

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COUNCIL**

Distr.
LIMITED
E/ESCWA/27/L.1
27 February 2012
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: ARABIC

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Twenty-seventh session
Beirut, 7-10 May 2012

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND ANNOTATIONS

1. Opening of the twenty-seventh session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
4. Consideration of requests by States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of ESCWA to participate as observers in the twenty-seventh session of the Commission.
5. Policy issues in the ESCWA region:
 - (a) The role of participation and social justice in achieving sustainable and balanced development;
 - (b) The preparations for Rio+20 in the Arab region;
 - (c) Inclusive financing for small and medium-sized enterprises and creating job opportunities.
6. Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission:
 - (a) Programme performance report for the biennium 2010-2011;
 - (b) Implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-sixth session;
 - (c) Technical cooperation programme and regional advisory services;
 - (d) Financial status of the Commission;
 - (e) Reports of the subsidiary bodies on their sessions.

7. Management issues:
 - (a) Streamlining the work of the Commission:
 - (i) Evaluation of the work of ESCWA;
 - (ii) Establishment of a unit on strategic and intersectoral initiatives and policies at ESCWA.
 - (b) Proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013.
8. Revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015.
9. Consideration of the request of Tunisia for membership in the Commission.
10. Date and venue of the twenty-eighth session of the Commission.
11. Other matters.
12. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its twenty-seventh session.

ANNOTATIONS

1. Opening of the twenty-seventh session

The twenty-seventh session of the Commission will comprise two segments, namely the senior officials segment, which will begin at 10 a.m. on Monday 7 May 2012; and the ministerial segment, which will begin at 9.30 a.m. on Wednesday 9 May 2012 in the main Conference Hall at the United Nations House in Beirut.

2. Election of officers

Rule 12 of the Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia provides as follows: “Member countries shall assume the chairmanship of the sessions of the Commission on a rotating basis, in the Arabic alphabetical order employed by the United Nations.* At the beginning of each session, the Commission shall elect from among the representatives of its members two Vice-Chairpersons and a Rapporteur, who shall remain in office until such time as their successors shall be elected and be eligible for re-election.” Pursuant to that rule, the chairmanship of the twenty-seventh session shall be assumed by the United Arab Emirates since Jordan assumed the chairmanship of the twenty-sixth session, while the representatives of the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain were elected as Vice-Chairpersons and the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic as Rapporteur.

3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

The provisional agenda was drawn up by the Executive Secretary of ESCWA in consultation with the Chairperson of the twenty-sixth session and the Technical Committee, a body composed of senior officials from member countries, at its sixth meeting in December 2011. Pursuant to rule 8 of the Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, which provides as follows: “At the beginning of each session, after the election of the Chairperson according to rule 12, the Commission shall adopt the agenda for that session on the basis of the provisional agenda,” the Commission will be presented with the provisional agenda and annotations in document E/ESCWA/27/L.1, and the organization of work in document E/ESCWA/27/L.2. The Commission may adopt these two documents in the form in which they were submitted or make amendments thereto.

4. Consideration of requests by States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of ESCWA to participate as observers in the twenty-seventh session of the Commission (E/ESCWA/27/3)

The Commission will have before it the requests received from States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of the Commission to participate as observers in the twenty-seventh session of the Commission, in accordance with Economic and Social Council Resolution 1818 (LV), paragraph 4, and rule 63 of the Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia.

5. Policy issues in the ESCWA region (E/ESCWA/27/4)

This agenda item consists of three salient issues for the ESCWA region which will be discussed in three round tables at the ministerial level:

* ESCWA member countries in the Arabic alphabetical order are as follows: Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Sudan, Iraq, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Kuwait, Lebanon, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

(a) The role of participation and social justice in achieving sustainable and balanced development (E/ESCWA/27/4(Part I))

During the sixth meeting of the Technical Committee (Beirut, 1-2 December 2011), the representatives of member countries decided that the main theme of the twenty-seventh ESCWA session shall be "The role of participation and social justice in achieving sustainable and balanced development in the region". This issue will be discussed in a ministerial round table which will constitute a timely opportunity for a constructive dialogue between the ministers representing member countries and other renowned figures from the region.

The document before the Commission under this item presents a conceptual policy framework describing the role of participation and good governance in achieving just, inclusive and sustainable development. The report highlights the challenges that governments face in achieving social justice and proposes a set of cornerstones for aligning participation with the objectives inherent in the concept of sustainable development.

The report calls for a transformation of the social and institutional structures that reinforce vulnerability and inequality, in order to ensure that the development process is fair and balanced to all. The report stipulates that integrated social policies are key factors for achieving that transformation and for supporting changes in the structures and patterns of production and consumption necessary for a more sustainable development in the region.

The Commission is invited to review the report and provide comments thereon.

(b) The preparations for Rio+20 in the Arab region (E/ESCWA/27/4(Part II))

The Commission will consider this issue in a round table that brings together heads of delegations and high-level speakers and experts from the region. This round table will provide a final opportunity to consolidate the positions of member countries prior to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20), which will be held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, and will pave the way for a post-Rio+20 engagement.

The secretariat shall present participants in the round table with a paper that provides an overview of the Arab region preparatory process for Rio+20. The paper takes stock of the major outcomes of the preparatory process and highlights the expected outcomes of the Rio+20 conference and the sustainable development issues posited by Rio+20 and of special importance for the Arab region. It concludes with recommendations to increase the engagement of member countries towards Rio+20 and identifies next steps paving the way for post-Rio engagement.

The report focuses on three interrelated issues of relevance to the Arab region; namely: a green economy responsive to the prevailing regional challenges; an institutional framework supportive of sustainable development in the Arab region; and a renewed political commitment for sustainable development.

The Commission is invited to review the report and provide comments thereon.

(c) Inclusive financing for small and medium-sized enterprises and creating job opportunities (E/ESCWA/27/4(Part III))

This issue will be tackled in a high-level round table featuring the participation of heads of delegations and prominent experts on the subject. The paper that will be presented by the secretariat at the round table essentially stipulates that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) lie at the core of private sector development to foster sustainable and inclusive growth. The paper provides a review of the industrial corporate sector in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and addresses two main research questions: (1) are SMEs financially constrained? and (2) what are the implications of

corporate financing on employment across SMEs and large businesses? The results of this study can guide policymakers to develop helpful policy environments that broaden financial access with the objective of achieving more inclusive growth.

The Commission is invited to review the report and provide comments thereon.

6. Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission (E/ESCWA/27/5)

The Commission will have before it the following five reports:

(a) Programme performance report for the biennium 2010-2011 (E/ESCWA/27/5(Part I))

This report presents an overall evaluation of the performance of ESCWA programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011 and highlights achievements and lessons learned for each of the seven subprogrammes. It also includes an assessment of the performance of the executive direction and management component, including the work of the Office of the Executive Secretary, the Programme Planning and Technical Cooperation Division (PPTCD) and the Administrative Services Division (ASD), as well as that of the United Nations Information Services/Centre.

The Commission is invited to review the report and provide comments and guidance on the overall ESCWA programme performance and the performance of individual subprogrammes.

(b) Implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-sixth session (E/ESCWA/27/5(Part II))

This report presents a follow-up to the implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-sixth session (Beirut, 17-20 May 2010) concerning the different fields of action of ESCWA and various issues and themes of importance to member countries. The Commission is invited to take note of what has been accomplished since the twenty-sixth session in the implementation of those resolutions, which carry the following numbers and titles:

- (i) Resolution 292 (XXVI): Upgrading the Section for Emerging and Conflict-Related Issues to the level of a division and establishing a governmental committee on emerging issues and development in conflict settings;
- (ii) Resolution 293 (XXVI): Upgrading the ESCWA Centre for Women to the level of a division and follow-up to the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in the Arab countries after fifteen years: Beijing+15;
- (iii) Resolution 294 (XXVI): Establishment of the ESCWA technology centre;
- (iv) Resolution 295 (XXVI): Guiding declaration of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia on giving greater attention to youth policies: An opportunity for development;
- (v) Resolution 296 (XXVI): Enhancing public sector institutions and resources to attain national development goals;
- (vi) Resolution 297 (XXVI): Arab MDG monitor for societal progress;
- (vii) Resolution 298 (XXVI): Social development;
- (viii) Resolution 299 (XXVI): Adoption of the amendments introduced to the programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011;
- (ix) Resolution 300 (XXVI): Adoption of session reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia;
- (x) Resolution 301 (XXVI): Adoption of the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2012-2013.

(c) Technical cooperation programme and regional advisory services (E/ESCWA/27/5(Part III))

The report presented to the Commission under this sub-item contains a review of the technical cooperation activities undertaken by ESCWA during the biennium 2010-2011 within the framework of the three interrelated funding modalities, namely: the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC), the United Nations Development Account and extrabudgetary resources.

The activities funded by RPTC aim to enhance capacity-building in member countries by organizing training activities and offering advisory services and technical assistance in formulating policies, strategies and plans of action in various specializations. The activities funded by the United Nations Development Account and from extrabudgetary resources consist of intraregional and interregional projects.

The report provides specific examples of the results that have been achieved during the biennium 2010-2011 that serve to expand ESCWA hands-on knowledge of the development challenges in the region and to build the capacity of member countries in effectively responding to those challenges. The report demonstrates the synergy between all the components of technical cooperation as well as between technical cooperation and the regular programme of work. Finally, the report takes stock of good practice and lessons learned during the implementation of the programme of work of the biennium.

The Commission is invited to take note of those accomplishments and results.

(d) Financial status of the Commission (E/ESCWA/27/5(Part IV))

This report presented to the Commission under this sub-item reviews the various financial aspects of the programmes of the Commission, including the regular budget, extrabudgetary resources and the ESCWA Trust Fund for Regional Activities.

The secretariat invites member countries and donor funds, organizations and agencies to contribute to the extrabudgetary resources in order to support the activities and projects undertaken by ESCWA and enable it to continue to meet the increasing demands and needs of member countries.

The Commission is invited to take note of the financial status of the Commission and provide guidance and comments thereon.

(e) Reports of the subsidiary bodies on their sessions (E/ESCWA/27/5(Part V))

The Commission will have before it the reports of the seven subsidiary bodies on their sessions which were held between the twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh sessions of the Commission as well as the reports of the Technical Committee on its meetings held during the same period. In addition to the recommendations, the reports cover the issues discussed, information on the organization of those sessions and meetings, lists of participants and documents presented therein. Those reports are:

- (i) Report of the Statistical Committee on its ninth session (E/ESCWA/SD/2010/IG.1/10/Rev.1);
- (ii) Report of the Committee on Energy on its eighth session (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2010/IG.1/6);
- (iii) Report of the Committee on Social Development on its eighth session (E/ESCWA/SDD/2011/IG.1/6/Report);
- (iv) Report of the Committee on Women on its fifth session (E/ESCWA/ECW/2011/IG.1/7/Report);
- (v) Report of the Technical Committee on its fifth meeting (E/ESCWA/2011/C.5/8/Report);

- (vi) Report of the Committee on Water Resources on its ninth session (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2011/IG.1/8/Report);
- (vii) Report of the Committee on Transport on its twelfth session (E/ESCWA/EDGD/2011/IG.1/7/Report);
- (viii) Report of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization and Financing for Development in the Countries of the ESCWA Region on its seventh session (E/ESCWA/EDGD/2011/IG.2/7/Report);
- (ix) Report of the Technical Committee on its sixth meeting (E/ESCWA/2011/C.6/7/Report);
- (x) Report of the Committee on Transport on its thirteenth session (E/ESCWA/EDGD/2012/IG.1/8/Report).

The Commission is invited to adopt those reports including the recommendations.

7. Management issues (E/ESCWA/27/6)

Under this item, the following reports will be presented to the Commission:

- (a) Streamlining the work of the Commission (E/ESCWA/27/6(Part I))
 - (i) Evaluation of the work of ESCWA (E/ESCWA/27/6(Part I)/A)

The document presented to the Commission under this sub-item reports on the ongoing efforts aimed to enhance the evaluation process within ESCWA in relation to all aspects of its work and to ensure that lessons learned through the evaluation process are translated into tangible improvements in the way ESCWA carries out its operations as well as ensure that the appropriate level of transparency and communication exists in this regard between the secretariat and member countries. The document also reports on efforts exerted since the twenty-sixth session of the Commission on: (a) the development of a new policy for subprogramme evaluation; (b) evaluations conducted on complete Development Account projects; (c) ad hoc evaluations of business processes including job audits conducted in ESCWA; (d) other steps taken and future plans to expand the use and value of the evaluation processes conducted by ESCWA; (e) progress made in the evaluation of the intergovernmental mechanism of the Commission and steps taken to address gaps identified by the evaluation; and (f) the improved process of assessment of the conduct of intergovernmental meetings.

The Commission is invited to take note of the report and provide comments thereon.

- (ii) Establishment of a unit on strategic and intersectoral initiatives and policies at ESCWA (E/ESCWA/27/6(Part I)/B)

The document presented to the Commission under this sub-item contains a proposal by the secretariat to create a unit on strategic and intersectoral initiatives and policies at ESCWA. The objective is to create a flexible space from which to develop swift reactions to upcoming exigencies and challenges that were unforeseen at the time programmes of work for the different subprogrammes were formulated by ESCWA and approved by the General Assembly. Through a range of initiatives, the unit will consider such exigencies from an intersectoral and interdisciplinary perspective and coordinate efforts to be exerted by all ESCWA Divisions to address them. The initiatives are meant to support member countries and provide decision makers, researchers, civil society activists and the larger development community with an interdisciplinary perspective of such challenges and with options for addressing them. The document presents an overview of the background, main objectives and resources necessary for the establishment of the unit.

The Commission is invited to consider this proposal and, if in agreement, endorse it.

(b) Proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013 (E/ESCWA/27/6(Part II))

The document presented to the Commission under this sub-item contains the proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2012-2013 in the light of emerging issues since the Commission adopted the programme of work at its twenty-sixth session. These changes are also based on the new mandates that emanated from the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

The Commission is invited to consider the proposed changes with a view to endorsing them for incorporation into the programme of work.

8. Revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015 (E/ESCWA/27/7)

The ESCWA strategic framework pertains to programme 18 of the United Nations strategic framework which addresses economic and social development in Western Asia. It lays out the overall orientation of the programme of work of ESCWA, its strategy, objectives, expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement for each of its seven subprogrammes. The draft strategic framework for the biennium 2014-2015 was submitted to the Technical Committee at its sixth meeting (Beirut, 1-2 December 2011). The Technical Committee membership comprises senior officials from member countries and is mandated by the Commission to follow up implementation of programme activities and support ESCWA in achieving its aims. The secretariat prepared a revised version of the draft strategic framework taking into account the comments provided by member countries during the Technical Committee meeting and advice from the United Nations Secretariat.

The Commission is invited to take note of and discuss the overall programme orientation, focus areas and strategies, taking into account the specific mandates issued by the Commission and the general mandates issued by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The Commission is also invited to make concrete recommendations for further improvement, as necessary, and endorse the revised draft strategic framework for 2014-2015.

The Commission will also have before it the report of the high-level expert group meeting on the vision and framework of ESCWA in light of current and future challenges in the region, which was held in Beirut on 20 and 21 September 2011 (E/ESCWA/OES/2011/WG.1/Report). In that meeting, experts discussed current and anticipated challenges facing the Arab countries against the backdrop of the recent developments in the region resulting from the overwhelming and deeply rooted socio-economic indigence propagated over the years. The discussions focused on the strategic objectives identified by ESCWA and its new vision through 2020 in line with the key priorities of the region and in pursuit of a new development paradigm. The new development paradigm shall essentially address all the emerging challenges and examine the structural changes that need to take place in order to respond to the people's aspirations, cater to their fundamental needs and ensure that they are no longer being excluded politically, economically and socially.

The Commission is invited to take note of the report.

9. Consideration of the request of Tunis for membership in the Commission (E/ESCWA/27/8)

Under this item, the Commission will have before it a document which contains the request by Tunis for membership in the Commission.

Pursuant to the Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, the country desiring membership in the Commission must present a formal request to the Commission

which must discuss it and submit a recommendation either accepting or refusing the request to the Economic and Social Council.

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

Rule 1, paragraph (a) of the Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia provides that the regular sessions of the Commission shall be held in April every two years, at a time to be determined by the members of the Commission. Subject to an invitation of a member country to host the twenty-eighth session, it is expected that the Commission will decide to hold its twenty-eighth session in Beirut in April 2014.

11. Other matters

This item covers any other issue which the members of the Commission may wish to discuss.

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

The Commission will consider the draft report on its twenty-seventh session, with resolutions presented to the Economic and Social Council for adoption and others presented to the Council for informative purposes.
