

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION
FOR WESTERN ASIA**

REPORT OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION
15-18 September 2014

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
OFFICIAL RECORDS: 2014

SUPPLEMENT No. 21



United Nations

E/2014/41
E/ESCWA/28/9/Report

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION
FOR WESTERN ASIA**

**REPORT OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION
15-18 September 2014**

**ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL
OFFICIAL RECORDS: 2014**

SUPPLEMENT No. 21



United Nations
Beirut, 2014

NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

E/2014/41

E/ESCWA/28/9/Report

ISSN: 1011-7024

14-00274

United Nations Publication

Summary

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), pursuant to its resolutions 158 (XIV) of 5 April 1987 on holding the sessions of the Commission on a biennial basis, and 196 (XVII) of 31 May 1994 on the frequency of sessions of the Commission, held its twenty-eighth session in Tunis, from 8 to 15 September 2014.

Session meetings were held in two segments, one for senior officials and the other for ministers. At the senior officials' segment, consideration was given to requests by States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of ESCWA to participate as observers in the twenty-eighth session of the Commission. The segment also reviewed the economic and social developments in the Arab region 2013-2014; the outcomes of the Arab High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development; the issue of support for the Palestinian people and the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; the revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017; the report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission; and management issues.

Four dialogues were held at the ministerial level on the subject "Social justice in the policies of Arab States", which was also the theme of the twenty-eight ESCWA session. The following four topics were discussed, with reference to research papers prepared by the secretariat: social justice and the new development approach; economic policies supportive of social justice; intergenerational justice and access to natural resources; and social justice: monitoring and measurement.

The session concluded with the adoption of the Tunis Declaration on Social Justice in the Arab Region, recommendations made by the senior officials' segment, and resolutions to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council for its action or attention. This report sets out the Declaration, recommendations and resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-eighth session, and a summary of the main points raised in the discussions on each agenda item.

CONTENTS

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	1-2	3
<i>Chapter</i>		
I. ISSUES CALLING FOR ATTENTION AND ACTION BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL	3	4
II. RECOMMENDATIONS	4	16
III. SESSION THEME: SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE POLICIES OF ARAB STATES	5-29	17
A. Social justice and the new development approach	6-14	17
B. Economic policies supportive of social justice.....	15-20	19
C. Intergenerational justice and access to natural resources	21-24	20
D. Social justice: monitoring and measurement.....	25-29	20
IV. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION AND DISCUSSION	30-105	21
A. Important issues and developments.....	30-54	21
B. Revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017	55-64	24
C. Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission	65-80	25
D. Management issues.....	81-105	28
V. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION	106	31
VI. ORGANIZATION OF WORK	107-129	31
A. Date and venue	107-109	31
B. Consideration of requests by States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of ESCWA to participate as observers in the twenty-eighth session of the Commission.....	110-112	31
C. Opening of the session.....	113-120	32
D. Participants	121	33
E. Election of officers	122-124	34
F. Credentials.....	125	34
G. Agenda.....	126-127	34
H. Date and venue of the twenty-ninth session	128	35
I. Other matters	129	35

ANNEXES

I. List of participants	36
II. List of documents	44

INTRODUCTION

1. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held its twenty-eighth session pursuant to its resolutions 158 (XIV) of 5 April 1987 on holding the sessions of the Commission on a biennial basis, and 196 (XVII) of 31 May 1994 on the frequency of sessions of the Commission.
2. The present report sets out the proceedings of the twenty-eighth session of the Commission, which consisted of eight plenary meetings, including four senior officials meetings and four ministerial dialogues, and four closed meetings. The session was held in Tunis, from 15 to 18 September 2014.

I. ISSUES CALLING FOR ATTENTION AND ACTION BY THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

3. At its plenary meeting of 19 September 2014, the Commission adopted the following Declaration and resolutions to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council for its attention and action.

TUNIS DECLARATION ON SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE ARAB REGION

1. We, the representatives of the member States of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, assembled in Tunis at the twenty-eighth ministerial session of the Commission, commit to social justice as a core value of the Arab and Islamic culture and a foundation for secure, cohesive and prosperous societies.

2. We shall strive to achieve equality and equity in our countries, eradicating poverty, securing environmental sustainability and building partnerships for development, as enshrined in international treaties and declarations.

3. We note with extreme concern the daunting challenges that the Arab region is facing in all aspects of human development. We affirm the importance of addressing threats to social cohesion and combating water scarcity, food and water insecurity, environmental pollution, climate change and the increasing debt of poor Arab countries, which further impede efforts towards social justice and sustainable development.

4. We are deeply alarmed by the escalating conflicts; the continuous loss of lives, livelihoods and resources; and particularly the religious and sectarian tensions that detrimentally affect large segments of our society and undermine social cohesion.

5. We strongly condemn the Israeli military offensives targeting Palestinian civilians and infrastructure, and the latest attack on the Gaza Strip in July and August 2014. We recognize that the Israeli occupation and its policies and practices of discrimination, racial segregation, apartheid and settlement-building and the Judaization of East Jerusalem undermine the basic rights of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories and the Syrian population in the occupied Golan Heights.

6. We denounce the revival of racist calls to religious purity of States – namely by the Government of Israel and extremist groups in the region – a concept which represents a flagrant violation of the rights of peoples to equality and non-discrimination.

7. We strongly condemn that are our societies face vicious waves of terrorism that limit their opportunities to achieve development and social justice goals, by threatening their resources and capabilities and destroying the development gains that their peoples and Governments secured over decades. We urge organizations in the Arab region to examine the dangers of all aspects of the economic blockade and of money laundering and its links to terrorism financing, and to propose measures to limit such dangers that threaten development, peace and security.

8. We also reaffirm that social justice is as a fundamental prerequisite for peace, security and social cohesion, all of which are, in turn, critical for realizing social justice.

9. We recall the Commission's resolution 304 (XXVII) of 10 May 2012 on the role of participation and social justice in achieving sustainable development, in which it encourages member States to intensify their efforts to mainstream social justice into sustainable development strategies and address the concerns of all social groups.

10. We refer to the 2012-2016 action plan of the League of Arab States¹ and the Amman Declaration on Priorities of the Arab Region for Inclusive and Sustainable Development Post-2015,² which highlight the link between inclusive development and social justice in the region.

11. We commend the efforts and progress made in ratifying relevant human rights treaties and instruments; in achieving the Millennium Development Goals; and in participating in global processes leading to the adoption of the post-2015 development agenda.

12. We affirm the commitment of Arab States to advancing youth development, especially for those with special needs, and stress the urgent need to overcome the obstacles to youth economic and social empowerment. We also stress the importance of empowering older persons and enhancing their contribution to the development process.

13. We stress the crucial role of sound macroeconomic policies in advancing the mutually reinforcing objectives of social justice and inclusive development, to combat inequalities among social groups within countries.

14. We shall reduce unemployment through indiscriminate means to create employment opportunities; developing productive sectors; addressing the mismatch between educational outcomes and the needs of the labour market; and improving economic governance systems.

15. We affirm the need to develop policies, establish mechanisms to combat violence against women and undertake special measures to increase women's effective participation in decision-making.

16. We shall develop strategies that expand social protection, without exclusion or marginalization to address the requirements of different population groups.

17. We recognize the importance of promoting participatory mechanisms that strengthen the role of civil society institutions and other stakeholders in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of sustainable development policies, especially social protection policies.

18. We shall promote the right to health and education, without exclusion or marginalization, as stipulated by the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to empower individuals.

19. We stress the urgent need for policies to ensure the preservation and management of increasingly scarce natural resources, in a manner that respects the environment and guarantees intergenerational justice.

20. We are determined to promote a sense of responsible citizenry and civic engagement in decision-making.

21. In this context, We request the Commission's secretariat:

(a) To incorporate the elements of social justice in its work on the preparation, monitoring and implementation of a post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals, and establish clear implementation and monitoring mechanisms to ensure the achievement of national, regional and global development goals, in accordance with country capabilities;

(b) To strengthen the policy capacity of member States in all relevant fields through training, research and normative work, including through the production of reports on justice, poverty, inequality,

¹ The five year plan (2012-2016) stemmed from the second thematic session of the ministers of social affairs of the League of Arab States, held in Cairo, on 28 May 2012.

² Adopted by the Arab ministers of social affairs as an outcome document of the Conference on Priorities of the Arab Region for Inclusive and Sustainable Development Post-2015, held in Amman, on 11 May 2014.

social protection, social inclusion, women's empowerment, natural resource management, renewable energy subsidies, access to technology and good governance, as well as trade policies and their role in achieving development;

(c) To provide advisory services and technical support to member States to improve national policy responses so as to enhance social cohesion, tackle youth and women's development challenges, and promote youth and women's participation and empowerment in decision-making processes;

(d) To monitor the effects of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, its implications in the light of regional and international developments and its detrimental impact on the attainment of the multiple dimensions of justice in Palestine and the region as a whole, so as to uphold the human rights-based and legal efforts to condemn the Israeli occupation and support the Palestinians in demanding their rights;

(e) To create a measurement tool to monitor progress in the area of social justice in the Arab region and strengthen the capacity of member States and statistical agencies to collect, build, analyse and disseminate harmonized related indicators.

22. From Tunis, we reaffirm our commitment to social justice for our peoples as a vision of and path to a bright, dignified and prosperous future.

8th plenary meeting
18 September 2014

314 (XXVIII). The Arab Forum on Sustainable Development

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) entitled "The future we want",¹ especially paragraph 97 that acknowledges the importance of the regional dimension of sustainable development and the ability of regional frameworks to complement and facilitate effective translation of sustainable development policies into concrete action at the national level, and paragraph 84 on establishing a high-level political forum on sustainable development,

Referring also to General Assembly resolution 67/290 on the format and organizational aspects of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, especially paragraph 7 (f) in which it decided that the meetings of the forum should benefit from regional preparatory processes, and paragraph 13 in which it acknowledged the importance of the regional dimension of sustainable development and invited the United Nations regional commissions to contribute to the work of the forum, including through annual regional meetings, with the involvement of other relevant regional entities, major groups and other relevant stakeholders, as appropriate,

Recalling its resolution 305 (XXVII) on sustainable development in the Arab region and follow-up and implementation of the decisions of the Rio+20 Conference,

Recognizing current regional challenges and circumstances and the importance of tackling them through a balanced and integrated developmental approach,

Noting the efforts of Arab countries to achieve sustainable development,

¹ General Assembly resolution 66/288.

Referring to the Dubai document for the Arab regional implementation of Rio+20² that emphasizes the important role of the regional commissions in the follow-up to the international processes launched by the Rio+20 Conference; and to the outcomes of the Arab High Level Forum on Sustainable Development, organized by the Commission in collaboration with the League of Arab States, the Regional Office for West Asia of the United Nations Environmental Programme, the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Government of Jordan,³

Appreciating the efforts of the secretariat of the Commission in following up the outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference, in undertaking good regional preparations with respect to the international process on the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals and in conducting regional preparations for the second session of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and striving to include all relevant stakeholders and sectors in developing a clear Arab regional perspective that takes into account the priorities of the Arab region and the challenges it is facing;

1. *Encourages* member States to actively participate in intergovernmental negotiations on the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals, and in the upcoming annual sessions of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development;

2. *Invites* member States to widely participate in the sessions of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development and achieve a balanced representation of governmental organizations in the Forum;

3. *Requests* the secretariat to hold sessions of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development periodically, in participation with the League of Arab States and other organizations concerned with sustainable development, in order to prepare for the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, review the progress made in achieving the sustainable development goals and contribute to launching regional partnerships to advance sustainable development in the Arab region;

4. *Further requests* the secretariat to monitor progress in achieving sustainable development in the Arab region and to prepare reports on the topic on the basis of official data for presentation at the sessions of the Arab Forum on Sustainable Development;

5. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to present a report, at the twenty-ninth session of the Commission, on the procedures undertaken to implement the present resolution.

8th plenary meeting
18 September 2014

315 (XXVIII). Establishing an intergovernmental committee on technology for development

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to the 2005 World Summit Outcome in which the United Nations Member States recognized that science and technology, including information and communications technology, are vital for the achievement of the development goals; and to Economic and Social Council resolution 2004/68 of 5 November 2004 concerning science and technology for development,

² Issued at the Arab Regional Implementation Meeting for the Twentieth Session of the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD-20) – Follow-up from the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in Dubai, 29-30 May 2013. Available from <http://css.escwa.org.lb/sdspd/2044/bd5.pdf>.

³ ESCWA. *Report of the Arab High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development*. Amman, 2-4 April 2014, E/ESCWA/SDPD/2014/WG.1/6/Report.

Referring also to the outcome of the World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva 2003-Tunis 2005), in particular the Tunis Agenda on the Information Society (Tunis Agenda 2005) and the international mechanisms and forums it generated,

Referring further to goal 8 of the Millennium Development Goals which includes a target on making available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technology,

Recognizing the importance of increasing the participation of the Governments of ESCWA member States in identifying priorities and planning and improving the ESCWA programme of work in the field of technology for development,

Recognizing also the need to enhance coordination and integration between ESCWA and Arab regional organizations regarding technology-for-development policies and programmes, to meet the needs of member States and develop this technology to achieve inclusive development in the Arab region,

Taking into consideration the recommendations resulting from the evaluation undertaken by ESCWA of its working mechanisms, including a proposal to establish a committee on technology for development,

Stressing the important role of ESCWA in promoting information and communications technology sectors and related industries and enhancing their role in development, information society and digital economy in member States and linking them to the international process of the World Summit on the Information Society and the mechanisms and international forums it generated for Internet governance; and invigorating the role of member States at the international level in those international forums,

Stressing also the important role of the ESCWA Technology Centre in the fields of science and technology and in networking scientific and technological research with major economic sectors in member States,

Taking into consideration the efforts undertaken by ESCWA under subprogramme 4, “Information and communications technology for regional integration”, and its achievements in those fields to advance the information and communications technology sector and scientific and technological research,

Guided by the work of other United Nations regional commissions regarding the establishment of specialized committees on technology for development,

1. *Endorses* changing the name of subprogramme 4, from “Information and communications technology for regional integration” to “Technology for development and regional integration”;

2. *Decides* to establish an intergovernmental committee to be named “Committee on Technology for Development”, comprising representatives from ESCWA member States with experience in the field, which would replace the Consultative Committee on Scientific and Technological Development and Technological Innovation, use the resources allocated to it and undertake the following:

(a) Identifying priorities of the ESCWA programme of work and medium-term plans regarding technology for development, including scientific research and innovation, digital economy and information society, knowledge economies and emerging areas;

(b) Monitoring the progress achieved in the field of technology, including information and communications technology, Internet governance, digital economy and the information society on the one hand, and areas related to scientific research and transfer of technology on the other hand; and formulating recommendations to strengthen the development of those fields;

(c) Following up regional and international processes, conferences and forums relevant to subprogramme 4, and coordinating regional efforts to implement decisions and recommendations of those conferences;

(d) Supporting the secretariat to continue to follow up the implementation of the Tunis Agenda adopted by the World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva 2003 and Tunis 2005) and to participate in the activities and projects related to the World Summit beyond 2015;

(e) Advancing the work of the secretariat in supporting cooperation with the ministerial councils and the organizations and unions of the League of Arab States, including the Council of Arab Ministers of Communications and Information Technology, the Arab Administrative Development Organization and other specialized organizations, in harmonizing policies and strategies, supporting communication and partnerships and coordinating positions at the international level in addition to building capacities;

3. *Also decides* that the Committee shall hold its sessions once every two years, with effect from 2016;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to submit a report on the implementation of the present resolution to the Commission at its twenty-ninth session.

8th plenary meeting
18 September 2014

316 (XXVIII). Support for the Palestinian people

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to General Assembly resolution 67/19 of 29 November 2012 concerning the status of Palestine in the United Nations, in which it accorded to Palestine the status of non-member observer State in the United Nations,

Referring also to General Assembly resolution 68/12 of 26 November 2013, in which it proclaimed 2014 the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People,

Referring further to General Assembly resolutions 68/14 concerning the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, 68/13 concerning the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat and 68/12 concerning the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, all of which adopted on 26 November 2013,

Referring to Economic and Social Council resolution 2014/26 of 11 July 2014 concerning the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan,

Recalling its resolutions 307 (XXVII) of 10 May 2012 and 292 (XXVI) of 19 May 2010, in which it reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, supported the efforts of the Palestinian people and Palestinian Authority towards the establishment of a Palestinian State that extends its authority over all its territory on the basis of United Nations resolutions, and called for intensifying efforts to raise awareness on the rights of the Palestinian people and on the violations of those rights,

Taking note of the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations prepared by the ESCWA secretariat in 2014 on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the

Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan,¹ which highlights the continuing deterioration of the economic and social conditions as a result of persistent Israeli practices and policies that violate international law, especially collective punishments against the Palestinian people, the Gaza blockade, the illegal expansionary settlements on Palestinian territory in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, the construction of the separation wall, denying Palestinians and their institutions the right to access and use their natural resources, including agricultural land and water resources, in addition to the excessive use of force by the Israeli army and security forces, the continuous destruction of Palestinian houses and institutions with impunity, and violence committed by Israeli settlers against the Palestinians and their properties and religious sites,

Also taking note of the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, published on 13 January 2014,² and the concluding observations of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination,³ which was “particularly appalled at the hermetic character of the separation of two groups, who live on the same territory but do not enjoy either equal use of roads and infrastructure or equal access to basic services and water resources,” and considered that this constitutes a breach of article 3 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and a violation of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to economic and social development,

Referring to decisions 594 and 595 adopted by the League of Arab States at its twenty-fifth summit on 26 March 2014, which reiterate the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to self-determination and the right of return of the Palestinian refugees, and the categorical refusal of the recognition of Israel as a Jewish State,

Noting with appreciation that, despite all difficulties, the Palestinians are persistently exerting all efforts to build their institutions, realize development and achieve a just and comprehensive peace on the basis of their legitimate rights under international law in the occupied territory,

Also noting with appreciation the efforts of the ESCWA secretariat to support the Palestinian people, build its institutions and raise the awareness of the international community of Palestinian rights as guaranteed by numerous international resolutions, charters and conventions,

Taking into consideration the increasing needs of Palestinian institutions and bodies in the process of building a state and achieving development despite occupation, as indicated by the number of requests for technical cooperation received by the secretariat from the Palestinian Government,

1. *Welcomes* General Assembly resolution 67/19 in which it accorded to Palestine the status of non-member observer State in the United Nations;
2. *Also welcomes* General Assembly resolution 68/12 in which it proclaimed 2014 the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;
3. *Calls on* the international community to support the Government of National Conciliation which was formed according to the Palestinian National Reconciliation achieved in May 2014, asserting the unity of the Palestinian people;

¹ A/69/81-E/2014/13.

² United Nations, Human Rights Council, twenty-fifth session, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Richard Falk, 13 January 2014, A/HRC/25/67.

³ United Nations, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, eightieth session, 13 February – 9 March 2012, Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 9 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, CERD/C/ISR/CO/14-16.

4. *Condemns with the strongest terms* the Israeli assault on the Gaza Strip, being another Israeli attempt at breaking the will of the Palestinian people; and stresses that targeting civilians and their houses and infrastructure, as seen in Gaza, constitutes further violations of the International Humanitarian Law, which emphasizes the need to hold Israel accountable for those crimes;

5. *Condemns* the practices and policies of the Israeli occupation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, which amount to apartheid, cause a continuous deterioration of their economic and social conditions and violate the collective and individual rights of the Palestinian people;

6. *Calls upon* member States:

(a) To raise the level of their support for the Palestinian people in their efforts to obtain their full rights, to put an end to Israeli violations of their rights and of the international law, to end the Israeli occupation and to establish an independent Palestinian State in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions;

(b) To support Palestine's efforts to obtain full membership in all specialized international agencies and to join international charters and protocols as an inherent right of the State of Palestine;

(c) To enhance efforts to support and reinforce the resilience of the Palestinian people, so as to ensure their continued existence on their land and mitigate the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation and related policies;

(d) To observe the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People through new or scheduled activities, in particular cultural ones;

(e) To observe the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November through special activities and/or ensure the highest possible level of representation in the activity organized by the ESCWA secretariat in that regard;

(f) To encourage Arab and foreign civil society organizations to launch initiatives to enhance the capacities of the Palestinian people and support their effort to obtain their full rights and provide moral and material support for those initiatives where possible;

(g) To support the efforts of the Arab humanitarian and charitable associations to help the Palestinian people;

(h) To contribute to the mobilization of international support for the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip and effectively participate in the international donors conference to be held in Egypt in October 2014;

(i) To encourage the subsidiary bodies of ESCWA to give special attention to the conditions of the Palestinian people;

7. *Requests* the ESCWA secretariat to raise the level of its support for the Palestinian people and their institutions at all levels, including the enhancement of human resources for subprogramme 7 to support the implementation of the following:

(a) Providing normative and technical assistance to the Palestinian institutions according to the Palestinian needs;

(b) Developing more activities on Palestine and organize special events in observance of the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, with the aim of raising awareness and mobilizing support for the Palestinian people in Palestine and abroad, and securing the widest media coverage for those events;

(c) Submitting periodic reports to the ministerial sessions of the Commission on the practices of the Israeli occupation that violate the economic and social rights of the Palestinian people and other rights guaranteed by international law, charters and conventions;

(d) Monitoring the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation, mobilizing regional partners to support the Palestinian people and their institutions in Palestine and abroad, assisting them in achieving development and exerting pressure and advocacy to help them obtain their full rights as guaranteed by United Nations resolutions and international conventions and charters;

8. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to follow up on the implementation of this resolution and report on progress made in that regard to the Commission at its twenty-ninth session.

8th plenary meeting
18 September 2014

317 (XXVIII). Adoption of the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Having considered the revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017,*

Bearing in mind that the draft strategic framework was amended following the discussions of subprogrammes during the sessions of the specialized intergovernmental committees as well as the eighth meeting of the Technical Committee, and taking into consideration the comments received from member States prior to and following the meeting, and during the high-level segment of the twenty-eighth session of the Commission,

Noting that the draft strategic framework reflects the economic and social development priorities of member States,

1. *Adopts* the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017;
2. *Requests* the secretariat to distribute the strategic framework in the form adopted by member States.

8th plenary meeting
18 September 2014

318 (XXVIII). Adoption of session reports of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Affirming the importance of the role played by its subsidiary bodies in designing, coordinating and following-up its programme of work in their respective domains, and for upholding the best interests of member States,

Recognizing the importance of implementing the recommendations made by those bodies to enable ESCWA to undertake its duties in the competencies falling within the remit of its subsidiary bodies,

Having considered the recommendations contained in the reports of the subsidiary bodies on their sessions held in the period between the twenty-seventh and the twenty-eighth sessions of the Commission, namely: the report of the Statistical Committee on its tenth session;¹ the report of the Committee on Energy on its ninth session;² the report of the Committee on Social Development on its ninth session;³ the report of

* E/ESCWA/28/7.

¹ E/ESCWA/SD/2012/IG.1/10/Report.

² E/ESCWA/SDPD/2013/IG.2/7/Report.

³ E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/IG.1/6/Report.

the Committee on Women on its sixth session;⁴ the report of the Technical Committee on its seventh meeting;⁵ the report of the Committee on Water Resources on its tenth session;⁶ the report of the Committee on Transport on its thirteenth session;⁷ the report of the Committee on Transport on its fourteenth session;⁸ the report of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade and Economic Globalization and Financing for Development on its eighth session;⁹ and the report of the Technical Committee on its eighth meeting,¹⁰

1. *Adopts* the recommendations contained in the reports of the subsidiary bodies with the amendments agreed on during the twenty-eighth session of the Commission;

2. *Requests* the secretariat to prepare a paper on the reasons and justifications of the requests concerning annual meetings of the sessions of the Statistical Committee, the Committee on Water Resources and the Committee on Energy;

3. *Calls upon* member States to implement measures to ensure that those amended recommendations are put into effect.

8th plenary meeting
18 September 2014

**319 (XXVIII). Adoption of the proposed amendments to the programme of work
for the biennium 2014-2015**

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Taking note of the progress made in 2014 in implementing the programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015,

Expressing satisfaction with the achievements made during the previous biennium,

Referring to the proposed amendments to the programme of work,

1. *Adopts* the amendments introduced to the programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015,* with consideration given to the remarks made by member States during the twenty-eighth session;

2. *Requests* the secretariat to follow up the implementation of the programme of work and, if necessary, include activities to address any challenge that may emerge in the Arab region.

8th plenary meeting
18 September 2014

⁴ E/ESCWA/ECW/2013/IG.1/7/Report.

⁵ E/ESCWA/2012/C.7/8/Report.

⁶ E/ESCWA/SDPD/2013/IG.1/8/Report.

⁷ E/ESCWA/EDGD/2012/IG.1/8/Report.

⁸ E/ESCWA/EDGD/2013/IG.1/7/Report.

⁹ E/ESCWA/EDGD/2013/IG.2/10/Report.

¹⁰ E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/10/Report.

* E/ESCWA/28/6(Part II).

**320 (XXVIII). Redesignating the Technical Committee as the “Executive Committee”
and amending its terms of reference**

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to its decision made on 11 May 2006 during its twenty-fourth session concerning the establishment of a technical committee which should meet once every six months to follow up the implementation of the programme of work,¹

Referring also to the terms of reference of the Technical Committee as revised at its fifth meeting, held on 6 and 7 April 2011, which stipulate that the Technical Committee shall hold three meetings per biennium, in support of the ministerial session of the Commission, to advise and assist the secretariat in planning and implementing the programme of work and to take action on any other matters,

Having considered the recommendation of the Technical Committee at its seventh meeting to amend the mandate of the Technical Committee in order to facilitate its work and strengthen its ability in taking decisions and responding to regional and international developments,²

Having also considered the recommendation of the Technical Committee at its eighth meeting to redesignate the Technical Committee as the “Executive Committee” and amend its terms of reference, so that it may play a greater role in steering and coordinating the activities of the Commission,³

Noting the increasing global and regional challenges and the need to develop swift regional responses to them,

Underscoring the importance of strengthening the intergovernmental engagement of member States in the decision-making processes of the Commission, in particular to ensure an integrated approach to the work of the Commission,

1. *Decides* to redesignate the Technical Committee as the “Executive Committee”;
2. *Also decides* to revise the role of the Technical Committee and its terms of reference, with immediate effect, as set out in annex to the present resolution;
3. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to follow up on the implementation of the present resolution.

Annex

Terms of reference of the Executive Committee

1. The Executive Committee shall submit a report on its activities to the Commission at its sessions.
2. The Executive Committee shall convene three meetings in the period between the biennial sessions of the Commission.

¹ ESCWA, *Report on the twenty-fourth session*, 8-11 May 2006, E/ESCWA/24/10, para. 49.

² ESCWA, *Report of the Technical Committee on its seventh meeting*, 18-19 March 2013, E/ESCWA/2012/C.7/8/Report, para. 7 (q).

³ ESCWA, *Report of the Technical Committee on its eighth meeting*, 10-12 December 2013, E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/10/Report, para. 6 (g).

3. The Executive Committee shall be entrusted with submitting resolutions and reports to the Economic and Social Council, on matters excluding the terms of reference of the Commission.
4. The Executive Committee shall undertake the following:
 - (a) Organize the sessions of the Commission;
 - (b) Review and adopt the programme of work of the subsidiary committees on the basis of criteria defined by the Executive Committee;
 - (c) Ensure consistency between subprogrammes;
 - (d) Deal with all matters related to programme planning.
5. The membership of the Executive Committee shall mirror that of the Commission.
6. The chairs or vice-chairs of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission can be invited to the meetings of the Executive Committee.
7. The Executive Committee may propose amendments to its terms of reference, which shall be considered for adoption by the Commission.
8. The Executive Committee shall be chaired by a representative of the country chairing the Commission.

8th plenary meeting
18 September 2014

**321 (XXVIII). Redesignating the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
as the “Economic and Social Commission for Arab States”**

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia,

Referring to Economic and Social Council resolution 1818 (LV) of 9 August 1973, in which the Council established the Economic Commission for Western Asia and set out its terms of reference,

Referring also to the Council resolution 1985/69 of 26 July 1985, in which the Council decided to change the name of the Economic Commission for Western Asia to the “Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia” and to amend its terms of reference to reflect the new name,

Recalling its resolution 302 (XXVII) of 10 May 2012, in which it requested the secretariat to coordinate with the relevant United Nations entities and the League of Arab States the redesignation of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia to become the “Economic and Social Commission for Arab States”,

Having considered the recommendations of the Technical Committee at its seventh¹ and eighth² meetings concerning the redesignation of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia as the Economic and Social Commission for Arab States,

¹ ESCWA, *Report of the Technical Committee on its seventh meeting*, 18-19 March 2013, E/ESCWA/2012/C.7/8/Report, paras. 6 (a) and (b).

² ESCWA, *Report of the Technical Committee on its eighth meeting*, 10-12 December 2013, E/ESCWA/2013/C.8/10/Report, para. 6 (b).

Having taken note of the communications made by the secretariat with the League of Arab States and the United Nations office of Legal Affairs,

Bearing in mind the mandate of the Commission to address economic and social challenges in member States and its unique role in promoting regional integration among them,

1. *Recommends* the Economic and Social Council:

(a) To redesignate the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia as the “Economic and Social Commission for Arab States”;

(b) To amend the terms of reference of the Commission as set forth in its resolution 1985/69 of 26 July 1985, in line with the new designation;

2. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to follow up on the implementation of this resolution and submit a report on the progress achieved in that regard to the Commission at its twenty-ninth session.

8th plenary meeting
18 September 2014

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

4. Member State representatives participating in the senior officials segment of the ESCWA twenty-eighth session notably discussed the economic and social developments in the Arab region 2013-2014; the outcomes of the Arab High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development; support for the Palestinian people and the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; the revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017; the report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission; and management issues. The senior officials expressed their gratitude to the United Arab Emirates, which chaired the twenty-seventh session of the Commission, and their wishes for success to Bahrain, which chaired the current session. Discussions concluded with a number of recommendations, as follows:

(1) Using data from national statistical agencies when preparing ESCWA reports and studies;

(2) Preparing a report on a draft proposal to establish an Arab development and reconstruction bank for submission to the Arab Economic and Social Development Summit, to be held in Tunis in 2015;

(3) Developing a unified vision for the Arab region, in collaboration with the League of Arab States, for the post-2015 development agenda; and emphasizing the importance of coordination mechanisms to avoid duplications and bifurcations in reports and initiatives;

(4) Carrying out a coordinated study between ESCWA and the League of Arab States to assess the progress made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals and methods to continue their implementation under the new development framework; and examining obstacles and challenges to ensure that the Goals meet requirements;

(5) Undertaking a study on the social effects and the financial and economic implications of terrorism on the Arab region, especially in the light of regional and international recognition of the dangers terrorism poses to sustainable development in the region;

(6) Recognizing that the work done by subprogramme 7 on emerging and conflict-related issues is sufficient, therefore eliminating the need to establish a specialized intergovernmental committee;

(7) Establishing an Arab trade and economic integration centre, stressing the importance of complete coordination and collaboration with the League of Arab States;

(8) Declining to transform the Consultative Committee on Scientific and Technological Development and Development Innovation into an intergovernmental committee after considering the additional financial demands of this procedure on the United Nations budget;

(9) Redesignating the Technical Committee as the “Executive Committee”, with the power to plan and implement the programme of work, take action on any other matters between ministerial sessions and present resolutions to the United Nations Economic and Social Council;

(10) Not objecting in principle to holding meetings of ESCWA subsidiary bodies as necessary and requesting the secretariat to prepare a paper on the reasons and justifications for holding those meetings annually for consideration by the Executive Committee;

(11) Redesignating the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia as the “Economic and Social Commission for Arab States”, and requesting the secretariat to implement the resolution on this issue.

III. SESSION THEME: SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE POLICIES OF ARAB STATES

5. The Commission selected “Social justice in the policies of Arab States” as the theme of its twenty-eighth session, following broad discussions and consultations between the secretariat and members States, given its tight connection to the Arab region’s heritage and culture, its pertinence in view of current events in the region and its importance as a solid foundation for secure, cohesive and open societies. The secretariat prepared a discussion paper, set out in document E/ESCWA/28/8, which it presented to member State representatives at the ministerial segment. The theme was discussed at length in four ministerial dialogues, which covered all dimensions of social justice, under the following four headings: social justice and the new development approach (E/ESCWA/28/8/Panel.1); economic policies supportive of social justice (E/ESCWA/28/8/Panel.2); intergenerational justice and access to natural resources (E/ESCWA/28/8/Panel.3); and social justice: monitoring and measurement (E/ESCWA/28/8/Panel.4).

A. SOCIAL JUSTICE AND THE NEW DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

6. The moderator of the ministerial dialogue on the topic “Social justice and the new development approach”, Mr. Frederico Neto, Director of the ESCWA Social Development Division, opened the debate noting that social justice was built on equity, equality, human rights and participation, and was one of the main issues currently being discussed in international negotiations on a post-2015 development agenda. He added that there were several social, economic, political and cultural obstacles to the implementation of social justice, and it was therefore necessary to tackle the issue through an integrated approach. The present dialogue would address the lack of consensus on the definition of social justice, and on using social protection and political and economic participation as means for its achievement.

7. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz al-Nasser, High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations, said that social justice was an old concept which the United Nations had addressed in treaties, declarations and agreements stressing that social justice was achieved by eradicating corruption, ensuring equality before the law, creating job opportunities and providing basic services for all. He added that economic progress and equal opportunities paved the way to achieving social justice and development. Arab peoples aspired to live in peace and enjoy decent jobs, safe surroundings and freedom in practicing their customs and traditions. They wanted their Governments to respect the principles of justice, equity and transparency. The lack of stability, peace and security in the region on the one hand, and weak governance, misuse of resources and lack of political participation, transparency and accountability on the other, undermined development efforts.

8. Ms. Mervat Tallawy, President of the National Council for Women in Egypt, said that social justice entailed equitable income distribution, the absence of discrimination and upholding the rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups. The Arab region did not assign enough importance to social justice because it lacked knowledge of the institutional, legislative and executive means to achieve it. It was important to employ authentic, rather than imported, methods that respected peoples' specificities and met the needs of all social groups, especially women and young people. Conflicts and wars constantly threatened the region, and recurring Israeli aggressions destroyed what countries had built in times of stability. The principle obstacle to social justice in the Arab region had been the Israeli occupation of Palestine for the past sixty years, which reflected the absence of international justice.

9. Mr. Jihad Azour, former Minister of Finance of Lebanon, said that Arab peoples had revolted, demanding social justice after years of deadlock, but ruling elites had not been prepared to grant it. Some Governments had increased subsidies and created public sector jobs in an attempt at appeasement, instead of undertaking structural reforms. A set of policies was required to tackle short-term issues to achieve political, economic, social and institutional stability, to pave the way for addressing long-term issues. Steps to stimulate growth include strengthening small and medium enterprises as engines of growth, increasing the effectiveness of social policies and reforming social protection systems. He added that it was important to reinstate confidence between States and their citizens and that fiscal policies for achieving social justice should not be limited to economic objectives, but should also cover social objectives. Arab countries must therefore review their tax policies and additional tax revenues should be spent on achieving social justice, increasing wages, salaries and efficient public spending, and on subsidy reform given that current subsidies did not benefit the poor.

10. Mr. John Jost, a political science professor at New York University, said that the basis of social justice was Governments listening to citizens before making decisions. Arab peoples were aware that their demands could not be met immediately, but they needed to be reassured that the authorities were listening to them and were willing to meet their needs eventually. The achievement of social justice faced the challenges of personal interest and resistance to change, since groups that benefited from the status quo preferred to preserve it.

11. Mr. Ishak Diwan, a lecturer at Harvard University, said that the main issue underpinning social justice was the will of the people. It was now easier to understand the attitudes of Arab citizens with the help of data sources, such as the Arab Barometer and Gallup surveys. New data had shown that Arab youth valued strengthening market competition over wealth redistribution and State interference in the economy.

12. In the ensuing discussion, one representative said that social justice was not a political choice but an absolute value linked to faith and law. To achieve it effectively, it was necessary to employ fairness at the legislative, institutional and social levels and in monitoring and evaluation, for justice to be a development tool. Providing equal job opportunities combated unemployment; enhancing transparency increased production; offering effective support achieved justice through wealth redistribution and cemented confidence and social stability; and eradicating corruption strengthened human rights and built trust between Governments and citizens.

13. Another representative said that the dominant State and market economy models had failed. It was therefore necessary to find new models that balanced between the free market and the regulatory role of the State, in accordance with specific standards. Reforming tax policies, correcting wages and improving social services were all interrelated parts of distributive justice. The aim of tax reform should be wealth redistribution not increasing State revenue. Social justice required the absence of discrimination and the right to self-determination, including the right to select development paths and implement fundamental principles such as accountability and participation.

14. Participants agreed that it was vital to refer to successful global experiences and adapt them to meet Arab country specificities; acknowledge the shared responsibility between citizens and State; secure funding

without recourse to foreign aid; and assign the will, ambitions and hopes of Arab peoples the importance they deserve.

B. ECONOMIC POLICIES SUPPORTIVE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

15. Mr. Abdallah al-Dardari, Director of the Economic Development and Globalization Division, chaired the ministerial dialogue on the theme “Economic policies supportive of social justice”. He opened the discussions by indicating that the aim of the current dialogue was to examine the effects of investing or not investing in social justice, and to develop an understanding of economic policies for social justice. He added that rather than concentrating on the lack of consensus regarding the definition of social justice, the concept should be viewed from the perspective of successful experiences.

16. Mr. Grzegorz Kolodko, former Deputy Prime Minister and former Finance Minister of Poland, said that social justice was a means of achieving social cohesion in the European Union. He also spoke about the global outlook on social economy, indicating that social justice was a controversial concept relative to culture and heritage, the definition of which differed between countries. The uprisings had highlighted the absence of social justice in the Arab region in terms of equitable distribution of growth and using tax revenue and financial resources to achieve comprehensive social development. Economic growth raised wealth distribution questions, given that social justice was achieved through equitable wealth distribution between sectors and population groups, according to their needs, and by investing public funds in human capital, education, health care and research and development.

17. Mr. Hazem al-Beblawi, former Prime Minister of Egypt and former ESCWA Executive Secretary, gave a presentation on enshrining social justice in fiscal and economic policies. He tackled the issue of economic optimization and the need to reconcile the many social pillars. He said that social justice was futile in the absence of freedom. Economies could not be confined to aspects of production and efficiency alone, as their most important characteristic was the balance between private and public goods, such as security, justice, stability and education. Achieving social justice required partnerships between individuals, civil society and the State. Individuals should strive to secure their personal interests through entrepreneurship, competition and innovation, thus driving the economy; civil society should encourage cooperation between individuals, specifying the ethical practices that should prevail in a society; and the State should guarantee security, peace, freedom and the rule of law.

18. Mr. Omar Razzaz, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the King Abdullah II Fund for Development, tackled the issues of social protection and employment and their roles in achieving social justice. Regarding social protection, he said that the Arab region lacked experience in developing a comprehensive system to protect citizens from serious threats. Concerning employment, he said that the region currently suffered from high unemployment rates, especially among young people, giving rise to the phenomenon known as the “generation in waiting”, represented by educated young people of working age waiting for elusive job opportunities, leading to frustration and, ultimately, extremism. He indicated that only 25 per cent of women in the region were employed, compared to a global average of 50 per cent.

19. Mr. Mohammed Saed al-Sadi, Minister of Planning and International Cooperation of Yemen, presented his country’s experience to cast light on the link between politics, development and economics. After five decades of political conflict, the debate continued to focus on rulers rather than on how to rule and drive development. Given limited resources and political considerations, development remained a secondary issue or a voluntary practice carried out by citizens. Today, following the 2011 popular uprisings and the Yemeni National Dialogue Conference that lasted 11 months, Yemenis had agreed on an outcome document with social justice at its heart.

20. In the ensuing discussion, participants affirmed that social justice did not entail abandoning market efficiency and did not weaken economic competition. It should not be limited to developing economic tools, such as a minimum wage, or implementing social policies to protect the rights of workers and vulnerable and

marginalized groups. Achieving social justice must begin with the belief that it was fundamental for the development of policies that met the region's specificities, and country priorities and economic capabilities.

C. INTERGENERATIONAL JUSTICE AND ACCESS TO NATURAL RESOURCES

21. Ms. Nada al-Nashif, Assistant Secretary-General and Regional Director for the Arab States of the International Labour Organization, opened the dialogue on the topic "Intergenerational justice and access to natural resources". She said that the International Labour Organization assigned great importance to social justice and she commended regional efforts to do the same. She added that the current ministerial dialogue would cover all aspects of social justice related to the use of natural resources.

22. Ms. Carole Nakhle, energy economics lecturer at the University of Surrey, said that 32 million persons in the Arab region did not have access to electricity. She stressed that there was a strong link between economic development and access to energy and expressed her objection to the theory that natural resources should be left untouched for future generations; instead they should be used to strengthen the economy for present and future generations. She warned that the oil sector did not offer sufficient employment opportunities, so it could not be depended on entirely, especially considering that investment projects in the sector were directly affected by fluctuating oil prices.

23. Mr. Shaddad al-Attili, former Palestinian Minister and Chair of the Water Authority, said that natural resources had suffered under the current generation. The industrial revolution had had several environmental consequences, such as global warming, a rise in sea levels, water scarcity and drought. He mentioned the disagreements that had arisen following the Copenhagen Climate Change Conference between those who supported adapting to the effects of climate and those who called for mitigating such effects. He added that it was necessary to implement the Arab Water Strategy and Action Plan developed by Arab water ministers. Hunger, poverty, water scarcity were among the reasons that drove people to demand social justice, including equitable resource distribution. He affirmed that it was important to abide by international laws and regulations and build on the achievements of the international community to develop future strategies.

24. In the ensuing discussion, participants said that it was vital to address the challenges of water resource management in the Arab region, where there were great expanses of desert and infertile land. They recalled several successful experiences from numerous Arab countries that could be referred to, including the sustainable water management strategy in Oman and desalination projects in Gulf Cooperation Council countries. Ensuring intergenerational justice in the management of water resources entailed developing an economic diversification mechanism; diversifying energy and income sources; encouraging responsible consumption; upholding citizens' rights to access information; ensuring citizen participation in developing strategies and policies; prohibiting monopoly; encouraging competition; and strengthening energy capabilities to invest funds in other areas and create job opportunities to attain social justice. They added that it was necessary to achieve Arab regional integration for countries to benefit from other countries strengths in tackling their own challenges.

D. SOCIAL JUSTICE: MONITORING AND MEASUREMENT

25. Mr. Juraj Riecan, Director of the ESCWA Statistics Division, opened the dialogue with a presentation on the monitoring and measurement of social justice, with reference to a paper prepared by ESCWA on the topic, stressing the importance of monitoring and measurement and of providing statistics to develop indicators for use in policymaking and evaluation.

26. Ms. Martine Durand, Chief Statistician and Director of the Statistics Directorate at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), presented her organization's new approach to measuring human well-being and quality of life. She said that indicators no longer simply relied on financial and economic aspects, such as gross domestic product (GDP), income, employment and housing, but also

focused on people's quality of life. Indicators to measure intangible assets, such as the effects of climate change, health, security, well-being and participation in decision-making, had also been developed.

27. Ms. Ola Awad, Minister of the Palestinian National Authority and President of the Palestinian National Bureau of Statistics, said that there was no set definition for social justice, but its measurement required accurate and clear statistical data sets. Official statistics were vital in guiding policymaking to meet specific country needs. She gave the example of Palestine, where all relevant stakeholders participated in setting a large number of statistical monitoring tools and indicators. She added that there were several challenges facing statistical agencies in various areas, including adapting international standards to regional contexts, receiving legal clearance to publish statistics on sensitive issues such as corruption and unemployment, and securing necessary resources.

28. Mr. Shantayanan Devarajan, Chief Economist of the World Bank's Africa Region, said that it was important to publish statistics on social justice in securing accountability and improving service provision, especially in the public sector. He added that Arab countries faced several challenges related to accountability, which affected service quality in education and health care, despite quantitative targets being met.

29. In the ensuing discussion, participants said that the Arab region faced similar challenges to other regions in applying certain OECD economic indicators, such as those measuring social relations and mental health. The issue of social justice and its measurement was not limited to developing countries; marginalized groups in developed countries, such as migrants and ethnic minorities, suffered from poor education and health-care services.

IV. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION AND DISCUSSION

A. IMPORTANT ISSUES AND DEVELOPMENTS

30. At the senior officials segment, several important issues and developments in the Arab region were considered and discussed, with reference to the work and monitoring carried out by ESCWA prior to the twenty-eighth session. Participants discussed the economic and social developments in the Arab region 2013-2014; the outcomes of the Arab High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development; support for the Palestinian people; and the revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017.

1. Survey of economic and social developments in the Arab region

31. The representative of the secretariat gave a presentation to the senior officials on a survey of economic and social developments in the Arab region 2013-2014, prepared annually by ESCWA, covering the following four topics: the global economy and its effects on the Arab economy; important developments in the Arab economy and the challenges faced by Arab countries, surveyed in accordance with their economic and social specificities; a fundamental issue that changes every year: this year it was the funding gap in the Arab region; and the situation of women in terms of the labour market and political participation in the Arab region.

32. The representatives of Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen made pertinent comments on the presentation.

33. Representatives commended the survey and its precise results, which examined Arab countries in detail by grouping them according to their levels of development, income and economic diversification. Comments focussed on tackling the obstacles hampering the implementation of the Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA) through continued cooperation between ESCWA and the League of Arab States, especially regarding its detailed operational rules, so as to strengthen trade ties and increase integration among Arab countries.

34. Representatives inquired about the feasibility of establishing an Arab bank under the proposed solutions for bridging the funding gap, in view of the significant regional challenges. They questioned whether such a project would succeed and how the necessary resources would be secured. They suggested developing a clear scenario for the proposed bank's working mechanism, voting rights and loan approvals and conditions.

35. Representatives focused on the importance of evenly balancing between social and economic aspects in the survey, especially given the need to take into account the cost of terrorism on development and other achievements in the region, and its negative effects on vital social sectors such as education and health.

36. Representatives highlighted growth disparities and the lack of equitable income distribution, which were reasons behind the uprisings. They said that the absence of justice increased social tension because it broadened the funding gap and they raised questions on how to allocate resources within the region to bridge that gap.

37. In response to comments, the representative of the secretariat said that the survey was a periodic survey of the economy and its relevant factors, which also addressed issues such as unemployment, poverty, women's participation, gender equality and the environment. It should be read with reference to other ESCWA reports, including the *Arab Integration Report* that analysed the successes and shortfalls of integration, which continued to attract attention and investment from other regions, including the European Union, which had achieved economic unity.

38. With regard to trade integration, ESCWA was collaborating with the League of Arab States on several issues, notably assessing GAFTA outcomes and achievements, especially non-tariff barriers that could further liberalize trade following the elimination of custom restrictions. He expressed his hope that the broad and close partnership with the League of Arab States would result in scenarios for submission to the next Arab Economic and Social Development Summit.

39. Concerning an Arab development bank, the representative of the secretariat noted the efforts of development funds in the Arab region, and stressed the urgent need for effective, fast and low-cost funding mechanisms that exceeded the capacity of all funds combined. The Arab region was the only region without a development bank working alongside various funds and multilateral organizations. He expressed her willingness to prepare a detailed study on the proposal.

40. Regarding the funding gap, the representative of the secretariat noted that some countries spent double the amount on energy subsidies and the security sector than on education and health combined, although richer population groups benefitted the most from such subsidies.

41. In relation to the effects of crises on development, ESCWA had published studies on the effects of the Libyan crisis on the Tunisian economy; the impact of the ongoing crisis in Iraq on the economies of neighbouring countries; the effects on the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic on Jordan and Lebanon; and the consequences of the Israeli aggression on Gaza and the Arab region. Examining the wider effects of crises gave a clearer picture of the development links between Arab countries and the impact of development fluctuations on poverty, unemployment, balance of payments and government budgets.

2. Outcomes of the Arab High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development

42. The representative of the secretariat, referring to document E/ESCWA/SDPD/2014/WG.1/6/Report, reviewed the outcomes of the Arab High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development, organized by ESCWA in collaboration with the League of Arab States and the United Nations Environment Programme. The aim of the Forum was to follow-up on the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20).

43. The Forum was the result of a series of consultations on what Arab countries wanted to gain from Rio+20. The Forum focused on the following four topics: progress made in achieving the Millennium Development Goals; the regional position on the proposed sustainable development goals; the Arab Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development 2015-2025; and the Forum's structure and work mechanism for its future sessions. Its outcomes had been presented to all Arab countries and to the councils of Arab social affairs ministers and the Arab ministers responsible for the environment.

44. The Forum had proposed 11 interlinked sustainable development goals, focusing on poverty; unemployment; infrastructure; water and energy; food security; provision of goods, services and public utilities; balanced development; and decent housing.

45. Those goals cut across the proposed 17 global sustainable development goals. The Forum was an important mechanism for encouraging an integrated approach to the economic, social and environmental dimensions of development and generating the political momentum for decision-making, and a communication mechanism between experts, civil society and all sustainable development stakeholders.

46. In the ensuing discussion, representative of the Sudan, Tunisia, Yemen and the League of Arab States commented on the presentation.

47. The representative of the secretariat said that the League of Arab States and ESCWA were jointly organizing a conference to develop goals according to the priority outcomes of the first Arab High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development, with the participation of the technical secretariats of the ministries of environment, water and housing.

48. Representatives said that it was important to develop a unified vision for the Arab region when preparing the post-2015 development agenda, and that all Arab countries should participate in the negotiations to ensure that the region had a strong and unified position, allowing it to place its priorities at the heart of the final outcome. They added that coordination mechanisms were vital to avoid duplication and overlaps in reports and initiatives. Concerning agreement on the final development goals at the international level, the Arab region must uphold its priorities, including peace, institution-building and science and technology.

3. Support for the Palestinian people

49. The representative of the secretariat reviewed the economic and social situation in Palestine, referring to document E/ESCWA/28/4. He said that the situation in Palestine was deteriorating as a result of the ongoing Israeli occupation, especially the recurring offensives on Gaza and the great human and material losses they entailed, requiring large amounts of resources to compensate and rebuild, which affected the economic and social situation in the whole region.

50. ESCWA had carried out normative and technical activities to support the Palestinian people and to prepare for the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, including launching a media campaign to disseminate daily information on Palestine for a period of 181 days in commemoration of the General Assembly resolution that carried the same number; organizing initiatives to support Palestinians in Lebanon; and celebrating the International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People to raise awareness of the violations they suffered, galvanize regional and international support for the Palestinian Cause and assist the Palestinian people in regaining their rights.

51. He added that ESCWA was preparing a report documenting Israeli violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

52. The representatives of Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, the Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen commented on the presentation

53. Representatives said that the Palestinian Cause affected the Arab region as a whole. More importance should be given to the issue, granting it broader and more integrated institutional and social support. They also requested that the annual report prepared by ESCWA, in collaboration with other United Nations entities, on the repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, be presented at ESCWA ministerial sessions, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to integrate practical recommendations that had international support.

54. Representatives added that special attention should be given to documenting violations and supporting the Palestinian people and their institutions in following up their case through international legal avenues.

B. REVISED DRAFT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE BIENNIUM 2016-2017
(Agenda item 8)

55. The representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the following three strategic objectives and priority areas for 2016-2017: inclusive development, regional integration, and good governance and resilience. He said that the secretariat had taken into account comments from member States when preparing the draft strategic framework and that ESCWA was committed to achieving priority objectives for the Arab region. He added that it was important to follow up ESCWA work by collecting data and statistics and conducting evaluations that assisted in developing policies.

56. Representatives commended the secretariat's efforts in preparing the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017 and incorporating comments from member States.

57. They raised several issues, including flexibility in implementing the strategic objectives given that not all objectives and their priority areas applied to all subprogrammes. For example, they said that resilience to crises and occupation, under the good governance pillar, did not apply to subprogramme 7, and might only apply to institutional capacity-building under other subprogrammes. They requested clarification on the role that ESCWA could play in developing agreements and strategies between member States under the regional integration objective. They said that regional integration accomplishments could not be measured by the number of bilateral and multilateral agreements on the issue. Moreover, accomplishments in the advancement of women could not be measured by the number of regional networks developed for that purpose. State participation in ESCWA activities and ESCWA participation in international forums was not a sufficient measure of achievements; the positive effects of activities was what truly reflected expected accomplishments. Representatives stressed the need to broaden achievement indicators so that they not only measured quantity, but also quality and the effects of services provided. One representative said that "challenges of occupation" should be added to the expected accomplishments of subprogramme 7.

58. Another representative requested that a study on the social effects and financial and economic repercussions of terrorism on the region be undertaken, especially in view of the regional and international acknowledgement of the threats from terrorism that the Arab region was facing.

59. Representatives said that it was important to focus on the knowledge society and knowledge-based economy, given that those two concepts were applicable to all sectors. They stressed the need to create job opportunities for young people and prepare periodical reports on pertinent issues, such as competitiveness, integration, productivity and economic diversification, and requested that ESCWA increase its technical support capabilities.

60. In response to a representative's suggestion to develop a subprogramme for Arab countries undergoing transition, other representatives said that it was impossible to do so, given the volatile situation in those countries and the varied levels of transition they had achieved. They proposed the development of an initiative to build those countries' institutional capacities and assist them in completing their political and social transitions. Those countries could also submit a request to ESCWA for the development of programmes that met their specific needs.

61. One representative indicated that the draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017 would be affected by the impending deadline for the Millennium Development Goals and the launch of the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals. Another representative said that ESCWA not only offered regional representation, but also an Arab representation within the United Nations.

62. One representative said that the pertinent issue of the family was not mentioned in the draft strategic framework, and stressed the need to develop planning frameworks and programmes and hold workshops to build planning capacities.

63. The representative of the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics, participating as an observer, said that it was important to assign civil society the importance it deserved in the draft strategic framework, given its vital role in many areas, including health care, education, culture, and women and youth issues. He indicated the absence of a database on civil society organizations that acted as mediators between government bodies and civilians in terms of awareness-raising, education, support, democratic transition, equality and the achievement of desired goals and the national and international levels. He suggested that the programmes set out in the draft strategic framework should include building the capacities of civil society organizations in view of their important social and economic roles and the numerous job opportunities they offer.

64. In response to comments on the draft strategic framework, the representative of the secretariat thanked the representatives for their valued interventions and said that they would be taken into consideration in the preparation of the work programme for the biennium 2016-2017, without changing the general direction of the Strategic Framework.

C. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMISSION (Agenda item 9)

1. *Financial status of the Commission*

65. The representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the financial status of the Commission, with reference to document E/ESCWA/28/6(Part I), which covered items under the regular budget, including economic and social development in Western Asia; the regular programme of technical cooperation; the Development Account; and security and safety. It also covered extrabudgetary resources. He said that programmes on statistics, the advancement of women and conflict mitigation and development had received additional budgetary resources. He outlined the secretariat's achievements in reducing administrative expenditures and reviewed the utilization of regular budget and extrabudgetary resources and expenditures to support member States. He added that there had been a drop in extrabudgetary resources for the biennium 2012-2013 compared to the previous biennium and highlighted that ESCWA had access to fewer extrabudgetary resources than the other regional commissions.

66. The representative of Saudi Arabia said that it was important to increase resources allocated to technical assistance services for member States.

2. *Programme performance for the biennium 2012-2013*

67. The representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the programme performance for the biennium 2012-2013, referring to document E/ESCWA/28/6(Part II). He said that ESCWA had achieved many objectives related to enhancing economic integration, implementing the Millennium Development Goals and supporting sustainable development, especially with regard to implementing the outcomes of Rio+20, participating in the preparation of the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals, and the advancement of women. He outlined the accomplishments and lessons learned for each of the seven subprogrammes. He clarified that the secretariat, in the programme performance report, had followed a result-based evaluation approach, whereby performance indicators were set, data were systematically

collected, lessons were drawn and obstacles and challenges were identified and taken into account when developing plans and programmes for the upcoming periods.

68. In the ensuing discussion, one representative suggested that it was not sufficient to review challenges and lessons learned; solutions should also be proposed to overcome obstacles.

69. In response to a request for clarification by one representative on the type of technical support provided by ESCWA, the representative of the secretariat referred to the Communication and Information Unit established as a result of an agreement signed between ESCWA and Saudi Arabia.

3. Technical cooperation and regional advisory services

70. The representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the technical cooperation activities conducted by ESCWA, funded by the regular programme of technical cooperation, the United Nations Development Account and extrabudgetary resources. Services provided included policy advice, technical support, capacity-building and field projects, in accordance with member States' needs to support their initiatives and provide solutions on the basis of country specificities. He outlined the accomplishments of the technical cooperation programme and projects financed through the Development Fund and extrabudgetary resources. Such services focused on evaluating the effects of climate change on water resources and its social and economic impact in the Arab region; the International Comparison Programme for Western Asia, building the capacities of policymakers in the region to develop policies and national workplans for young people; and strengthening negotiating positions on bilateral investment treaties and information and communication technology policies.

71. The representative of the secretariat said that 2013 had seen an increase in demand for technical cooperation and advisory services. The number of applications received by the secretariat to date for 2014 had already surpassed the number for 2013. He added that the secretariat would strive, in collaboration with relevant United Nations entities, to increase resources allocated to that area, and called for an increase in member State contributions to allow ESCWA to meet increasing member State needs. He said that the added value of ESCWA lies in its technical expertise.

72. To clarify the relationship between technical cooperation activities and the ESCWA mandate, the representative of the secretariat said that activities implemented in that regard, such as the Syrian national dialogue initiative, were funded using extrabudgetary resources, covering post-conflict development, economic and social policies. The representative of Bahrain, in his capacity as Chair of the senior officials segment, said that it was member States' prerogative to decide whether to launch a national dialogue in collaboration with ESCWA. The representative of the secretariat added that such dialogues would be considered following clear applications from member States, outlining their desire to benefit from ESCWA expertise in various areas.

4. Implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-seventh session

73. The directors of the ESCWA substantive divisions gave a presentation summarizing ESCWA activities related to the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-seventh session, held in Beirut, from 7 to 10 May 2012. Member State representatives took note of the completed activities and those that were still in progress.

5. Reports of the subsidiary bodies on their sessions

74. The reports of the seven ESCWA subsidiary bodies on their sessions, held between the twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth ESCWA sessions, were reviewed, as well as the reports of the Technical Committee on its sessions held over the same period. The reports contained recommendations, research and discussion topics and information on the organization of those sessions, lists of participants and lists of documents. The

representative of the secretariat highlighted three recommendations on the frequency of the sessions of the Committee on Water Resources, the Committee on Energy and the Statistics Committee, held annually.

75. Concerning those recommendations, participants said that they have no objection in principle to sessions of some subsidiary bodies being held as necessary. However, they requested that the secretariat prepare a paper setting out the reasons for holding those sessions annually, for consideration at the sessions of the Executive Committee.

76. With regard to the report on the eighth session of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development, the representative of Tunisia presented several proposals on effecting the Committee's activities, including the following: coordinating funding with development needs and priorities in the Arab region; facilitating trade, developing logistical services and reducing transport costs; benefiting from Arab production chains to enter new markets, improve quality, and develop the production of advanced technology goods rather than labour-intensive projects, given that low-cost labour is no longer the main driver of competitiveness; offering technical support to member States to strengthen institutional and legislative frameworks for trade, competitiveness, customs and logistical services; achieving Arab trade and economic integration set out in agreements under the League of Arab States and the programmes and projects approved by the Arab economic and social development summits, held in 2009, 2011 and 2013.

77. The representative of Egypt requested clarification of paragraph (h) of a recommendation made to the secretariat, contained in the report of the ninth session of the Committee on Social Development. She said that the final part of the paragraph was unclear and confusing.

78. The Chair of the session announced the adoption of all the following subsidiary body reports, taking into account the proposed amendments:

- Report of the tenth session of the Statistics Committee (E/ESCWA/SD/2012/IG.1/10/Report);
- Report of the ninth session of the Committee on Energy (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2013/IG.2/7/Report);
- Report of the ninth session of the Committee on Social Development (E/ESCWA/SDD/2013/IG.1/6/Report);
- Report of the sixth session of the Committee on Women (E/ESCWA/ECW/2013/IG.1/7/Report);
- Report of the seventh meeting of the Technical Committee (E/ESCWA/2012/C.7/8/Report);
- Report of the tenth session of the Committee on Water Resources (E/ESCWA/SDPD/2013/IG.1/8/Report);
- Report of the thirteenth session of the Committee on Transport (E/ESCWA/EDGD/2012/IG.1/8/Report);
- Report of the fourteenth session of the Committee on Transport (E/ESCWA/EDGD/2013/IG.1/7/Report);
- Report of the eighth session of the Technical Committee on Liberalization of Foreign Trade, Economic Globalization and Financing for Development (E/ESCWA/EDGD/2013/IG.2/10/Report);
- Report of the eighth meeting of the Technical Committee (E/ESCWA /2013/C.8/10/Report).

6. *Activities of the ESCWA Technology Centre for the period 2011-2013*

79. The representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the activities of the Technology Centre for the period 2011-2013, referring to document E/ESCWA/28/6(Part VI). He gave an overview of Technology Centre studies, databases, work networks, meetings, workshops and advisory services. He said that the centre aimed to strengthen member States' capacities to improve national and administrative systems; ensure technology development, transfer, adaptation and application; and identify suitable technology for the region, facilitate its development and improve the legal and commercial frameworks for its transfer. He presented a list of current financial commitments to the Centre and urged all member States to contribute to its funding, to enhance its activities covering numerous member States. He also reviewed the list of nominations sent for approval by member States for membership of its board of directors for the period 2014-2017.

80. One representative commended the Centre's achievements, although it was newly established and was operating with limited human resources. Following comments on nominations and membership, member State representatives adopted the list of nominations for membership of the Centre, taking into account suggested amendments and adding nominees from member States not included in the list.

D. MANAGEMENT ISSUES
(Agenda item 10)

81. The Commission considered document E/ESCWA/28/7, containing the following six sections:

1. *Evaluation of the work of the Commission*

82. The representative of the secretariat reviewed the project to evaluate the work of the Commission, its programmes and activities and its intergovernmental mechanisms. She said that the main aim of the project was to improve performance through planning and self-evaluation and cement the principle of accountability through an independent and objective evaluation process, following standards applied by other international organizations and regional commissions.

83. The Commission had benefitted from the experiences of other commissions and entities. It had reviewed the evaluation process and adopted a new approach, maintaining member States' role in directing and commenting on the process, given the importance of that joint approach to performance improvement and effective resource allocation.

84. The representatives of Egypt, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Tunis and Yemen commented on the issue.

85. Representatives affirmed the importance of the evaluation process in improving performance and resource allocation, in accordance with member States' needs, aims and priorities.

86. They also stressed the importance of neutral and independent evaluation. They said that, whether conducted internally or externally, evaluation processes must be as neutral, objective and independent as possible, which was best achieved when the process was carried out by a section other than the one undertaking the planning, to ensure objective outcomes that improved the evaluation process.

87. Representatives said that it was necessary to link evaluation processes to stakeholder needs and strengthen coordination between ESCWA and member States to correct any disagreements that could negatively affect cooperation and transparency.

88. Representatives requested that member States be informed about how evaluation processes were conducted at other regional commissions, coordinate with bodies mandated to appoint focal points, and benefit from the experiences of other regional commissions in terms of performance evaluations, especially in dealing with the outcomes of evaluations conducted by the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

89. They discussed the role ESCWA played in Arab integration and its relationship to ESCWA performance. They supported the self-evaluation process, focusing on quality rather than the number of evaluation arrangements.

90. The representative of the secretariat clarified that the aim of independent evaluations was to separate evaluation from planning. Member States played a fundamental role in evaluation processes, given that they were conducted on the basis of their comments and the outcomes were submitted to them to enable them to direct planning by presenting priorities and observations on performance in all work areas.

2. Proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015

91. Regarding the proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015, the representative of the secretariat gave a brief presentation on the proposed amendments and their justifications, which did not surpass 10 per cent of the work programme. He said that the secretariat had suggested them in compliance with its mandate and terms of reference, accorded to it by member States under the adopted Strategic Framework and in view of regional and international developments that had altered priorities.

92. The issue was discussed at length, and several comments were made by the representatives of Egypt, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan and the United Arab Emirates.

93. Although representatives agreed that flexibility in planning was vital, they said that strong justifications were needed to amend the work programme following its approval. The flexibility margin should remain within the set limits of the mandate granted to ESCWA by member States and activities and programmes should not be replaced by others without good reason.

3. Proposed terms of reference of the intergovernmental committee on emerging issues and development under crisis

94. The representative of the secretariat reviewed the reasons for establishing an intergovernmental committee on emerging issues and development under crisis, referring to document E/ESCWA/28/7(Part V), prepared pursuant to ESCWA resolutions 292 (XXVI) and 296 (XXVI). He said that the committee's mandate would include supporting member States' efforts in institutional and administrative capacity-building and development under crisis; monitoring the effects of emerging issues, crises and the Israeli occupation of Palestine and other Arab territories on social and economic development in the region; presenting the latest key initiatives on governance to benefit from them and encourage the exchange of experience and expertise between member States and strengthen cooperation; review progress made, as a result of ESCWA activities, in the areas of governance, emerging issues and development under crisis and foreign occupation; and following international and regional conferences, ensuring member State participation and coordinating efforts to implement resulting decisions and recommendations.

95. In the ensuing discussion, observations were made by the representatives of Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

96. Following lengthy discussions, representatives recommended that the proposal not be submitted pending further clarification. They agreed that it was not necessary to establish an intergovernmental committee on emerging issues and development under crisis given that the work carried out on the issue by ESCWA subprogramme 7 was currently sufficient.

4. Proposal for the establishment of an Arab trade and economic integration centre

97. The representative of the secretariat presented a proposal for the establishment of an Arab trade and economic integration centre, with reference to document E/ESCWA/28/7(Part IV), aimed at strengthening economic and commercial cooperation and coordination among Arab countries with specific characteristics

and varying development levels; and offering integration opportunities in our globalized world and facilitating the full implementation of GAFTA, the Arab Customs Union, within the context of negotiations between the League of Arab States, the World Trade Organization and the European union on liberalizing trade.

98. The centre would develop economic models and unified tariff scenarios; coordinate macroeconomic policies for the Arab Customs Union; and prepare studies on cross-border infrastructure to facilitate the flow of goods and services between Arab countries.

99. The Regional Integration Section of the Economic Development and Globalization Division would be at the heart of the centre, headed by the ESCWA Executive Secretary under the management of a director. ESCWA intergovernmental committees would monitor its work. He stressed that the establishment of the centre would not require additional human and financial resources and its projects would be funded using extrabudgetary sources.

100. In the ensuing discussion, the representatives of Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, the Sudan, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen made comments, focusing on the importance of coordination with the league of Arab States to avoid duplication and ensure the efficiency of efforts. Representatives requested clarification on the reasons for transforming the Regional Integration Section into a centre and on the feasibility of achieving its desired goals.

101. In response to comments, the representative of the secretariat said that ESCWA was continuously collaborating with the Economic and Social Council of the League of Arab States, which had requested ESCWA technical support for the League's role in trade liberalization talks. The aim of transforming the Regional Integration Section into a centre was to increase flexibility so as to meet member States' needs more swiftly. Desired goals were being achieved as a result of several technical studies in various areas related to trade and of the funding received from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, totalling 1 million Euros, to monitor the effects of service liberalization on the Arab economy.

5. Proposal for the establishment of an intergovernmental committee on information and communications technology for development

102. The representative of the secretariat gave a presentation on the proposal for the establishment of an intergovernmental committee on information and communication technology for development, referring to E/ESCWA/28/7(Part III), to replace the Consultative Committee on Scientific and Technological Development and Development Innovation and continue the work of the Technology for Development Division. He said that the aim was to provide member States with opportunities to include their priorities in the ESCWA programme of work for presentation at international forums, especially sessions of the Commission on Science and Technology for Development, the World Summit on the Information Society and the Internet Governance Forum. Given the importance of technology for innovation, development and the swift advance of the knowledge society concept, including the information society, the information economy and the peaceful uses of outer space, it had been necessary to restructure the Information and Communication Technology Division, redesignating it as the Technology for Development Division.

103. In the ensuing discussion, the representatives of Iraq, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen made comments. They requested clarification on the financial implications of establishing the committee, the frequency of its sessions and its relationship with the ESCWA Technology Centre established in 2011.

104. In response to comments, the representative of the secretariat said that transforming the Consultative Committee into an intergovernmental committee would not require great amounts of funding. It would meet every two years. Regarding its relationship with the Technology Centre, the committee would cover policy issues, good practices and international developments in technology and innovation, whereas the Centre was concerned with coordinating work between Arab countries given its operational and networking roles to broaden regional cooperation.

*6. Proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure
of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia*

105. Under this sub-item, representatives discussed two proposals. The first on redesignating the Commission as the “Economic and Social Commission for Arab States” and the second on redesignating the Technical Committee as the “Executive Committee” and amending its terms of reference. Representatives unanimously supported both proposals. They said that the Commission’s name should reflect that its work and mandate covered all Arab countries. Transforming the Technical Committee into an executive committee was necessary to amend its Terms of Reference to allow it to play a bigger role in directing and coordinating ESCWA activities and to take decisions in the periods between ministerial sessions.

**V. ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION
OF THE COMMISSION**

106. The Commission, at its closing plenary session, held on 18 September 2014, adopted the Tunis Declaration and draft resolutions and the recommendations from the senior officials segment, which will be sent to member States in the final report. The secretariat, prior to adopting the draft resolutions, read a statement from the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts of the United Nations Secretariat on the estimated costs of implementing the resolutions. Rule 24 of the ESCWA Rules of procedure states that the Executive Secretary shall prepare an estimate of the cost of implementing any proposal entailing expenditure from United Nations funds. The secretariat said that the following resolutions would require expenditure from United Nations Funds:

- (a) Support for the Palestinian people, estimated at \$428,600;
- (b) Establishing an intergovernmental committee, estimated at \$21,500;
- (c) The Arab Forum on Sustainable Development, estimate at \$751,600.

VI. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. DATE AND VENUE

107. The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia held its twenty-eighth session in Tunis, from 15 to 18 September 2014. It convened eight plenary meetings, at which it discussed its agenda items covering issues of concern to member States.

108. A framework agreement was signed between the Commission and the Government of Tunisia, under which ESCWA shall provide technical services to support the Tunisian national development plan. Those services will focus on priorities identified by the Government, including developing an investment map for the least developed regions and establishing an economic modelling unit to determine the effects of public policies on employment and growth.

109. A side event was held to give an overview of an ESCWA report entitled “The Arab Middle Class: A Force for Change”, which offers two definitions of the middle class. The first definition is economic on the basis of national poverty lines and consumption choices. The second is sociological, referring to education and employment. It also includes a parameter on personal perceptions regarding social group affiliation. The report aims to monitor key developments related to the size and structure of the middle class.

**B. CONSIDERATION OF REQUESTS BY STATES MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND/OR
ITS SPECIALIZED AGENCIES THAT ARE NOT MEMBERS OF ESCWA
TO PARTICIPATE AS OBSERVERS IN THE TWENTY-EIGHTH SESSION
OF THE COMMISSION
(Agenda item 4)**

110. Rule 63 of the ESCWA Rules of procedure states that the Commission may invite any Member of the United Nations or of a specialized agency that is not a member of the Commission to participate in its

deliberations on any matter which the Commission considers to be of particular concern to that State. A State thus invited shall not have the right to vote, but may submit proposals which may be put to the vote at the request of any member of the Commission.

111. In accordance with that rule, the secretariat, at the twenty-eighth ESCWA session, reviewed requests by member States and took the necessary decisions. Finland; various United Nations programmes and agencies; the secretariat of the League of Arab States; the Saudi Fund for Development; the secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC); the Organization of Islamic Cooperation; the Federation of GCC Chambers; the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas; the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics; the Arab Organization for Agricultural Development; the Gulf Organization for Industrial Consulting; the Arab Towns Organization; the Higher Council for Science and Technology; and non-governmental organizations from ESCWA member States and non-member States, accredited by the United Nations Economic and Social Council, participated as observers in the twenty-eighth ESCWA session.

112. The representative of Finland made a brief statement, highlighting the importance of economic and social policy planning, cemented in the ESCWA mandate, in handling cross-cutting challenges, with reference to his country's experiences in the area. He expressed his country's desire to cooperate with ESCWA to support equitable development and Arab prosperity.

C. OPENING OF THE SESSION

113. The session was opened in two stages. The senior officials segment was opened on the morning of Monday, 15 September 2014. The ministerial segment was opened on the morning of Wednesday, 17 September 2014.

1. *Senior officials segment*

114. At the opening of the senior officials segment, the representative of the United Arab Emirates, Mr. Mohamed Saleh Shelwah, Advisor to the Minister of the Economy of the United Arab Emirates and Chair of the senior officials segment of the twenty-seventh ESCWA session, gave a statement commending the efforts of the ESCWA secretariat that positively affected member States in all areas. He noted the fruitful cooperation between the Session Bureau and the secretariat in implementing programmes and realizing various objectives, especially considering the bleak conditions currently facing the Arab region.

115. Mr. Nadim Khouri, ESCWA Deputy Executive Secretary, made a statement stressing the importance of participating in the current session during an unprecedented and fateful period in the region's history. He said that concerted efforts were necessary to drive economic and social development in the Arab region and achieve the aspirations of Arab countries and their peoples' ambitions for freedom, dignity and justice, using its human and natural resources, knowledge and rich cultural heritage.

2. *Ministerial segment*

116. Mr. Salem Issa Alghattam Alzaabi, United Arab Emirates Ambassador to Tunisia, representing the Chair of the ministerial segment of the twenty-seventh ESCWA session, opened the ministerial segment with an address in which he highlighted ESCWA support for Arab countries in facing numerous challenges, coordinating efforts and strengthening cooperation to stimulate development. He reviewed the objectives realized since the last session, including the membership of Libya, Morocco and Tunisia that strengthened ESCWA representation and its role as a regional platform for exchanging ideas and experiences, and its standing as a United Nations presence in the Arab region. He said that ESCWA continued to implement its work programme despite difficult conditions and was able to secure additional extrabudgetary resources used to increase its support to member States. He commended the collaboration between ESCWA and the League of Arab States in implementing the outcomes of Rio+20 and presenting Arab priorities during negotiations

on the post-2015 development agenda. He also praised ESCWA efforts to ensure the advancement of women and gender equality, enshrined in the Kuwait Declaration on Combating Violence against Women, resulting from the sixth session of the Committee on Women.

117. Mr. Nadim Khouri, ESCWA Deputy Executive Secretary, gave a statement following the message from the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon. He said that the demands of Arab citizens for a just society founded on human rights had resonated throughout the region. Nevertheless, the Arab region, like many other parts of the world, faced several challenges, including poverty, geographical disparities, unemployment, exclusion and conflicts that made social justice harder to attain. The ESCWA session offered a valuable opportunity to exchange views and unify positions. Discussions and activities organized by ESCWA were vital to developing a common Arab stance, on the basis of national priorities, for consideration during negotiations for a post-2015 development agenda.

118. Mr. Ghanim bin Fadhl al-Buanain, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, made a statement, affirming that social justice was a pertinent theme for the session. He said that the main challenges facing the Arab region, which also had economic repercussions, were high unemployment and poverty rates, food insecurity, the absence of a healthy and safe environment, excessive consumption of natural resources, population increases, a lack of innovation and the absence of a knowledge economy. He added that those challenges required a review of development policies and the adoption of a development approach founded on studies and inclusive and comprehensive plans to achieve sustainable development; and the participation of all population groups in the decision-making process. Small and medium sized enterprises played an important role in strengthening growth and investment, creating job opportunities for young people, combating poverty and raising living standards. He presented the Bahrain Economic Vision 2030 aimed at identifying a clear approach for the development of the Bahraini economy, and the country's national reform initiatives that established the *Tamkeen* (empowerment) organization tasked with developing the private sector as the key driver of economic growth.

119. Ms. Rima Khalaf, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of ESCWA, gave a statement thanking the Government and people of Tunisia for hosting the session. She commended member State participation in the session despite current difficulties, which reflected Arab commitment to supporting ESCWA. She said that social justice was a pertinent theme for the session, given that it was a value cemented in Arab and Islamic culture, philosophy and civilian demands, and the main objective of State policies.

120. Mr. Mongi Hamdi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, made a statement outlining the reasons behind growing income disparities, rising poverty, the lack of equal opportunities and equality and exclusion, resulting in a lack of justice and equity in the Arab region. He said that joint efforts should be made to face increasing security and economic challenges, by reviewing economic and social plans to ensure that they were aimed at achieving social justice to meet the needs and aspirations of Arab peoples. Arab experts should propose structural reforms to organize social protection and social assistance programmes for marginalized groups; support food, energy and housing resources; and secure necessary funding. He also praised the *Arab Integration Report*, launched by ESCWA in February 2014. He added that regional and international rapprochement and coordinated efforts were vital in view of the threats posed by terrorism, extremism and organized crime. He expressed his confidence that the Tunis Declaration on Social Justice in the Arab Region, resulting from the current session, would be tantamount to a roadmap for Arab countries.

D. PARTICIPANTS

121. The session was attended by representatives of 15 ESCWA member States. It was also attended by Finland as an observer. Other observers included representatives of United Nations programmes, agencies and institutions; international and non-governmental organizations; other organizations; and a number of experts. The list of participants is contained in annex I to the present report.

E. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. *Senior officials segment*

122. Rule 12 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission provides that member countries shall assume the Chair of the sessions of the Commission on a rotating basis, in Arabic alphabetical order. It also provides that the Commission shall, at the beginning of each session, elect from among the representatives of its members two Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur, who shall remain in office until such time as their successors shall be elected, and shall be eligible for re-election.

123. Accordingly, Ms. Rana Bent Issa Al Khalifa, Assistant Undersecretary for Arab and Afro-Asian Affairs and Organizations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, assumed the Chair of the senior officials segment. The representative of Tunisia, Mr. Jalel Snoussi, Director of Multilateral Cooperation at Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia; and the representative of the United Arab Emirates, Mr. Mohamed Saleh Shelwah, Advisor to the Minister of the Economy, assumed the posts of Vice-Chair. The representative of the Sudan, Mr. Abdl Aziz Mohamed Mabrouk, Director General of Foreign Trade at the Ministry of Trade, assumed the post of Rapporteur (given that the Syrian Arab Republic did not participate in the session).

2. *Ministerial segment*

124. His Excellency Mr. Ghanim Ben Fadhul al-Buanain, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain, chaired the ministerial meetings; the representative of Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates assumed the positions of Vice-Chairs; and the representative of the Sudan assumed the position of Rapporteur.

F. CREDENTIALS

125. In accordance with Rule 11 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission, the credentials of the representatives of member countries participating in the twenty-eighth session were submitted to the Executive Secretary.

G. AGENDA

126. At its first meeting, the Commission adopted the agenda as presented in document E/ESCWA/28/L.1. The agenda was adopted as follows:

1. Opening of the twenty-eighth session.
2. Election of officers.
3. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
4. Consideration of requests by States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of ESCWA to participate as observers in the twenty-eighth session of the Commission.
5. Economic and social developments in the Arab region 2013-2014.
6. Outcomes of the Arab High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development.
7. Support for the Palestinian people: International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.
8. Revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017.

9. Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission:
 - (a) Financial status of the Commission;
 - (b) Programme performance in the biennium 2012-2013;
 - (c) Technical cooperation and regional advisory services;
 - (d) Implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-seventh session;
 - (e) Reports of the subsidiary bodies on their sessions;
 - (f) Activities of the ESCWA Technology Centre in the period 2011-2013.
10. Management issues:
 - (a) Evaluation of the work of the Commission;
 - (b) Proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015;
 - (c) Proposal for the establishment of an intergovernmental committee on information and communications technology for development;
 - (d) Proposal for the establishment of an Arab trade and economic integration centre.
 - (e) Proposed terms of reference of the intergovernmental committee on emerging issues and development under crisis;
 - (f) Proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia;
11. Opening of the ministerial segment.
12. Social justice in the policies of Arab States:
 - (a) The new development approach;
 - (b) Economic policies supportive of social justice;
 - (c) Intergenerational justice and access to natural resources;
 - (d) Monitoring and measurement.
13. Adoption of a ministerial declaration on social justice in the policies of Arab States.
14. Date and venue of the twenty-ninth session of the Commission.
15. Other matters.
16. Adoption of the report of the Commission on its twenty-eighth session.
17. Closure of the session.

127. At the same meeting, the Commission adopted the proposed organization of work for its twenty-seventh session, presented in document E/ESCWA/28/L.2.

H. DATE AND VENUE OF THE TWENTY-NINTH SESSION (Agenda item 14)

128. The twenty-ninth session of the Commission will be held in Beirut in April 2016, if no other member State proposes to host it.

I. OTHER MATTERS (Agenda item 15)

129. No proposals were received under this agenda item.

Annex I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

A. ESCWA MEMBER COUNTRIES

Bahrain

Mr. Ghanim bin Fadhul al-Buanain
Minister of State for Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ms. Rana bent Issa al-Khalifa
Assistant Undersecretary for Arab and Afro-Asian
Affairs and Organizations
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Ali bin Jasem al-Moussa
Director of the Office of the Minister of State for
Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Fouad Sadiq al-Baharna
Counselor
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Khalil Ebrahim Butrada
Counselor
Embassy of Bahrain in Tunisia

Ms. Maha Sultan al-Jawdar
Administrative Coordinator in the Organizations
Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ms. Ramzi bin Adam bin Maghzouz
Public Relations Officer
Embassy of Bahrain in Tunisia

Egypt

Ms. Ghada Wali
Minister of Social Affairs

Mr. Majdi Radi
Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for
Multilateral Economic Relations and
International Cooperation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Ayman Mashrafa
Ambassador
Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Tunisia

Ms. Amani Fahmi
Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for
International Economic Relations
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Iraq

Ms. Nuha Khudhur Yousif Sharmaa
Director General of Human Development
Ministry of Planning

Mr. Ali Mohamad Shwaikh
Chief of Protocol and Culture Affairs
Embassy of Iraq in Tunisia

Jordan

Ms. Zeina Zeid Toukan
Director of International Cooperation Department
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Ms. Hazar Badran
Head of the World Bank Group and United
Nations Agencies Division
International Cooperation Department
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Kuwait

Mr. Yahya Suliman al-Oqaily
General Secretary
Supreme Council for Planning and Development

Mr. Khaled Ali al-Khamees
Assistant Secretary-General
General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for
Planning and Development

Mr. Meshal Minwar al-Ardhi
Controller
Ministry of Finance

Mr. Hassan Mahmud Kamal
Manager of Minister Office Department
General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for
Planning and Development

Kuwait (continued)

Ms. Randa Abdalla Khalifa Shahine
Manager of Strategic Planning Department
General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for
Planning and Development

Ms. Hissah Ibrahim al-Hamlan
Administrative Coordinator
Ministry of Finance

Mr. Abdulrahman Bandar al-Dehani
Second Secretary
Embassy of Kuwait in Tunis

Lebanon

Mr. Bassam Abdel Kader Naamani
Ambassador
Embassy of Lebanon in Tunisia

Mr. Jihad Azour
Executive Advisor
Middle East Regional Advisory Group
International Monetary Fund

Morocco

Mr. Mohammad Louafa
Deputy Minister to the Head of the Government in
charge of General Affairs and Governance
Ministry for General Affairs and Governance

Ms. Hanane Touzani
Chargée d'études auprès du Chef du
Gouvernement
Ministry for General Affairs and Governance

Ms. Boutaina bin Moussa
Chef de Service des institutions financières
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

Oman

Mr. Hussein bin Omar bin Abdullah al-Ibrahim
Ambassador
Embassy of Sultanate Oman to Tunisia

Mr. Hamed bin Jaber Saud al-Mahrooqi
Director General for Services Sectors
Development
General Secretariat of Supreme Council for
Planning
Ministry of National Economy

Ms. Souad Mohamad bin Youssif al-Fadhel
Director of Technical Cooperation Department
General Secretariat of Supreme Council for
Planning

Mr. Said bin Rashid al-Qatbi
Director of Regional Development and
Infrastructure Department
General Secretariat of Supreme Council for
Planning

Ms. Aisha Rashid Salim al-Hashimi
Social Expert
Ministry of Social Development

Palestine

Ms. Ola Awad
President of Palestinian Central Bureau of
Statistics

Mr. Ashraf Samara
Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

Qatar

Mr. Saleh bin Mohammad Salem al-Nabet
Minister
Ministry of Development Planning and Statistics

Ms. Muna Salman Mohamad Hussine Dehnim

Mr. Sutlan Ali Alkowari

Mr. Ahmad Mohamad Hussein
Advisor
Ministry of Statistics and Development

Mr. Hamad Rashed al-Nabet

Mr. Ghanem Moubarak Alkowari
Director of Department of Social Insurance
Ministry of Social Affairs

Mr. Abdullah Nasser al-Homeidi
Ambassador
Embassy of Qatar to Tunis

Mr. Abdel Aziz Mohamad Elsheikh
Chargé d'Affairs
Embassy of Qatar of Tunis

Saudi Arabia

Mr. Bandar Ben Abdelaziz Al Wayli
Under Secretary
Ministry of Economy and Planning

Mr. Abdulla Ali al-Marwani
Assistant Undersecretary
Ministry of Economy and Planning

Mr. Nabil bin Mohamad Adel Helmi
Representative
Ministry of Communications and Information
Technology

Mr. Abdullah bin Hasan al-Nasr
Director of Planning Directorate
King Abdulaziz City for Science

Mr. Saleh bin Mohamad al-Dakhil
General Director
Productive Projects Department
Ministry of Social Affairs

Mr. Saed bin Naser Elqorayni
Assistant General Director
Social Research Department
Ministry of Social Affairs

Mr. Saqr bin Suleiman al-Qorahi
Representative
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Emad bin Ahmad al-Ghamdi
Economic Researcher
Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Mr. Saleh bin Fahd El Shahri
Planning Specialist
Ministry of Economy and Planning

Mr. Hamed Ali Shahri
Second Secretary
Embassy of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Tunis

Sudan

Mr. Othman Omar Ali al-Shariff
Minister of Trade

Mr. Abdl Aziz Mohamed Mabrouk
Director General of Foreign Trade
Ministry of Trade

Ms. Majida Ahmad al-Mahdi
Director of Administration of Organizations

Ms. Shaza Osman Omar
Consultant
Ministry of Trade

Tunisia

Mr. Mongi Hamdi
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Fayçal Gouia
Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Nouredine Zakri
Secretary of State for Development and
International Cooperation
Ministry of Economy and Trade

Ms. Holla Bachtobji
Director General for Organizations and
International Seminars
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Mohamed Zribi
Director General for Social Advancements
Ministry of Social Affairs

Mr. Badie al-Kodaidi
Director of Diplomatic Protocol
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Jalel Snoussi
Director of Multilateral Cooperation
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Nofal Elobeidi
Chief of Information Department
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Ahmed Alsaghir
Director for Arab and Islamic Organizations in
General Department for the Arab World
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Nejmeddine al-Akhal
Assistant Director for the Administration of
International Organizations and Forums
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Tunisia (continued)

Mr. Chokri Letaief
Assistant Director of the Department of Public
Information
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Mohamed Maher Beddeb
Counsellor of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mr. Hassen Saadani
Secretary of Foreign Affairs for the Administration
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ms. Saida Hachicha
General Director of Economic and Commercial
Cooperation
Ministry of Trade and Handicrafts

Ms. Kalthoum Hamzaoui
Director General of Multilateral Cooperation
Secretary of the State of Development and
International Cooperation

Mr. Mohamed bin Omar
Engineer
General Director of the Office of International
Cooperation and External Relations
Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research,
Information Technology and Communication

Ms. Najat Ben Salah
Chargée de mission
Ministry of Justice; Human Rights and Transitional
Justice

Ms. Sabriah Elbatouni
Director of International Cooperation and
Partnership

Mr. Lotfi bin Said
Director
Ministry of Equipment, Land Planning and
Sustainable Development

Mr. Mohamed Jamel Elifa
Director
Ministry of Trade and Handicrafts

Ms. Naima Jelassi
Director of Social Defense
Ministry of Social Affairs

Ms. Malika Ouerghi
Director of Family Issues
State Secretariat for Women and Family

Mr. Sami Zgueb
Director of Cooperation and External Relations
Ministry of Transport

Ms. Kawthar Dabbash
Advisor to the Minister
Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research
and Information and Technology

Ms. Sania Abdellatif Jillibi
Deputy Director
Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research,
Information Technology and Communication

Ms. Hajer Chalouati
Deputy Director
Ministry of Development and International
Cooperation

Ms. Hanen Benzarti
Chargée du Mécánisme d'Observation de La
Famille
State Secretariat for Women and Family

United Arab Emirates

Mr. Salem Issa Alghattam Alzaabi
Ambassador
Embassy of United Arab Emirates in Tunisia

Mr. Mohamed Saleh Shelwah
Advisor to the Minister
Ministry of Economy

Mr. Nizar Faysal Almeshel
Director of Economic Agreements and Joint
Committee
Ministry of Economy

Mr. Hussain Saeed al-Shaikh
Assistant Undersecretary of Social Care Affairs
Ministry of Social Affairs

Mr. Abdulla Hassan Obaid Alshamsi
Chargée d'Affairs
Embassy of United Arab Emirates to Tunisia

Ms. Hanan Abdulla al-Qadi
First Administrative
Ministry of Economy

Yemen

Mr. Mohammed Saeed Al-Sadi
Minister
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Mr. Mohammed Ahmed al-Hawri
Deputy Minister for Economic Studies and
Forecasting Sector
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Ms. Sultan al-Dubai
General Director of Protocol
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Ms. Amani Mohamad Zabara
Director General of National Reforms
Economic Studies and Forecasts Sector
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Mr. Ahmed Hammoud al-Shibami
Director General of International Cooperation with
International and Regional Organizations and
Conferences
International Cooperation Sector
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

Mr. Abdo Ghanem Naji Elmohayya
Director of Infrastructure
Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

B. STATES MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS NOT MEMBERS OF ESCWA

Finland

Mr. Matti Lassila
Finish Special Envoy to Syrian Transition Process
Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ms. Tanja Jaaskelaine
Ambassador
Embassy of Finland in Tunis

Ms. Elena Rimppi
Deputy Head of Mission
First Secretary

C. UNITED NATIONS SECRETARIAT

Regional Commissions New York Office
(RCYNO)

Mr. Amr Nour
Director

Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

Mr. Nassim Oulmane
Senior Economic Affairs Officer

D. UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMMES AND AGENCIES

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Mr. Mounir Tabet
United Nations Resident Coordinator and UNDP
Resident Representative
Tunis

Mr. Glorbano Segneri
Political Advisor
Tunis

World Food Program (WFP)

Ms. Maria Lukyanova
Head of Office
Tunis

Mr. Mohamed Diab
Regional Director for Middle East, North Africa,
Central Asia and Eastern Europe

United Nations on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Mr. Thierry Rostan
Head of Office

United Nations Office for Project Services
(UNOPS)

Mr. Faouzi bin Jebara
Project Manager
Tunis

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the
Empowerment for Women (UN WOMEN)

Mr. Mohammad Naciri
Deputy Regional Director
Regional Office for Arab States
Egypt

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
(UNAIDS)

Ms. Yamina Shakkar
Regional Director for the MENA Region

Mr. Eltayeb Elamin
Regional Advisor

E. UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATIONS AND SPECIALIZED AGENCIES

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

Mr. Ghassan Khalil
Special Representative

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Mr. Nasserddine Haj Amin
Senior Policy Officer
Regional Office for the Near East and North Africa

International Migration for Migration (IOM)

Ms. Pasquale Lupoles
Regional Director for the MENA Region

United Nations Industrial Development
Organization (UNIDO)

Ms. Azza Morsy
Chief of the Arab Programme
Vienna

F. INTERGOVERNMENTAL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND RELATED BODIES

League of Arab States (LAS)

Ms. Faeqa al-Saleh
Assistant Secretary-General
Head of Social Sector

Mr. Tarek al-Nabulsi
Head of Follow-up and Coordination Unit

Arab League Educational Cultural and Scientific
Organization (ALECSO)

Mr. Abulgasem al-Badri
Director of the Department of Scientific and
Scientific Research
Commissioned Minister in the League of Arab
States

Arab Organization for Agricultural Development
(AOAD)

Ms. Nidhal Melaouah
Coordinator of the Programme of Aquaculture

Arab Towns Organizations (ATO)

Ms. Muna Bourisli
Advisor to Secretary-General

Cooperation Council for the Arab Gulf Countries
(GCC)

Mr. Mohamad al-Ghayeb
Social Researcher
Council of Ministers
Bahrain

Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

Mr. Hasan Arslan
Member of the Cabinet of the Secretary General

Arab Institute for Training and Research in
Statistics (AITRS)

Mr. Abdelaziz Maalami
General Manager
Jordan

The Saudi Fund for Development

Mr. Turki Ghanem al-Ghanem
Media Researcher
Research and Economic Studies Department

Mr. Hamoud bin Saad Altowired
Deputy Director General of Treasury Department

International Trade Center (ITC)

Mr. Abdeslam Azuz
Senior Trade Promotion Officer
Office for Arab States

Ms. Lilia Naas
Chargé d'Affairs
Office for Arab States
Geneva

G. GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting
Countries (OAPEC)

Mr. Abbas al-Naqi
Secretary General
Kuwait

Mr. Abdul Karim Ayed
Director
Library and Media Department

National Council for Women

Ms. Mervat Tallawy
Chief
Egypt

Higher Council for Science and Technology
(HCST)

Mr. Khaled Elshuraydeh
Secretary General
Jordan

Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS)

Mr. Khatim Kherraz
Executive Secretary
Tunis

Tunisian Union for Social Solidarity

Mr. Shokri Jaouadi
Programme Development Coordinator
Tunis

H. PANELISTS

First panel - Social justice and the new
development approach

Mr. Frederico Neto
Panel Moderator
Director of the Social Development Division
ESCWA

Ms. Mervat Tallawy
President of the National Council for Women
Egypt

Mr. John Jost
Political science professor at New York University

Mr. Ishak Diwan
Lecturer at Harvard University

Mr. Jihad Azour
Former Minister of Finance of Lebanon

Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz al-Nasser
High Representative for the Alliance of
Civilizations

Second panel - Economic policies supportive of
social justice

Mr. Abdallah al-Dardari,
Panel Moderator
Director of the Economic Development and
Globalization Division
ESCWA

Mr. Hazem al-Beblawi
Former Prime Minister of Egypt and former
ESCWA Executive Secretary

Second panel - Economic policies supportive of social justice (continued)

Mr. Grzegorz Kolodko
Former Deputy Prime Minister and former Finance Minister of Poland

Mr. Omar Razzaz
Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the King Abdullah II Fund for Development

Mr. Mohammed al-Sadi
Minister of Planning and International Cooperation of Yemen

Third panel - Intergenerational justice and access to natural resources

Ms. Nada al-Nashif
Panel Moderator
Assistant Secretary-General and Regional Director for the Arab States of the International Labour Organization

Ms. Rola Majdalani
Director of the Sustainable Development Policies Division
ESCWA

Ms. Carole Nakhle
Energy economics lecturer at the University of Surrey

Mr. Shaddad al-Attili
Former Palestinian Minister and Chair of the Water Authority

Mr. Sherif Arif
Senior Environmental Consultant to the Global Environment Facility at the World Bank

Fourth panel - Social justice: monitoring and measurement

Mr. Juraj Riecan
Panel Moderator
Director of the Statistics Division
ESCWA

Ms. Ola Awad
Minister of the Palestinian National Authority and President of the Palestinian National Bureau of Statistics

Ms. Martine Durand
Chief Statistician and Director of the Statistics Directorate of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

Mr. Shantayanan Devarajan
Chief Economist of the World Bank's Africa Region

Annex II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Symbol	Item	Title
E/ESCWA/28/1	3	Agenda and annotations
E/ESCWA/28/2	3	Organization of work
E/ESCWA/28/3	4	Consideration of requests by States Members of the United Nations and/or its specialized agencies that are not members of ESCWA to participate as observers in the twenty-eighth session of the Commission
E/ESCWA/EDGD/2014/1/Summary	5	Survey of Economic and Social Developments in the Arab Region 2013-2014 – Summary
E/ESCWA/SDPD/2014/WG.1/6/Report	6	Report of the Arab High-Level Forum on Sustainable Development
E/ESCWA/28/4	7	Support for the Palestinian people: International Year of Solidarity with the Palestinian People
E/ESCWA/28/5	8	Revised draft strategic framework for the biennium 2016-2017
E/ESCWA/28/6	9	Report of the Executive Secretary on the activities of the Commission:
E/ESCWA/28/6(Part I)	9 (a)	Financial status of the Commission
E/ESCWA/28/6(Part II)	9 (b)	Programme performance in the biennium 2012-2013
E/ESCWA/28/6(Part III)	9 (c)	Technical cooperation and regional advisory services
E/ESCWA/28/6(Part IV)	9 (d)	Implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Commission at its twenty-seventh session
E/ESCWA/28/6(Part V)	9 (e)	Reports of the subsidiary bodies on their sessions
E/ESCWA/28/6(Part VI)	9 (f)	Activities of the ESCWA Technology Centre in the period 2011-2013
E/ESCWA/28/CRP.1		Progress achieved in the implementation of the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society
E/ESCWA/28/7	10	Management issues:

Symbol	Item	Title
E/ESCWA/28/7(Part I)	10 (a)	Evaluation of the work of the Commission
E/ESCWA/28/7(Part II)	10 (b)	Proposed amendments to the programme of work for the biennium 2014-2015
E/ESCWA/28/7(Part III)	10 (c)	Proposal for the establishment of an intergovernmental committee on information and communications technology for development
E/ESCWA/28/7(Part IV)	10 (d)	Proposal for the establishment of an Arab trade and economic integration centre
E/ESCWA/28/7(Part V)	10 (e)	Proposed terms of reference of the intergovernmental committee on emerging issues and development under crisis
E/ESCWA/28/7(Part VI)	10 (f)	Proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference and Rules of Procedure of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
E/ESCWA/28/8	12	Social justice in the policies of Arab States:
E/ESCWA/28/8/Panel.1	12 (a)	The new development approach
E/ESCWA/28/8/Panel.2	12 (b)	Economic policies supportive of social justice
E/ESCWA/28/8/Panel.3	12 (c)	Intergenerational justice and access to natural resources
E/ESCWA/28/8/Panel.4	12 (d)	Monitoring and measurement
E/ESCWA/28/INF.1		Information for participants
E/ESCWA/28/INF.2		List of documents