Commission. It is comprised of heads of diplomatic missions in the host country of the Commission, and a high-level representative of the host country (Lebanon). Following the establishment of the Technical Committee, two annual meetings are planned for the biennium 2010-2011.

Figure 1. ESCWA conference structure



C. BACKGROUND TO ESCWA INTERGOVERNMENTAL MECHANISM REFORM INITIATIVE

The present evaluation of ESCWA Intergovernmental Mechanism (IGM) represents the latest in a series of initiatives aimed at improving the effectiveness of ESCWA. In order to put into context the present evaluation, it is important to have an understanding of the background of the IGM reform agenda. This section presents the salient outcomes of the twenty-fourth, twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth Sessions of ESCWA.

ESCWA's Twenty-fourth Session

ESCWA considered a report by the secretariat on "Streamlining the Work of the Commission: Consideration of ESCWA intergovernmental machinery"² at its twenty-fourth session in May 2006. In presenting a proposal the secretariat informed the Commission that it had initiated the comprehensive evaluation of the ESCWA IGM "in accordance with the recommendation made by OIOS as part of the United Nations reform process." The secretariat also explained that the reform of the United Nations by the Secretary-General in response to the 2005 World Summit Outcome was expected to bring about incremental changes throughout the United Nations system for the next decade. Consequently, the reform process provided an opportunity for the Commission to prepare itself for such changes by reviewing the current establishment and by planning ahead in consultation with member Governments and United Nations Headquarters.

Thus, it was beneficial, according to the secretariat, for ESCWA to carry out an in-depth assessment of the intergovernmental machinery through a series of consultations between member Governments and the secretariat. Such an assessment must aim to identify an intergovernmental structure that can effectively strengthen interlinkages among the subprogrammes, and bring about a coherent programme focused on the priority issues of the region.

The Commission did not act on the proposal at that session. However in adopting the report of the session, 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

² E/ESCWA/24/6(Part I)/Add.2.

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.

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.

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 agenda and issue invitations to the meeting.³ No formal resolution was adopted.

ESCWA's Twenty-fifth Session

The secretariat of ESCWA submitted under items 8 (a-i) and 8 (a-ii) two related reports to the twenty-fifth session of the Commission in 2008: one on: "Lessons learned from evaluation of the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies"⁴ and the other on "Frequency of the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies."⁵ In section V "Way Forward" of the first document, the secretariat pointed out the increased importance attached to evaluation as a tool for promoting learning and accountability, and its intention to continue its internal evaluation of sessions.⁶ It also pointed out that "collective effort is required on the part of both the secretariat and member countries to further improve the effectiveness of sessions" and to that end it made three proposals for consideration by the Commission as the way forward.

The first proposal relates to improving the ESCWA website by making the archives of session documents available, including reports. This is an action that the secretariat should have done previously.

The second proposal relates to strengthening further liaison and cooperation with the secretariat and member countries and calls on the latter:

(a) To review their internal distribution channels for ESCWA session documents, to solicit feedback from the ministries or offices concerned on how distribution channels could further be improved and share the outcome of these reviews with the secretariat;

(b) To consider designating their ambassadors to Lebanon as heads of the permanent missions to ESCWA, and nominate a working-level focal point responsible for liaison with the secretariat on the work of the Commission.

This proposal reflects a serious problem of identifying ESCWA constituency in member countries.

The third proposal relates to requesting member countries to give feedback on how to improve contents of the evaluation of the sessions.

The second document on the "Frequency of the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies" provides the background for this in-depth evaluation of ESCWA IGM. The introductory section of the document states that:

³ E/2006/41, E/ESCWA/24/10, paras. 47-49.

⁴ E/ESCWA/25/6(Part I)/Add.1.

⁵ E/ESCWA/25/6(Part I)/Add.2.

⁶ E/ESCWA/25/6(Part I)/Add.1.

“As a regional arm of the United Nations, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia carries out analytical and normative work, building on its accumulated knowledge and multidisciplinary expertise, which are in turn supported by the provision of technical cooperation. It also facilitates multilateral dialogue, knowledge-sharing and networking on the outcome of the work of the Commission on national, regional and global development issues, taking into consideration the outcome of global meetings. Within the United Nations Development Framework, ESCWA highlights the regional dimension of development in Western Asia at key global meetings, including the annual sessions of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions.

In this regard, the Commission and its subsidiary bodies play the vital role of guiding and overseeing the work of the secretariat, as well as facilitating multilateral dialogue, knowledge-sharing and networking among member countries and between member countries and the secretariat. Furthermore, they provide mandates, which serve as the foundation for future ESCWA programmes of work.”⁷

The key findings of the report and the Way Forward were:

“While no evaluation of its overall intergovernmental structure has been carried out by ESCWA, the decision of the Commission to regulate the frequency of intergovernmental sessions derived from consultations with member countries, which felt that the limited resources allocated to ESCWA should be used to provide a variety of services in support of member countries, including technical cooperation activities.”⁸

“To enhance system-wide coherence within the United Nations, the core role and function of ESCWA and the other regional commissions has been evolving to refocus on the provision of intergovernmental forums for the preparation and servicing of and follow-up to the annual sessions of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions, as well as other key global conferences. For example, the current Commission session provides an opportunity for member countries to carry out regional consultations to assess both the progress achieved and the gaps identified in pursuing the Monterrey Consensus of the International Conference on Financing for Development, the outcome of which will be presented at the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, to be held in Doha from 29 November – 2 December 2008.”⁹

“While it is still too early to assess the effectiveness of the Technical Committee, it is worth noting that the secretariat received written comments from six member countries on the draft Strategic Framework for 2010-2011 as a direct result of the collective review at the first meeting of the Committee.”¹⁰

“Although the scope of” the ESCWA secretariat “document is limited to the frequency of intergovernmental sessions, there are other means of enhancing interaction among member countries, as well as between member countries and the secretariat. Further improving the format and sharpening the focus of intergovernmental sessions may lead to improved interaction, as was indicated by the results of the evaluation of 18 intergovernmental sessions held between March 2004 and December 2007 and from consultations with other regional commissions.”¹¹

“Since the work of the Commission requires collegial effort by member countries and the secretariat, commitment from member countries is essential for providing substantive input during the preparatory process, identifying appropriate representatives, taking active participation in deliberations and following up on the recommendations and decisions arising from the sessions. The secretariat is required to provide timely

⁷ E/ESCWA/25/6(Part I)/Add.2, paras.1 and 2.

⁸ E/ESCWA/25/6(Part I)/Add. 2, para. 17 (a).

⁹ Ibid., para. 17 (b).

¹⁰ Ibid., para. 17 (c).

¹¹ Ibid., based on para. 18.

coordination and service to member countries, including proposing topical agenda items based on its normative, analytical and operational work, the provision of issue-oriented background documents to facilitate meaningful deliberation, the timely dissemination of session reports and regular follow-up on the progress made in the implementation of recommendations and decisions.”¹²

Three options were proposed by the secretariat for the consideration and decision of the Commission, each with its own benefits and programmatic and financial implications:

“Option one: Under this option, the frequency of Commission sessions would be increased from biennial to annual, with effect from the biennium 2008-2009. The frequency of meetings of the Technical Committee would be reduced from semi-annual to annual, thereby allowing six-monthly interactions between member countries and the secretariat at the programme level. The Committees currently meet biennially and this frequency would remain unchanged. Their work would be supported by establishing regional working/expert groups which would meet in the years in which the Committees do not meet, following the example of the Statistical Committee and the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region.”¹³

The benefit envisaged from Option 1 was that “the Commission would be able to renew its mandates on an annual basis. The work of regional working/expert groups would assist the Commission at its annual sessions in tackling emerging sectoral development issues and provide appropriate mandates for concrete action.”¹⁴

In terms of programmatic and financial implications stemming from Option 1, “in order to convene Commission sessions annually, ESCWA would require additional human and financial resources from the regular budget for the preparation of documents and other information material, as well as in-session and post-session services.”¹⁵

“Option 2: Under this option, while maintaining the current frequency of the Commission and the other Committees, the frequency of the Committee on Energy and the Committee on Social Development would be increased from biennial to annual, with effect from the biennium 2008-2009. The Technical Committee would continue to convene its meetings six-monthly. In close consultation with member countries, the secretariat would monitor the outcome of (a) the work of the group of three Committees that meet annually (the Committee on Energy, the Committee on Social Development and the Committee on Transport); (b) the work of the Statistical Committee and the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region, which would be supported by regional working/expert groups; and (c) the work of the Commission and the Committees that continue to meet on a biennial basis, and the role of the Technical Committee in supporting their work. A comparative assessment of the outcome of these groupings would be submitted to the twenty-seventh session of the Commission, which will be held in the spring of 2012. This proposal is set out in greater detail in annex II, part B.”¹⁶

The benefit envisaged from Option 2 is that “this approach would provide an experimental period for the member countries and the secretariat, and would allow the Commission to make an informed decision, based on the results of the comparative assessment. It would also allow the Commission to respond to the expressed needs of the Committee on Energy and the Committee on Social Development.”¹⁷

¹² Ibid., para. 19.

¹³ E/ESCWA/25/6(Part I)/Add. 2, para. 21.

¹⁴ Ibid., para. 21.

¹⁵ Ibid., para. 21.

¹⁶ Ibid., para. 22.

¹⁷ E/ESCWA/25/6(Part I)/Add.2, para. 22.

The programmatic and financial implications of Option 2 are that “additional human and financial resources would be required”.¹⁸

“**Option 3:** Since the frequency of intergovernmental sessions cannot be considered separately from programme priority, ESCWA intergovernmental machineries and other related factors, the secretariat would carry out an in-depth evaluation of the intergovernmental structure of ESCWA in the light of both the programme priority, as identified by member countries, and the ongoing United Nations reforms. At the same time, the contribution of the Technical Committee, which became operational in January 2008, would be closely monitored and assessed. Both the evaluation and the assessment would be carried out in close consultation with member countries, using the existing forum of the Technical Committee, which is responsible for reviewing the work of ESCWA at programme level. The outcome of the evaluation and the assessment would be reported to the Commission at its twenty-sixth session, scheduled for 2010. Until then, the current frequency of the sessions of the Commission and the existing Committees would be maintained.”¹⁹

A benefit envisaged from Option 3 is that “there would be minimal change to the approved programme of work of ESCWA for the biennium 2008-2009. At the same time, this option would allow time for the newly-operational Technical Committee to further articulate its role and functions in supporting the work of ESCWA.”²⁰

“... Any action necessary would be taken during the biennium 2008-2009, within the staff and non-staff resources available in the regular budget.”²¹

The Commission was invited to review this document, exchange views on the key findings and the way forward presented herein, and make concrete recommendations in order to enable the secretariat to take such follow-up action as may be necessary. The Commission went along with Option Three but indicated that an in-depth evaluation should be carried out by an independent evaluator.

Other Reform Initiatives

The secretariat of ESCWA, as part of the United Nations Secretariat, launched the ESCWA Reform and Revitalization Project after a series of meetings with OIOS, external auditors and the United Nations Office of Human Resource Management during the October 2001 retreat. The new programme, which observed the reform requirements of the Secretary-General and the member countries, was based on the goals of the Millennium Declaration, on regional specificities and priorities and strongly linked to the rapid global technological and trade transitions. In carrying out its reform and revitalization ESCWA secretariat dealt carefully with programme organization, quality and budget issues, particularly focusing the programme of work and shifting from quantity to quality.

In addressing the Fourth Special Session of ESCWA in March 2002, the Executive Secretary gave a presentation highlighting the main amendments made to the medium-term plan and the programme of work and priorities. The Executive Secretary added that the purpose of the amendments was to focus the programme on a smaller number of priorities and emphasize issues of regional integration, approaches to development in international and regional arenas, keeping abreast with developments in the sphere of information technology and in line with the principles expressed in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, in order to respond to the needs of the region, concentrating on quality rather than quantity.

¹⁸ Ibid., para. 22.

¹⁹ Ibid., para. 23.

²⁰ Ibid., para. 23.

²¹ Ibid., para. 23.

OIOS concludes that the ESCWA reform made an unquestionable contribution to becoming an action-oriented regional centre of excellence dedicated to developing the highest quality professional work through an efficient and effective work environment. A main challenge to ESCWA is fully realizing its competitive advantages vis-à-vis regional partners and enhancing its management culture.

D. ESCWA AND INTERAGENCY COOPERATION AND COORDINATION

“Regional Commissions were called upon to play a central role in the regional follow-up to global development agendas and to serve as catalysts in intensifying inter-agency collaboration at regional levels. Towards that end, it was envisaged that more effective use would be made of regional coordination meetings under the aegis of Executive Secretaries. Such meetings should facilitate:

- (i) The better integration of the regional dimension in the program frameworks of its participants;
- (ii) Foster collaboration in technical cooperation projects;
- (iii) Share knowledge derived from management experiences;
- (iv) Result in better coordination policies and activities;
- (v) Build synergies with partner organizations for achieving a coherent regional development agenda.²² (See the Secretary-General’s report E/2005/15, pars. 64-67. on regional cooperation in the economic, social and related fields).

According to OIOS report, the “meetings of the Regional Coordination Group, managed by ESCWA, did not fulfil these expectations, while its most recent meeting was better attended and organized, its outcome still had no decisive impact on strengthening regional collaboration. Responsibilities and deadlines for implementing recommendations of the Group’s meetings are not formally set and there is no reliable system for organizing joint implementation, monitoring its progress and reporting on the outcomes. With minimal staff support to the Group, it remains dormant between meetings. The Group’s page on the ESCWA website is of little value as an information asset or a coordination tool: information is out of date and there are no inputs from and no links to the regional offices of other United Nations Programs and organizations.”²³

“OIOS further noted that at its 10th meeting, the Regional Coordination Group had expressed concern about different geographical coverage of the Arab region by United Nations entities but did not make any recommendation in that regard. OIOS also noted that it was one of the challenges faced by the management of ESCWA in its activities vis-à-vis the economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the League of Arab States (LAS) and that ESCWA requested the Joint Inspection Unit to review in 2006 the geographical grouping adopted by the United Nations departments, offices, funds, programs, organizations and agencies in the light of the problem discussed at the 10th meeting of the Group... ESCWA management has officially requested all States members of LAS that are not members of ESCWA to join as full members. The Sudan has already been admitted (May 2008) and all the other concerned countries send observers to meetings of the Commission.”²⁴

“ESCWA is hoping that more members will be admitted during the 2006 Commission meeting. In the short term there is an obvious need to enhance collaboration between ESCWA and the Subregional Office for North Africa of ECA. While such cooperation currently exists on an ad hoc and case-by-case basis, it is essential to make it continuous and comprehensive.”²⁵

²² A/61/61, based on para. 25.

²³ A/61/61, para. 26.

²⁴ Ibid., para. 27.

²⁵ Ibid., para. 27.

“OIOS was most concerned about the rather feeble collaboration between ESCWA and another most important United Nations actor in the region - the Regional Bureau of Arab States of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),”²⁶ and ESCWA and Resident coordinators.

“OIOS noted that the Secretary-General currently envisages strengthening the regional dimensions of operational activities through an array of measures that include resident coordinators engaging regional commissions in common country assessments, United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and the poverty reduction strategy papers, creating a roster of experts within the regional commissions and their network of national and international experts and policymakers shared with the United Nations country teams; and maintaining intensive consultations between and among United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and regional commissions in the formulation and implementation of their regional programmes.”²⁷

In response to OIOS recommendations that “ESCWA should proactively engage the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States in developing a comprehensive and specific framework of longer term cooperation when strengthening the regional dimensions of operational activities, as envisaged by the Secretary-General,”²⁸ ESCWA had the following to say:

“ESCWA agrees with” the above recommendation “which should reflect the fact that it takes two sides to cooperate. ESCWA has made several attempts to reach out to the UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States which went unanswered on numerous occasions. In order to remedy this situation, the new leadership at UNDP has been contacted and two meetings were arranged during July and October 2005 to explore modalities of cooperation... an important resource for more effective collaboration could be regional networks for knowledge-sharing in terms of analytical work, policy advice, capacity development and networking”.²⁹ The UNDP Regional Bureau for Arab States has recently signed an agreement with the Government of Egypt to establish an Office in Cairo for its regional projects.

²⁶ Ibid., para. 28.

²⁷ Ibid., para. 29.

²⁸ A/61/61, para. 62.

²⁹ Ibid., para. 63.

Annex II

INTERNET SURVEY RESULTS

A questionnaire on the effectiveness of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) was developed and sent to 152 stakeholders, including: focal points from the ESCWA intergovernmental subsidiary bodies; Chiefs of substantive divisions; Secretary of the Commission (past and present); ESCWA staff assigned to the specialized technical committees; Office of the Executive Secretary/Programme Planning and Technical Cooperation Division staff and observers. The list of stakeholders was provided by the Programme Planning and Coordination Section.

The questionnaire consisted of 59 questions, most of which were scalar-type questions concerning various aspects related to the effectiveness of ESCWA intergovernmental mechanism (IGM). For most questions, respondents were asked either to rank the effectiveness of a particular aspect of the IGM on a scale ranging from “very effective” to “very ineffective”, or to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a particular statement. A number of open-ended questions were also included, asking respondents for their opinions on how the effectiveness of the IGM might be improved.

The questionnaire was sent by e-mail with an introductory note explaining the purpose of the survey and encouraging recipients to complete it. Two subsequent, follow-up e-mails were sent to all recipients.

The response rate varied from question to question: not all respondents answered all questions. Questions 1 through 12 of the questionnaire were answered by 37 people, corresponding to a response rate of 24 per cent. The response rate for questions 13 through 21 (related to the optimum frequency for meetings of the various committees) were completed by 24 people on average, a response rate of 16 per cent. Most of the remaining questions were completed by 28 people, an 18 per cent response rate.

Figures 1 and 2 present the characteristics of the respondents to the Internet survey by nationality, stakeholder category. Sixty-four per cent of respondents were male and 36 per cent were female.

Figure 1. Respondents by nationality

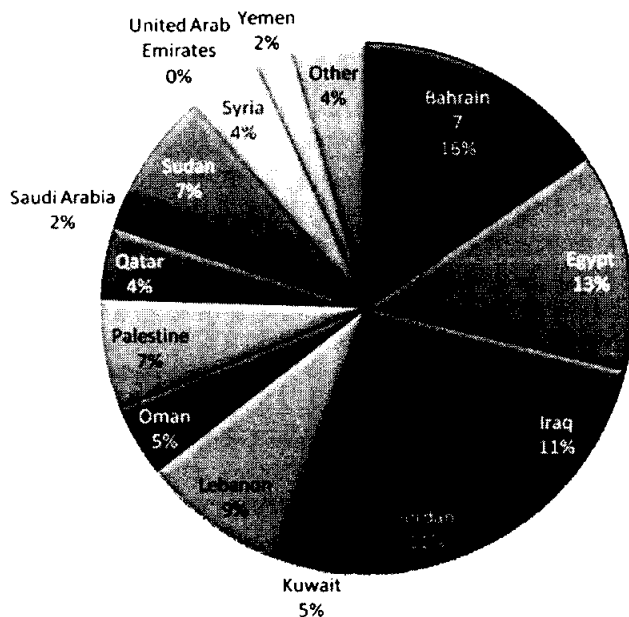
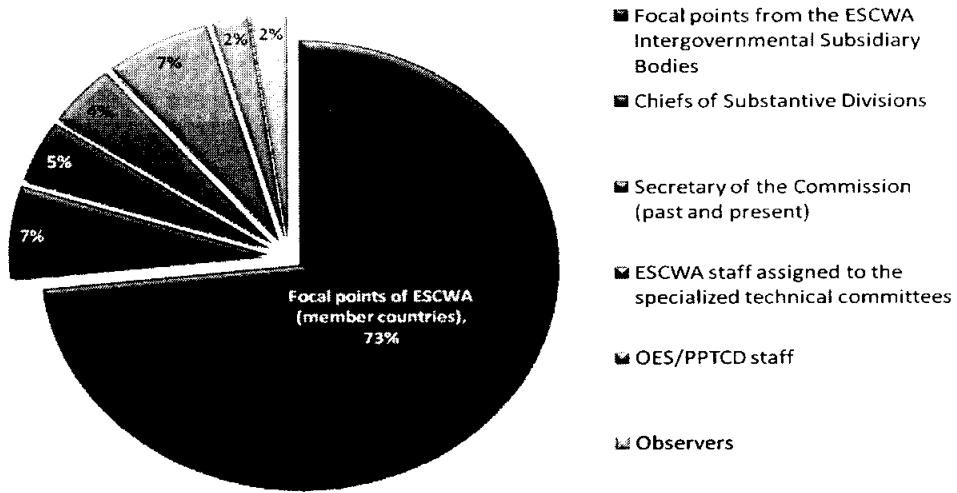


Figure 2. Respondents by stakeholder category



PART A: GENERAL INFORMATION

Please provide the following basic information about you:

1.	To which stakeholder/participant category do you belong?		
	Focal points of ESCWA (member countries)	33	73.33%
	Focal points from the ESCWA intergovernmental subsidiary bodies	3	6.67%
	Executive Secretary and Deputy-Executive Secretary	0	0.00%
	Chiefs of Substantive Divisions	2	4.44%
	Secretary of the Commission (past and present)	2	4.44%
	ESCWA staff assigned to the specialized technical committees	3	6.67%
	OES/PPTCD staff	1	2.22%
	Secretaries of Commission in other regional commissions	0	0.00%
	Observers	1	2.22%
	Total	45	
	Mean	2.02	
	Standard Dev.	2.03	
	Variance	4.11	

Q2

2.	Please indicate your nationality		
	Bahrain	7	15.56%
	Egypt	6	13.33%
	Iraq	5	11.11%
	Jordan	5	11.11%
	Kuwait	2	4.44%
	Lebanon	4	8.89%
	Oman	2	4.44%
	Palestine	3	6.67%
	Qatar	2	4.44%
	Saudi Arabia	1	2.22%
	Sudan	3	6.67%
	Syrian Arab Republic	2	4.44%
	United Arab Emirates	0	0.00%
	Yemen	1	2.22%
	Other	2	4.44%
	Total	45	
	Mean	5.67	
	Standard Dev.	4.14	
	Variance	17.14	

Q3

3.	Please indicate your gender		
	Female	16	35.56%
	Male	29	64.44%
	Total	45	
	Mean	1.64	
	Standard Dev.	0.48	
	Variance	0.23	

PART B: OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE IGM AT PROVIDING STRATEGIC
LEADERSHIP AND DIRECTION SETTING

In order for ESCWA to achieve its strategic objectives as set out in its mandate as a regional commission, ESCWA IGM must provide strategic leadership and set the direction. In your opinion, how effective has ESCWA IGM been at providing strategic leadership and at setting the direction with regard to:

4. Reducing poverty and addressing development disparities among countries/subregions within the region.

Very ineffective	1	2.56%
Ineffective	4	10.26%
Neither effective nor ineffective	12	30.77%
Effective	13	33.33%
Very effective	1	2.56%
Don't know	8	20.51%
Total	39	
Mean	3.85	
Standard Dev.	1.35	
Variance	1.82	

5. Fostering economic integration at the subregional/regional level.

Very ineffective	1	2.78%
Ineffective	1	2.78%
Neither effective nor ineffective	7	19.44%
Effective	20	55.56%
Very effective	5	13.89%
Don't know	2	5.56%
Total	36	
Mean	3.92	
Standard Dev.	0.97	
Variance	0.94	

6. Promoting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other internationally-agreed development goals in the region.

Very ineffective	1	2.78%
Ineffective	1	2.78%
Neither effective nor ineffective	4	11.11%
Effective	25	69.44%
Very effective	4	11.11%
Don't know	1	2.78%
Total	36	
Mean	3.92	
Standard Dev.	0.84	
Variance	0.71	

7. Supporting South-South cooperation, both intraregional and interregional.

Very ineffective	1	2.78%
Ineffective	2	5.56%
Neither effective nor ineffective	2	5.56%
Effective	22	61.11%
Very effective	4	11.11%
Don't know	5	13.89%
Total	36	
Mean	4.14	
Standard Dev.	1.10	
Variance	1.21	

8. Promoting the economic, social and environmental aspects of security and peacebuilding at the subregional/regional levels.

Very ineffective	2	5.56%
Ineffective	2	5.56%
Neither effective nor ineffective	8	22.22%
Effective	20	55.56%
Very effective	1	2.78%
Don't know	3	8.33%
Total	36	
Mean	3.69	
Standard Dev.	1.12	
Variance	1.25	

In order for ESCWA to fulfill its four prime functions, ESCWA IGM must provide strategic leadership and direction. In your opinion, how effective is ESCWA IGM at providing strategic leadership and setting the direction with regard to its prime functions:

9. Analytical function: Producing regional economic and social studies on trends, situations and policies in the various areas of work.

Very effective	9	24.32%
Effective	25	67.57%
Neither effective nor ineffective	2	5.41%
Ineffective	1	2.70%
Very ineffective	0	0.00%
Total	37	
Mean	1.86	
Standard Dev.	0.63	
Variance	0.40	

10. Normative function: Preparing policy recommendations/guidelines/norms and standards for policy debate or adoption/implementation.

Very effective	8	21.62%
Effective	23	62.16%
Neither effective nor ineffective	4	10.81%
Ineffective	2	5.41%
Very ineffective	0	0.00%
Total	37	
Mean	2.00	
Standard Dev.	0.75	
Variance	0.56	

11. Capacity-building function: Providing technical assistance.

Very effective	10	27.03%
Effective	24	64.86%
Neither effective nor ineffective	3	8.11%
Ineffective	0	0.00%
Very ineffective	0	0.00%
Total	37	
Mean	1.81	
Standard Dev.	0.57	
Variance	0.32	

12. Convening power function: Organizing multilateral dialogues, knowledge-sharing and networking at the regional level.

Very effective	6	16.22%
Effective	27	72.97%
Neither effective nor ineffective	3	8.11%
Ineffective	1	2.70%
Very ineffective	0	0.00%
Total	37	
Mean	1.97	
Standard Dev.	0.60	
Variance	0.36	

In your opinion, how frequently do you believe that ESCWA IGM should meet in order to achieve optimum effectiveness?

13. Ministerial Session		
Every 3 months	4	15.38%
Every 4 months	0	0.00%
Every 6 months	2	7.69%
Once a year	12	46.15%
Once every 2 years	8	30.77%
Once every 3 years	0	0.00%
Total	26	
Mean	3.77	
Standard Dev.	1.34	
Variance	1.78	

14. Technical Committee

Every 3 months	6	23.08%
Every 4 months	1	3.85%
Every 6 months	11	42.31%
Once a year	8	30.77%
Once every 2 years	0	0.00%
Once every 3 years	0	0.00%
Total	26	
Mean	2.81	
Standard Dev.	1.13	
Variance	1.28	

15. Committee on Energy

Every 3 months	2	9.09%
Every 4 months	0	0.00%
Every 6 months	6	27.27%
Once a year	10	45.45%
Once every 2 years	4	18.18%
Once every 3 years	0	0.00%
Total	22	
Mean	3.64	
Standard Dev.	1.09	
Variance	1.19	

16. Committee on Water Resources

Every 3 months	2	8.33%
Every 4 months	1	4.17%
Every 6 months	8	33.33%
Once a year	7	29.17%
Once every 2 years	6	25.00%
Once every 3 years	0	0.00%
Total	24	
Mean	3.58	
Standard Dev.	1.18	
Variance	1.38	

17. Committee on Social Development

Every 3 months	4	17.39%
Every 4 months	0	0.00%
Every 6 months	7	30.43%
Once a year	7	30.43%
Once every 2 years	5	21.74%
Once every 3 years	0	0.00%
Total	23	
Mean	3.39	
Standard Dev.	1.34	
Variance	1.79	

18. Committee on Transport

Every 3 months	3	12.00%
Every 4 months	1	4.00%
Every 6 months	6	24.00%
Once a year	11	44.00%
Once every 2 years	4	16.00%
Once every 3 years	0	0.00%
Total	25	
Mean	3.48	
Standard Dev.	1.19	
Variance	1.43	

19. Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development in the Countries of the ESCWA Region

Every 3 months	1	4.55%
Every 4 months	1	4.55%
Every 6 months	6	27.27%
Once a year	10	45.45%
Once every 2 years	4	18.18%
Once every 3 years	0	0.00%
Total	22	
Mean	3.68	
Standard Dev.	0.99	
Variance	0.99	

20. Statistical Committee

Every 3 months	3	12.50%
Every 4 months	0	0.00%
Every 6 months	7	29.17%
Once a year	9	37.50%
Once every 2 years	5	20.83%
Once every 3 years	0	0.00%
Total	24	
Mean	3.54	
Standard Dev.	1.22	
Variance	1.48	

21. Committee on Women

Every 3 months	2	9.09%
Every 4 months	1	4.55%
Every 6 months	0	0.00%
Once a year	8	36.36%
Once every 2 years	8	36.36%
Once every 3 years	3	13.64%
Total	22	
Mean	4.27	
Standard Dev.	1.39	
Variance	1.92	

22. In your opinion, how could ESCWA improve the effectiveness of its strategic leadership and direction setting? (You may check more than one box).

Support activities outside of the IGM sessions that enhance communication between member countries	26	19.12%
Support activities outside of the IGM sessions that enhance communication between member countries and the ESCWA secretariat	18	13.24%
Establish regional working/expert groups (one for each specialized technical committee)	21	15.44%
Strengthen the technical/profession criteria for the selection of participants in IGM sessions	15	11.03%
Improve the monitoring of the results of technical committee sessions by the secretariat	6	4.41%

Strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system of ESCWA activities in order to strengthen the strategic planning capacity	6	4.41%
Improve the follow-up on recommendations made during IGM sessions	20	14.71%
Ensure the continuity of representation of member countries in the sessions of the Commission and in the technical committees	15	11.03%
Introduce greater flexible and better responsiveness in order to adjust the work programme to better address emerging issues.	6	4.41%
Other (Please specify in the box below)	3	2.21%
Total	136	
Mean	4.38	
Standard Dev.	2.74	
Variance	7.53	

ESCWA has little say in selecting intergovernmental participants. Interference on its part would upset member countries. Establishing a regional working/expert group for each specialized technical committee would simply add another layer without additional benefits. It would take time away from completing programmed outputs owing to additional organizational and substantive duties. The same applies for convening the technical committees annually. Regular work comes to a halt owing to time needed for preparing for convening IGMs. Additional efforts need to be made in maintaining and sustaining contact with member countries with regard to preparing for IGMs and following up on recommendations emanating from them on a continuous basis.

The above-mentioned expertise contribute in enhancing the role of ESCWA and improve its effectiveness. The challenge remains regarding the quality and outcomes of ESCWA activities, as well as the proposed options. It is believed that a well thought preparation based on consultations with member countries would contribute in enhancing this role.

It is believed that ESCWA lacks serious follow-up mechanisms. A bureau is formed for every intergovernmental committee, but its work ends with the conclusion of the session. The objectives of each session should be specified and an evaluation of the outcomes should be made.

23. In your opinion, how could ESCWA improve the effectiveness of IGM sessions? (You may check more than one box).

Improve the time management of IGM sessions	17	16.83%
Improve the quality of background material for IGM sessions, in particular regarding input on substantive issues and agenda items	15	14.85%
Provide session documents in a more timely fashion (adhering to the 6 week rule)	14	13.86%
Strengthen the technical/profession criteria for the selection of participants in IGM sessions	10	9.90%
Increase the participation of member countries in the development of the agendas for IGM sessions	19	18.81%
Allow more time for questions following presentations made at IGM sessions	12	11.88%
Add additional days to IGM sessions to allow for more detailed discussion of issues	10	9.90%
Other (Please specify in the box below)	4	3.96%
Total	101	
Mean	3.94	
Standard Dev.	2.12	
Variance	4.48	

In addition to what has been already mentioned, it is highly important to limit the number of agenda items since not enough time is being allocated for discussions. Moreover, presenting experiences and lessons learned from some member countries will enrich discussions.

In the Internet age, it is not important anymore to distribute the documents six weeks before the session. The documents can be made available four weeks before a meeting, which is more realistic to ESCWA and to representatives. There is also a need for representatives to be well prepared for the meeting to have an effective participation and contribution. ESCWA can organize, in cooperation with UNITAR, training session for member countries representatives to enhance their participation in Committee sessions.

ESCWA should have offices in member countries.

Please indicate how strongly you agree/disagree with the following. Compared to other entities in the region, ESCWA has a comparative advantage at:

24. Producing regional economic and social studies on trends, situations and policies in the various areas of work.

Strongly agree	11	36.67%
Agree	16	53.33%
Undecided	3	10.00%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Strongly disagree	0	0.00%
Total	30	
Mean	1.73	
Standard Dev.	0.64	
Variance	0.41	

25. Preparing policy recommendations, guidelines, norms and standards for policy debate or for adoption and implementation.

Strongly agree	12	38.71%
Agree	16	51.61%
Undecided	3	9.68%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Strongly disagree	0	0.00%
Total	31	
Mean	1.71	
Standard Dev.	0.64	
Variance	0.41	

26. Undertaking technical cooperation for capacity-building within the region.

Strongly agree	11	36.67%
Agree	16	53.33%
Undecided	2	6.67%
Disagree	1	3.33%
Strongly disagree	0	0.00%
Total	30	
Mean	1.77	
Standard Dev.	0.73	
Variance	0.53	

27. Preparing and implementing field projects.

Strongly agree	6	20.00%
Agree	13	43.33%
Undecided	6	20.00%
Disagree	5	16.67%
Strongly disagree	0	0.00%
Total	30	
Mean	2.33	
Standard Dev.	0.99	
Variance	0.99	

28. Organizing multilateral dialogues, knowledge-sharing and networking at the regional level.

Strongly agree	10	34.48%
Agree	18	62.07%
Undecided	0	0.00%
Disagree	1	3.45%
Strongly disagree	0	0.00%
Total	29	
Mean	1.72	
Standard Dev.	0.65	
Variance	0.42	

In your opinion,

29. How effective are ESCWA activities at contributing to the linking of national, regional and international goals?

Very effective	2	6.90%
Effective	22	75.86%
Neither effective nor ineffective	4	13.79%
Ineffective	1	3.45%
Very ineffective	0	0.00%
Total	29	
Mean	2.14	
Standard Dev.	0.58	
Variance	0.34	

30. How effective is the support of ESCWA to member countries in helping to ensure that the common position and interests of member countries are adequately reflected in the outcomes of high-level international development-related conferences?

Very effective	5	17.86%
Effective	18	64.29%
Neither effective nor ineffective	4	14.29%
Ineffective	1	3.57%
Very ineffective	0	0.00%
Total	28	
Mean	2.04	
Standard Dev.	0.69	
Variance	0.48	

31. How effective is ESCWA IGM at adjusting the work programme to address emerging issues?

Very effective	2	6.90%
Effective	18	62.07%
Neither effective nor ineffective	8	27.59%
Ineffective	1	3.45%
Very ineffective	0	0.00%
Total	29	
Mean	2.28	
Standard Dev.	0.65	
Variance	0.42	

PART C: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMISSION

In your opinion, as the regional arm of the United Nations in West Asia, how effective is the Commission at ensuring that ESCWA:

32. Promotes a people-centered and comprehensive approach to development?

Very effective	5	17.24%
Effective	17	58.62%
Neither effective nor ineffective	6	20.69%
Ineffective	1	3.45%
Very ineffective	0	0.00%
Total	29	
Mean	2.10	
Standard Dev.	0.72	
Variance	0.52	

33. Upholds values such as universality, multilateralism, neutrality, objectivity and flexibility?

Very effective	3	10.71%
Effective	11	39.29%
Neither effective nor ineffective	12	42.86%
Ineffective	2	7.14%
Very ineffective	0	0.00%
Total	28	
Mean	2.46	
Standard Dev.	0.79	
Variance	0.63	

34. Promotes and encourages the flexible use of grant resources in the interest of partner countries?

Very effective	4	14.29%
Effective	9	32.14%
Neither effective nor ineffective	14	50.00%
Ineffective	1	3.57%
Very ineffective	0	0.00%
Total	28	
Mean	2.43	
Standard Dev.	0.79	
Variance	0.62	

In your opinion, how effective is the Commission:

35. At providing guidance that enables ESCWA to forge alliances with other partners in the region?

Very effective	4	14.29%
Effective	17	60.71%
Neither effective nor ineffective	5	17.86%
Ineffective	2	7.14%
Very ineffective	0	0.00%
Total	28	
Mean	2.18	
Standard Dev.	0.77	
Variance	0.60	

36. At leading efforts to enhance regional coordination and cooperation between United Nations bodies in order to achieve better synergy, coherence, consistency and effectiveness in the regional activities of those bodies?

Very effective	7	25.00%
Effective	15	53.57%
Neither effective nor ineffective	4	14.29%
Ineffective	2	7.14%
Very ineffective	0	0.00%
Total	28	
Mean	2.04	
Standard Dev.	0.84	
Variance	0.70	

37. As the main general economic and social centre within the United Nations system for West Asia region?

Very effective	6	21.43%
Effective	17	60.71%
Neither effective nor ineffective	5	17.86%
Ineffective	0	0.00%
Very ineffective	0	0.00%
Total	28	
Mean	1.96	
Standard Dev.	0.64	
Variance	0.41	

38. At engaging the major regional organizations, notably League of Arab States and its subsidiaries in collaborative and joint programming and activities in shared priority areas?

Very effective	5	17.86%
Effective	21	75.00%
Neither effective nor ineffective	1	3.57%
Ineffective	1	3.57%
Very ineffective	0	0.00%
Total	28	
Mean	1.93	
Standard Dev.	0.60	
Variance	0.37	

PART D: EFFECTIVENESS OF ESCWA PROGRAMME OF WORK

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:

39. The Commission effectively monitors and evaluates the achievement of ESCWA major goals and overall mandate.

Strongly disagree	1	3.45%
Disagree	2	6.90%
Undecided	4	13.79%
Agree	18	62.07%
Strongly agree	4	13.79%
Total	29	
Mean	3.76	
Standard Dev.	0.91	
Variance	0.83	

40. The Commission has done a good job of defining what reports it needs to effectively monitor and evaluate the achievement of ESCWA major goals and overall mandate.

Strongly disagree	1	3.57%
Disagree	1	3.57%
Undecided	8	28.57%
Agree	16	57.14%
Strongly agree	2	7.14%
Total	28	
Mean	3.61	
Standard Dev.	0.83	
Variance	0.69	

41. For the most part, the expected accomplishments described in the strategic framework clearly defined and sufficiently detailed to provide the Commission with enough information for the provision of effective guidance.

Strongly disagree	1	3.45%
Disagree	3	10.34%
Undecided	2	6.90%
Agree	20	68.97%
Strongly agree	3	10.34%
Total	29	
Mean	3.72	
Standard Dev.	0.92	
Variance	0.85	

42. ESCWA programme of work is clearly derived from and reflects the expressed needs of member countries during the intergovernmental meetings.

Strongly disagree	1	3.45%
Disagree	2	6.90%
Undecided	4	13.79%
Agree	19	65.52%
Strongly agree	3	10.34%
Total	29	
Mean	3.72	
Standard Dev.	0.88	
Variance	0.78	

43. The bureau of the Commission should oversee the programme implementation and represent the Commission in major regional and sub-regional events (ministerial conferences/meetings) of relevance to ESCWA.

Strongly disagree	1	3.70%
Disagree	2	7.41%
Undecided	3	11.11%
Agree	18	66.67%
Strongly agree	3	11.11%
Total	27	
Mean	3.74	
Standard Dev.	0.90	
Variance	0.81	

PART E: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

In this section, we are interested in knowing your opinion of the Technical Committee comprising representatives of all ESCWA member countries; and the seven Specialized Technical Committees. In your opinion, how effective is the guidance that the Technical Committee provides to the secretariat in:

44. Drawing up proposals for the strategic framework, the programme of work and priorities, consistent with guidance provided by the Commission?

Very effective	7	25.00%
Effective	14	50.00%
Neither effective nor ineffective	3	10.71%
Ineffective	0	0.00%
Very ineffective	4	14.29%
Don't know		
Total	28	
Mean	2.43	
Standard Dev.	1.60	
Variance	2.55	

45.	Following up on the implementation of Commission resolutions and any other outstanding matters that require action?		
	Very effective	5	18.52%
	Effective	11	40.74%
	Neither effective nor ineffective	4	14.81%
	Ineffective	2	7.41%
	Very ineffective	0	0.00%
	Don't know	5	18.52%
	Total	27	
	Mean	2.85	
	Standard Dev.	1.73	
	Variance	2.98	
46.	Following up the implementation of the programme of work and activities of the Commission, including the mobilization of extrabudgetary resources to support their implementation?		
	Very effective	1	3.70%
	Effective	11	40.74%
	Neither effective nor ineffective	5	18.52%
	Ineffective	3	11.11%
	Very ineffective	0	0.00%
	Don't know	7	25.93%
	Total	27	
	Mean	3.41	
	Standard Dev.	1.72	
	Variance	2.94	
47.	Identifying emerging economic and social issues and other relevant priority issues for incorporation into the provisional agendas of the Commission sessions and the subsidiary intergovernmental Committees?		
	Very effective	3	11.11%
	Effective	16	59.26%
	Neither effective nor ineffective	4	14.81%
	Ineffective	0	0.00%
	Very ineffective	0	0.00%
	Don't know	4	14.81%
	Total	27	
	Mean	2.63	
	Standard Dev.	1.52	
	Variance	2.32	
48.	Recommending to the Commission an order of priorities among the subprogrammes and activities within subprogrammes?		
	Very effective	3	11.11%
	Effective	18	66.67%
	Neither effective nor ineffective	2	7.41%
	Ineffective	1	3.70%
	Very ineffective	0	0.00%
	Don't know	3	11.11%
	Total	27	
	Mean	2.48	
	Standard Dev.	1.40	
	Variance	1.95	

49. Encouraging a learning culture, and developing evaluation procedures and their use in the improvement of programme design and implementation?

Very effective	4	15.38%
Effective	12	46.15%
Neither effective nor ineffective	3	11.54%
Ineffective	3	11.54%
Very ineffective	0	0.00%
Don't know	4	15.38%
Total	26	
Mean	2.81	
Standard Dev.	1.63	
Variance	2.64	

50. In your opinion, how could the effectiveness of the Technical Committee is strengthened?

- The technical committee was established after I left ESCWA. I am, therefore, in no position to comment on its effectiveness.
- Through more participation of member countries and engagement of technical experts.
- Regular technical meetings and progress reports should be major tools in this strengthening approach. Also workshops, seminars and exhibitions are other tools to do so.
- Strengthen the capacity of staff academically and with required expertise.
- Make available concepts in different languages.
- Building capacities through providing technical experts in the economic, social and environmental fields.
- Identification and analysis of the real problems.
- Specify the specialization of participants.
- Provide proposals and recommendation on important issues such as poverty.
- Develop, together with member countries, comprehensive strategies and policies that would help overcome obstacles.

51. In your opinion, how could the effectiveness of the Statistical Committee be strengthened?

- By concentrating on propagating International Statistical Standards, building capacity of member countries in producing harmonized, reliable statistics following international statistical standards and introducing statistics in previously untapped areas.
- Through creation of open channel between the Statistics Division and the Statistics Agencies of the member countries and training programmes on updating data and census conduction.
- Central Bureau of Statistics in the ESCWA member countries should nominate coordinator and a will formed technical assistance programme to support the Statistic Bureau in conducting their work within specified period of time. This should be done through a will planned schedule between the two parties and both technical reports and progress reports should be submitted by the member countries project coordinator to ESCWA for revision and records.
- Become more familiar with the conditions of each country to be taken into consideration in developing indicators and definitions.
- Checking data and revise it from time to time.
- Standardizing methodologies and statistical methods used.

- Improve current methodologies and put in place integrated plans that will develop into comprehensive strategies.
- Will not give my opinion regarding the Technical Committee since I am not informed about its work.

52. In your opinion, how could the effectiveness of the Committee on Social Development be strengthened?

- By concentrating on social issues of particular relevance to the ESCWA region.
- Through more participation of member countries in policy formulation and planning of socio-economic long term projects.
- Recently, the Social Committee has improved considerably.
- Contribute actively and effectively to resolve the various social problems.
- Encourage the culture of education.
- Develop an appropriate framework for social development taking into consideration the various points of view throughout the planning and policy formulation stages. Also, ensure wider participation throughout implementation, follow-up and evaluation. That in addition to providing specific and realistic recommendations and plans that contributes to the realization of the MDGs, and develop global partnership for development.
- Will not give my opinion regarding the Technical Committee since I am not informed about its work.

53. In your opinion, how could the effectiveness of the Committee on Energy be strengthened?

- By fostering the implementation of regional cooperation projects, such as gas and electricity grids and renewable energy projects.
- International regional, and national experts must be more involved in the meetings and discussions.
- The need for partnership with the European Union and donors to support member country projects in energy at the rural levels.
- Follow-up on the global events related to energy and oil and report to member countries on developments.
- Coordinate with member countries on proposing solutions to problem facing sustainable development.
- Participate in conferences and the coordination meetings in the field of fossil energy and renewable and climate change.
- Specialized coordinator and technical committee members of each sector should be assigned from the member countries and a will formed technical assistance programme should be schedule between the two parties in a reasonable period of time with identified activities to be fulfilled under the supervision of technical officer (ESCWA side). Both technical reports and progress reports should be submitted by the member country project coordinator to ESCWA for revision and records.
- Coordinate with OPEC and OAPEC and other relevant parties on issues related to alternative energy, especially solar energy.

- More capacity-building work in member countries and continuously organize meetings to assess the progress made.
- Stress on the specialization and expertise of participants and present experiences and best practices through holding meetings in all member countries.
- Will not give my opinion regarding the Technical Committee since I am not informed about its work.

54. In your opinion, how could the effectiveness of the Committee on Water Resources be strengthened?

- By concentrating on the progress made in implementing ongoing water-related projects that foster regional cooperation on water-related issues.
- Extent participation of the private sector and reform of legislation on water.
- Support in solving the issue of water between Iraq and relevant States, and benefit from the experience of the European Union in that regard since it has already overcome this problem.
- Building capacity through supporting projects in the field of environmental accounting and economy.
- Actively intervene to provide realistic solutions to problems.
- The performance of the Committee is very good. It needs more efforts by member countries to overcome the shortage of water resources and curb the water crisis in benefit of people's well-being.

55. In your opinion, how could the effectiveness of the Committee on Transport be strengthened?

- By following up closely with member countries on the implementation of ITSAM (Integrated Transport System in the Arab Mashreq) and moving to from land transport to railroad and maritime transport.
- Establishing strong links between transport and trade, as transport is a vehicle for facilitating trade is also of prime importance.
- Need for implementation of the existing transport agreements between member countries.
- It is important to take into consideration the bilateral agreements between member countries while drafting regional agreements.
- Follow-up on national plans through applying international standards.
- Participants in Committee meetings should be technically and educationally qualified, and give the opportunity to each representative to express his/her views clearly and explicitly.
- Direct follow-up with focal points nominated by member countries regarding the implementation of recommendations issued during the Committee sessions.
- Will not give my opinion regarding the Technical Committee since I am not informed about its work.

Please indicate the extent that you agree/disagree with the following: The representatives of member countries in the following committees consistently have the necessary academic and professional qualifications, skill set and knowledge base to effectively contribute to the ability of the Committee on which they serve to fulfill its responsibilities:

56. In your opinion, how could the effectiveness of the Committee on Women be strengthened?

- By assisting member countries in establishing and strengthening national mechanism on women's issues, assisting those bodies in reporting on women's issues and focusing their interest on selected issues related to the 12 subjects enshrined in the Beijing Platform of Action.
- Make use of the United Nations women new entity and seek more women participation.
- In-depth review of the situation of women, encourage laws and legislations, and focus on the media in order to improve the situation of women the way it was 20 years ago.
- Give importance to customs and social values.

57. In your opinion, how could the effectiveness of the Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization be strengthened?

- By continuing to sensitize member countries and build their capacities in relation to WTO agreements, soliciting common positions prior to attending conferences and availing WTO related material in Arabic.
- More participation of member countries and seek reform of members legislation.
- Give importance to the interests of member countries.
- Will not give my opinion regarding the Technical Committee since I am not informed about its work.

58. Technical Committee

Strongly agree	1	4.35%
Agree	15	65.22%
Undecided	1	4.35%
Disagree	2	8.70%
Strongly disagree	1	4.35%
Don't know	3	13.04%
Total	23	
Mean	2.83	
Standard Dev.	1.53	
Variance	2.33	

59. Committee on Energy

Strongly agree	2	10.53%
Agree	7	36.84%
Undecided	6	31.58%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Strongly disagree	0	0.00%
Don't know	4	21.05%
Total	19	
Mean	3.05	
Standard Dev.	1.68	
Variance	2.83	

60. Committee on Water Resources

Strongly agree	1	4.76%
Agree	10	47.62%
Undecided	5	23.81%
Disagree	1	4.76%
Strongly disagree	0	0.00%
Don't know	4	19.05%
Total	21	
Mean	3.05	
Standard Dev.	1.60	
Variance	2.55	

61. Committee Social Development

Strongly agree	2	9.52%
Agree	11	52.38%
Undecided	4	19.05%
Disagree	1	4.76%
Strongly disagree	0	0.00%
Don't know	3	14.29%
Total	21	
Mean	2.76	
Standard Dev.	1.51	
Variance	2.29	

62. Committee on Transport

Strongly agree	2	9.09%
Agree	12	54.55%
Undecided	5	22.73%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Strongly disagree	0	0.00%
Don't know	3	13.64%
Total	22	
Mean	2.68	
Standard Dev.	1.46	
Variance	2.13	

63. Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development in the Countries of the ESCWA Region

Strongly agree	1	5.26%
Agree	8	42.11%
Undecided	3	15.79%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Strongly disagree	1	5.26%
Don't know	6	31.58%
Total	19	
Mean	3.53	
Standard Dev.	1.90	
Variance	3.60	

64. Statistical Committee		
Strongly agree	4	18.18%
Agree	9	40.91%
Undecided	3	13.64%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Strongly disagree	1	4.55%
Don't know	5	22.73%
Total	22	
Mean	3.00	
Standard Dev.	1.88	
Variance	3.52	
65. Committee on Women		
Strongly agree	3	14.29%
Agree	8	38.10%
Undecided	6	28.57%
Disagree	0	0.00%
Strongly disagree	1	4.76%
Don't know	3	14.29%
Total	21	
Mean	2.86	
Standard Dev.	1.59	
Variance	2.53	

F. SECRETARIAT MANAGEMENT OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETINGS

Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the following statements:

66. The quality of substantive information provided by the secretariat facilitates good dialogue during the IG meetings		
Strongly disagree	1	4.35%
Disagree	2	8.70%
Undecided	1	4.35%
Agree	15	65.22%
Strongly agree	4	17.39%
Total	23	
Mean	3.83	
Standard Dev.	0.98	
Variance	0.97	
67. The timing of the delivery of substantive information sent by the secretariat for IG meetings allows for adequate analysis		
Strongly disagree	1	4.35%
Disagree	5	21.74%
Undecided	2	8.70%
Agree	12	52.17%
Strongly agree	3	13.04%
Total	23	
Mean	3.48	
Standard Dev.	1.12	
Variance	1.26	

68. The secretariat submits viable proposals and recommendations for the consideration of member countries.

Strongly disagree	1	5.00%
Disagree	1	5.00%
Undecided	6	30.00%
Agree	11	55.00%
Strongly agree	1	5.00%
Total	20	
Mean	3.50	
Standard Dev.	0.89	
Variance	0.79	

69. In-session interventions by the secretariat contribute to productive discussion, effective decision-making and recommendations by the Commission

Strongly disagree	0	0.00%
Disagree	2	8.70%
Undecided	6	26.09%
Agree	14	60.87%
Strongly agree	1	4.35%
Total	23	
Mean	3.61	
Standard Dev.	0.72	
Variance	0.52	

70. The level of conference servicing provided by the secretariat ensures smooth organization of the IG sessions.

Strongly disagree	2	8.70%
Disagree	1	4.35%
Undecided	2	8.70%
Agree	12	52.17%
Strongly agree	6	26.09%
Total	23	
Mean	3.83	
Standard Dev.	1.15	
Variance	1.33	
