

**RECOMMENDATIONS ON DRAFT RESOLUTIONS
SUBMITTED BY SENIOR OFFICIALS
TO MINISTERS FOR CONSIDERATION
SANA'A, 27 MAY 2008**

ISSUES CALLING FOR ACTION BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

280 (XXV). Request from the Sudan to become a member of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to its approval, at its twenty-third session, which was held in Damascus from 9 to 12 May 2005, of the request submitted by the Sudan to take part in ESCWA meetings and activities in the capacity of an observer,

Noting that, since approval was granted, representatives of that country have participated in a number of ESCWA meetings and technical activities and that such cooperation has strengthened the relationship between the Sudan and both the ESCWA secretariat and other member countries,

Referring also to the letter dated 5 June 2007 addressed to the secretariat by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan, affirming the desire of that country to increase cooperation with ESCWA and its member countries, and requesting to become a member of the Commission,

Taking into consideration paragraph 2 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1818 (LV) dated 9 August 1973 concerning the terms of reference of the Commission, which provides as follows:

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.

Recalling that the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia do not discuss the geographical location of countries which may become members thereof or proscribe a member of one regional commission from being at the same time a member of another regional commission,

Recalling also that most of the other regional commissions have as members countries that are not located in the region that they serve,

1. *Welcomes* the request made by the Sudan to become a member of the Commission;
2. *Requests* the secretariat to put forward to the Economic and Social Council for action the recommendation that the request for membership by the Sudan should be approved.

ISSUES TO BE BROUGHT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

281 (XXV). Addressing climate change issues in the Arab region

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Reaffirming the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, namely, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) which supports initiatives to assess the consequences of climate change,¹

Convinced of the importance of the Ministerial Declaration of the 2007 high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council,² which reaffirms that responses to climate change should be coordinated, with a view to integrating social and economic development therein,

Recalling the Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change,³ which noted the scientific consensus that climate change is a reality, and expressed the expectation that the Arab region will be one of the regions that is most vulnerable to the potential impact of climate change, including coastal zone threats, increased water scarcity and worsening drought and desertification,

Recalling the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, progress achieved on the associated commitments, and the Bali Road Map and Bali Action Plan,⁴ whereby Member States decided on the need to enhance action for international cooperation in undertaking vulnerability assessments and preparing natural disaster mitigation strategies, in view of the potential risks associated with climate change,

Acknowledging the outcomes of discussions that call upon the United Nations regional commissions to support regional action on climate change adaptation, mitigation, technology and finance,

Mindful of the emphasis given to climate change issues by the Arab Regional Implementation Meeting reports for the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) cycles, and the outcomes of the twelfth to sixteenth CSD sessions and their associated thematic topics related to water, energy, industrial development, climate change, agriculture, desertification, drought and rural development,

Welcoming the Arab Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change that was adopted on 6 December 2007 at the nineteenth session of the Council of Arab Ministers Responsible for the Environment, which affirmed their commitment to adopt national and regional action plans on climate change issues, with a view to assessing possible impacts and developing mitigation and adaptation programmes, and to include climate change-related policies in all sectors within national and regional policies for sustainable development,

Referring to ESCWA resolution 261 (XXIII) of 12 May 2005 on strengthening the cooperation between ESCWA and the League of Arab States in the field of economic and social development,

1. *Requests* the secretariat to prepare an assessment of the vulnerability to climate change of economic and social development in the region, with particular emphasis on fresh water resources;

¹ *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August – 4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

² Report of the Economic and Social Council for 2007, Ministerial declaration of the high-level segment “Strengthening efforts to eradicate poverty and hunger, including through the global partnership for development” (A/62/3).

³ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, *Climate Change 2007, Mitigation of Climate Change*, ISBN 978-0-521-88011-4.

⁴ Decision/COP.13.

2. *Encourages* member countries to actively support and participate in the preparation of the aforementioned vulnerability assessment, including by providing required facilities and information;

3. *Requests* the secretariat to take the measures necessary to increase awareness of climate change, in respect of adjusting to and alleviating its impact, and to work with member country Governments and initiate dialogue over the relevant recommendations;

4. *Further requests* the secretariat to develop an Arab framework action plan on climate change, in partnership with the League of Arab States, UNEP/ROWA and other relevant regional organizations;

5. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to make available through the regular budget the resources necessary to implement those activities;

6. *Further requests* the Executive Secretary to report on the findings and recommendations arising from the assessment and any additional action taken in that regard to the twenty-sixth session of the Commission.

282 (XXV). Mitigating the impact on development of conflict, occupation and instability in ESCWA member countries

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Guided by the 2005 World Summit Outcome¹ that emphasized the mutually reinforcing interlinkages between development, peace, security and human rights,

Recalling its resolutions 271 (XXIV) of 11 May 2006 on strengthening the role of ESCWA in addressing the impact of conflict and instability within the context of social and economic development and 260 (XXIII) of 12 May 2005 on development and regional cooperation under unstable conditions,

Expressing grave concern with regard to continued occupation, violence, political tensions and conflicts and their negative impact on social and economic development and the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in conflict-afflicted countries and Western Asia as a whole,

Recognizing the need to continue to raise awareness of the negative impact of instability on development and undertake new interventions aimed at strengthening public sector and civil society capacity to attain social and economic development goals, including MDGs, regardless of conflict and political tensions,

Taking note of ESCWA reports that monitor and analyze political, social and economic developments in countries afflicted by conflict and, in particular, the report that reviews the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan²,

Noting with appreciation the results of various capacity-building initiatives in conflict-afflicted countries that have addressed the improvement of management skills and poverty reduction,

Noting also ESCWA efforts to mobilize extrabudgetary resources and forge partnerships with local, regional and international actors,

1. *Welcomes* the establishment in ESCWA of the Development Subprogramme on the mitigation of the impact of conflict and occupation;

2. *Calls on* member countries to:

(a) Intensify efforts to enhance institutional capacities to respond to the challenges associated with conflict and occupation;

(b) Support conflict- or occupation-afflicted countries in overcoming socio-economic and political challenges;

3. *Requests* the ESCWA secretariat to:

(a) Intensify its efforts to raise awareness of the potential impact of conflict and instability on development;

(b) Build on successful ESCWA interventions in conflict- or occupation-afflicted countries through the development and interchange of best practice and adaptation thereof for the use of other member countries;

¹ Security Council resolution 60/1.

² Economic and Social Council resolution 2006/43 and General Assembly resolution 61/184 .

(c) Contribute to the capacity-building of Government officials, focusing on management skills and strategy planning;

(d) Continue its efforts to mobilize extrabudgetary resources to finance the implementation of capacity-building and other activities;

(e) Enhance partnerships with relevant local, regional and international organizations;

4. *Invites* member countries and donors to support ESCWA in its endeavours to mitigate the impact of conflict and instability and the socio-economic ramifications thereof;

5. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report to the twenty-sixth session of the Commission on the progress achieved in implementing this resolution.

**283 (XXV). ESCWA member country compliance with international standards
for enhancing national statistical systems**

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Guided by the 1985 Declaration on Professional Ethics of the International Statistical Institute which stresses the importance of adherence by statisticians to the relevant ethics and best practices,

Committed to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics that were issued by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 1994 with a view to enhancing public trust in official statistics and national statistical systems and establishing statistical systems that are consistent with international concepts, classifications and standards,

Affirming the importance of the Marrakech Action Plan for Statistics and the recommendations that were made at the three Arab statistical forums that were held in Amman in 2003, Muscat in 2005 and Sana'a in November 2007, which called for the statistical profession to be developed and the capacities of statistical systems to be enhanced within general State administration, as an important tool in identifying, monitoring and evaluating the social and economic situation,

Affirming the Amman Declaration of Statistics, issued by the First Arab Statistical Conference, that was held in Amman in 2007, which emphasized the importance of autonomous statistical work and adherence by statisticians to the relevant ethics and best practice, and asserted the importance of building professional national statistical systems oriented towards the needs of users,

Guided by the General Data Dissemination System that was issued by the International Monetary Fund with the aim of enabling member countries to measure economic and social developments in an objective and transparent manner,

Guided also by the initiatives undertaken by several countries in the region with a view to increasing the autonomy of the statistical system:

1. *Requests member countries to take the following measures:*

(a) Take all the measures necessary in order to produce high quality official statistics that can be used in international comparisons, by applying international concepts, classifications and standards and activating statistical institutions;

(b) Adopt the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and take action to apply them, ensure the credibility, impartiality and autonomy of statistical institutions and enhance the credibility of statistics at the national, regional and international levels;

(c) Complete the design and implementation of national strategies for statistical development, in accordance with the general orientations issued by Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (Paris 21);

(d) Empower the statistical machinery to publish data in a timely fashion by adhering to the conditions of the General Data Dissemination System that was issued by the International Monetary Fund;

(e) Enhance the position of the national statistical machinery within the national institutional structure and strengthen the structural factors that are connected to the legislative framework and regulatory arrangements in accordance with the Handbook of Statistical Organization that was issued by the United Nations in 2004;

2. *Requests* the secretariat to take the following measures:

- (a) Hold training workshops on international concepts, classifications and standards;
 - (b) Support member countries in adopting and undertaking to apply the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics;
 - (c) Support member countries in designing and implementing national strategies for statistical development by providing technical assistance, issuing and translating pertinent guidelines, holding workshops and contributing to the organization of Arab statistical forums;
 - (d) Encourage member countries to participate in and adhere to the General Data Dissemination System and the Special Data Dissemination Standard of the International Monetary Fund;
3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to follow up on the above recommendations and submit a report thereon to the twenty-sixth session of the Commission.

284 (XXV). Establishment of the ESCWA regional technology centre

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to the 2005 World Summit Outcome,¹ Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/68 of 5 September 2004 and the Millennium Declaration,² which identified the promotion of science and technology as a United Nations priority,

Reiterating the importance of science, technology and innovation (STI) in accelerating development, building more competitive, knowledge-based economies, achieving sustainable development at the national and regional levels, and generating new opportunities for employment, leading to poverty reduction,

Referring to ESCWA resolution 274 (XXIV) of 11 May 2006, which approves in principle the establishment of a technology centre for development and requests the secretariat to take action and submit a report on that matter,

*Guided by the conclusions of the ESCWA report on the technology centre that was published in December 2007, entitled *Detailed assessment of regional needs and priorities and identification of implementation mechanisms*, which has been reviewed by panels of experts and the ESCWA Consultative Committee on Scientific and Technological Development and Technological Innovation at its fourth meeting,*

Further guided by the Committee's recommendation that steps should be taken to establish a technology centre, which should be affiliated to ESCWA and actively supported and funded by member countries, with an operational structure that is in line with United Nations rules, regulations and best practice,

Encouraged by preliminary offers received from member countries to host the centre upon the request of ESCWA, and seeking to increase regional support for such activities:

1. *Requests the secretariat:*
 - (a) To finalize hosting arrangements;
 - (b) To coordinate with member countries over the establishment of a board of governors;
 - (c) To take the necessary measures to draft centre administrative regulations in preparation for approval by the board of governors;
2. *Further requests the secretariat to set up within ESCWA a multidisciplinary team to support and monitor progress in the operationalization of the centre, to be funded by extrabudgetary resources;*
3. *Requests the Executive Secretary to report on the progress made in the implementation of this resolution to the twenty-sixth session of the Commission.*

¹ General Assembly resolution 60/1.

² General Assembly resolution 55/2.

285 (XXV). Integrated social policy

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to the 10 commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development,¹ in particular, to commitments 1 and 2 concerning the creation of an economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment that will enable people to achieve social development; and the reduction of inequalities, increase in opportunities and access to resources and income, and removal of any political, legal, economic and social factors and constraints that foster and sustain inequality,

Guided by the 2005 World Summit Outcome,² and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),³

Keeping in mind General Assembly resolution 62/126 dated 18 December 2007, which reaffirms the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (WPAY),

Recalling ESCWA resolution 277 (XXIV) dated 11 May 2006, concerning social development policies, which calls upon member countries to adopt an integrated social policy approach,

Considering the evolving youth bulge in the ESCWA region and the consequent need for social and economic integration of youth into society,

Acknowledging the continuous need of member countries to strengthen their capacities to achieve participatory, equitable and sustainable development in the context of globalization and its impact,

Cognizant of the repercussions of continued conflict, occupation and instability on the social and economic development of certain countries in the ESCWA region,

Referring to the recommendation made by the Committee on Social Development at its sixth session, which was held from 5 to 7 March 2007, that greater attention should be paid to and concrete actions initiated towards institutionalizing integrated social development policies,

Welcoming the increased interest expressed through official requests by a growing number of member countries for advisory services in integrated social policy fields and participatory social policy formulation, implementation and monitoring,

1. *Encourages* member countries to initiate national consultative dialogue aimed at adopting an integrated social policy approach;

2. *Appeals to* member countries to adopt a participatory approach through encouraging partnership between Government institutions, the private sector and civil society organizations in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of social policies;

3. *Encourages* member countries to adopt and institutionalize integrated social policy and seek harmony and balance between economic priorities and social outcomes;

4. *Requests* member countries to formulate national youth policies as part of their integrated social policy and national development plans and programmes;

¹ Report of the World Summit for Social Development, Copenhagen, 6-12 March 1995 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.8), chap. I, resolution, annex I.

² General Assembly resolution 60/1.

³ General Assembly resolution 55/2.

5. *Requests* the secretariat to build upon the experience of promoting integrated social policy in Bahrain, Egypt, the Sudan and Yemen and intensify its endeavours in advocating and enhancing the capacity of member countries to formulate and adopt an integrated social policy approach through the following actions:

(a) Develop and promote the integrated social policy approach among member country decision makers, putting forward practical suggestions on building the capacities of participating countries to design public policies, including social policies, and implement and follow up programmes and evaluate performance; and making available ESCWA analytical, technical and advisory services in the field of social policy and social development;

(b) Enhance and follow up on participatory consultative processes on social policy dialogue between public offices, civil society and private sector;

(c) Assist member countries in implementing the internationally agreed plans of actions and recommendations, including MDGs and WPAY priority areas;

6. *Requests* the ESCWA Committee on Social Development to monitor progress in implementing this resolution and facilitate information and knowledge-sharing by member countries;

7. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the progress made in implementing this resolution to the Commission at its twenty-sixth session.

286 (XXV). Gender statistics for equality and empowerment

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling the United Nations Millennium Declaration,¹ in which Member States resolved, inter alia, to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women as effective ways to combat poverty, hunger and disease and to stimulate sustainable development, and the 2005 World Summit Outcome,² which reaffirmed the need to promote gender equality and eliminate pervasive gender discrimination by taking all the necessary resolute actions,

Reiterating General Assembly resolution 62/218 of 12 February 2008, on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and its earlier resolution 60/230 of 23 December 2005 on the elimination of discrimination against women,

Referring to General Assembly resolution 62/206 of 10 March 2008 on Women in Development, which stresses the importance of collecting and exchanging all relevant information needed on the role of women in development, as well as the need to develop statistics disaggregated by age and sex,

Recognizing the need to improve the situation of women in rural areas and address the lack of timely, reliable, sex-disaggregated data and, in particular, statistics concerning women's unpaid work, for use in informing policy and programme decisions, as highlighted in General Assembly resolution 62/136 of 12 February 2008,

1. *Calls upon* member countries to adopt the set of indicators in the Arab Gender Issues and Indicators Framework as a common set of indicators, and produce the statistics related to those indicators for use in the monitoring and evaluation of strategic policies and work plans in areas related to gender;

2. *Calls upon* member countries also to develop a mechanism for the collection, dissemination and analysis of gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data by rural, urban and age information for the formulation of gender-related and gender-sensitive policies and programmes;

3. *Encourages* member countries to formulate and implement training programmes to mainstream gender issues and statistics into their statistical systems, with a view to sensitizing data producers and users to the issue of gender equality and women's empowerment;

4. *Calls upon* the secretariat to provide technical support to member countries in the form of advisory services and workshops, and assist member countries in integrating a gender perspective into national strategies for the development of statistics and national statistical system plans of action;

5. *Requests* the secretariat to work with member countries in developing a detailed gender database to act as a gender mainstreaming observatory in all sectors;

6. *Calls upon* the secretariat to mainstream gender statistics, as appropriate, into its programmes and outputs;

7. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to report to the twenty-sixth session of the Commission on the implementation of this resolution.

¹ General Assembly resolution 55/2.

² General Assembly resolution 60/1.

287 (XXV). Strengthening statistical capacities for evidence-based policymaking

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling the 2005 World Summit Outcome,¹ in which the General Assembly reiterates its determination to ensure the timely and full realization of the development goals and objectives agreed at the major United Nations conferences and summits, including those agreed at the Millennium Summit, that are described as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs),

Referring to the significance of the impartiality of national statistical offices (NSOs) and of ensuring effective coordination between those offices and other State organs, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission in 1994,

Recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/50 of 27 July 2005 on the Damascus Declaration, and the role of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) in the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including MDGs,

Also recalling Economic and Social Council resolution 2005/13 of 22 July 2005 on the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Programme, which stressed the increasing importance of population and housing censuses in meeting data requirements for follow-up on activities related to the Millennium Summit,

Reaffirming the need to improve institutional statistical frameworks in member countries and intensify efforts aimed at strengthening statistical capacity to produce and disseminate timely and reliable results on progress towards national and international development goals, including MDGs, as emphasized by the Commission in resolution 276 (XXIV) of 11 May 2006 on the strengthening of statistical capacity in the ESCWA region,

Reaffirming also the crucial role of the ESCWA secretariat in facilitating the sharing of knowledge between member countries and supporting those countries in strengthening their national statistical capacities for evidence-based policymaking by means of technical cooperation and capacity-building activities aimed at improving the comprehensiveness, quality and comparability of economic and social statistics,

Reaffirming further the need for the secretariat to continue its efforts to mobilize the necessary additional resources in support of member country efforts in that respect,

Having reviewed the report of the Statistical Committee on its seventh session, which was held in Beirut from 7 to 9 November 2006,²

Welcoming the recommendation of the Statistical Committee on the setting up of a task force of statisticians that includes NSO directors,

1. *Approves* the recommendation of the Statistical Committee that ESCWA region NSO capacity-building needs should be periodically assessed in order to monitor progress;

2. *Urges* member countries to produce MDG indicators and, in particular, indicators related to poverty, education and health, using surveys and other relevant sources;

3. *Also urges* member countries to adopt the Common Set of Core Information and Communications Technology Indicators issued by the Global Partnership on Measuring Information and Communications Technology for Development, and make available the data related to those indicators for use in the drafting, evaluation and review of strategic policies and work plans in areas of priority for the development of an information society in the region;

¹ General Assembly resolution 60/1.

² E/ESCWA/SCU/2006/IG.1/12.

4. *Stresses* the need to strengthen NSO impartiality in order to produce objective data, and improve coordination mechanisms within the statistical system with a view to improving the production and use of statistical data for evidence-based policymaking;

5. *Urges* member countries to exchange experience and information for best practice in the development of statistical activities and systems;

6. *Commends* the support given by Oman to the Task Force on Population and Housing Censuses and the activities that it has undertaken for the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses;

7. *Calls upon* member countries to accelerate implementation of the 1993 System of National Accounts and its revisions, in order to enable policymakers to monitor economic changes and improve economic performance;

8. *Requests* the secretariat to:

(a) Assist member countries in building their capacity to unify concepts and definitions and carry out multi-purpose family surveys and improve their administrative records at the national level through holding workshops and providing technical services;

(b) Prepare and submit to the ESCWA Statistical Committee periodic reports on progress made in the development of NSO statistical activities, based on ESCWA region NSO capacity-building needs assessments;

(c) Facilitate, through its official webpage on the Internet and the provision of technical consultancy, the interchange between member countries of experience and knowledge, with a view to promoting best practice in the development of statistical systems and activities;

(d) Increase its efforts to mobilize extrabudgetary resources to support various activities, including those of the Task Force on Population and Housing Censuses, and implement the 2010 Population and Housing Census Programme.

288 (XXV) Establishing an Arabic language centre at ESCWA

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 62/225 of 22 December 2006 on the pattern of conferences in which it requests the Secretary General to continue his efforts to ensure the highest quality of interpretation and translation services in all official languages and to make sure that the terminology used in the translation and interpretation services reflects the latest linguistic norms and terminology of the official languages in order to ensure the highest quality;

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 62/266 of 16 May 2007 in which it proclaims 2008 as International Year of Languages,

Referring to ESCWA resolution 239 (XXII) of 17 April 2003 on consideration of the establishment within the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia of a United Nations Arabic language centre,

Bearing in mind the comments and proposals made by the Arab countries concerning Arabic language services in the United Nations and, in particular, the letter dated 31 July 2001 addressed to the Secretary General from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations in his capacity as Chairman of the Arab Group for the month of July 2001,¹ and the proposal of the delegation of Egypt in the annex to the Report of the Committee on Conferences,²

Having considered the report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission: Follow-up to the establishment of an Arabic language centre at ESCWA, which presents the outcome of the consultation carried out with the parties concerned in the Organization and in the Arab region,³

Having considered also the project document prepared by the ESCWA secretariat which outlines the objectives, functions, proposed activities and required resources of the centre,⁴

Stressing the important contribution that ESCWA can make, in view of its location in the Arab region, to strengthening Arabic language services in the United Nations system, making use of available resources,

1. *Cognizant* of the project document presented to Senior Officials' Segment of the twenty-fifth ESCWA session concerning the establishment of an Arabic language centre at ESCWA, to be involved in the coordination of Arabic terminology, organization of training sessions and building of cooperative relationships with translation institutes and universities, in accordance with the details set forth in the project document, in coordination with the Department of General Assembly and Conference Services;

2. *Encourages* continued cooperation with ESCWA by the focal points designated by member countries for this project;

3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to explore ways and means to fund the project from extrabudgetary resources;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to follow-up on the implementation of this resolution and submit a report to the Commission at its twenty-sixth session.

¹ A/56/261.

² A/49/32/Rev.1.

³ E/ESCWA/25/5(Part III).

⁴ E/ESCWA/25/5/CRP.1.

289(XXV). Supporting the comprehensive development efforts of Yemen

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Appreciative of the comprehensive and sustainable development efforts of Yemen,

Noting with satisfaction the tangible progress that has been made in entrenching economic and financial reform measures in the face of limited resources and the status of Yemen as a least developed country;

1. *Comments* the comprehensive development efforts exerted by the Government of Yemen that are aimed at eradicating poverty and meeting economic and social needs with the extensive involvement of civil society and the professional, academic and political social sectors;

2. *Recommends* that the Commission should provide more support of all types to Yemen with a view to achieving the activities and efforts that are undertaken as part of comprehensive development and national efforts to realize the Millennium Development Goals.

290 (XXV). Call for regional action to accelerate implementation of the Monterrey Consensus in Western Asia

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to General Assembly resolution 62/187 of 19 December 2007 concerning the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, in which the Assembly decided to hold the conference in Doha from 29 November to 2 December 2008,

Referring also to ESCWA resolution 270 (XXIV) of 11 May 2006 concerning macroeconomic policy for financial stability,

Referring further to the Monterrey Consensus¹ that was issued by the International Conference on Financing for Development which was held in Mexico in 2002,

Taking into consideration the intensive consultations that took place between experts and specialists at the Consultative Preparatory Meeting for the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development which was held in Doha on 29 and 30 April 2008,²

Noting that, notwithstanding the progress that has been made in implementing the Greater Arab Free Trade Agreement, there remains a pressing need to strengthen regional integration in order to enhance the competitive capacities of ESCWA member countries,

Concerned by the turbulence that has recently affected the global economy, involving fluctuations in the exchange rates of the major currencies and inflation and the consequent fall in the purchasing power of the national currencies of member countries, which could destabilize the domestic economic environment that member countries have succeeded in building up over the years,

Noting that, while several member countries have become international investors, and have helped to stabilize the global monetary system, their role in managing that system remains extremely limited,

Appreciative of the assistance that the oil-producing countries provide to developing and, in particular, ESCWA member countries,

Taking into consideration the reports on the progress made in implementing the Monterrey Consensus in member countries,

1. *Adopts* the draft final communiqué annexed hereto that was issued by the Consultative Preparatory Meeting for the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development which was held in Doha on 29 and 30 April 2008;³

2. *Affirms* the need for developing countries, including ESCWA member countries, to be more involved in the management of the global financial, monetary and trade system;

3. *Calls upon* member countries to continue to support regional integration, including through increased interregional investment and trade;

4. *Calls upon* member countries also to support small and medium-sized enterprises and make available the financial resources necessary to create new youth employment opportunities;

¹ Report of the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 18-22 March 2002 (United Nations publication Sales No. E.02.II.A.7), chap.1, resolution 1, annex.

² E/ESCWA/EDGD/2008/4.

³ Ibid, chap. I, A.

5. *Further calls upon* member countries to continue efforts to eradicate financial and administrative corruption, thereby enhancing opportunities to increase investment, and to make use of available domestic financial resources;

6. *Requests* member countries to exert greater efforts to increase their share of foreign direct investment (FDI) and, in particular, investment that leads to the transfer of modern technology and the development of human resources; and to stress the importance of education and its central role in enabling individuals, eradicating poverty at the family and community levels and achieving wider socio-economic development goals;

7. *Requests* the developed donor countries to honour their undertakings and increase official development assistance in order to assist in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, without placing any conditions on such assistance that could have a negative impact on the capacities of beneficiary countries;

8. *Affirms* the need for member countries to make an effective contribution at the highest possible level to the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus and harmonize their positions during the Conference in order to ensure that the outcome is consistent with their ambitions and demands;

9. *Requests* the ESCWA secretariat to strengthen cooperation with the relevant regional and international organizations and with the other United Nations regional commissions on Monterrey Consensus-related issues, with a view to supporting the position of the developing countries with respect to the formulation of international rules;

10. *Calls upon* the ESCWA secretariat to follow up the outcome of the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development and support member countries in studying and analysing new issues arising from that Conference that relate to the region and assist them in devising and pursuing appropriate policies;

11. *Requests* the ESCWA secretariat to support member country efforts to build institutional capacities and, in particular, with respect to FDI, double taxation treaties, international regulation of investment and bilateral investment agreements;

12. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to report on the progress made in implementing this resolution to the Commission at its twenty-sixth session.

291 (XXV). Frequency of the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Recalling the Commission decision in resolution 158(XIV) of 5 April 1987 to hold its sessions biennially rather than annually,

Further recalling successive resolutions adopted between 1992 and 2003 on the establishment of the seven subsidiary bodies of the Commission and the frequency of their sessions,

Referring to the concern expressed at its twenty-fourth session over the lengthy interval between sessions, that led to the decision to establish a technical committee comprising senior officials from member countries, which would meet once every six months with a view to supporting ESCWA in achieving its aims,

Considering the recommendation of the Statistical Committee at its seventh session that a regional working group should be established composed of the directors of statistical offices in the region, to meet in years when the Committee does not, and a similar recommendation, made at its fifth session by the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region, that two separate expert group meetings should be held during the period between each Committee session, one dedicated to trade issues and the other to regional integration and financing for development,

Considering also the recommendations made by the Committee on Energy¹ and the Committee on Social Development² at their sixth sessions that their sessions should be held annually rather than biennially in order to increase interaction between member countries and between those countries and the secretariat,

Noting that the Technical Committee has so far held only one meeting since it was established,

Having deliberated on the key findings and the way forward in the report of the secretariat on the frequency of the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies,³ in conjunction with the lessons learned from evaluation of the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies and the way forward,⁴

Recognizing that the frequency of the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies cannot be considered separately from programme priorities, ESCWA intergovernmental machineries and other related factors,

1. *Decides* to defer consideration of the relevant recommendations of the Committees on Energy and Social Development, and of the Statistical Committee and the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization in the Countries of the ESCWA Region;

2. *Calls on* the secretariat to carry out an in-depth evaluation of the intergovernmental structure of ESCWA in the light of both programme priority, as identified by member countries and ongoing United Nations reforms;

3. *Also calls on* the secretariat to support, closely monitor and assess the contribution of the Technical Committee;

4. *Appreciates* the sharing of lessons learned from the evaluation of the intergovernmental sessions held during the period 2004-2007;

¹ E/ESCWA/SDPD/2007/IG.1/7.

² E/ESCWA/SDD/2007/IG.1/8.

³ E/ESCWA/25/6(Part I)/Add.2, paras 17-23.

⁴ E/ESCWA/25/6(Part I)/Add.1, paras 13-15.

5. *Invites* member Governments to review their internal distribution channels for ESCWA session documents, solicit feedback from the ministries or offices concerned on how distribution channels could be further improved and share the outcome of those reviews with the secretariat;

6. *Requests* the secretariat to:

(a) Improve and continually update the ESCWA website, with the aim of providing easy access for future delegates attending the sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies to session documents and reports;

(b) Activate the member country official focal points identified by those countries;

7. *Decides* to review the outcome of the in-depth evaluation at the twenty-sixth session.