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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Statistical Committee
Eighth session
Beirut, 14-16 October 2008

Item 3 of the provisional agenda

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND ANNOTATIONS

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13. Adoption of the report of the Statistical Committee on its eighth session.

ANNOTATIONS

1. Opening of the eighth session of the Statistical Committee

The opening session will begin at 10 a.m. on Tuesday, 14 October 2008, at United Nations House, the headquarters of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in Beirut.

2. Election of officers

In accordance with the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, section V, rule 18, "Member countries shall assume the chairmanship of the sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission on a rotating basis, in the Arabic alphabetical order employed by the United Nations". Unless the Commission decides otherwise, those bodies shall elect all their other officers".* In accordance with that rule, Sudan shall assume the chairmanship of the eighth session of the Statistical Committee, succeeding Syrian Arab Republic, which assumed the chairmanship of the seventh session, from November 2006 to October 2008. The Committee shall elect two vice-chairmen and a rapporteur among its members.

3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Pursuant to the provisions of the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, rule 8, which apply to subsidiary bodies, "At the beginning of each session, once the Chairman has assumed his duties in accordance with rule 12, the [Committee] shall adopt the agenda for that session". The committee will have before it the provisional agenda and annotations for this session in document E/ESCWA/SD/2008/IG.1/L.1.

The Committee will have before it E/ESCWA/SD/2008/IG.1/L.2, which contains proposals relating to the organization of the session's work. The Committee may adopt that document in the form in which it is submitted, or make amendments thereto, as participants see fit.

4. Review of statistical work carried out since the seventh session of the Statistical Committee

The Committee will have before it document E/ESCWA/SD/2008/IG.1/3 comprising three parts:

(a) Follow-up on the recommendations of the Statistical Committee at its seventh session (E/ESCWA/SD/2008/IG.1/3(Part I))

The Committee is invited to take note of what has been accomplished in implementation of the recommendations of its seventh session.

(b) Progress made in carrying out statistics-related activities between the seventh and eighth sessions of the Statistical Committee (E/ESCWA/SD/2008/IG.1/3(Part II))

The Committee will review implemented activities in the field of statistics between the seventh and eighth sessions of the Statistical Committee, including those financed from the Development Account and extra-budgetary funds. Under this item, the secretariat will also deliver two presentations. The first will review the activities implemented by the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation in the field of statistics; the second will highlight the activities carried out by ESCWA in the area of the information and communication technology statistical indicators. The Committee is requested to take note of the progress made in implementing the statistics-related activities and give guidance regarding future work and needs in the field of statistics.

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

(c) Outcome of the twenty-fifth session of ESCWA in the field of statistics
(E/ESCWA/SD/2008/IG.1/3(Part III))

The Committee will take note of the outcome of the twenty-fifth session of ESCWA held in Sana'a, 26-29 May 2008 in the field of statistics.

5. Millennium Development Goals: monitoring framework and proposals for improvement
(E/ESCWA/SD/2008/IG.1/4)

The Committee will have before it a comprehensive review of the changes introduced in the MDGs framework, as well as an assessment of issues such as data availability, gaps and discrepancies between national and international sources on MDG indicators. The Committee is invited to take note of the findings of the review and to make comments and suggestions.

6. Capacity-building in statistics for evidence-based policymaking

Under this item, the Committee will consider the following issues:

(a) Needs assessment for capacity-building of the national statistical offices in the ESCWA member countries: progress achieved towards strengthening the national statistical capacities
(E/ESCWA/SD/2008/IG.1/5)

The Committee will have before it the outcome of the needs assessment survey undertaken by ESCWA in order to facilitate the formulation of an action plan for capacity-building at the regional level. The Committee is called upon to discuss the outcome of the needs-assessment survey and provide suggestions.

(b) Follow-up on the recommendations of the Third Arab Forum on Statistical Capacity-Building and preparation for the next statistics-related activities

Two presentations will be made before the Committee: (i) a presentation by the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics on the follow-up to the recommendations of the Third Arab Statistical Forum; (ii) presentation by the Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics in Egypt on the work carried out in preparation for the Fourth Arab Statistical Forum.

(c) The Global Project on Measuring the Progress of Societies

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) will make a presentation on this topic.

7. Regional implications of the thirty-ninth session of the United Nations Statistical Commission
(E/ESCWA/SD/2008/IG.1/6)

The Committee will consider the outcome of the analysis carried out by the secretariat of the impact of global statistical issues on the work of national statistical offices in the region as well as the work of ESCWA for 2010-2011. The report of the thirty-ninth session of Statistical Commission will be distributed to the Committee as a background paper (E/2008/24-E/CN.3/2008/34).

8. Activities of the Regional Task Force on Population and Housing Censuses

The Chairperson of the Regional Task Force on Population and Housing Censuses will present an overview of the work undertaken by the Task Force. The Committee is requested to take note of the work of the Task Force and make recommendations.

9. Results of self-assessment of the External Trade Bulletin of the ESCWA Region (E/ESCWA/SD/2008/IG.1/7)

The Committee will have before it the results of the self-assessment of the regular publication "External Trade Bulletin of the ESCWA Region". The Committee is requested to review the results of the assessment and decide on the continuation/discontinuation of the Bulletin.

10. Proposed programme of work for the biennium 2010-2011 in the field of statistics (E/ESCWA/SD/2008/IG.1/8)

The Committee will consider the proposed outputs and activities to be undertaken by ESCWA during the 2010-2011 biennium, which were conceived in line with the revised strategic framework for the biennium 2010-2011 adopted at the twenty-fifth ministerial session of ESCWA. The Committee is requested to review the proposed programme of work in the field of statistics and provide comments and suggestions.

11. Date and venue of the ninth session of the Statistical Committee

The Committee will discuss the date and venue of its ninth session.

12. Other business

This item shall cover any other issue that the members of the Committee may wish to discuss.

13. Adoption of the report of the Statistical Committee on its eighth session (E/ESCWA/SD/2008/IG.1/L.9)

The Committee will consider the draft report on its eighth session and may wish to adopt it including recommendations.