The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) is organizing an Expert Group Meeting in cooperation with MEDSTAT, International Energy Agency (IEA), Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), and the United Nations Department of Economics and Social Affairs’ Statistics Division (UNSD).

**Background**

Energy represents a basic input to all sectoral and national development plans, particularly in ESCWA member countries where the energy sector has a vital role in the economic and social development. While the development of national policies and programmes is highly dependent on the availability, accuracy and reliability of statistical energy production and sectoral consumption information, the quality of energy statistical information in most of ESCWA member countries still needs capacity building to meet the appropriate statistical requirements for formulating national development plans and international reporting.

The availability and overall quality of data on energy face several problems in the ESCWA region and thus there is an urgent need to upgrade the level of awareness in the field of energy statistics as well as for harmonizing the definitions and classification of energy statistical data.

ESCWA, UNSD, OPEC and ECE (Economic Commission for Europe), have organized a similar activity in 2004. Since then, IEA has been leading the InterEnerStat meetings, where major regional and international organizations share experiences for further cooperation and harmonization in energy statistics. UNSD had performed a review process on the International Recommendations of Energy Statistics, and it is organizing an International Meeting on Energy Statistics in Mexico in December 2008 and reviewing the System of Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounts (SEEA), including the energy accounts, to become an international standard in 2012. MEDSTAT had developed a programme to assist Mediterranean countries in improving their statistics on energy.

**Objective**

With the aim of further assisting ESCWA member countries in developing and improving applied statistical skills, as well as promoting measures to improve the availability and reliability of energy statistics and the harmonization of definitions and methodologies, ESCWA is organizing the EGM inviting experts from the region and international experts to discuss the topics below:
Main Topics
– International recommendations of energy statistics, methodologies for compilation of oil, gas and electricity, renewable energy statistics;
– Energy balances and accounts;
– Energy indicators; and
– Analysis and dissemination of energy data.

Outcomes
The main outcomes of the meeting will be to:
1- Improve the capacity of users and producers of energy statistics in compiling, analyzing and disseminating energy statistics and indicators and prepare energy balances and accounts; and
2- Increase the harmonization in producing and disseminating data on energy statistics regionally and internationally.

Organization
The meeting is organized by ESCWA and is scheduled to be held in Beirut, Lebanon, on January 7-9, 2009.

Participants and registration
Experts from National Statistical Offices, Ministries of Energy and Electricity, as well as other experts from regional and international agencies are invited to participate actively.

Documentation
The documents will include working papers on the topics of the meeting prepared by ESCWA; selected country papers on the national experiences, contributed by national experts nominated by countries; and selected regional and/or international papers prepared by representatives of the United Nations bodies, MEDSTAT, IEA and OPEC and other international organizations and regional entities.

Participants are requested to review the manual on energy statistics in Arabic prepared by IEA, present their country experience in compiling and disseminating energy statistics and energy balances and present their contribution no later than 15 December 2008, to allow time for reproduction and inclusion in the meeting programme.

Languages
English and Arabic are the working languages of the meeting. Simultaneous translation from English to Arabic, and vice-versa, will be provided during the meeting sessions.

Additional information and correspondence
The Web page http://www.escwa.un.org/, will provide the latest information on the meeting.

Correspondences, submissions, inquiries and requests for additional information can be addressed to ESCWA through Ms Wafa Aboul Hosn (email: aboulnhosn@un.org). Once participants have been nominated, they will be contacted directly with additional administrative instructions.