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### CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

#### Report of the Secretary-General

#### Addendum

#### I. INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 38/6 of 28 October 1983 entitled "Co-operation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States", recommended that a sectoral meeting on social development should be organized under the aegis of the Secretariat General of the League of Arab States (LAS), in a country member of that organization, to give careful consideration to projects prepared for joint implementation, in conformity with the priorities set forth in paragraphs 61 and 62 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/38/299 and Corr.1).
2. Subsequently, the General Assembly, in its resolution 39/9 of 8 November 1984, reaffirmed that recommendation and requested the Secretary-General to co-operate closely with the Secretary-General of LAS concerning arrangements for the organization of the meeting and to provide all necessary assistance and facilities to ensure its success.
3. In pursuance of the aforementioned resolutions, consultations were held during 1984 and 1985 between the United Nations Office for Special Political Questions of the United Nations Secretariat and the representatives of the Secretary-General of LAS concerning the agenda items, organizations to be invited and documentation to be prepared for the meeting. The Office for Special Political Questions also consulted on a number of occasions the interested organizations and agencies of the

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\* A/40/150.

United Nations system with regard to preparations for the meeting. The concerned organizations and agencies of the two systems prepared reviews of their ongoing co-operation in the field of social development as well as outlines of prospective joint endeavours which were circulated to the participants prior to the meeting.

## II. PARTICIPANTS AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

### A. Participants

4. At the invitation of the Ministry of Labour and Social Development of Jordan, the United Nations-League of Arab States sectoral meeting on social development was held at Amman from 19 to 21 August 1985.
5. The League of Arab States and its specialized organizations were represented by its Secretariat General, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), the Arab Organization for Social Defence against Crime (AOSDAC), the Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU), the Arab Organization of Administrative Sciences (AOAS), the Arab Labour Organization (ALO) and the Arab Satellite Communications Corporation (ARABSAT).
6. The United Nations system was represented by the Office for Special Political Questions, the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs (DIESA), the Department of Technical Co-operation for Development (DTCD), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).
7. Statements at the opening meeting were made by the Minister of Labour and Social Development of the Government of Jordan, the LAS Under-Secretary-General for Social and Cultural Affairs and the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Special Political Questions.

### B. Agenda

8. The meeting adopted an agenda consisting of the following items:
  - (i) Volume and level of technical assistance furnished by the United Nations agencies in the Arab region in the social development field;
  - (ii) Review and assessment of previous efforts between the two sides in the social development field;

- (iii) United Nations assistance in the issuance of the joint Arab social report and similar sectoral reports;
- (iv) Joint assistance in the field of youth, on the occasion of International Youth Year;
- (v) United Nations participation in the Arab Conference on Social Welfare Policies up to the year 2000 (September 1985);
- (vi) Arab projects relating to population education, development and the communications media;
- (vii) Arab projects relating to the eradication of illiteracy and for promotion of technical education;
- (viii) Arab projects relating to correctional institutions;
- (ix) Establishment of an Arab Centre for Research and Training in Social Development, in co-operation with the United Nations.

#### C. Procedural matters

9. The meeting was presided over jointly by representatives of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of LAS. Each co-chairman was assisted by a rapporteur. All meetings were held in plenary sessions.

10. Participants, while acknowledging that proposals and recommendations adopted by the meeting could in no way commit their agencies and organizations to any particular course of action, agreed to ensure that pertinent proposals would be transmitted to their respective headquarters for full consideration.

### III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### A. Matters of a general nature

11. Following a review of global concepts that helped it determine the framework for its substantive deliberations, the meeting agreed as follows:

(a) For the purpose of the meeting's work and for a better comprehension of its report, the concept of social development would be taken in its holistic sense and not only as a sectoral approach;

(b) Further contacts between the LAS Secretariat General and the appropriate United Nations bodies should be initiated by either party by all possible means, including correspondence, in order to ensure fruitful exchanges of views and experiences between the two systems with regard to global and/or macro-level conceptual approaches to social issues and a futuristic outlook of socio-economic

progress. Such preliminary contacts should pave the way, if and when the need arose, for an expert group meeting, on a high level of competence, to try to define appropriate approaches to planning for future social development;

(c) Within the United Nations system, the majority of the agencies and organs were concerned, in one way or another, with social development. To assist LAS in ensuring efficient follow-up, it would be useful to designate one organization or agency of the United Nations system which LAS could contact on specific issues and which would be responsible for facilitating co-operation among all concerned United Nations organizations. The designation of a United Nations liaison organization would be without prejudice to existing bilateral arrangements;

(d) Resource constraints to social development should be understood, in the context of the present report, to encompass financial, technical and manpower resources. It was felt that, with regard to financial constraints, it was important that both regional and United Nations funding bodies should reinforce their involvement in projects in the Arab region in a more co-ordinated and synchronized manner;

(e) The meeting emphasized the usefulness and importance of joint endeavours between the United Nations and the League of Arab States in the field of social development research, training, exchange of information and publications, technical assistance and participation in technical meetings organized by both sides, due consideration having been given to the fact that such joint activities were conducive to better co-operation and understanding. In this context, the meeting noted with appreciation the expressions of concrete interest by some organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, in particular WFP, which hitherto had not participated in any joint United Nations-LAS endeavours.

#### B. Consideration of agenda items

Agenda item (i), "Volume and level of technical assistance furnished by the United Nations agencies in the Arab region in the social development field" and (ii), "Review and assessment of previous efforts between the two sides in the social development field"

12. The meeting noted with satisfaction that the volume, level, scope and diversity of technical assistance furnished by the United Nations system in the Arab region corresponded to the felt needs, many of which, when not an integral part of the social sector, have a direct bearing on it. It was agreed that such technical assistance should be maintained and expanded with a view to achieving self-reliance.

13. Constraints in joint project implementation, which were increasingly felt by both sides, were related not only to resource availability and to flexibility in their utilization but also to execution of project phases according to a predetermined plan of operations. The meeting agreed that such constraints should be given careful consideration at a later stage.

14. The United Nations system should consider giving greater importance to regional and multilateral projects in the Arab region because the region was striving to achieve integration and resource reallocation, as defined by its Governments. The LAS socio-economic integration strategies would be much enhanced by regional projects. Further, LAS held the view that there was a need to revise and review regional multilateral projects in order to bring about, at the macro level, new endeavours that would help define social development perspectives in the Arab region during the next two decades, with particular emphasis on basic needs - employment and labour, health, food, education, shelter - and their possible future fulfilment. Such global projects would entail closer co-operation between the United Nations and LAS. It would be appropriate to envisage a five-year planning cycle for such joint activities.

15. The meeting felt that, while numerous multilateral projects between LAS and the United Nations system were viewed by LAS as successful and should, therefore, be maintained and consolidated, other co-operative activities were having less satisfactory outputs and would, therefore, require review and possible reformulation.

16. Co-operation between LAS and the regional commissions ECA and ESCWA, which encompass all Arab countries, should be especially strengthened for social development in order to translate the agreements of co-operation between LAS and the two Commissions into concrete activities and endeavours. To that end, it would be appropriate to organize a tripartite co-ordinating meeting with the aim of identifying and defining common programmes and projects.

Agenda item (iii), "United Nations assistance in the issuance of the joint Arab social report and similar sectoral reports"

17. Information was provided by both sides regarding the LAS project for a joint Arab social report as well as the social reports currently issued by the United Nations system, in particular the report on the world social situation. The following conclusions and recommendations were adopted:

(a) The project for a joint Arab social report was welcomed since the proposed report would be an important instrument for bringing about a better understanding of social issues and for promoting social development in the Arab region;

(b) It was agreed that the report should be comprehensive and should include such components as population, housing, health, employment, nutrition, rural development, labour, communications, education and the cultural aspects of development. The issues of equity and the situation of women, children, youth and other specific population groups should be given particular importance;

(c) A joint Arab social report would not duplicate current publications on social development at the national, regional and international levels. To the contrary, such a report would complement other sectoral or global reports which would in turn benefit from the insights given by an analysis at the regional level;

(d) The conception of a social report, including its scope, methodology, use of social indicators and intended audience, was considered to be of the utmost importance. LAS had already given considerable attention to that question. In view of the experience gained by the United Nations in the elaboration of global social reports, it was recommended that DIESA should provide LAS with the services of a senior adviser, on a short-term basis, to participate in designing the joint Arab social report;

(e) Exchanges of information and documents, visits and consultations on social issues and social reports should be systematically promoted between LAS and the agencies and organizations of the United Nations system particularly concerned with social development. Interested agencies and organizations of the United Nations system were invited to designate focal points which would ensure the development of an organized dialogue with LAS. The specific role of ECA and ESCWA in that regard was considered to be of particular relevance. It was also agreed that the possibility of a future meeting to follow up the various forms of co-operation in those areas should be given due consideration by the parties concerned.

Agenda item (iv), "Joint assistance in the field of youth, on the occasion of International Youth Year"

18. The meeting considered a number of proposals for expanding and intensifying co-operation between the United Nations system and the Secretariat General of LAS in translating the Arab Policy for Youth into a plan of action. Such co-operation was consistent with the long-term plan of action for the follow-up of the International Youth Year. Specific proposals included making available advice and information on youth-related matters and providing expert services and assistance in the preparation of specialized working papers on the issues, needs and problems of Arab youth. It was emphasized that the Arab policy towards youth should cover all major problems including unemployment, school drop-outs, the generation gap and alienation, and drug addiction.

19. It was pointed out that the services of the United Nations Interregional Adviser on Youth were available. In addition, DIESA/CSDHA (Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs) and other concerned organizations of the United Nations system were prepared to respond positively to the proposals of LAS. The meeting recommended that specific proposals be forwarded by LAS to DIESA/CSDHA for appropriate action.

Agenda item (v), "United Nations participation in the Arab Conference on Social Welfare Policies up to the year 2000 (September 1985)"

20. The meeting welcomed the decision of LAS to convene an Arab Conference on Social Welfare Policies, to be part of the preparatory process for convening the Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes scheduled for the fall of 1987, pursuant to the pertinent resolutions of the Economic and Social Council (resolutions 1983/22 and 1985/26). The Consultation would provide a valuable opportunity to consider, at a global level, social development questions in an integrated and interrelated manner. The Arab

Conference, as well as similar efforts in other regions, would provide much-needed inputs for that exercise. The organizations and agencies of the United Nations system were urged to assist LAS in refining and implementing such proposals as might be agreed upon at the Conference.

Agenda item (vi), "Arab projects relating to population education, development, and the communications media"

21. The meeting took note of the satisfactory implementation of the various components of the joint LAS/UNFPA/DICD ongoing project entitled "Assistance to the Population Research and Training Unit" within the LAS Secretariat General. It was agreed that, in view of the request of LAS to have the project extended beyond 1986 and the readiness of UNFPA to explore the possibility of such an extension, favourable consideration should be given to the request so that the project would enter into a new phase that would pave the way for self-reliance.

22. The meeting also agreed to endorse ASBU's request for a two-year extension of the joint UNESCO/ASBU project on the integration of population and social development concepts into broadcasting programmes in the Arab countries, in view of its importance, achievements and impact on social development in the Arab region.

Agenda item (vii), "Arab projects relating to the eradication of illiteracy and for the promotion of technical education"

23. The meeting noted with appreciation the efforts of ALECSO in the field of eradication of illiteracy. It called upon ALECSO, UNESCO and all the concerned organizations of the United Nations system to accelerate existing efforts.

Agenda item (viii), "Arab projects relating to correctional institutions"

24. The meeting considered the activities of Arab countries in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice and, in particular, the proposed projects for (a) a strategy of action in the field of correction and reform and (b) the reorganization of correctional and reform institutions and the training of their staff. The meeting took note of the high degree of co-operation already existing between LAS and DIESA/CSDHA and the willingness of the relevant unit of CSDHA to respond to specific requests that might be submitted by LAS.

Agenda item (ix), "Establishment of an Arab Centre for Research and Training in Social Development, in co-operation with the United Nations"

25. The meeting noted that the establishment of an Arab Centre for Research and Training in Social Development had been approved by the Council of Social Ministers of the Arab States and that the proposal was consistent with resolution 1406 (XLVI) of the Economic and Social Council, adopted on 5 June 1969, which, *inter alia*, called for the establishment of regional centres to promote and implement the developmental thrusts in social welfare.

26. The meeting agreed that the purpose of the proposed centre would be to carry out social studies and research in the various social fields, implement pioneer social projects, organize teaching and training programmes, produce teaching

materials and audio-visual aids and organize inter-Arab meetings at all levels for those active in social development programmes. The proposed centre should not duplicate the activities of national institutions but should attempt to co-ordinate and support those efforts, as well as take advantage of existing structures for research and training programmes.

27. It was also agreed that the organizations of the United Nations system, given their expertise and experience with similar institutions, should assist LAS in making the necessary preparations by providing an expert and a number of consultancies for a period of one year to help in the preparation of a feasibility study. The study would include questions related to (a) the purpose and objectives of the centre; (b) the nature and type of research and training activities to be undertaken; (c) personnel to be trained and level of training; (d) the method and approach of training; (e) the development of indigenous approaches and training materials; (f) documentation and dissemination of information; and (g) organizational matters, financing, location etc. Moreover, the study would review existing national, regional and international institutions and possible areas of co-operation between them and the proposed centre.

28. As part of the preparatory phase, a comprehensive project document would be formulated, which would determine the nature and extent of future assistance requirements for the centre, including assistance that might be provided by the United Nations system.

29. During the last session of the meeting, the Resident Representative of UNDP at Amman announced that he had received a communication from UNDP headquarters in New York to the effect that UNDP would provide support to the proposed Arab Centre for Research and Training in Social Development, in the light of the relevant recommendations adopted at the meeting. The meeting noted with appreciation the declaration of support for the proposed centre.

### C. Additional recommendations

#### Co-operation between the International Labour Organisation and the Arab Labour Organization

30. The meeting recognized the importance of the Arab regional project on labour administration which, among other things, would enhance co-operation and joint action between ILO and ALO. All parties involved should endeavour to ensure its implementation. Efforts should also be made to initiate the Arab regional project on employment. In this regard the meeting reaffirmed the recommendation contained in paragraph 63 (b) (iii) of the report of the Secretary-General in document A/38/299.

#### Refugees

31. The meeting recognized the importance of considering refugee problems in the context of social development policies as well as the importance of enhancing co-operation with UNHCR and other concerned organizations and agencies.



### Health

32. The meeting noted with satisfaction the existing collaboration between WHO and LAS in formulating and implementing programmes and activities in the field of health. It also noted with satisfaction that WHO would convene a meeting at Geneva on 12 and 13 November 1985 on health care programmes to be carried out within the framework of the WHO overall policy of Health For All by the Year 2000, in relation to the Arab region and in accordance with a recommendation adopted at the 1983 United Nations-LAS Tunis meeting (A/38/299, para. 62 (c)).

33. The meeting recommended that consideration should be given to an in-depth analysis of infant mortality, especially in Arab least developed countries, as well as to the wide dissemination of information on health matters.

### Children

34. UNICEF expressed great interest in co-operation with LAS in the development of a report on the state of the Arab child, which could be used in the preparation of the joint Arab social report. Co-operation would aim at improving the data related to infant mortality and its causes. UNICEF also welcomed the idea of a continuous exchange of information and communication materials with ASBU and ARABSAT concerning dissemination of information. It was agreed that technical meetings would be held to translate the proposals into action.

### Follow-up

35. It was agreed that the procedure adopted at the 1983 United Nations-LAS Tunis meeting with regard to proposals would be followed for the Amman proposals on social development, namely:

(a) Bilateral proposals. The counterpart organizations and agencies would continue bilateral contacts in regard to all follow-up action. The United Nations organizations and agencies would keep the Office for Special Political Questions fully informed of their follow-up activities, and the specialized organizations of the League of Arab States would keep their Secretariat General similarly informed;

(b) Multilateral proposals. The Office for Special Political Questions and the Secretariat General of LAS would undertake consultations with the agencies and organizations of their respective systems in order to agree on modalities of follow-up including, when necessary, the convening of joint working groups and the designation of convenors.

### D. Conclusion of the meeting

36. The participants expressed their deep gratitude to the Government and people of Jordan for hosting the meeting and for the hospitality which had been extended to them.

37. In adopting the report, all participants agreed that both sides should strive, through further contacts and consultations, to maintain the momentum gained at the Amman meeting.