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**CO-OPERATION AMONG DEVELOPING COUNTRIES  
AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

Note by the Executive Secretary

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## I. Introduction

This item refers to co-operation among developing countries and regional organizations with a view to promoting collective self-reliance through matching the needs and the available capacities of the developing countries under the modalities of technical co-operation among developing countries/economic co-operation among developing countries (TCDC/ECDC). Essentially the primary responsibility to initiate and implement such activities lies with developing countries themselves. However, the United Nations development system is required to play an important catalytic and supportive role in order to enhance and strengthen such co-operation. During the reporting period the programme of work and priorities of the Commission embraced numerous programmes and activities emphasizing the need to promote and strengthen such priority activities that would lead to regional and interregional co-operation.

## II. ESCWA regional TCDC/ECDC activities

In order to strengthen existing arrangements, high-level contacts and intensive fund-raising efforts were made during the period under review in and outside the region in order to obtain extrabudgetary resources to strengthen the priority programmes of the Commission. Some of these efforts led to immediate signing of new agreements, while others paved the way for enhancing future co-operation and the need to prepare and submit specific projects and activities for consideration. New agreements concluded during the reporting period included the following:

(a) The Arab League and ESCWA agreement on Transport Co-operation signed in June 1988, in Tunis, which constitutes a framework for co-operation among Arab countries in the transport sector. This co-operation has been further developed by the secretariat through formulation of specific projects and initiation of new studies;

(b) The Arab League and ESCWA agreement on co-operation in the field of Statistics. This co-operation covered four joint activities namely Unified Arab Statistical Abstract, Unified Arab Compendium of Social Statistics, Coordination in the field of Statistical publications and preparation for convening the Second Arab Conference on national accounts.

(c) The ESCWA and Islamic Development Bank agreement signed on 29 March 1987 designed to facilitate co-operation and promote the economic and social development of member States in selected priority sectors including economic and technical co-operation;

(d) The Memorandum of Understanding signed on 21 December 1987 by ESCWA and the Iraqi Scientific Research Council regarding the establishment of a Regional Centre for New and Renewable Sources of Energy (NRSE) Information Network at the Solar Energy Research Centre in Baghdad;

(e) The holding of a high-level meeting with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) from 18 to 19 June 1987 in order to strengthen long-term co-operation. During the discussion, 10 projects were identified for possible co-operation; an agreement was reached on the modalities to be followed and was signed on 16 September 1987;

(f) The holding of a meeting with the Secretary-General of UNCTAD on 24 June 1987 to explore ways and means of institutionalizing and developing co-operation between ESCWA and UNCTAD on a wide range of activities including specific joint projects and TCDC/ECDC activities;

(g) The carrying out of a high-level mission to Sweden and Norway as well as the secretariat of the European Economic Community in October 1987 in order to explore ways and means of enhancing co-operation and collaboration in activities. Discussions were held on a wide range of activities and it was agreed that ESCWA should prepare specific activities for co-operation.

These meetings provided opportunities to intensify TCDC/ECDC activities of the secretariat both at the regional and interregional levels. At the same time numerous activities carried out by the secretariat during the period under review further enhanced co-operation and co-ordination of activities at the regional level. Some of these activities are described below:

(a) ESCWA initiated a project for the establishment of a Regional Centre for New and Renewable Sources of Energy in 1985 and as a follow-up organized a technical meeting on the subject in Amman from 25 to 26 November 1987. The meeting successfully achieved its objective by establishing the above-mentioned Regional Centre for NRSE Information Network at the Solar Energy Research Centre of the Scientific Research Council of the Government of Iraq in Baghdad in December 1987;

(b) The Joint ESCWA/UNIDO Industry Division has been co-operating continuously with the Arab Industrial Development Organization (AIDO) in the area of micro-electronics and informatics and has held several meetings on the matter in Kuwait and Baghdad in 1987. Furthermore, general consultation meetings on the progress of joint projects covering a feasibility study to establish a pilot line silicon foundry in the Arab region as well as a Pan-Arab "Soft-ware Technology Centre" were held with the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD), UNIDO, SERICS (of France) and various Arab institutions in Kuwait, Vienna and Paris in 1987;

(c) ESCWA organized the Expert Group Meeting on Strengthening the Research and Development Linkages with the Production Sector in the ESCWA Region in Amman from 15 to 19 November 1987. The meeting was attended by member governments and regional organizations such as FASRC and the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC);

(d) ESCWA organized the Regional Expert Group Meeting on End of Decade Review of the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action on Science and Technology for Development in the ESCWA Region in Amman, Jordan, from 21 to 23 November 1988;

(e) ESCWA as part of its work programme in perspective planning organized the Expert Group Meeting on Econometric Modelling from 14 to 16 November 1987 in Amman, which was attended by member governments and representatives of the Council of Arab Economic Unity;

(f) ESCWA convened the Second Meeting of the Heads of Statistical Organizations in the ESCWA Region from 25 to 26 March 1987 in Baghdad. The Third Meeting of the Heads of Statistical Organizations in the ESCWA Region was held from 28 February to 2 March 1989 at Baghdad. The Second Meeting was attended by member governments and representatives of such regional organizations as AFESD, OAPEC, the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD), the Arab Labour Organization (ALO) and the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics. The Third Meeting was attended by representatives of eight member governments, three Arab organizations, four international organizations and a number of experts;

(g) ESCWA convened the Intergovernmental/Inter-agency Meeting on the Transport and Communications Decade in Western Asia from 13 to 15 December 1988 at Baghdad to review the various stages of the project report on preparatory assistance in the programme for the Decade. The Meeting adopted the report with modifications and made recommendations for its implementation;

(h) ESCWA convened the Seminar on Biogas Technology for Rural Areas in Selected Arab Countries in Cairo from 26 November to 1 December 1988. The Seminar was attended by officials and experts from ESCWA member States, other Arab States and experts from China, India and international institutions. Various aspects relating to limitations and obstacles impeding the widespread application of biogas technology in rural areas were discussed and measures to overcome them were discussed. This activity was followed by a study tour to the People's Republic of China from 3 to 15 December 1988 and to India from 16 to 26 December 1988 to give participants first-hand experience on the designing, maintenance and utilization of biogas technology for domestic purposes as well as industrial and agrarian uses. This aspect of the Seminar provided opportunities for operational activities through exchange of experience and information at a regional level and gave the regional Seminar a wider dimension for interregional co-operation;

(i) ESCWA convened the First Regional Meeting of the Group of the Intergovernmental Task Force on Disability in Amman from 21 to 23 October 1987. The Group is composed of representatives of the ILO, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (CSDHA), UNESCO, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Statistical Office of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (DIESA) and ESCWA. It was formed to deal with the development and co-ordination of regional activities and to enhance the equalization of opportunities and promote governmental participation in this field. The meeting reached an agreement on a frame-work within which future regional activities might be elaborated with ESCWA serving as the co-ordinator in this regard;

(j) ESCWA co-organized with the Arab Federation for Food Industries and the Government of Iraq the First Symposium on Optimal Use of Food Industries' By-products in the Arab World in Baghdad from 28 November to 1 December 1988;

(k) ESCWA is supporting the newly established Agricultural Food Marketing Association for the Near East and North Africa (AFMANEER), which deals with marketing of agricultural products from associations of public and private bodies of its member States of Egypt, Jordan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Democratic Yemen, the Yemen Arab Republic, Cyprus, Pakistan and Somalia. The aim of the Association is to strengthen economic co-operation by the exchange of information and experiences among its members in the field of agricultural marketing;

(l) ESCWA, in collaboration with the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, held near Munich from 27 July to 18 August 1988 a training course on Planning for Resource Conservation and Desertification Control in ESCWA Countries, with a component dealing with exchange of countries' experiences (based on country reports) on resource use, planning and desertification control from seven developing countries of the ESCWA region;

(m) ESCWA, in collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations (UNCTC), organized the Intergovernmental Meeting on Trade in Services and Development in the ESCWA Region from 17 to 19 January 1989 to generate greater awareness and recognition of the significance of trade in services for the ESCWA region and its member States; to formulate proposals to enhance the role of services in development in Western Asia; to define the interest of member countries in the ongoing Uruguay Round of multilateral negotiations on services; and to promote regional co-operation and co-operation with other developing countries and regions in the field of services.

While the above highlights some of the regional activities that the secretariat has organized in order to promote and strengthen regional co-operation, the secretariat, and more particularly the regional advisers, assisted in strengthening regional institutions in their programmes and participated in numerous activities as indicated below:

(a) The ESCWA Regional Adviser in National Accounts and Economic Statistics assisted the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS) in Baghdad in 1987/1988 in giving lectures on economic statistics in a long-term training programme in applied statistics organized by the Institute for the Arab States;

(b) The ESCWA Regional Adviser in Demography assisted the Arab Planning Institute in Kuwait in a training course on manpower projects and population estimations from 15 to 27 March 1987;

(c) The ESCWA Regional Adviser in Demography also rendered assistance in demographic training to AITRS in Baghdad from 25 to 29 April 1987;

(d) The National Household Survey Capability Programme team organized and co-ordinated in collaboration with the AITRS a four-week regional workshop on design of questionnaires for household surveys in Cairo from 29 September to 28 October 1987. The course design was intended to standardize the principles of questionnaire design, concepts and methodologies, testing and evaluation of questionnaires, system of data analysis and case-studies for the whole region in order to enhance regional co-operation in this activity. A total of 20 participants attended the workshop;

(e) The ESCWA Regional Adviser in Agriculture gave consultancy service to the AOAD team on the common agricultural policy of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) in September 1987;

(f) The ESCWA Regional Adviser in Agriculture participated in and presented two papers at the meeting on Arab prospective study held in Tunis from 15 to 21 October 1987 and organized by the Centre for Arab Unity Studies with financial support from AFESD, OAPEC and the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF);

(g) The ESCWA Regional Adviser in Agriculture participated in and presented a paper at the Expert Group Meeting on Regional Technical and Economic Co-operation in Agriculture, organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and held in Rome from 10 to 14 December 1988;

(h) The ESCWA Regional Adviser on New and Renewable Sources of Energy participated in and presented a paper at the Seminar on Biogas Utilization in the Arab World held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and organized by FARSC from 20 to 22 April 1987;

(i) The ESCWA Regional Adviser on New and Renewable Sources of Energy participated in and presented a paper entitled "Prospects of Wind Energy Utilization in the ESCWA Region" at the Seminar on Utilization of Wind Energy in the Arab World, held in Algeria from 2 to 7 April 1988;

(j) The ESCWA Regional Adviser in Human Resources Development participated in and presented a paper at the Seminar on Population and Human Resources Development and Utilization in the Arab Region with focus on Jordan, organized by the University of Jordan in collaboration with ILO in May 1988;

(k) The ESCWA Regional Adviser in Science and Technology participated in the Expert Group Meeting on Strengthening Research and Development Capacity and Linkage with the Production Sectors in Countries of the ESCWA Region, held in Amman, Jordan, from 15 to 19 November 1987;

(l) The ESCWA Regional Adviser in Science and Technology participated in the Third Working Group Meeting for Petrochemical Industries in the Arab World, organized by AIDO in collaboration with the Tunisian Enterprise for Petrochemical Activities in Tunis;

(m) The ESCWA Regional Adviser in Water Resources participated in and presented a paper entitled "Technologies in Water Resources Development in the ESCWA Region" at the End of Decade Review of the Implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action on Science and Technology for Development in the ESCWA Region in Amman, Jordan, from 21 to 23 November 1988;

(n) The ESCWA Regional Adviser in Water Resources also participated in the 4th International Symposium on System Analysis Applied to Management of Water Resources, held in Rabat, Morocco, from 10 to 14 October 1988.

(o) The ESCWA Regional Adviser in Industrial Project Identification, Formulation and Appraisal participated in the meeting of manufacturers and users of heavy fabricated chemical equipment held in Algeria from 24 to 30 June 1988 and is preparing modalities for co-operation of Arab Manufacturers;

(p) The ESCWA Regional Adviser in Data Processing participated in a Technical Committee meeting on Child Health Surveys in Gulf Countries and other Arab Countries held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from 22 to 25 February 1988.

In addition to the above activities, the programme of work and priorities of the Commission recognizes the urgent need in the region to strengthen the participation of women in development. This programme received financial help from the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and a number of technical co-operation projects for the development of women have been undertaken during the period under review as follows:

(a) Enhancement of the economic participation of women through:

- Organization of Self-help Groups for Income Generation among Poor Women (EGY/86/W01);
- Activating the Popular Participation of Women at the Grass-root Level (IRQ/87/W01).

(b) Identification of the needs of women through:

- The Role of Rural Women in Economic Development in the ESCWA Region (RAB/80/W01);
- Promoting Women's Role in the Production of Traditional Handicrafts in the Region (RAB/86/W02);
- Developing Regional Training Programmes for Training of Women Specialized in the Socialization of Children (RAB/86/W05).

(c) Collection of data and dissemination of information on and for women through the following:

- Directory of Arab Professional Women for Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries (RAB/84/W01);



- Guide for Arab Women on Legislation Related to Personal Status, Family and Employment Laws and Procedures (RAB/86/W06);
- Strengthening the Statistical Capacity for Promoting the Participation of Women in Development (RAB/88/W01);
- The Impact of Population Policies on Arab Women (RMI/88/P06/32/05).

### III. ESCWA Interregional TCDC/ECDC activities

Economic and technical co-operation among developing countries from different regions has been gaining ground in recent years, as a promising dimension for interregional co-operation. The regional commissions, making use of their long experience in promoting regional co-operation, decided in 1985 to launch interregional project proposals and submitted a draft project proposal for consideration and financing under the Pérez-Guerrero Trust Fund for Economic and Technical Co-operation among Developing Countries<sup>1/</sup> at the High Level Meeting of the Group of 77 on Economic Co-operation among Developing Countries held in Cairo from 18 to 23 August 1986 (see document E/ESCWA/C.1/14/7). In accordance with the guidelines of the Trust Fund adopted at the above meeting, the Inter-governmental Follow-up and Co-ordination Committee on ECDC/TCDC, IFCC(IV), meeting in Cuba from 7 to 12 September 1987, decided not to finance projects that could obtain or had initial financing from the United Nations and as such the interregional project proposals of the regional commissions were considered to fall within this category and failed to secure funds for implementation.

Other interregional activities carried out during the reporting period were:

(a) The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on 12 May 1988 by the three regional commissions of ESCWA, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) relating to an interregional project on transport questions in the Mediterranean region to be financed by a United Nations Trust Fund with ECE designated as lead agency for the project, which is expected to become operational during 1989;

(b) The ESCWA Regional Adviser on New and Renewable Sources of Energy participated in and presented a paper entitled "Present Situation and Future Prospects of Biogas Technology in the ESCWA Region" at the Interregional TCDC Training-cum-Workshop in Biogas Technology organized by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in co-operation with the Government of China from 16 to 21 November 1987;

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<sup>1/</sup> The Trust Fund was so designated by General Assembly decision 41/457 of 8 December 1986.

(c) ESCWA participated in the Intergovernmental TCDC Programming Exercise held in Cairo from 9 to 13 July 1988 which was convened by the Government of Egypt with assistance from the Special Unit for TCDC of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for English-speaking African Countries. The meeting, which was a culmination of preparatory work carried out by the Special Unit for TCDC of UNDP and the Government of Egypt, involved the matching of the existing capacities and needs of Egypt with those of the participating countries. Similar exercises were carried out by UNDP in China, Paris, Turkey and Tunis, and are designed to inspire ideas for introducing TCDC methodologies in the implementation of projects at the country, subregional, regional and interregional levels.