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**Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)**

Twenty-seventh session  
Beirut, 7-10 May 2012

Item 9 of the provisional agenda

**CONSIDERATION OF THE REQUEST OF TUNISIA FOR MEMBERSHIP  
IN THE COMMISSION**

**Summary**

The Commission will consider a request which it has received from Tunisia to become a member of the Commission. Since the twenty-third session of the Commission held in May 2005, Tunisia has consistently participated as an observer in all meetings of the Commission.

The Commission is invited to consider the request made by Tunisia to be admitted to the membership of ESCWA and to submit a recommendation as to whether the request should be accepted or refused by the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

## Introduction

1. Since the twenty-third session of the Commission held in May 2005, Tunisia has participated with great interest and effectiveness in a number of ESCWA activities. Its delegates have attended numerous expert and intergovernmental meetings, in particular the sessions of the Commission. Representatives of Tunisia have taken part in technical activities implemented by the secretariat, and its experts have collaborated with the various technical divisions in a range of fields, thereby strengthening Tunisia's relationship with the secretariat and member countries.

### I. REVIEW

2. The secretariat received a letter dated 2 March 2012 from the Embassy of Tunisia in Lebanon, containing a request for the full membership of Tunisia in ESCWA. The letter affirmed the desire of Tunisia to strengthen and develop its cooperation with ESCWA and its member countries. On 28 March 2012, the secretariat formally notified ESCWA member countries by transmitting a letter to their embassies in Beirut and to the focal point ministries in their capitals. The secretariat also communicated this request to the ambassadors of member countries at the meeting of the Advisory Committee of Ambassadors, which was held on 5 April 2012.

3. The Economic and Social Council resolution 1818 (LV) dated 9 August 1973 concerning the terms of reference of ESCWA stipulated that "the members of the Commission" shall consist of the States Members of the United Nations situated in Western Asia which at present call on the services of the United Nations Economic and Social Office in Beirut. Future applications for membership by Member States shall be decided on by the Council upon the recommendation of the Commission."

4. On the basis of the foregoing statement, a request for membership in the Commission requires the following:

(a) That the State in question should submit a membership request;

(b) That the request should be submitted to the ESCWA session for consideration and a recommendation to accept or refuse the request be made to the United Nations Economic and Social Council for its decision;

(c) That the United Nations Economic and Social Council should make a decision on the basis of the recommendation of the session.

5. The ESCWA *Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure* do not address the geographic location of States that are eligible for ESCWA membership, nor do they mention the possibility of a member country being a member of another regional commission. In fact, most regional commissions grant membership to States that are not geographically situated in the specific region that the commission serves. Some States in Central Asia and Europe are members of both the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) including, among others, Armenia, France, Georgia, the Netherlands, Turkey and the Russian Federation. Similarly, the United States of America is also a member of ESCAP and ECE, and France, Japan, Germany, Spain, the Republic of Korea, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are also members of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

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\* The current members of ESCWA are Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

6. Since the establishment of the Commission in 1973, Egypt, the Palestinian Liberation Organization, and the Sudan have been granted ESCWA membership, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolutions 2088 (LXII), 2089 (LXII) of 22 July 1977, and 2008/8 of 22 July 2008.

7. The request by a State for membership in a regional commission does not involve additional financial obligations, because United Nations Member States make annual contributions to the regular budget of the United Nations Secretariat that includes the regional commissions. Similarly, the States Members of regional commissions do not bear any additional financial burden as a result of the admittance of new members for membership.

## **II. REQUIRED ACTION**

8. Consider the request made by Tunisia to be granted ESCWA membership and recommend to the United Nations Economic and Social Council whether the request should be accepted or refused.

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